“Does that mean we’re middle class now*?”*: Experiences of educational psychologists who identify as coming from a low socioeconomic status background in accessing, training, and practicing within the profession.

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Summary of thesis

This thesis is divided into three sections, a literature review, an empirical report, and a critical appraisal:

Part 1

The literature review begins by exploring the broad context of socioeconomic status and its relevance to the educational psychology profession. This is followed by a description of the literature search and a critical discussion of existing research relating to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds in higher education. Finally, the rationale for the current research is outlined the research questions are presented.

Part 2

Part two comprises a summary of the existing literature, followed by the empirical study which provides a detailed account of the current research project. This includes an outline of the chosen methodology and procedure, and a reflexive thematic analysis of ten semi-structured interviews with qualified educational psychologists from England and Wales who consider themselves to be from a low socioeconomic status background. This analysis and the themes developed from the data are then discussed in relation to the literature. Strengths and limitations of the current study are discussed, and possible areas for future research are highlighted. Implications for educational psychologists, educational psychology services, training institutions and wider systems will then be outlined from the findings.

Part 3

The critical appraisal of research is divided into two sections, firstly, a critical account of the research in terms of contribution to knowledge is discussed in Part A. The researcher position, methods, participants and recruitment, data analysis dissemination of the results will also be discussed. Part B outlines a critical account of the research practitioner and presents a reflective and reflexive account of the research, including rationale for the thesis, methodological considerations, and analysis of data. Following this a concluding statement is offered.

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Abbreviations and terminology

(N)QEP(s)	(Newly) qualified Educational Psychologist(s)
(C)YP	(child[ren] and) young people/ person
AEP	Association of Educational Psychologists
ALN	Additional learning needs
ALNCo	Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator
ASSIA	Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts
BEI	British Education Index
BME	Black and minority ethnic
BPS	British Psychological Society
CP(s)	Clinical psychologist(s)/ psychology
CYP	Children and young people/ children, young people
DECP	Division of Child and Educational Psychology
DEdPsy	Doctorate in educational psychology
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EP(s)	Educational Psychologist(s)/ psychology
EPIP	Educational Psychology in Practice
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
ERIC	Educational Resources Information Centre
FIF	First in family (to attend university)
FSM	Free school meals
HCPC	Health Care and Professions Council
HE	Higher education
IDP	Individual Development Plan
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LA	Local authority
LSES	Low socioeconomic status
NAPEP	National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PEP(s)	Principal Educational Psychologist(s)
PG	Postgraduate
PhD	A doctorate in any faculty
POLAR	Participation of Local Areas
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systemic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
SC	Social class

SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
Service users	Children, young people and their families, school staff
SES	Socioeconomic status
SG(s)	Social Graces
SM	Social mobility
TA	Thematic analysis
TEP(s)	Trainee Educational Psychologist(s)
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WC	Working class
WP	Widening participation
YP	Young people

Part 1: Major literature review

Word count: approx 10,384

Part A: Introduction

Structure of the literature review

The literature review will begin by defining the term socioeconomic status, which is used throughout the research. Literature concerning the saliency of research in this area will be explored, followed by the relevance to educational psychology. A description of the role of educational psychologists (EPs) will be provided, along with the current training route. Current information on diversity within the profession will then be outlined. The socio-political context and power of education will be summarised and information on widening participation will be presented. Finally, a summary of all aforementioned areas is presented to provide the context for the focussed literature review presented in Part B. Relevant psychological theories will be outlined to aid understanding where applicable.

Issues of terminology: defining socioeconomic status

There is a debate in the literature regarding a conclusive definition of socioeconomic status (SES). Baker (2014) suggests SES can be considered in terms of an individual's economic position and educational attainment in relation to others, including wealth, home ownership, neighbourhood disadvantage or subjective SES.

SES is often conflated with social class (SC), a complex construct of subjective identity (Manstead, 2018). SC comprises a person's SES alongside other factors, including resources, location and status (Cook & Lawson, 2016). SC can also be defined as a marker of power within society (Deutsch, 2017; Thompson, 2019). Rather than likening SES to SC, it is acknowledged that SES forms a part of a person's SC identity (Cook & Lawson, 2016). The literature suggests people think more readily in terms of their SES when asked about their identities (Manstead, 2018); and this term will be used throughout the current research.

Other terms within research critically reviewed in this report include 'working-class', 'non-traditional students', 'disadvantaged', 'low participation neighbourhood(s)' and 'deprived'. It is recognised that these terms are used within the scope of describing low SES (LSES). The literature in this area should be reviewed with caution, and particular attention should be paid to the differing definitions presented by researchers. In this thesis, these terms will be used to reflect the original researchers' choice of language, rather than the views of the author of this report.

Why is SES important to consider?

Those from a low SES (LSES) background are often referred to in the literature as 'disadvantaged (Mills, 2021)'. A report published by the Welsh Government defines socioeconomic disadvantage as "living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society" (Mills, 2021, p. 8).

Mills (2021) suggests that socioeconomic disadvantage overlaps with the concept of poverty. The term 'poverty' is often used to describe the living conditions of some people from a low SES (LSES). Although poverty is often defined in terms of low income, there is a debate about whether this serves as a relevant measure of poverty (The Social Metrics Commission, 2020), and there is no single accepted definition of poverty (Francis-Devine, 2022). The Social Metrics Commission (2020) developed a way of measuring poverty which considers the resources families have and the extent to which these resources meet their needs, including recurring costs associated with disability, housing and childcare. This measure also considers the nature of poverty and analyses the depth and persistence for those in poverty (The Social Metrics Commission, 2020). This suggests that those who live in poverty can be included when talking about LSES backgrounds. A recent report from The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2022) found that more than 1 in 5 people in the UK are living in poverty, including 31 percent of children. Experiencing childhood poverty can have a significant negative impact on early child development (Marmot et al., 2020).

Recent statistics highlight the importance of addressing the inequity of outcomes between those living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage (Mills, 2021), who have less access to economic, material or social resources and opportunities. Individuals often experience poorer outcomes than those not from a LSES, such as poorer physical and mental health (Marmot et al, 2020), lower education and attainment level, and less access to higher paid work (Mills, 2021).

Statistically, those from a LSES are more likely to face Adverse Childhood Experiences than those not from a LSES, which can have a negative impact on physical and mental health (Mills, 2021). Statistics also suggest that children eligible for free school meals (FSM) in year 11 are less likely to achieve permanent employment, and are more likely to receive out-of-work benefits as adults (Department for Education, 2018). This inequality can create a cycle which continues for future generations (Atkinson, 2015).

As illustrated by Figure 1, those from a LSES can suffer from inequity of outcome in a multitude of areas which can impact all aspects of life.

Figure 1: Socioeconomic disadvantage and inequality of outcome (Mills, 2021)

Although these data paint a stark picture, it must be highlighted that these statistics outline the situation and imply a correlation, rather than causation. As The Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlight in their recent (2022) report on poverty in the UK: "this is a story that cannot be told solely through graphs and charts" (p.4.). Research into experiences of individuals from such backgrounds is important to understand the nuance of these experiences.

Socio-political context: the power of education

The term 'Higher Education' (HE) refers to education accessed at age 18 and over including foundation degrees, undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications including PhD and Doctoral courses (GOV.UK, n.d.).

Politicians have long emphasised the power of education in driving upward social mobility (SM) (Blair & Adonis, 2021), which is often supported by research in this area (Crawford & Van Der Erve, 2015; Donnelly & Evans, 2019). The Social Mobility Commission (SMC, 2021) define SM as "the simple idea that where you start in life shouldn't determine your future" (p.3.). SM can be measured by comparing a person's occupation or income and the occupation or income of their parents. Where there is a strong link there is low SM, and a weak link indicates higher SM (SMC,

2021). The SMC (2021) state that the efforts of improving SM should be aimed at ensuring that an individual's choices, merit, and potential determine their outcomes in life.

The context of HE in the UK has changed in recent years, with the rise in tuition fees, the scrapping of maintenance grants for those from low-income families and increased competition between universities for funding (Boliver 2018). This has made it harder for those from LSES backgrounds to access HE, despite the emphasis on the importance of working hard to achieve (Manstead, 2018).

The selective nature of HE involves educational and economic requirements, such as admission fees and grades to gain entry, which gives universities a high-status context (Manstead, 2018). The UK government and HE institutions have made efforts in changing policy and practice to enable 'non-traditional' learners to participate in HE (Thunborg et al., 2016). The term non-traditional learners refers to underrepresented groups in HE such as those who are the first in their family (FIF) to attend university, mature students and other differences relating to age, social class, ethnicity and gender (Thunborg et al., 2016). Those who are FIF to attend university are more likely to be from a LSES background, ethnically diverse, and mature students (Spiegler & Bednarek, 2013). Such factors are likely to intersect and impact significantly on their experiences (O'Shea, 2021).

Research often concludes that those from more privileged backgrounds are more likely to participate and attain higher in HE (Richardson et al., 2020), and recent reports suggest they are 60 percent more likely to obtain a professional occupation than those from LSES backgrounds (SMC, 2021). Research suggests that those from LSES backgrounds are more likely to finish school with lower levels of educational attainment (Lindner, 2020), and are underrepresented in HE (Chowdry et al., 2010). Children entitled to FSM are among the least likely to participate in HE (Harrison & Hatt, 2010). Verified information on previous FSM eligibility is not made available to universities (Jerrim, 2021) which Lindner's (2020) report suggests is salient to gaining a true picture of the representation of those from LSES backgrounds, as this is a relatively hidden disadvantage.

The Social Mobility Commission (2021) reported that every measure of social mobility across the UK were poor in 2019, and suggested that the pandemic is likely to increase the likelihood of measures such as income inequality, unemployment, access to stable housing and gaps in school attainment getting worse. This supports Mills' (2021) assertion that inequity of outcomes is likely to continue for those from LSES backgrounds without systemic change.

Psychological theories and models related to SES

The concept of SES can be illustrated with Bourdieu's (1967; 1986; 2000) notions of field, habitus and capital. Bourdieu (1967; 1986, 2000) suggests that individuals have various levels of different types of capital:

- Economic (material resources),
- Social (networks and knowledge),
- Cultural (knowledge and credentials) and
- Symbolic (reputation and respect).

These capitals equip people with set of basic dispositions, which Bourdieu (1967) coined as 'habitus'. Patterns of beliefs, taste and behaviour are thought to be shared with people of similar habitus (Bourdieu, 1967) which can be applied to SES, assuming that people with similar levels of capital within the same field share a similar habitus. This is relevant to the current study as highlighted by O'Shea (2021), "HE is a stratified system that relies on a hidden recognition of similar capitals and habitus" (p. 71).

Bourdieu's concept of habitus has been criticised for its deterministic nature and the suggesting that individuals have a lack of agency and therefore low potential to change (O'Shea, 2021). Although habitus is developed from childhood and is informed by early socialisation, it is not rigid (Bourdieu, 1986). A person's habitus is develops based on interactions or encounters with social fields, and educational socialisation can result in an adapted and cultured habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1986) suggested that levels of cultural capital differ between social classes based on the diversity of their experiences.

In hand with the concept of SES, Urie Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bio-ecological model highlights the relationships between environmental systems and the impact on an individual's development. This theory was first developed in 1974 and is known in an earlier form as the ecological model (1979). Bronfenbrenner revised his ecological theory to highlight the importance of proximal processes, the regular reciprocal interactions between the individual and the objects, people and symbols in the environments around them, calling them "the engines of development" (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000, p. 118). Following this revision, the bioecological model was created (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Bronfenbrenner (2005) outlined the multiple systems which interact:

- The microsystem is the immediate environment in which an individual lives and people they regularly interact with, including family, peers and teachers.
- The mesosystem refers to the relationships and interactions between those within the microsystem, such as the individual and their parents.

- The exosystem outlines the link between the individual and their wider social settings and services around them, such as their neighbours and community services, parent/ carer(s) place of employment and mass media. Interactions at this level are often indirect.
- The macrosystem concerns the broader social, cultural, and political context which indirectly influences and impacts an individual.
- The chronosystem refers to the changes and consistencies in experiences of the individual over time (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

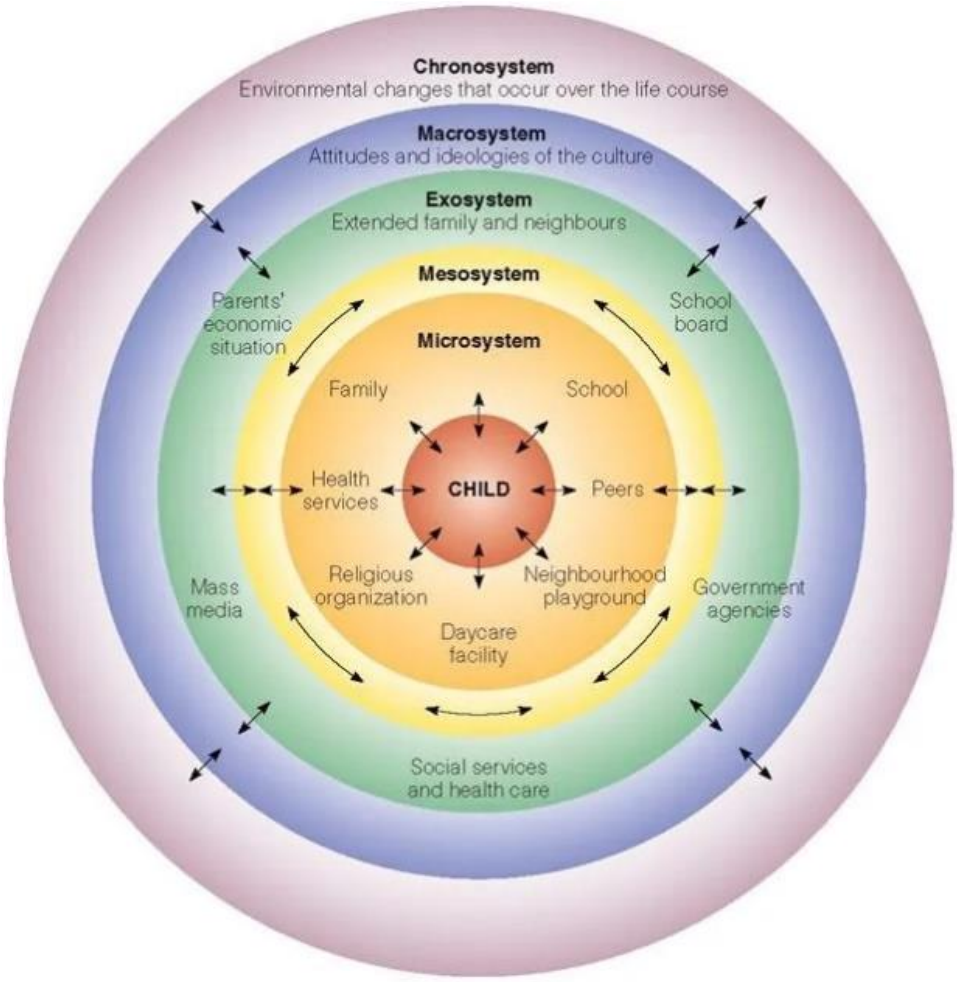

Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model (Guy-Evans, 2020).

In consideration of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) model, the experiences of individuals who have grown up in a LSES macrosystem can be considered in relation to the mesosystemic relationships between parental occupation, neighbourhood, peers, availability of opportunities in local area, and consideration of the impact of these environmental factors on the individual.

In the context of the current study, the chronosystem can be considered in terms of the changes in an individual over the period they attend HE.

A psychological theory often presented to illustrate the impact of LSES is Maslow's (1943; 1970) hierarchy of needs. Maslow (1943; 1970) asserted that psychological and basic needs such as food and drink, shelter and security should be met for a person to be able to achieve their potential. Maslow's (1943) theory of motivation has been applied to educational environments with the emphasis on the importance of a person having their basic needs met, feeling safe and as though they belong in order to be ready to learn. This is relevant considering that those from LSES backgrounds often experience inequity in areas such as health and personal security (Mills, 2021) and food bank use has increased in the last five years, with 1 in 5 people in poverty in the UK experience food insecurity (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2022). These facts suggest that those from a LSES may not always have their basic needs met, which may impact their ability to achieve.

Another psychological theory which is relevant to this study is Rotter's (1954) concept of locus of control, which refers to a person's beliefs about the causes of events in their lives. Rotter (1954) outlined that an individual may either attribute events in their life as controlled by external forces, referred to as having an external locus of control, or believes that they are in control of their own destiny, and possesses an internal locus of control. Previous research suggests that young people from LSES backgrounds tend to demonstrate an external locus of control, which often leads to poorer educational outcomes (Shifrer, 2018). Shifrer's (2018) findings suggested that those from higher SES demonstrated an internal locus of control more often due to increased resources such as attending more prestigious and safe schools as well as access to professional networks.

Measuring disadvantage

There are several objective methods of measuring disadvantage. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this article to explore every existing measure, a few will be briefly outlined.

The Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) measure (Office for Students, 2021) classifies local areas or 'wards' into five groups based on the proportion of 18-year-olds who enter higher education aged 18 or 19 years old. These groups range from quintile 1 areas, with the lowest young participation (most disadvantaged), up to quintile 5 areas with the highest rates (least disadvantaged). POLAR data shows that the proportion of students in HE from state funded schools or colleges has remained constant since 2016, although the proportion of

undergraduate students from low participation neighbourhoods has increased by 1% since 2019 (HESA, 2022). Although useful to explore participation rates, the POLAR measure has been criticised for not considering relative deprivation (Jerrim, 2021).

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) takes relative deprivation into account and ranks smaller localised areas (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015). Seven domains of deprivation are used in the IMD: income and employment deprivation, education and training deprivation, health deprivation and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment deprivation (Smith et al., 2015). The IMD uses the information from the seven domains of relative deprivation to rank every small area from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area) (Smith et al., 2015). This information is used to describe how relatively deprived a small area is by saying whether it falls among the most deprived 10 per cent, 20 per cent or 30 per cent of small areas in England (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015). Recent IMD measures indicate those from the most deprived areas are still attending university in significantly smaller numbers than those from least deprived areas (HESA, 2022).

Whilst the POLAR and IMD measures can be deemed as useful, they are biased against ethnic minorities, those from single parent families and those who rent their properties (Jerrim, 2021). Alternative measures exist, such as the highly localised Acorn measure (Consolidated Analysis Centers, Inc., 2014). The Acorn measure is a geodemographic measure of the UK population which organises postcodes and neighbourhoods into 6 categories, 18 groups and 62 types by using information such as social factors and demographic data (CACI, 2014). The Acorn measure is comparable across the UK, however it is not free to use and the methodology is not widely available (Jerrim, 2021).

Widening participation to undergraduate education

The UK Government have committed to prioritising social mobility (Social Mobility Commission, 2021). The SMC (2021) highlight the importance of tackling the high rates of child poverty to enable progress, and ensuring priority is given to investing in infrastructure to address geographical inequalities. There has been a sustained public policy interest in reducing inequalities associated with LSES by increasing their access to, and participation in, HE (Burnell, 2015; Social Mobility Commission, 2021).

Widening Participation (WP) efforts aim to increase accessibility to education to include low-participation groups (Burnell, 2015). The assumption of WP is that if participation rates

increase across the whole population, young people (YP) from low-participation groups will be drawn into the system, and therefore equality of opportunity will increase (Thompson, 2019).

Although SM remains stagnant due to continuing inequalities in educational opportunity (Berrington et al., 2016), there has been an increase in students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds, including LSES backgrounds, accessing HE (HESA, 2022). Increased participation has also been stimulated by a lack of alternatives for YP of minimum school-leaving age, as they are less likely to have qualifications or skills valued by employers, and therefore have a limited choice of occupations (Thompson, 2019).

Criticisms of Widening Participation

Efforts to widen participation have been criticised for holding assumptions about the nature of educational inequalities (Donnelly & Evans, 2019). WP policies have been criticised for the emphasis on increasing aspirations among YP from LSES, as research has suggested that aspirations are high, however more YP aspire to attend university than ultimately end up accessing HE (Berrington et al., 2016).

Research into graduate outcomes has been dominated by a focus on quantifiable measures such as income and occupation following graduation (Christie et al., 2018). Although a wealth of research exists, it often overlooks issues beyond WP to HE, such as Roberts' (2011) research, and neglects to focus on exploring the experiences of academics, particularly doctoral students (Sverdlik et al., 2018). Exploring the experiences of LSES students whilst in HE may be just as crucial to improving the participation of LSES students as HE policies, admissions, and marketing activities, but are often ignored (Brook & Michell, 2012).

Within a neo-liberal field, WP policies position the student as being in control of and responsible for their own achievement and academic success (O'Shea, 2021). This neglects to recognise the impact of the systems in which those from LSES grow up in, and the impact of socio-economic disadvantage (Mills, 2021).

Data on attrition rates in HE published by the Higher Education Policy Institute suggest those who are from black and minority ethnicities, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have to commute long distances are among the most likely to withdraw from university (Hillman, 2021). This statement is based on undergraduate students, and suggests that when one experiences a disadvantage, it can intersect with the aforementioned factors (Hillman, 2021). This may be due, in part, to the fact that WP efforts focus on increasing participation for more diverse population of students into an unchanged HE (Christie et al., 2018).

Hillman's (2021) report suggests that universities should ensure that students have a sense of belonging, as this may be helpful to reduce rates of withdrawal. The importance of belonging has long been discussed within psychological literature, notably as a basic human need on the third level of Maslow's (1943;1970) hierarchy of needs. The need to belong has been described as "a powerful fundamental, and extremely pervasive motivation" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p.497). Belonging is constructed and maintained through action and interactions and facilitates feelings on inclusion or exclusion (Antonsich, 2010). Starting a new course involves settling in, making connections, and developing a new identity as a learner, all of which are key to establishing a sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010).

An overly positive assumption of WP policies is that once individuals access HE, they will experience SM (Reay, 2019). Research suggests this is not straightforward and equitable for everybody, as there are a multitude of barriers to participation in HE, such as SES background, age, gender, geographical location, and family circumstances (Mullen, 2010). YP from LSES backgrounds are likely to be confronted with their disadvantages upon access to HE due to lack of access to privileged social networks (Bathmaker et al., 2013). This raises important considerations for students from LSES backgrounds, who may arrive with different beliefs and experiences to peers with higher economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1967). Individuals who experience upward SM often struggle with hysteresis; a term coined by Bourdieu (2000) to describe the experience of their habitus being at odds with the environment around them. SM often means that those from LSES access environments, or fields (Bourdieu, 1986), struggle to adapt their behaviours where their social, economic and cultural capital is viewed as inferior (Exley, 2019), such as in HE.

Success of WP is often measured by numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds enrolled into university, of which there has been an overall rise in recent years (HESA, 2022). However, statistics show efforts to improve inclusion to, and diversity among, HE has centred around undergraduate level and neglected postgraduate education (Lindner, 2020).

Widening participation to postgraduate education

As access to HE has widened, overall qualification levels have increased and so has competition for sought after occupations, which means postgraduate qualifications have become desirable (Wakeling & Mateos-González, 2021). Calls for WP to extend into postgraduate (PG) education have been raised since 2010 (Wakeling & Kyriacou, 2010). Mullen (2010) highlighted the need for exploration of the factors affecting access, and whether social or financial factors are dominant issues.

McCulloch and Thomas' (2013) review of WP to PG education in the UK raised the need for research on how different backgrounds affect student experiences. More recently, organisations such as the Sutton Trust have advocated for WP efforts to be extended to postgraduate education (Wakeling & Mateos-González, 2021). The University of Central London have explored the issue in increasing equality, diversity and inclusion for their PG research students and found that although diversity is increasing at undergraduate and master's level, this change is not yet reflected for PG doctoral research students (Lindner, 2020). Lindner's (2020) report also showed that lack of diversity at doctoral study leads to a less diverse teaching staff, which may impact feelings of belonging for the whole student community. This circular causality may perpetuate the lack of diversity, and is important to address (Lindner, 2020).

Research exploring existing data on HE graduates has shown that graduates from LSES backgrounds are less likely to progress to postgraduate education than those from a higher SES, even when attainment and type of school is controlled for (Wakeling & Mateos-González, 2021). It can be suggested that a rise in tuition fees and general cost of living may be a reason for this, particularly for those from a LSES (Boliver, 2018).

The recent introduction of postgraduate student loans had a positive impact on access (Wakeling & Mateos-González, 2021). However, The Sutton Trust raise the fact that the loans do not cover the full cost of living as a full-time postgraduate student, and suggested that disadvantaged students may be "priced out" (Wakeling & Mateos-González, 2021, p. 64) of PG study at higher-status universities. In support of this, Lindner (2020) suggests that students from LSES may be averse to accumulating additional debt due to their lack of a financial "safety net" (p.27), which may discourage them to access postgraduate study. A lack of financial support and family history of HE can influence confidence and ability to engage at doctoral level, both factors lack visibility which means they may be unintentionally overlooked (Lindner, 2020).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is "the connected nature of social categories such as race, class, or gender that create overlapping systems of disadvantage" (Mills, 2021, p. 9). A person's SES should be considered in conjunction with other demographic variables such as age, regionality, gender and race (Mills, 2021; Rubin et al., 2014). Race, ethnicity, gender identity or sex and disability are key factors which affect a person's ability to access postgraduate education, however these factors are exacerbated by being from a LSES, which has received less attention in the literature (Lindner, 2020).

The Social GGRRAAACCEEESSS model was jointly developed by Burnham (1993) and Roper-Hall (1998) and describes differences which may form part of a person's identity and construction of experiences (Burnham, 2018). Individuals can experience multiple layers of difference, which can affect their levels of privilege and therefore their experiences (Burnham, 2018); this can be applied to higher education and professional occupations. The list of current differences can be seen below in Figure 3.

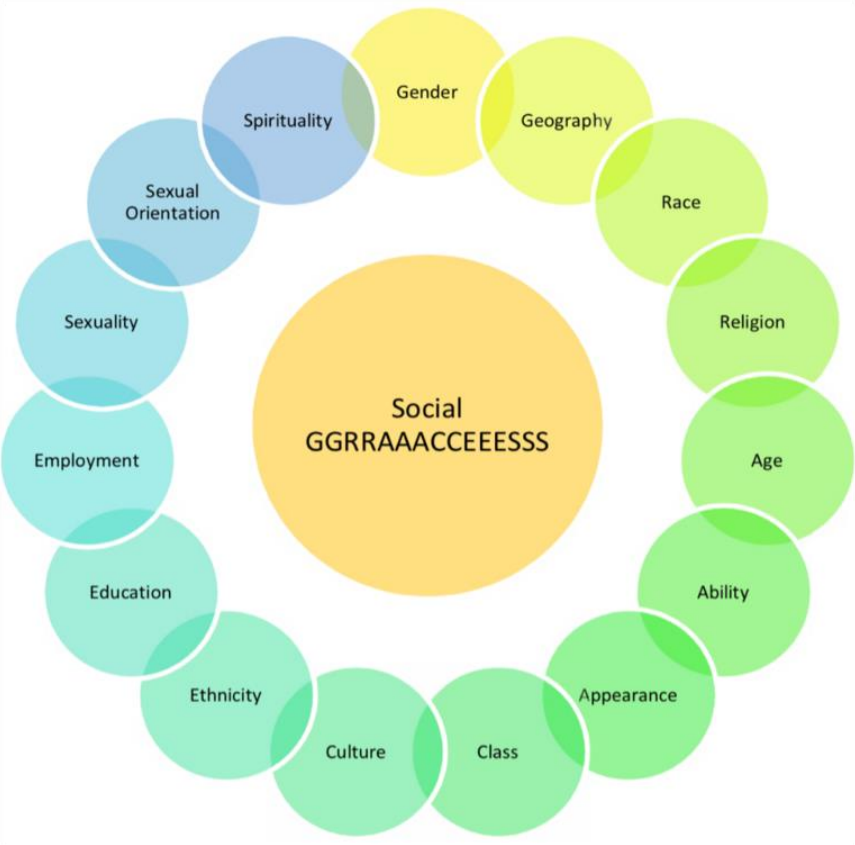

Figure 3: Burnham's (2012) Social Graces (Soni et al., 2021).

This tool has been utilised by practitioner psychologists in family therapy (Burnham, 2018) and more recently used to prompt reflective activities in EP practice in transcultural supervision (Soni et al., 2021; Totsuka, 2014). This model highlights the importance of considering the impact of LSES in the context of other areas of difference to understand how an individual constructs their experiences (Burnham, 2018).

A review of literature from Richardson et al. (2020) pertaining to the impact of gender, social class, and ethnicity on participation attainment in HE found persistent inequalities in all aforementioned areas. Studies included within the review suggest that middle class females from ethnic minority backgrounds show the highest participation rate in HE, whereas the lowest participation rate exists amongst white working-class males (Richardson et al., 2020). Due to the method used, these statistics illustrate the issues of diversity within HE, but do not give an explanation.

Although important to contextualise information, both aforementioned studies focussed on data on taught masters and postgraduate research degrees, and there are no data included for taught doctoral degrees. This limits generalisability to the doctorate in educational psychology. Wakeling and Mateos-González's (2021) research offers a snapshot insight focussed on graduates who continued to postgraduate study immediately following their undergraduate courses, so many students are likely to be missing from this data, such as those who left HE and returned after a period of employment. Further, it is not known whether graduates from LSES applied and were rejected or unable to enrol or applied to postgraduate study in the first instance (Wakeling & Mateos-González, 2021).

Relevance to the EP profession and practice

To introduce the study relevance to educational psychologists (EPs), it is first important to outline the role and responsibilities of EPs in the UK.

The role of EPs in the UK

EPs work holistically in consultation with children, young people (CYP), their families and professionals to promote inclusive approaches to support the development, emotional wellbeing, and learning of CYP between 0 and 25 years old (AEP, n.d.; Lyonette et al., 2019). EPs work in an evidence-based, person-centred way in collaboration with multiple agencies with the goal of facilitating inclusion for CYP in schools (Welsh Government, 2016). EPs also have a key role in training the wider workforce (Lyonette et al., 2019). The foundation of EP work is "to

promote improved outcomes for all service users taking account of their context and needs" (British Psychological Society, 2019 p. 8).

In England EPs have a key role in identifying special educational needs (SEN) and providing a statutory contribution to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans for CYP (Lyonette et al., 2019). In Wales, EPs have a role within the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) in contributing to Individual Development Plans (IDPs), which replace statements of SEN under the new Act (ALNET, 2018). EPs can support schools to identify a CYP's additional learning need(s) and/ or the additional learning provision, or step in if the parent(s)/ carer(s) or pupil disagrees with the IDP written by school (ALNET, 2018). EPs draw on a range of skills such as Rogerian principles (Rogers, 1951) to build trust and rapport with CYP and their families and consider how their individual contexts impact on development.

Relevance of LSES to the EP profession

There are various objective measures based on income, occupation, education level and material possessions which are often used to establish SES (Rubin et al., 2014). Although there are difficulties with such measures, including the challenge of comparing them to population-based standards which are controversial and outdated quickly (Jerrim, 2021; Rubin et al., 2014). Entitlement to FSM whilst at school is often used as a proxy measure for LSES (Taylor, 2018). Hobbs and Vignoles (2010) suggest researchers should be cautious in drawing inferences from research reliant on this measure, as eligibility for FSM is an imperfect indicator of low income or disadvantage. Reasons for this include that not all parents of children who are eligible for FSM apply to access FSM, and the criteria for entitlement may not capture all children living in poverty (Taylor, 2018). Further, children who access FSM may not always be from the poorest families once benefits are considered (Hobbs & Vignoles, 2010). In contrast, a recent report from The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2022) argues that families receiving certain benefits have very high levels of poverty, as the rate of out-of-work benefits is at its lowest for 30 years at a time of high inflation. Jerrim (2021) argues that the length of time a child is eligible for FSM is the best indicator of childhood poverty, and has fewer biases than other measures, such as recognising single parent families and those who rent their properties. The ease of collecting FSM data and relatively stable criteria for accessing FSM over time has meant that new measures of SES have not been developed (Taylor, 2018).

According to recent statistics, pupils with learning needs are more likely to be eligible for FSM (ONS, 2021a). Additional research from the Department for Education (2021) suggests that children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience additional challenges, which can impact on their ability to achieve their potential in school. This suggests that EPs are likely to work with and support many CYP and families from LSES backgrounds.

Legislation and statutory guidance

In line with the Equality Act (2010) it is illegal to discriminate against someone because of a protected characteristic. There are nine protected characteristics: age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, national, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It is of note that SES is not listed as a protected characteristic. In Wales, the Socio-economic Duty came into force in March 2021 which requires public bodies to consider how their decisions may help to reduce inequalities associated with SES disadvantage (Mills, 2021). As most EPs work within local authorities (AEP, 2021b), they are required to adhere to this Duty in Wales.

EPs are required by law to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), which is the statutory regulatory body for all UK practitioner psychologists. The HCPC's (2015) Standards of Proficiency state that psychologists have a professional duty to understand and address power imbalances with the individuals and groups whom they work with; and to support service users to understand factors which influence development. EPs also have a professional responsibility to promote equality and address stigma and discrimination to facilitate social inclusion (British Psychological Society, 2017). EPs are well placed to promote social justice and raise awareness through individual and systemic work in schools (Power, 2008). The British Psychological Society (BPS, 2019) highlight the importance of EPs practising in a way that is culturally competent, which requires awareness and understanding of diverse communities (BPS, 2019).

Training to become an EP in the UK

The three-year doctoral training route was introduced in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2006 (Frederikson, 2013). Prior to 2006, EPs trained via a one-year master's in educational psychology with the pre-requisite of being a qualified teacher for two years (Frederikson, 2013). There was much debate throughout the 1990s and multiple papers raised the need for the training to be restructured and extended to a three-year doctorate, in line with the clinical psychology profession (Evans et al., 2012). An optional four-year part time doctorate was offered to qualified EPs as continuing professional development in 1999, before EP training was officially extended and restructured to a three-year doctoral programme in 2006 (Frederikson, 2013).

The doctoral training course includes university-based sessions and practical placements within local authorities (LAs) or other organisations (AEP, n.d.). To apply individuals must have a

psychology degree of upper second class or higher, or have completed an approved psychology conversion course or psychology master's degree eligible for the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership with the British Psychological Society (BPS). A teaching qualification is no longer compulsory, instead candidates need a minimum of one-year full time experience working with CYP in education, health, social care or childcare settings (AEP 2021; Frederickson, 2013). An implication of this is that trainees might enter the EP profession without direct experience of working within education systems or EP services, in comparison to their peers.

At the time of writing, there are 13 universities in England offering a total of 203 funded places per year (AEP, 2021a). Queen's University Belfast is the only provider of the EP doctorate in Northern Ireland (Queen's University Belfast, n.d.) and Cardiff University is the only provider of the doctorate in educational psychology in Wales, with 10 places funded by the Welsh Government (Cardiff University, n.d.). Training requirements differ in Scotland, where trainee EPs (TEPs) are required to complete a two-year full-time master's in educational psychology, and a one year supervised probationary period (University of Dundee, n.d.). There is only one training course in Scotland at the University of Dundee. EPs from Scotland were not included within this research due to the difference in training route, but this presents as an interesting area of future study.

Financial implications for training

Trainee EPs are currently paid a bursary throughout their three years of training (AEP, 2021a). There is a discrepancy between the bursary for a TEP in Wales (£12,600) (edpsy.org, 2021), Northern Ireland (£15,700) and England (£15,950, London weighting £16,390), (AEP, 2021a). Unlike the previous one-year master's training route, the doctorate is a three-year commitment, and it is important to consider the financial implications for those wanting to pursue a career in educational psychology.

There is an expectation that those applying to train to become an EP can drive and have access to their own car, a requirement which has been written about in the grey literature (Singer, 2021). Writing for The Psychologist magazine, Singer (2021) raised the implications of such a requirement and the consideration that it is disadvantaging those who cannot drive due to a disability. Singer (2021) also argued that there is inequity due to geographical locations of some universities and their trainees, which may mean that some do not have to drive, and others may have lengthy commutes. Singer (2021) was writing with reference to clinical psychology, however this can be applied to educational psychology where the same expectation exists. Considering the previous point about the relatively low bursary and the rising cost of living (Institute for Government, 2022), such a requirement also has important financial implications, particularly for those from a LSES. An implication of this is that rural LAs are less likely to host

TEPs on placement; and often struggle to fill vacancies as TEPs are less likely to choose remote or rural locations due to cost implications (Lyonette et al., 2019).

Applications to the doctorate

Despite all the aforementioned factors, there are still relatively high numbers of applications to train to be an EP (AEP, 2021a), and it is highly competitive to get onto doctoral training courses. Statistics available for applications in England indicate that all courses are over-subscribed, with 1169 applicants for 203 places in 2021 (AEP, 2021a). Demographic data available on applicants to the EP doctorate in universities in England indicate that of those who chose to declare their details from 2016-2020, most applicants were white, heterosexual females between the ages of 20-29 with no dependents who did not consider themselves to have a disability (AEP, 2021b). No research is currently available which searches for possible reasons for the lack of diversity in applications for the doctorate.

The information on applicants to the EP doctorate in England published by the AEP (2021a) did not include information about the backgrounds of applicants in terms of socioeconomic status. At the time of writing, there was no published data available for applications to train on the EP doctorate in Wales or Northern Ireland.

Educational psychology as a "middle-class" profession

At the time of writing, scale point one of the Soulbury pay scale is £38,865 (The Soulbury Committee, 2021). This salary is higher than the latest statistics available for the UK average yearly salary, which is currently £31,285 (ONS, 2021b). This suggests that upon qualifying, EPs are amongst professional occupations who can be perceived as being of a middle-class profession (Lissack, 2020). This has implications in terms of Bourdieusian principles of financial and social capital and habitus (Bourdieu, 1977; 1986), for those from LSES backgrounds which may present as mismatched both on entry to EP training and whilst practicing in the profession.

Experiences of trainee EPs

A review of research on social justice in educational psychology by Schulze et al. (2017) found that when trainees experience difference in gender, sexuality, social class and race they often have inequitable experiences to those who do not and demonstrated the importance of teaching social justice on training courses. The review also highlighted the importance of awareness, culturally competent practice, fairness and equality, advocacy and addressing discrimination in the practice of school psychologists (Schulze et al., 2017). Schulze and colleagues' (2017) review

was based on studies with trainee and qualified school psychologists in America, where the role differs in many ways to EPs who practice in the UK. Despite this, the highlighted need for research on the significance of social justice in educational psychology is also a relevant call for researchers in the UK.

Research available on TEP experiences such as Mc Laughlin's (2020) doctoral thesis, has explored personal and professional change and provided salient implications for training institutions and the profession alike. Several other national and international doctoral theses have explored course content, relationships, and impact of professional supervision on feelings of belonging (Heaney, 2010; Shaldon, 2015) and experiences of being employed by an academy (Vallily, 2014). Although useful to explore TEPs' experiences, none of the studies focussed specifically on TEPs from a LSES. Brook and Michell (2012) assert that the lack of research on accounts of academics from LSES backgrounds may be due to the poorly understood relationship between education, knowledge and class, and emphasise the importance of understanding this relationship to be able to effect change.

Equality and diversity: a hot topic

Despite the scarcity of research available on the experiences of EPs from LSES, the subject is topical within psychology professions. The Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) website offers a collection of material on equality and diversity on (AEP, 2021b) and the British Psychological Society (BPS) have been running the "From Poverty to Flourishing" campaign since 2019 (BPS, 2019b). Individual universities such as the University College London (UCL) have recently hosted a leading-edge day on the subject of CYP growing up in poverty and discussed implications for EPs (UCL, 2022).

The agenda for exploring class-based inequalities is topical within broader psychology disciplines, as illustrated by a tweet by the Psychologist magazine (2022) in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Tweet from The Psychologist (2022)

In clinical psychology (CP), researchers have drawn attention to the disproportionate and over representation of white and female trainee clinical psychologists (Wood & Patel, 2017).

Research focussing on the 'whiteness' of clinical psychology has highlighted the importance of exploring and understanding the experiences of CPs from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds (Shah, 2012). Findings have raised the cognitive dissonance individuals experience in terms of navigating their personal and professional identities (Adetimole et al., 2005) and reluctance to raise the lack of cultural diversity in teaching for fear of being perceived negatively (Rajan & Shaw, 2008). Shan's (2012) research with BME trainee CPs highlighted important implications for ensuring course tutors are trained on and teaching about social disadvantage, privilege, and the impact of racism. The CP training course in the University of East London has integrated teaching workshops for their trainees on 'whiteness' and decolonising the profession in response to these concerns (Wood & Patel, 2017).

Diversity within EP profession: insights from recent data

Although no qualitative explorations of this topic are currently available, there have been several workforce surveys of EPs and wider psychology professions.

A report on insights into participation, progression, and diversity in career routes of psychology graduates concluded there is a lack of diversity within the broader psychological workforce in the UK (Palmer et al., 2021). Palmer et al. (2021) also raised the importance of understanding the role that demographics play in career routes of graduates.

A survey of HCPC registrants was undertaken using parental attainment and type of school attended to indicate SES (HCPC, 2021). The survey showed that 78 percent of practitioner psychologists who responded went to a state run or funded school and 56 percent did not have a parent educated to degree level or higher (HCPC, 2021). This indicates there may be a proportion of EPs who come from LSES backgrounds, although the measurement of LSES from these variables have been questioned (Jerrim, 2021). The respondents to this survey represented only 18 percent of total HCPC registrants (HCPC, 2021) and cannot be determined as conclusive for all practitioner psychologists.

The demand for EPs continues to be greater than the number of EPs trained each year, with many LAs in the UK reporting consistent shortages (Lyonette et al., 2019). In 2018, a survey of the EP workforce in Wales found that 84 percent of EPs were female, and 23 percent were over 55 years old, although no information was reported for SES background (Welsh Government, 2018). However, not every EP in Wales participated in this survey, and there was no data collected for TEPs.

The AEP (2021b) published a survey completed by 894 members including TEPs on equality, diversity, and inclusion issues within the EP profession. Respondents were asked about their

work location and professional position, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and gender; whether they were in receipt of FSM when they were at school, and what type of school setting they attended (AEP, 2021b). Findings indicated that most respondents:

- Were white
- Were heterosexual
- Were Female
- Were aged between 35-44 years old,
- Worked as qualified main grade EPs in England,
- Held no religion or belief
- Did not consider themselves to have a disability,
- Attended a non-selective state school and
- Were not in receipt of FSM at any time (AEP, 2021b).

This profile of applicant aligns with data available on applicants to the doctorate (AEP, 2021a). Although the data provide interesting insights, it is important to note that 894 members represent approximately 25 percent of the total members of the AEP, which account for 77.5 percent of the total number of EPs registered with the HCPC, therefore should be generalised with caution (AEP, 2021b). Rhodes (2021) highlights the importance of ensuring the psychology workforce is as varied in terms of demographics as the population they work with, and data does suggest a need for increasing diversity of EPs (AEP, 2021b).

The response rates of surveys mentioned highlight the difficulty with gathering demographic data via surveys, and although positivist approaches provide interesting data, they do not explore the reasons for the findings, which highlights the importance of qualitative research exploring experiences of such individuals (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The apparent lack of diversity may be due to systematic disadvantage preventing access to the profession, such as disparities in educational attainment, financial barriers of getting onto a doctoral course and lack of access to network opportunities (Rhodes, 2021). EPs have a professional duty to understand and address power imbalances with the groups and individuals whom they work with (HCPC, 2015), and it is important to consider this in terms of colleagues within the profession.

A recent blog post by Lissack (2020) highlights the impact of a person's socioeconomic background and upbringing on their identity, and the challenge of working within a predominantly middle-class profession. This remains a relatively unexplored area of research in terms of the practitioner psychologist workforce (Lindner, 2020). Available data on the EP workforce does not specifically detail the SES backgrounds of EPs prior to qualifying as an EP,

however most responses to the AEP (2021) survey indicated that they were not in receipt of FSM at any time, which is a measure used to determine LSES (Jerrim, 2021).

Summary

- Coming from a LSES background is associated with increased likelihood of negative outcomes (Mills, 2021).
- HE is positioned as a significant driver of SM (Crawford & Van Der Erve, 2015; Donnelly & Evans, 2019) and efforts to WP and research have focussed on getting more young people from low-participation areas into HE but not considered the experiences and impact of areas of difference, such as LSES.
- Research into graduate outcomes has been dominated by a focus on quantifiable measures (Christie et al., 2018) and often overlooks issues beyond WP to HE (Roberts, 2011). The experiences of individuals are often negated to be explored, particularly doctoral students (Sverdlik et al., 2018).
- EPs work with CYP with learning needs (Lyonette et al., 2019), those who access FSM are more likely to have additional learning needs (ONS, 2021a); and those who access FSM are more likely to be from a LSES (Jerrim, 2021). Therefore, EPs likely to work with families from a LSES.
- EP workforce surveys suggest a lack of diversity within the profession, although limitations to this data exist, they raise the importance of addressing the lack of diversity within the profession.
- Although equality and diversity is topical within the wider psychological community, there is a lack of qualitative research in this area.
- Experiences of EPs doctoral training have been explored via evaluation of specific areas such as teaching and learning and value of supervision whilst training. There exists a gap in the research to explore the experiences of EPs in training and practising with particular relevance to their socioeconomic status background.

In view of the context presented, a critical review of literature will now be outlined and discussed.

Part B: Critical review of available literature

Literature search strategy

A search for relevant literature exploring the question of *"What does existing research tell us about the experiences of EPs from LSES backgrounds in training and practising within the profession?"* was undertaken in September 2021, however there were no existing research within this specific area. The question was then broadened to *"What does the existing literature say about the experiences of individuals from LSES backgrounds who access higher education or practice within psychology professions?"* The literature included in this review was obtained using electronic databases between September 2021 and January 2022 including British Education Index (BEI), Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts (ASSIA) all of which were chosen due to their coverage of social sciences, psychology, and education papers. Synonyms and variations of the key search terms were used such as "Education* psycholog*"; "trainee education* psycholog*"; "low socioeconomic"; "doctora* education" and "profession*". The Boolean operator "AND" was used between key search term categories to ensure all search terms were found within the same paper. Journals were initially identified from the context of their titles to ensure relevance to the subject. The literature search process and search terms are detailed in Appendix A.

Hand searches of the grey literature were conducted between October 2021 and January 2022. Grey literature consists of materials produced outside of the traditional commercial or academic publishing networks including unpublished papers, theses and evaluations (Mahood, et al., 2014). Publications by the BPS such as The Psychologist magazine, as well as special interest texts relating to low SES backgrounds and higher education were also searched manually. Doctoral theses were searched on the Cardiff University ORCA and British library EThOS digital repositories. Additional references were gained through the process of 'pearl growing' or 'snowballing' (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), whereby reference lists were searched to identify further relevant studies. Searches were replicated up to April 2022 to ensure that key articles were included as part of the literature review.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria for literature included in this study is presented below in Table 1.

Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Studies where included that were: • Published after 2006, as it was deemed necessary to explore studies undertaken within the time frame whereby the EP training changed from a master's to a doctorate (Frederickson, 2013). • Published in the English or Welsh language. • Peer reviewed. • Took a qualitative approach which captured the experiences of individuals from a LSES in higher education and/ or practicing in a psychology profession. • Literature pertaining to experience of training or practice within psychology professions. • Research from across the world was included, acknowledging the contextual differences and limitations of this.	Studies were therefore not included in the literature search if they were: • Published before 2006. • Published in a language other than English or Welsh. • Studies that did not capture the experiences of individuals from LSES in HE and professions.

Structure and transparency of reporting

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) model (Moher et al., 2009) was used to clearly illustrate the results obtained from the search, full details of which can be found in Appendix A.

A narrative review was completed to provide a broad review of literature in this area (Green et al., 2006) due to the scarcity of research exploring experiences of EPs from LSES backgrounds. Narrative reviews are preferred over systematic reviews for some topics as they can provide a more broad and flexible review of literature (Collins & Fauser, 2005).

Experiences of LSES individuals in HE

Research about the experiences of individuals from LSES backgrounds will now be discussed in relation to the themes identified in the findings. A full list of included studies can be found in Appendix B.

Personal agency and motivation

Raven (2018) suggested that there are several factors which influence a person's ability to access HE, including personal agency, resilience and determination in spite of challenging circumstances. A review of research by Jury et al. (2017) identified motivation to attend and access HE as a common psychological barrier faced by LSES students. However, Jury et al.'s (2017) review was focussed on reviewing literature exploring psychological barriers only, and therefore may have missed research which opposed this.

In contrast, Lehmann's (2014) findings suggested that experiences in LSES backgrounds provided motivation for wanting to attend HE. In support of this, students in another study reported their motivation was due to the desire to minimise the risk of unemployment or being worse off than their parents (Pásztor & Wakeling, 2018). Participants in O'Shea's (2016) study reported high aspirations because of their experiences in LSES, and stated that their motivation facilitated resilience to persist despite challenges in HE (O'Shea, 2016). LSES graduates of Pitman's (2013) research attributed their success in part to their own motivation and determination which they believe their backgrounds gifted them with. In support of this, those who had difficult experiences attributed their resilience to their backgrounds (O'Hara & Cook, 2018).

Informational capital and belonging

Despite having strong motivation to escape their backgrounds, individuals often experienced feelings of displacement in HE (Brook & Michell, 2012). Those who had to move to cities to attend universities reported this as a difficult aspect of accessing HE, especially those from rural areas (Brook & Michell, 2012). This sense of displacement within HE was not only experienced in the physical sense, Reay et al. (2010) and Reay's (2019) findings suggested that participants felt out of place socially. This was perpetuated by their feelings of being unable to talk about their families or life experience whilst at university (Brook & Michell, 2012). Crumb et al. (2020) found that participants appeared to be hyper-aware of their LSES in HE due to feeling different to more privileged peers. Participants in Crumb et al.'s (2020) study reported feeling as though they had been overlooked for professional opportunities such as speaking at conferences due to their backgrounds.

Lessky and colleagues (2021) highlighted the importance of peer networks, both in terms of access to informational capital and facilitating feelings of belonging for FIF students (Lessky et al., 2021). Lessky and colleagues (2021) outlined informational capital as a combination of cultural and social capital. In support of this, Lehmann's (2014) participants reported increased personal growth and cultural capital after being exposed to more diverse experiences at university.

Students in Lessky and colleagues' (2021) research reported feelings of belonging were negatively impacted by institutional practices and the unspoken nature of some rules and information. O'Shea (2016) reported similar findings, where participants felt overwhelmed because of the unfamiliarity of university life. These findings highlight the importance of offering support to those new to HE and making rules and information explicit and readily available. In support of the salience of informational capital, participants of Roberts' (2011) focus group felt they lacked convertible social and cultural capital, which led to them considering withdrawal from their courses.

Students from a LSES who attend elite universities have reported feeling exposed regarding their lack of cultural and social capital (O' Shea, 2021; Reay, 2019). Reay's (2019) participants described feeling like "academic insiders" and "social outsiders" (p.59) due to the perceived exclusivity of the social groups and activities at university. Reay (2019) suggested that those who were high achievers prior to entering an elite university struggled with being around more confident students from privileged backgrounds, which led them to prioritise academic achievement to help them to fit in.

Lessky and colleagues' (2021) research suggested the need for greater careers support in schools prior to university to equip students with information prior to attending HE. Lessky and colleagues (2021) also suggested peer mentoring for FIF students. In addition, O'Shea (2016) and Reay (2019) concluded that there is a need for upper-class peers, colleagues, tutors and universities to consider how they can change practice to facilitate a sense of belonging for LSES and FIF students.

Identity and fitting in socially

Due to the small number of students from LSES backgrounds attending elite universities, LSES students face considerable identity work alongside academic challenge (Crozier et al., 2019). There is a common misconception within the literature in this area that those from LSES backgrounds experience easy transitions to HE (Reay, 2019) and automatically become middle-class upon completion of their studies (Brook & Michell, 2012). Brook and Michell (2012) suggest that this process over-simplifies the nuance that comes with such upward mobility, and

HE is transformative for those from LSES backgrounds. Brook and Michell (2012) concluded that experiences of upward social mobility are not straightforward and were a source of "comfort and conflict" (p. 590) for participants. Similarly, findings from Reay et al. (2010) suggested that students studying at more elite universities had the most tension between fitting in and standing out and felt more challenged by their LSES identity. In further exploration of data from the same study, Crozier and colleagues (2019) suggested that students across three different institutions reported their identities were challenged by others, or their own perceptions of how others see them in a negative way. There was a tension between "assimilation and belonging" and "betrayal and exclusion" (p. 922) for students in Crozier et al.'s (2019) research, who developed hybrid identities to enable themselves to fit in in different contexts.

Further support for the aforementioned studies comes from Lehmann's (2014) research with LSES students who had positive experiences at HE. Lehmann (2014) highlighted experiences of transformation at HE which impacted participants' personal identities. Lehmann (2014) discussed the conflict this transformation of habitus caused for participants, who reported growing apart from or leaving behind old friendships and difficulties relating to family members. Lehmann's (2014) findings illustrate that even for those who were successful in HE academically and socially, there still existed a sense of unease at being "caught between two worlds" (p. 12). Some participants spoke of trying to fit in and noticing a transformation of their habitus towards a more middle-class way of being in their final year, and their internal struggle of having "allegiances to and dismissal of their working-class roots" (Lehmann, 2014, p. 12). FIF participants in O'Shea's (2021) research also reported feeling the need to change their identities and beliefs to fit into their new environment. These findings support that of Jury et al. (2017) whose review of literature identified identity management as a key psychological barrier faced by those from LSES in HE. These findings can be understood in terms of Bourdieu's (2000) notion of hysteresis, whereby a person's habitus is not applicable to the environment around them.

O' Hara & Cook (2018) explored the experienced of 11 doctoral-level counselling students across the US who had experienced social class microaggressions (SCMs). SCMs can take the form of comments and assumptions about individuals' backgrounds and whether they have the experience, knowledge and understanding required within differing situations (O'Hara & Cook, 2018). Findings suggested that SCMs are observable and had emotional, relational, and cognitive significance for participants. Participants reported feeling marginalised from the policies and expectations of the university field, which were at odds in terms of their own

culture (O'Hara & Cook, 2018). Although SCMs are harmful, O'Hara and Cook (2018) suggested that they can facilitate development of resilience and growth to persist despite adversity.

Universities are often viewed as middle-class environments, particularly Russell Group and 'elite' institutions (Brook & Michell, 2012). This assumption along with the evidence presented provokes the consideration that there are grounds for such institutions to examine their practice in favour of becoming more accessible to those from less privileged backgrounds.

Self-efficacy, support, and resilience

Pásztor & Wakeling (2018) suggested that students from LSES backgrounds were disadvantaged in comparison with more privileged peers who had parents educated to postgraduate level in terms of support and familiarity with HE. However, experiences in LSES backgrounds and the personal and academic support systems around them have been reported to facilitate development of self-efficacy and resiliency which is helpful throughout postgraduate study (Crumb et al., 2020).

Several other studies with LSES and FIF students have highlighted the value and importance of family and friends providing practical and emotional support throughout university (O'Shea, 2016; Pitman, 2013). Participants in Raven's (2018) research emphasised the positive influence of parents, both in terms of witnessing their struggles and being motivated not to recreate this life for themselves as well as being encouraged to progress. Most students discussed the impact that particular teachers had on their decision to progress to university which helped to increase their aspirations and confidence (Raven, 2018). In support of Lessky and colleagues (2021) and O'Shea (2016), Pitman's (2013) findings imply importance of outreach at earlier stages to those who are less likely to access HE to facilitate gradual familiarisation with HE practices.

Participants' academic potential appeared to be confounded by their lack of resources such as support and money, and students from a LSES reported having to juggle work, family, and university (Reay et al., 2010). These results were mediated for those who were in universities with higher levels of support (Reay et al., 2010). These studies highlight the value and importance of support from personal and professional networks in facilitating development of self-efficacy and resilience for those from LSES attending HE.

Lack of financial security and managing a work-life balance

When asked about their motivation to attend HE, participants in Pitman's (2013) research highlighted the extrinsic motivation of bettering their financial situation beyond that of their parents'. Lack of finance has also been raised as negatively impacting students' experiences at

HE, with some participants of Roberts' (2011) research reporting a lack of financial stability contributing to their decisions to withdraw from university. Doctoral students from less privileged backgrounds have also reported disruptions to study caused by financial difficulties (Pásztor & Wakeling, 2018).

Non-traditional students in Taylor and House's (2010) research reported concerns relating to managing money, lack of finance and managing their work-life balance as a result of having to take on part-time jobs. A review of barriers for individuals from LSES to access HE by Jury et al. (2017) concluded that LSES students face more psychological and financial barriers than those from privileged backgrounds. However, findings from participants of Crumb et al. (2020) suggested that their strong work ethic facilitated the ability to work alongside their studies to support themselves financially.

Rationale for current study

The literature review set out to explore the question: "*What does the existing literature say about the experiences of individuals from LSES backgrounds who access higher education or practice within psychology professions?"* The research highlighted some important themes and considerations; however the researcher acknowledges the limitations of the studies.

One notable limitation is that there was no existing research on the experiences of those from LSES backgrounds within psychology professions present within the literature from the search. This highlights a gap in the research which has been raised as important to explore to understand inequalities and the lack of diversity which exists within psychology professions (Palmer et al, 2021).

The methods of studies varied and included qualitative online surveys (Taylor & House, 2010) and semi-structured interviews (including Crumb et al., 2020; Lessky et al., 2021; O'Hara & Cook, 2018; O'Shea, 2016; Pásztor & Wakeling, 2018), mixed methods quantitative surveys and interviews (Crozier et al., 2008; O'Shea, 2021; Reay, 2019) focus groups (Roberts, 2011) and life story work (Pitman, 2013; Raven, 2018). Some research made use of existing survey and interview data (O'Shea, 2021), and reviewed other literature in this area (Jury et al., 2017) as well as gathering autobiographical essays (Brook & Michell, 2012). Each method mentioned comes with their own limitations, and although methods varied, the synthesisation presented here suggests that common themes are prevalent amongst the research.

Articles from Reay et al. (2010); Reay (2019) and Crozier et al. (2019) were all derived from data gathered in Crozier et al.'s (2008) study. Crozier et al. (2008) explored the experiences of

students in England from a LSES, as classified by the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (Rose & Pevalin, 2000), in conjunction with information of parents' education levels. This study involved a questionnaire and subsequent interviews with WC and middle-class students across four universities; 27 WC participants were subsequently followed by researchers over two academic years to gain structured and unstructured interviews at key decision making points (Crozier et al., 2008). There is a wealth of conclusions made from a relatively small sample of students and whilst this provides in-depth information of this context, it is difficult to generalise.

Participants in studies included were recruited in a variety of ways, one study offered monetary incentive to participate (O'Hara & Cook, 2018) which may have impacted their desire to respond to interview questions in a way that may please the researchers.

The research presented includes psychology students in HE amongst a broad range of other studies. Studies exploring experiences of those from broader disciplines were not excluded as the experiences of those from LSES at HE was the dominant focus of this part of the question.

Some studies were conducted outside of the UK (Brook & Mitchell, 2012; Crumb et al., 2020; Jury et al., 2017; Lehmann, 2014; Lessky et al., 2021; O'Shea, 2021; O'Shea, 2016; O'Hara & Cook, 2018; Pitman, 2013) and although this can limit the ability to generalise, consistent themes were apparent across the literature. Additionally, although the participants from studies included in this review are not a homogenous group, findings indicate that coming from a LSES background has an impact on experiences in HE for a wide range of students such as those from different ethnicities, age groups and countries of residence.

Although there has been some exploration of the positive experiences, research has often highlighted negative experiences for those from LSES at HE. For example, O'Hara and Cook (2018) recruited only those with negative experiences of SCMs. Further, Jury et al. (2017) reviewed articles outlining barriers to support their argument for the need for psychological interventions for LSES students in HE.

Whilst it is important to provide a platform to share voices of those from LSES backgrounds in research, there appeared to be a scarcity of research focussing on the strengths and resources that coming from this background may provide. The current research aims to explore the broad spectrum of experiences as reported by participants.

Research questions

In view of the limitations of existing research and absence of research in this area, the current

study aimed to explore the experiences of EPs from LSES backgrounds in accessing and completing the doctorate and practising within the profession. The research questions to be explored in the current study are as follows in Table 2.

Table 2: Research questions

1	**What are the experiences of EPs who identify as coming from a LSES background in training to be an EP; what are the facilitators and barriers for accessing and completing the doctorate?**
2	**What are the experiences of EPs who identify as coming from a LSES background in practising in the profession; how has coming from a LSES background impacted or influenced this?**

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Part 2: Empirical Report

Word count: approx 8,160

Abstract

Research suggests a correlation between those from socio-economic disadvantage and inequity of outcomes across all aspects of a person's life including education, living standards, health and work. Whilst many measures exist to determine low socioeconomic status (LSES), accessing free school meals over a period of time has been deemed one of the most reliable against bias. Those who access free school meals are more likely to have additional or special educational needs. This highlights the pertinence of this issue to the working practice of Educational Psychologists (EPs). The British Psychological Society highlight the importance of EPs practising in a way that is culturally competent, which requires awareness and understanding of diverse communities. The topic of equality and diversity is salient within the educational psychology profession and UK workforce surveys suggest that there is a lack of diversity of practicing EPs. Despite this, there is a lack of research exploring the possible reasons behind the statistics, such as the experiences of EPs and their journeys into the profession.

This research explored the experiences of ten qualified EPs from England and Wales who had completed the doctorate in educational psychology. Semi-structured interviews were completed online, and the data was analysed using reflective thematic analysis. Findings highlight the factors that were helpful for EPs to access and complete the doctorate. Several barriers are also raised in relation to the lack of experience and financial resources participants felt were due to their LSES. Once qualified, EPs reflected on the strengths their backgrounds had equipped them with and how they were helpful in their working practice. A consistent theme throughout training and practice suggested the importance of drawing awareness to and starting conversations about this issue in the EP profession. Implications for EPs and EP services are discussed, as well as implications for training institutions and wider systems. The results also suggested several areas for further research exploration.

Introduction

Definition and importance of socioeconomic status

An ultimate definition of socioeconomic status (SES) is debated within the literature; the current research adopts Manstead's (2018) definition that SES is generally characterised in terms of a person's economic position and educational attainment in relation to others. SES is often conflated with social class and the researcher acknowledges that a person's SES forms part of their social class identity (Cook & Lawson, 2016). Objective measures to determine SES exist and focus on participation in higher education (HE) within the local area, occupation status and access to free school meals whilst at school (Jerrim, 2021). The reliability of these objective

measures has been questioned due to the bias against individuals from single parent families, among other factors (Jerrim, 2021).

Within the literature in this area a variety of terminology is used to describe the circumstances and status of individuals from low SES (LSES) backgrounds such as 'working-class', 'disadvantaged', 'deprived' and living in 'poverty'. These concepts are related but by no means interchangeable, and the literature in this area should be reviewed with caution, paying particular attention to the varying definitions of these terms.

A person's SES is important to consider as government publications highlight that those from LSES are more likely to experience inequality of outcome and disadvantageous experiences such as poorer physical and mental health and quality of life and lower educational attainment, which can lead to them being less likely to attain a job and more likely to be on benefits as an adult (Marmot et al., 2020; Mills, 2021). Although these statistics are bleak, they identify a correlation between LSES and inequitable outcomes. Qualitative exploration is valuable to understand the reasons behind these data.

Socio-political context and widening participation

SES is the strongest predictor of educational attainment (Hills et al., 2010). Accessing HE is considered a vehicle to social mobility (Crawford & Van Der Erve, 2015; Donnelly & Evans, 2019). Politicians have reinforced the message of the power of education over several years (Blair & Adonis, 2021), positioning the individual as having power to change their SES (O'Shea, 2021).

Government initiatives to widen participation (WP) into HE for those from LSES backgrounds have seen an overall increase in rates of students from these backgrounds access HE in recent years (HESA, 2022), although this is focussed on undergraduate degrees, and individuals from LSES backgrounds remain the largest under-represented group in HE (Harrison & Hatt, 2010).

WP initiatives assume that such journeys are straightforward and prompt automatic social mobility (Reay, 2019). In contrast, research has shown students from disadvantaged backgrounds are amongst the most likely to withdraw from university (Hillman, 2021), citing difficulties in belonging as a key issue for these students.

Psychological considerations

To support the understanding of the phenomenon discussed within this research, several theoretical frameworks can be applied and are discussed throughout this report. Three salient theories and frameworks will now be outlined.

Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model (2005)

Bronfenbrenner (1979; 2005) acknowledges that an individual exists and interacts with a variety of complex and interconnecting systems, and such systems (or relationships and environments) around a person can impact their experiences. Figure 5 illustrates Bronfenbrenner's (2005) theory.

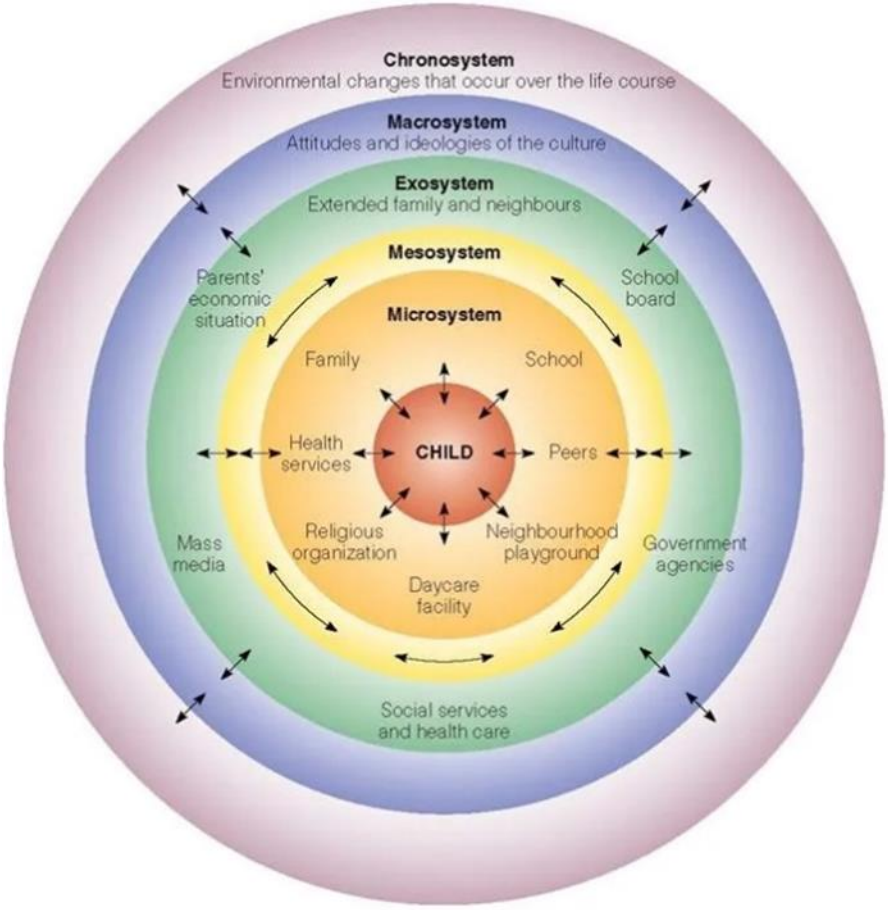

Figure 5: Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model (Guy-Evans, 2020).

In the context of the present study, a person's experiences accessing and completing doctoral training can be influenced by the individual's microsystem, which includes people that they regularly interact with such as family or tutors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The relationship between different people in their microsystem, or mesosystemic relationships, along with exosystemic factors such as access to opportunities and geographical location and local community also impacts a person's experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). LSES can be

considered as part of a person's macrosystem, as well as rules set in government (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The proximal processes of interaction between an individual and objects, people and concepts in their environment are salient to consider (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), in this context coming from a LSES macrosystem and the chronosystemic implications of the changes throughout the journey to access and complete the doctorate and practice within the EP profession.

Bourdieu's notion of capital, field and habitus

Bourdieu (1967; 1986; 2000) suggests individuals have various levels of different types of capital, or resources:

- Economic (material resources),
- Social (networks and knowledge),
- Cultural (knowledge and credentials) and
- Symbolic (reputation and respect).

These capitals are developed throughout childhood and continues to develop through social interactions and experiences (Bourdieu, 1986). These capitals inform a person's habitus (Bourdieu, 1967). A person's habitus is a set of dispositions, beliefs, and behaviours, and those from similar backgrounds often hold similar habitus (Bourdieu, 1967). Bourdieu (1986) suggested that levels of cultural capital differ between social classes based on the diversity of their experiences, and educational socialisation can result in an adapted and cultured habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). This is relevant to apply to the current research in terms of those from LSES accessing HE to train as EPs, and the potential for transformation of habitus. This is discussed further in light of the findings.

Burnham's (2018) Social GGRRAAACCEEESSS

Social GGRRAAACCEEESSS (SG) is a mnemonic developed to outline some areas which influence personal and social identity, and subsequently impact the experiences of an individual (Burnham, 2018). The figure below illustrates aspects of SGs.

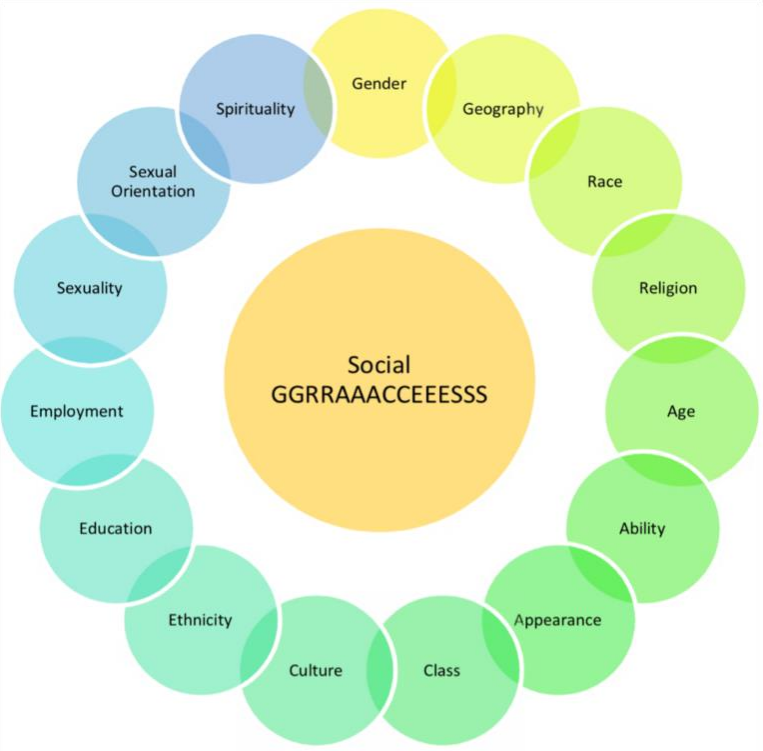

Figure 6: An illustration of the Social GGRRAAACCEEESSS model (Soni et al., 2021)

Burnham (2018) suggests that individuals can experience multiple layers of difference, which impact their experiences due to the privilege, or lack of, that these aspects provide (Burnham, 2018). This is relevant to the current study in relation to how LSES impacts EPs' experiences and highlights the consideration for intersectionality within this.

Relevance to the EP profession

The foundation of EP work is "to promote improved outcomes for all service users taking account of their context and needs" (BPS, 2019, p. 8). EPs work holistically with children, young people (CYP) and their families and supporting professionals to practice inclusively in education (Lyonette et al., 2019). EPS have a key role in identifying special educational needs and supporting schools with consultation and training to meet the needs of CYP (Lyonette et al., 2019).

Those with additional learning/ special educational needs are more likely to access free school meals (ONS, 2021) which is considered among the best proxy measures that determines LSES (Jerrim, 2021). The Department for Education (2021) report that CYP from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience educational and additional challenges, which can impact on their ability to achieve their potential in school. This suggests that EPs are likely to work with and support many CYP and families from LSES backgrounds.

EPs have a professional duty to understand and address power imbalances with the individuals and groups whom they work with (HCPC, 2015). The HCPC (2015) Standards of Proficiency also state that EPs should support service users to understand factors which influence development and change at different levels, such as individual, group and organisational.

For EPs to have a broad understanding of diverse systems and how they can impact individuals, it can be argued that diversity of the workforce itself is important (Palmer et al., 2021). Recent surveys of the EP workforce indicate a lack of diversity within the profession (AEP, 2021b; Lyonette et al., 2019) which is consistent in broader practitioner psychologist professions (Palmer et al., 2021; Rhodes, 2021).

The route to train to become an EP begins with accessing HE (AEP, 2021). Data gathered from applications to the EP doctorate in England suggests most applicants are white, female, between the ages of 20-29, have no dependents and no disabilities. There are no data available for the SES backgrounds of current applicants.

The AEP (2021) recognise the importance of increasing diversity amongst EPs, and there have been several recent professional conferences on the topic of equality and diversity. Despite this, there is a lack of research in this area beyond workforce surveys and exploration of the demographic information of applications to the doctorate. This data highlights that diversity is an area of development for the EP profession but lacks exploration of possible reasons for this. Brook and Michell (2012) assert that this may be due to the poorly understood relationship between education, knowledge and class, which is important before change can take place.

Summary of a narrative literature review on the experiences of those from LSES in HE

In part A of this thesis, a narrative literature review was conducted which aimed to collate and critically evaluate what existing research said about experiences those from LSES backgrounds in HE. Five themes were identified in the literature gathered: 'personal agency and motivation', 'informational capital and belonging', 'identity and fitting in socially', 'self-efficacy, support and resilience' and 'lack of financial security and managing a work-life balance'. These findings

offered a valuable insight into the experiences of LSES students at HE in various contexts and countries.

In summary, research in this area suggests that those from a LSES cite their backgrounds as motivation to access HE (Lehmann, 2014; O'Shea, 2016; Raven, 2018) and attribute their success to their own personal agency and determination, which they believed their backgrounds equipped them with (Pitman, 2013). Many LSES students report feeling overwhelmed with unfamiliar settings of HE (O'Shea, 2016) and lacking convertible informational capital, which can lead to withdrawal from HE in some cases (Roberts, 2011).

Previous research has also emphasised the importance of social and cultural capital (Brook & Michell, 2012; Reay et al., 2010) and highlighted that LSES students accessed this information through peer networks (Lessky et al., 2021). Connections with peers were important to facilitate a sense of belonging for LSES students, which led to more positive experiences at HE (Lessky et al., 2021).

Research also highlighted the misconceptions of easy transitions to HE for those from LSES (Reay, 2019), and highlighted the difficulty some LSES students had fitting in socially due to the perceived exclusivity of the social context of more elite universities (O'Shea, 2021; Reay, 2019). In terms of personal identity, previous studies have suggested experiencing social mobility through attendance at HE presents with challenges such as leaving behind old friendships (Lehmann, 2014) and changing their identities to fit in to new environments (O'Shea, 2021).

Although some studies have positioned LSES students as disadvantaged (Pásztor & Wakeling, 2018), other studies have suggested that experiences growing up in a LSES and the social support systems within them had benefitted individuals in terms of their experiences at HE (Crumb et al., 2020). The value of support from friends, family and communities have been cited as helpful on transition to and throughout HE (O'Shea 2016; Pitman, 2013).

Research has also suggested that LSES students have had to juggle competing demands of university, family, and paid work due to their lack of financial resources (Reay et al., 2010; Pásztor & Wakeling; 2018; Taylor & House, 2010). Despite this, instilled LSES values such as having a strong work ethic appear to have supported students (Crumb et al., 2020). Studies exploring experiences of social class microaggressions suggested that such negative experiences can facilitate resilience and personal growth despite adversity (O'Hara & Cook, 2018).

Rationale for the current study

The literature synthesised in the review highlighted the gaps in the research, most pertinently the lack of research into experiences of those from LSES within psychology professions. This

highlights the importance of research in this area to facilitate an understanding of how individuals make sense of their experiences (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

The studies focussing on experiences in HE largely focussed on students who were new to undergraduate courses and has largely neglected to explore doctoral level study (Pásztor & Wakeling, 2018). Some studies tracked students' journeys through university and explored attrition rates or destination in the labour market.

The studies included worldwide research of varying methodologies including mixed methods and quantitative surveys. Quantitative and mixed methods identify correlations between those from LSES backgrounds and their outcomes, however they do not allow for the nuance of experiences to be explored (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Much of the research focussed on experiences highlighted barriers and difficulties experienced, with little space given to positive experiences (O'Shea, 2016). In addition, many of the studies were conducted internationally, and although providing interesting insights into that specific context, cannot be generalised to the UK context. Further, studies determined LSES in different ways; mostly through objective measures including parental occupation and participation of the local area in HE. Many individuals may have been missed due to the lack of reliability of such measures (Rubin et al., 2014).

In consideration of the gaps and limitations to the existing research, the current study aimed to explore the experiences of EPs who identify as coming from LSES backgrounds in accessing and completing the doctoral training course and practising within the profession.

Research Questions

The gaps in available research led to development of the research questions, as seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Research questions

1	**What are the experiences of EPs who identify as coming from a LSES background in training to be an EP; what are the facilitators and barriers for accessing and completing the doctorate?**
2	**What are the experiences of EPs who identify as coming from a LSES background in practising in the profession; how has coming from a LSES background impacted or influenced this?**

Methodology

Epistemological and ontological positioning

The research paradigm adopted for the present study was critical realism. Critical realism comprises of ontological realism, which asserts there is an objective reality, and epistemological relativism, which asserts that objective reality cannot be determined (Bergin et al., 2008). To conceptualise this, Fletcher (2017) explained "Human knowledge captures only a small part of a deeper and vaster reality" (p. 182).

This stance allowed the researcher to view all responses as valid and draw tentative conclusions from patterns in the data to present an interpretation of reality, whilst acknowledging the existence of multiple interpretations (Cruikshanks, 2003; Bergin et al., 2008). Critical realism was adopted in recognition of the subjective nature of responses, as EPs were sharing their own experiences through the 'lens' of their own worldview (Lund, 2005).

Research design

In view of the epistemological and ontological stance taken, a qualitative design was deemed appropriate to explore the experiences of EPs from LSES backgrounds. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method for collecting data as they allow researchers to explore the subjective viewpoints and experiences of participants in depth (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Flick, 2018). The researcher considered using a focus group methodology however the risk of dominant voices and power dynamics within a focus group may hinder exploration of individuals' experiences (Wilkinson, 2015). A supplementary qualitative survey was also briefly considered to reach a broader range and greater amount of participants, however the lack of depth of data and inability to ask follow up questions may have missed important data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The aim of the interviews was to elicit in-depth data to provide initial understandings of EPs from LSES backgrounds. Further detail and decisions regarding the design can be found in Part 3 of the thesis.

Ethical considerations

This research was granted ethical approval from Cardiff University's Ethics Committee, and adhered to the British Psychological Society's (2021a) Code of Ethics and Conduct. Ethical considerations and how they were managed are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4: Ethical considerations and how they were managed by the researcher

Ethical consideration	How this was managed
Ensuring appropriate informed consent	• Gatekeeper consent was gained from the Principal EPs (PEPs) of each Educational Psychology Service (EPS) via a gatekeeper letter sent via email (Appendix C). • To ensure all participants gave informed consent, they were asked to read the participant information sheet (Appendix D) and consent form (Appendix E) before ticking boxes and writing their initials to indicate their consent prior to the commencement of the interview. • The participants were reminded of their right to withdraw up to two weeks after the interview. • The participants were also notified when the researcher began recording.
Participant welfare and the right to withdraw	• Participants were not manipulated or misled in any way for any part of this research. • Participants were informed of the purpose of collecting demographic information (Appendix F), and the voluntary nature of the completion of this form was emphasised, stating that choosing not to complete it will not affect their ability to take part in the study. • Participants were informed that the interview would be recorded and the process for secure storage and timescale of deletion was shared via the participant information sheet, consent and debrief form (Appendices D,E and G). • Whilst they were not at risk of harm, it was recognised that participants may discuss and reflect upon difficult experiences which could trigger upsetting memories. Counselling services were signposted on the debrief sheet (Appendix G). • Participants were given clear information regarding the nature of questions, and they were reminded of their right to withdraw, both in the interview and via the debrief sheet up to two weeks after their interview without giving a reason.

Online security	• To minimise the risk of online security becoming an issue, interviews took place in a password protected virtual meeting room whilst connected to the researcher's secure home network to ensure confidentiality (BPS, 2019b). The researcher used a private room to complete the interviews.
The right to refuse to answer any questions	• Prior to the commencement of the interview, the participants were encouraged to share their stories at their own comfort level and reassured that they did not have to answer any questions they did not want to.
Maintaining anonymity and confidentiality	• Whilst face to face online interviews cannot be anonymous, the recordings were kept confidential and stored on a password protected device only accessible by the researcher. • Prior to the interviews, participants were asked to complete a demographic information form (Appendix F). The information was anonymised and presented in a way that ensures the participants are not identifiable. • The participants were made aware that the recordings would be transcribed and anonymised no later than two weeks after the interview, and the recordings would be permanently deleted. Participants were informed that after two weeks they would no longer be able to withdraw their data from the research study, as any identifiable information will have been anonymised and the data will no longer be linked to them. • To protect the identities of the participants, all identifying information was anonymised or replaced with pseudonyms during transcription. This included all details of families, friends, tutors, colleagues, Universities, Local Authorities, and geographical areas. Quotations that were chosen to share within the research were carefully anonymised to ensure that the participant could not be identified (BPS, 2021).

Adequate debrief	• Prior to ending the online meeting, the researcher ensured that all participants were given opportunities to ask any questions. • Participants were given the opportunity to reflect with the researcher following the end of each interview recording. • All participants were provided with a debrief form (Appendix G) via email at the end of the interview, which detailed the researchers' contact details, the contact details of their supervisor and the ethics committee.
Maintenance of integrity whilst analysing the interview data	• The researcher used reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) to analyse the data, following steps set out by Braun and Clarke (2021). The data will only be used for reasons set out in the research aims and purpose. Examples from data analysis can be found in Appendix H.

Participant information and recruitment

At the time of developing this research, Braun and Clarke's most up to date writing (2013) suggested an ideal sample size for a project of this size, length and scope exploring experiences of individuals to be between 10 and 20 participants. Due to the length and scope of this project, it was limited to ten participants.

The inclusion criteria for participation in the current study are summarised in Table 5 below. The inclusion criteria were chosen to mirror the current route to becoming an EP. Trainee EPs (TEPs) were excluded from participating in this study in recognition of the fact that TEPs are a discrete group which may have differing issues and aspects to raise to qualified EPs (QEPs). Further, QEPs have the advantage of having time to look back and reflect on their journey, and being in a better economic situation owing to their increased salary.

The researcher chose to allow participants to self-identify as coming from a LSES due to criticisms of existing objective measures such as parental income and access to free school meals and the absence of a universally accepted measure (Jerrim, 2021). The researcher also recognised that definitions of LSES differ between geographical regions at different points in time (The Social Metrics Commission, 2020), therefore allowing participants of various ages from various geographical locations can be justified in this instance. Further, allowing participants to self-identify as coming from a LSES background is consistent with the critical

realist stance taken for this study, which recognises the importance of the subjective realities of participants (Fletcher, 2017).

Further information regarding justification for the inclusion criteria is discussed in Part 3.

Table 5: Inclusion criteria for participating in the study

Inclusion criteria To be able to participate in this research, participants MUST:
Have experience of working as a qualified EP in the United Kingdom (UK).
AND have completed the professional three-year Doctorate in a UK University.
AND identify as coming from a low socioeconomic status background.

Pilot interview

A pilot interview took place with a qualified EP in May 2021. The purpose of the pilot interview was to explore the robustness and ensure openness and flow of interview questions, as well as assess the readiness of the researcher (Beebe, 2007). The researcher hoped that a pilot study may be helpful to uncover any ethical or practical issues that the online interview or schedule may have raised (Leon et al., 2011). There were no major amendments made to the interview schedule as the researcher and participant agreed that the quality and quantity of information gathered was appropriate and relevant to the research questions. Minor changes were made in the form of addition to the prompt questions. This interview was not included in the overall analysis.

Recruitment procedure

Throughout the recruitment phase it became apparent that a recruitment procedure was needed to manage potential participants due to the volume of volunteers. A summary of the recruitment procedure is presented in Figure 7 below and discussed in more detail in Part 3.

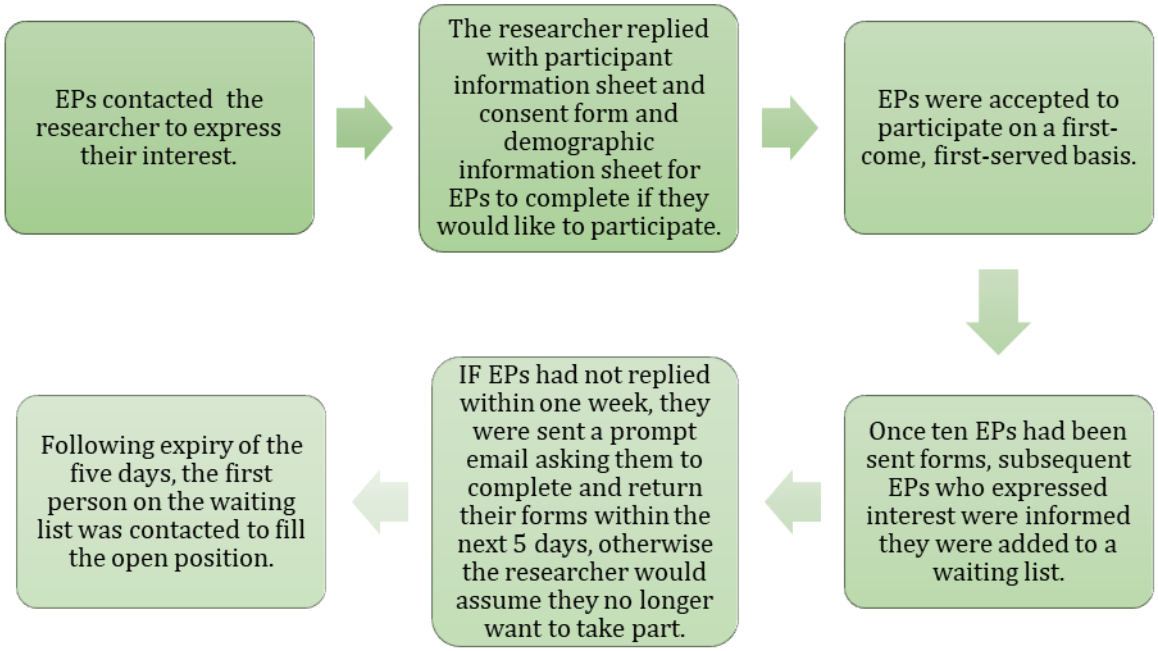

Figure 7: Recruitment procedure

Participant demographics

All participants were emailed a demographic information sheet (Appendix F) and informed that completion of this sheet was voluntary and would not affect their ability to participate. The two participants who were recruited prior to this amendment were sent the form retrospectively. This information was gathered to provide the reader with the context of participants in order to support understanding of the data, whilst maintaining anonymity for participants. This is discussed in more detail in the discussion and in Part 3 of the thesis. Nine out of ten participants completed and returned the demographic information sheet, a summary of participant demographics can be seen in Table 6. For the ethnicity and professional positions options, one participant selected more than one box, therefore the sum of these options is greater than the number of participants who completed the information.

Table 6: Participant demographics

Demographic information	**Number of participants**
Gender	
Female	7
Male	2

Age	
24-34 years	4
35-44 years	5
Ethnicity	
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	1
Multiple ethnic groups	1
White- British/ English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish	7
White- Irish	1
Religion or strongly held belief	
Christian	2
Muslim	1
Spiritual	3
No religion or belief	3
Disability status	
Consider themselves to have a disability	1
Do not consider themselves to have a disability	8
Country of doctoral training	
England	9
Number of years qualified as an EP	
0-2 years	4
3-5 years	2
6-10 years	3
Professional position	
Newly qualified (less than two years)	4
Established/ main grade EP	4
Specialist EP	1
University tutor	1
Working full time	6
Working part time	3
Working within a local authority	8
Working independently/ with private EP company	1

Procedure

A summary of the research procedure can be seen below in Figure 8.

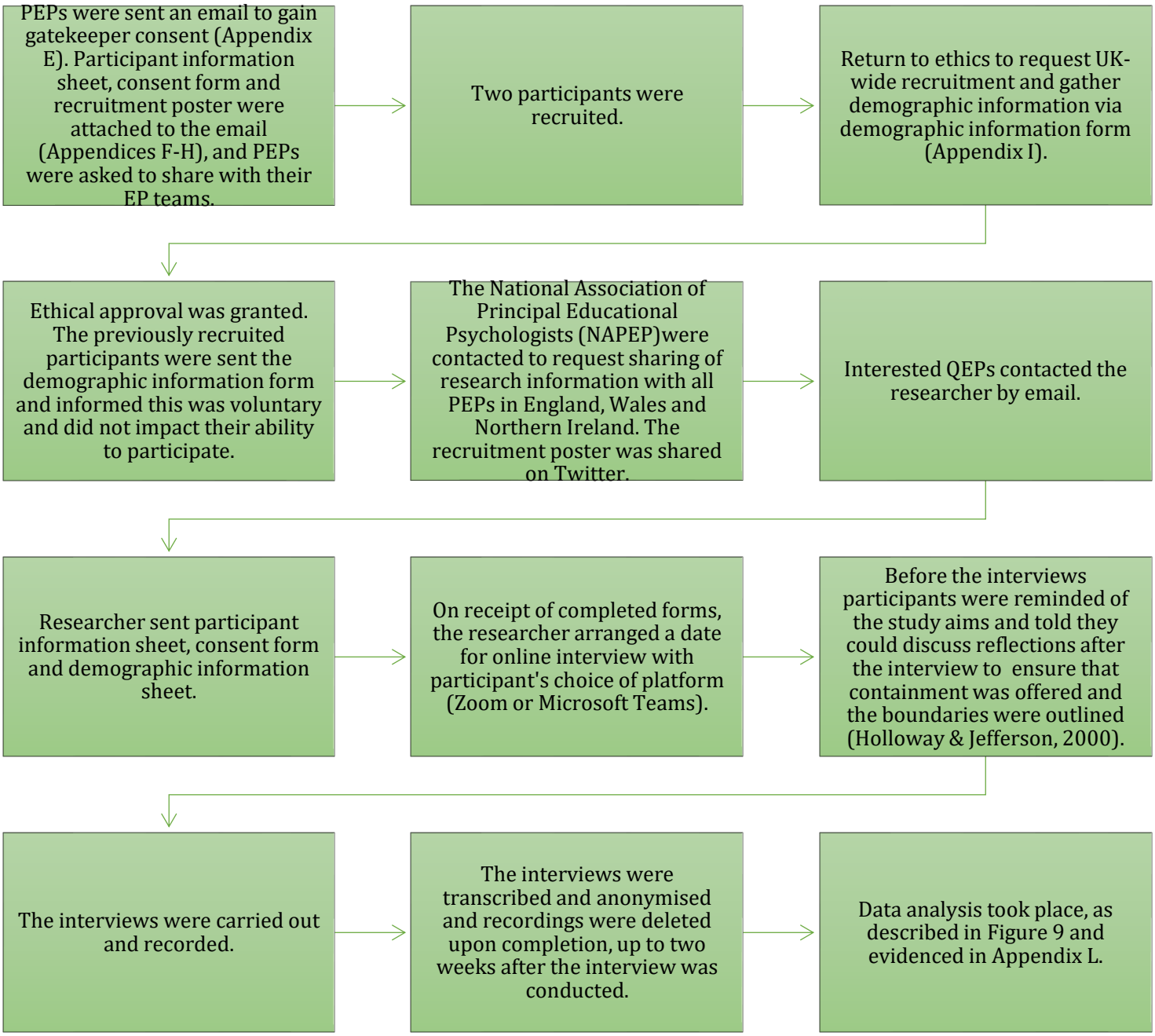

Figure 8: Summary of research procedure

Transcription

As interviews took place online, the Zoom and Microsoft Teams programmes generated transcripts automatically. These transcripts were downloaded and checked by the researcher to ensure accuracy. All identifying information, such as names of universities and local authorities were removed to maintain anonymity within the transcripts. Each recording was listened to at

least three times to ensure accuracy and ensure no information was lost so that a thorough analysis could take place (Willig, 2003).

Analysis and rationale

The analysis chosen for this research was reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2021). A summary of the rationale for choosing this method is presented in Table 7 below. The process of data analysis is outlined in Figure 9. Although the six-step process is presented in a way that suggests it is linear, data analysis involved movement back and forth between different steps (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Further discussion of the decisions taken for analysis can be found in Part 3 of this report, and examples of the data analysis process can be seen in Appendix H.

Table 7: Rationale for choosing RTA

Rationale for choosing RTA
• RTA is independent from any theoretical approach or epistemological stance and offers a great sense of flexibility for the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2021). • RTA analyses data from the bottom up and allows themes to be generated in an inductive way from the data collected rather than existing theory or research, whilst acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher as a key tool (Braun & Clarke, 2021). • In the context of exploring the experiences of EPs who identify as coming from a LSES background, RTA is useful because it enables exploration of the nuance and examination of the meanings people attach to their experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Evans & Lewis, 2018). • RTA allows for development of themes from the data to give an overview of group experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This is valuable in the current study as there are no current research in this area, and themes from the group data can provide an important initial insight into the experiences of EPs from LSES. • The researcher could have chosen Smith et al.'s (2009) Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis methodology to explore the data, however this would have allowed for the exploration of fewer participants' experiences due to the timescale of the study.

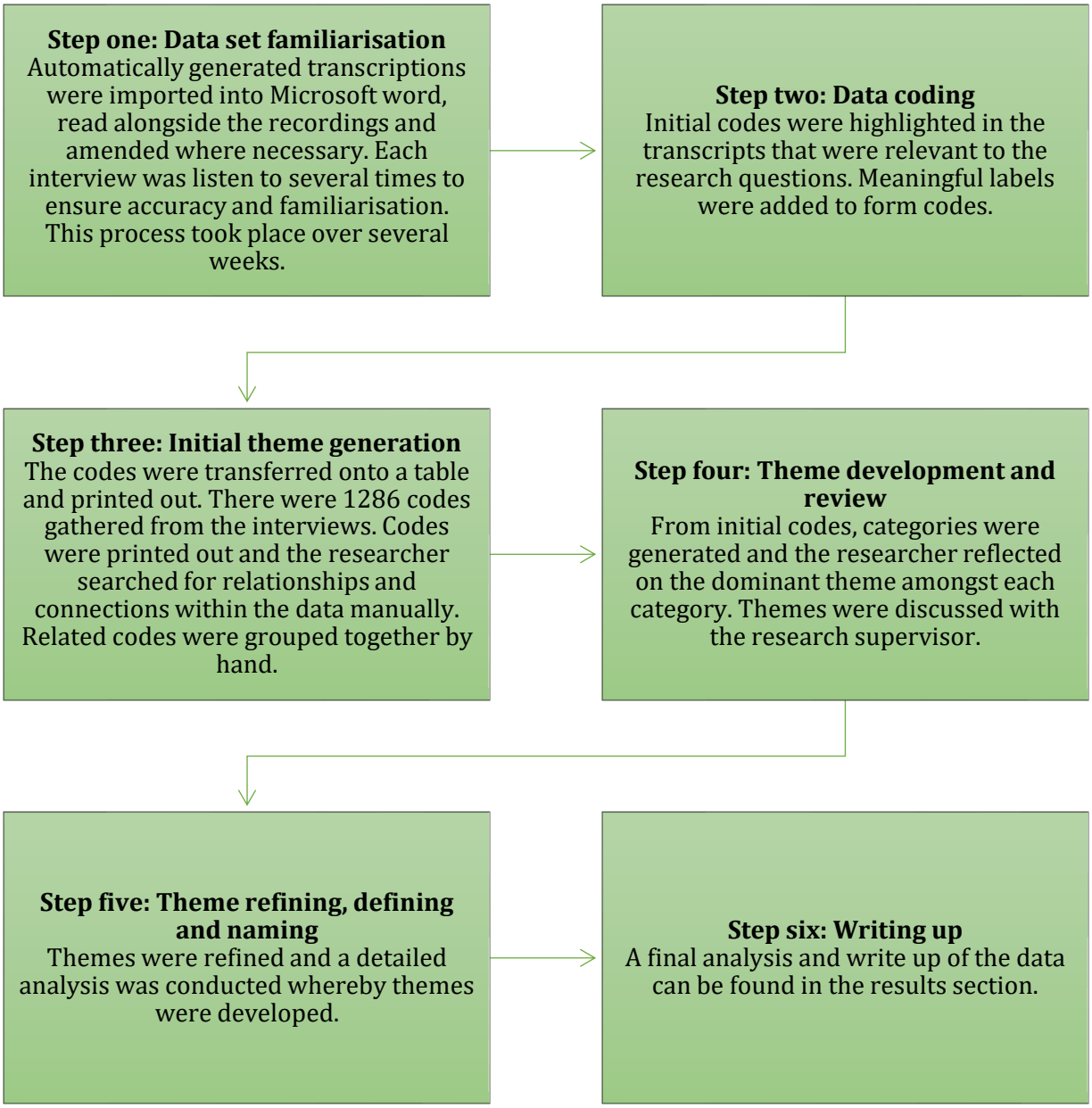

Figure 9: Process of Thematic analysis informed by Braun and Clarke (2021)

Reliability and validity

Yardley (2000)'s framework was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the research and analysis. An overview of this process is presented in Appendix I.

Findings

As can be seen from the final thematic map, (Figure 10), six main themes were identified from the interview data: "It isn't going to land in your lap, that's for sure."; "At times it felt really unfair"; Finding a way out; Evolution of self; "It's really difficult to talk about" and "Coming from a LSES background can give you all kinds of advantages".

The main themes and subthemes developed from interview data will now be discussed. Each theme will be presented and explained, then subthemes will be outlined. The analysis is illustrated with use of quotations from participants (Flick, 2018), which will be presented with their pseudonyms and corresponding line numbers of transcript to aid transparency. Quotations are presented in the words of participants, with minor adjustments to aid readability. The use of ellipses (…) illustrates where part of the text has been omitted to be concise and aid clarity.

Figure 10: Thematic map

Theme 1: "It isn't going to land in your lap, that's for sure."

This theme highlights the challenging experiences and barriers that participants reported experiencing prior to and during application to the doctorate.

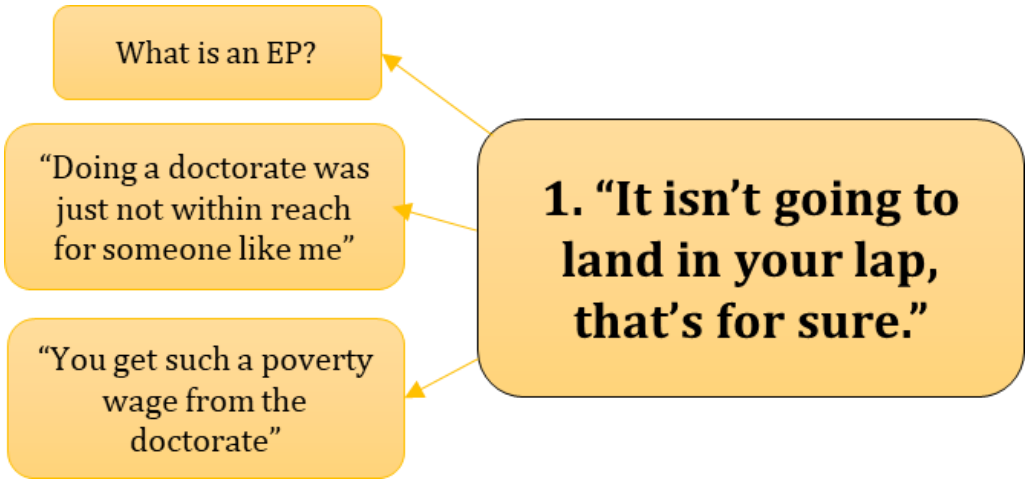

Figure 11: Theme 1 and subthemes

Subtheme 1: What is an EP?

Participants reported their lack of awareness of the EP profession, and shared their feelings of concern and disbelief when they discovered the requirements and route to train to be an EP.

"One of the things is knowing about educational psychology, like knowing that exists. That was critical. I didn't know it existed." Liam (415-416)
"It wasn't until my final year… I had a look at the route, and I was like… oh I have to complete a three-year doctorate to get to qualify as a psychologist… OK. then I thought oh OK, that's fine. I'll just apply for it. Not realising actually how competitive it was and how like limited the places were." Esme (6-10).

EPs felt as though their lack of professional connections meant that it was difficult to find information about the EP role. Several participants spoke of the circumstances in which they found out about the existence of EPs, and their shock they had never heard of the role despite studying psychology or working in education.

"My very middle-class boyfriend from university worked with a man and we went out for dinner with them… his partner was an educational psychologist. I was teaching at secondary school, I'd done an undergraduate degree in psychology, I'd been a teaching assistant… I was working with children with significant special educational needs, and I had never heard of an educational psychologist until that dinner." Stephanie (424- 433)

"I didn't know anybody that had been an educational psychologist. I didn't know anybody that even knew what an educational psychologist was. So, it was only from this lady telling me about it in college, one of my tutors, that I'd known about it." Lorraine (46-47)

The lack of visibility of the EP profession led to the perception that the EP world is hidden and felt difficult to access.

"It does feel a little bit secretive. I don't think it it's meant to be, but it comes across that way. Particularly when you don't know who to contact and how to access anything." Natalie (601-603).

Subtheme 2: "Doing a doctorate was just not within reach for someone like me"

After becoming aware of the EP profession and requirements to train, EPs shared some of the psychological barriers they experienced prior to applying for the doctorate. Participants shared their perception that a doctorate was intimidating, and their lack of self-belief that they could accomplish it.

"I just felt that something as crazy as doing a doctorate just wasn't for me. Just because of, you know it was out of reach. Going to [city] university and doing a doctorate was just not within reach for someone like me. And I should probably just stick to something a bit more realistic." Imogen (54-56)
"The doctorate struck fear into my heart. When I found out I needed to do a doctorate I thought, well, I can't do that. I'm not clever enough." Natalie (609- 610)

This concern continued beyond the application stage of the doctoral course, six out of ten EPs mentioned experiencing imposter syndrome.

"I initially felt quite intimidated actually going into it, and I had impostor syndrome for the entire course." Esme (213)

Participants also shared concerns about additional difficulties they experienced, and the potential for them to prove a significant barrier to becoming an EP.

"I went up afterwards and said, you know, I got diagnosed with dyslexia, is that going to impact upon me being an ed psych? And he [EP] was like really curt and said, 'you've got to do a written test in the interview, and you've got to perform in that test, so it will affect that." Imogen (72-75)
"I thought something like if I'm dyslexic, then how could I support children with literacy difficulties?" Liam (68-69)

The application and interview process were also raised as challenging for many participants, due to their concerns for fitting in at the university, and the stressful interview environment.

"I felt really alienated… at the interview day, I really didn't feel like you know [name] from [rural area] with a little bit of a chavvy accent would fit in very well with what was going on there." Imogen (95-99)
"It was this panel, and then you would sit on the chair like in the middle of the room and it was just really high pressure with windows at your back... they're creating this high-pressure situation for you, and I didn't like that." Liam (159-161)

Participants shared their discomfort with the personal nature of some interview questions.

"Some of the [interview] questions were like you know 'tell us how your childhood experiences have got you to where you are now' and, for me it was just like… no I'm out. Pass. You know, this is an interview. I don't know you, you're strangers, it's really weird…" Josiah (241-244)
"One of the interviews there I think, they asked a lot of personal questions about my background, my early life experiences. I remember I got into a situation where I was crying in interview 'cause I was just not expecting to touch on some of these subjects with this panel of strangers." Liam (144-147)

Participants also shared the challenge of being on a reserve list for interview, and the pressure of having to prepare for interview at short notice whilst working a full-time job.

"A day before I got a call saying, oh, we've got a drop out at [university] in the interview list. Can you come?... I remember it was 5 o clock in the evening I was on a twilight inset that evening. So, by the time I got home it was 9 o'clock and then I had a full day of teaching the next day, no frees, and then I had parents evening all evening and then the next day I had the interview. So, I was like oh dear, I have literally no time to prepare. But I was desperate for the opportunity. And I did the interview the following day. I was very lucky that my school released me for the day to do that cause I was worried they wouldn't." Natalie (60-70)

Subtheme 3: "You get such a poverty wage on the doctorate"

Financial difficulties were mentioned by most EP participants prior to and throughout the duration of the doctorate. EPs shared the difficulty in having a lack of financial support from their family as a barrier to obtaining entry requirements to enable them to apply to the doctorate.

"If I'd had that financial support or someone who could have, you know, given me money to do my driving lessons or pay for my masters, I would have maybe applied for the course potentially four, five years earlier than I did in the end, so I think that's a massive barrier." Debbie (22-25)

Once accepted onto the doctoral training course, several EPs discussed the low amount of the bursary, and how this was a reduction in income which presented as a barrier, which meant they had to seriously consider whether they could afford to access the course.

"I felt like I was just starting to get used to having money, then when I got on the doctoral course, the drop in salary was massive." Stephanie (140-141)
"I remember being in tears saying to my mum like I can't do this- I haven't got the money to do this. I'm going to have to just say I can't do the course." Rosie (59-61)
"You also have to weigh up, I think when you don't have financial stability, can I afford to, you know, be a trainee for three years, when I'm not making that much money?" Debbie (32-33)

For Rosie in particular, her lack of a back-up plan in terms of finance was a source of anxiety whilst training on the course.

"I didn't have, there was no safety net, and I couldn't ask my parents for money. That's the biggest thing, like I was the one giving them money... I was very nervous about things going wrong and losing my job and ending up with no money." Rosie (94-95)

Theme 2. "At times it felt really unfair"

This theme highlights an overall view that there was a lack of equity of experience in comparison to other TEPs from more affluent backgrounds.

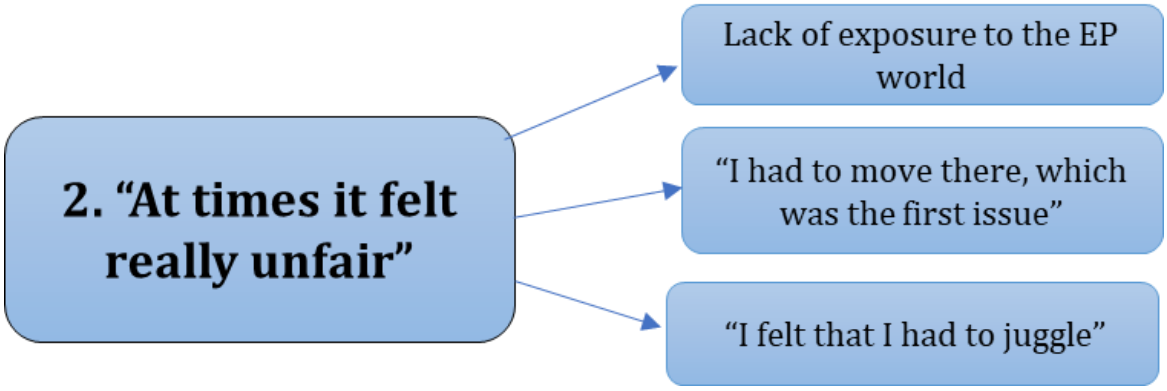

Figure 12: Theme 2 and subthemes

Subtheme 1: Lack of exposure to the EP world

Participants spoke about their lack of exposure to information and professional connections in the EP world, and how this made them feel disadvantaged in comparison to their peers.

"I remember feeling like internally furious. This sounds awful. But they [TEP colleague] had literally fell into it... literally been given it all. She'd been to a posh school, she knew EPs, she'd done psychology at [University] then a tutor at [University] said, 'oh, you should be an educational psychologist, I will help you apply'...and it's just … at the time I felt real bitter and injustice [laughs] like… I've spent like three years scrabbling round, building up my experience targeting it at getting on here. Trying to talk to people trying to build up my networks and my social links. And you did psychology at a posh university next door and have been told, yeah, this is what you should do." Lorraine (98-111)

EPs discussed how their lack of experience and professional connections contributed to feelings of frustration and inferiority whilst they were training to be an EP.

"I remember feeling so othered, like ridiculously othered from it. It kind of was quite obvious, my lack of experience... I felt inferior because I was one of two people that didn't have an assistant EP job… which meant that I started the course having no idea really what an EP does. I could apply psychology... but I didn't know educational psychology... I didn't even know anybody who did a job that required a degree...A lot of them [TEPs] had parents that were EPs, or they knew people who were EPs, or they had a SENCo friend and that's how they got in. That astounded me." Rosie (297- 310)
*"There were two other people on placement with me. One person whose mum was an EP and then another one who was super posh, super lovely. But they just kind of got it. They were already the 'packages', and I wasn't… I was definitely seen as the burden and 'she's the sh*t one' and 'we're going to have to spend some time with her' and 'she doesn't know how to write'. So that felt really, really hard."* Lorraine (237-242)

Participants also spoke of a lack of understanding of a unique EP language that they had not been exposed to in their previous experiences and the feeling that they struggled more than others to adapt to this new language.

"I thought everybody just spoke in a language that I think I have probably now developed professionally. But it came naturally a lot more to other people on the course than it did to me. I remember in first year everybody saying they were "being really mindful" about this, and "mindful" about that, and I was like what does that even mean? Like to say you're really "mindful" about something I just hadn't been exposed to that language." Imogen (107-112)

Subtheme 2: "I had to move there, which was the first issue."

Participants discussed feeling as though they had to move out of rural areas to access opportunities to enable them to train as an EP.

"It felt like because there wasn't enough equality of opportunity because of where I lived, I didn't have money to move… you have to go to a place that's in a big city to study." Rosie (312-313)

Additionally, EPs spoke of feeling forced to move as commuting would not be possible for them in terms of cost and accessibility.

"I had umpteen house moves as well… I've always had to get up and literally physically move to where the opportunities are for me because commuting has been too expensive or just not possible." Kerry (146-150)

Participants also outlined the financial implications of having to move to a city to complete the doctorate, and the difficulties they encountered in terms of costs of relocating.

"I got into [university]. Now I lived, I'm from [rural area of the UK], [university] is an hour and 45 minutes from [university], so I had to move there which was the first issue. I had no furniture I couldn't pay for a deposit on my house, so I had to get a bank loan, in order to just pay for even things like moving my car insurance company." Rosie (55-58)

Subtheme 3: "I felt that I had to juggle."

EP participants spoke about the challenge of time management between the work-based demands of the doctorate and their financial needs. Several participants shared they had to work part-time jobs to be able to afford to live whilst training to be an EP, unlike many of their TEP peers.

"The bursary was there. It was fine. It didn't mean it was easy when I was doing it, I worked most holidays... to get some extra income, which I know no one else had to do." Imogen (201- 203)
"It felt very unrelenting, like that pace was continual. I was either in lectures or seminars or a working one job or getting up and working the other job. So I'd work the Saturday night at the nightclub, but then I'd have to be up Sunday for work and things and so, and then even when I came back I had then picked straight up seasonal kind of pub work back home." Stephanie (32-39)

EPs discussed the difficulty affording to purchase, insure and maintain a car during training, and the impact this had on their ability to attend placement.

"I remember in January of my first year like days before my placement began, having to go and buy this awful banger that was like I think it was like 1600 pounds, which was insanely expensive...then all the maintenance, as well as tax and MOT and insurance... I remember certainly feeling poor once I got a car, definitely...my crap car that broke down on my first day of placement." Josiah (393- 399)
"I had times where I had to not go into placement and say I was unwell, but actually I couldn't afford the petrol. And so I said that I wasn't well, but actually I couldn't afford to make the trip… I think that will have influenced… how reliable I was seen as on the course and perhaps how dedicated I was to training as an EP, when actually it was something I was really wanting and busting a gut to do." Stephanie (170-176)

In addition to affording to run a car, EPs spoke of spending time planning and completing arduous yet cost effective commutes to be able to afford to travel to their placements.

"The biggest thing for me was, where I'm from- at the time I was always going to have to travel quite a distance so financially that was always going to be very hard for me…I was schlepping four hours in the morning and four hours in the evening on a combination of driving and trains. I often would get my bursary through then I would look ahead to the timetable for the next month and buy all my trains on a split ticketing app to make them as cheap as possible." Kerry (128-141)
"I bought like a 200-pound car, I left it parked in like in a train station outside of [city] and would catch four trains a day, then get to my car then drive because that was cheapest way of getting to my placement every day rather than commuting and paying for the petrol... It probably was harder than what others had to do." Imogen (217-221)

Some participants shared their frustrations of having to spend more time working than studying, which caused frustration and resentment towards other TEPs who appeared not to have to juggle the same considerations.

"I found it frustrating and at times it felt really unfair when I was having less time that I could spend focusing on my academic studies because I was having to prioritise getting a payment." Stephanie (95-97)
"You get more and more resentful like... Come on, everybody's off gallivanting and going on holiday here there and everywhere and I'm not even kidding. They're just like, off to a restaurant again and- what things have I got to look forward to? Oh maybe I might treat myself to a nice dinner when I get home..." Rosie (256-259)

Theme 3: Finding a way out

This theme highlights what participants found helpful in supporting their journey to become a qualified EP.

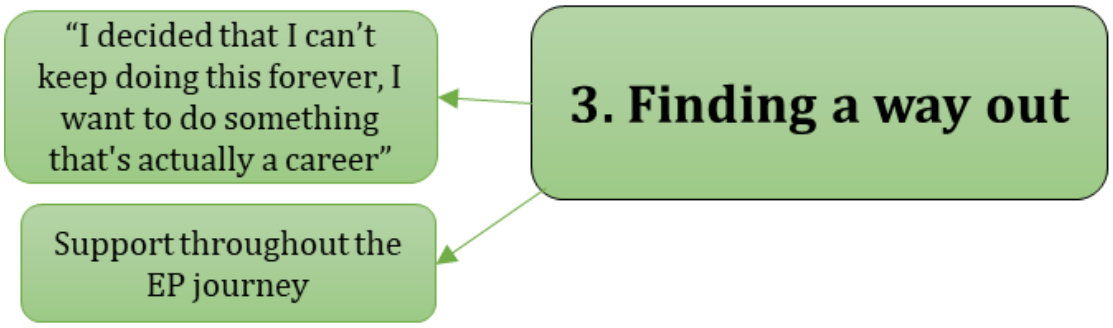

Figure 13: Theme 3 and subthemes

Subtheme 1: "I decided that I can't keep doing this forever."

The EPs spoke of their own intrinsic motivation to better their situations with the goal of securing a career and ensuring they did not remain in a LSES.

"I decided that I can't keep doing this forever, I want to do something that's actually a career." Kerry (24-25)
"I remember being very little and being told, the only way that I'm going to not live in the same way as my parents did was through getting a good education, working hard and moving out of the area. So that was always in my mind, and I think I had that sort of tenacity to never stop, the drive to continue education and to do the best I can do was an internal motivator." Rosie (531-535)

Participants also explained the resilience and determination that their upbringings had equipped them with, which helped them to remain motivated.

"I think it was just purely down to persistence. I think because of my experiences, I've always had the drive to kind of achieve my goals because I have no one else to rely on but myself. I think I've always had that view from an early age." Debbie (96-98)

Several participants spoke about having to persist and make multiple applications for the EP doctorate following unsuccessful attempts to secure a place initially.

"I applied for the ed psych doctorate three times, and I got interviewed the last two times... I think the first time I got onto the reserve list, I was really far down. The next time I was offered two places on two different courses." Esme (72-75)

Subtheme 2: Personal, professional, and financial support.

The EPs spoke about the importance of professionals who supported initial phases of their EP journey, such as supportive secondary school, college and university tutors.

"There was this one teacher in the sixth form who actually cared for me and encouraged me...I think if it wasn't for her, like rallying and trying to push me, I don't think I would have actually popped my UCAS form in, just because ... there wasn't that expectation I would go to university." Imogen (25-29)

EPs also mentioned the value of professional support in the application stage, and how it was helpful to meet with and speak to EPs and access helpful EPS open events for advice on applications and developing a greater understanding of the EP role. Participants also mentioned the positive impact of these events in terms of humanising EPs.

"I got a job working in a local school...they knew I wanted to be an educational psychologist, and they were really proactive in helping me meet the school's educational psychologist." Lorraine (55-58)
"She [PEP] told me about an open day at the service. So, I went along to that, and it was the best thing that I ever did. Because then I found out, this is what an EP does, and these are the kind of aspects to the role. This is the kind of experience you need. They even told you how to structure your form and what things to mention. And I think following that I got an interview." Esme (67-71)
"I think those open days are really great because what they do is say 'look at us, we're not aliens from a different planet, you can access this world too'." Rosie (684-686)

Participants also discussed the importance of support networks and the unwavering support from their families, friends, and partners.

"I said I'm going to apply for this thing, they [parents] were very supportive in that sense… you know, 'what can we do, how can we help?' It was very much sort of like just, being there you know, alongside me." Josiah (159-165)
"My friends have just lived with me always being the geek or the one that's working, you know 'what do you mean you're going to university again, how many times, can you go to university?!' It's always been on the cards for them, I go, and they are supportive… there's a level of acceptance and pride... I'm very lucky." Kerry (457-460)

Once the EP participants secured their places on training courses, they spoke about the valuable pastoral support from their course tutors and the positive impact of this.

"One of the tutors, when they knew that I was from the background I was from, they gave me special attention… I really liked that he'd always make a point of stopping to have a conversation with me and ask

me how I was doing and so on. That was lovely, it did help me. It was nice to know there was somebody there I could talk to." Liam (308-313)

"My personal tutor was absolutely lovely and really supportive and was kind of keen to talk to and identify with me 'cause she's from a working-class background and she kind of understood the struggles and the significant imposter syndrome. And not feeling academic and all of that stuff." Esme (347-350)

Throughout the training course and once qualified, several participants highlighted the value of their colleagues' supportive nature.

"I also incredibly value my colleagues support and being able to message them and go, what do you think about this? I've had this experience-kind of talking it through with someone." Natalie (482-484)

In addition to social support, some participants were able to access the course due to having financial support from a partner.

"I had a relationship at the time and so we were paying bills together and it felt like we were, umm, in it together and it wasn't all on me trying to make my way through. I felt supported by that relationship." Stephanie (123-125)

"I was quite fortunate… I did have my partner. I met my partner part way through this process, and he was in a very stable job, and he could help me with some of the financial aspect." Debbie (28-30)

In contrast, Rosie voiced her frustration as her financial circumstances changed due to a relationship break-up during the doctorate, but the bursary made her ineligible to access the university's hardship fund. This led to Rosie considering withdrawing from the course.

"When my partner and I split up and I was left paying all the bills and everything on this wage... it left me with 200 pounds a month to live on for food and fuel and things... I couldn't access a hardship fund, because of course I was on... there was nothing I could do... I thought I can't like drop out at this point, but I was really close because I didn't know what to do." Rosie (80-84)

EPs also emphasised their appreciation of their funded position on the course as well as the financial support from the bursary, despite the low amount.

"I was very grateful, if the course wasn't funded there's absolutely no way on earth, I could ever have done it. So, I didn't just get a 15,000-pound bursary I got like my 35,000-pound tuition fee paid." Josiah (332-334)

"Financially, I was quite dependent on the bursary, but it wasn't a big deal for me, I was used to making do and didn't have an awful lot of money to spend anyway." Imogen (190-195)

Theme 4: Evolution of self

Theme 4 details the EPs' personal and professional journey whilst training and the pursuit of a sense of belonging within the profession, as well as self-acceptance and confidence to be themselves.

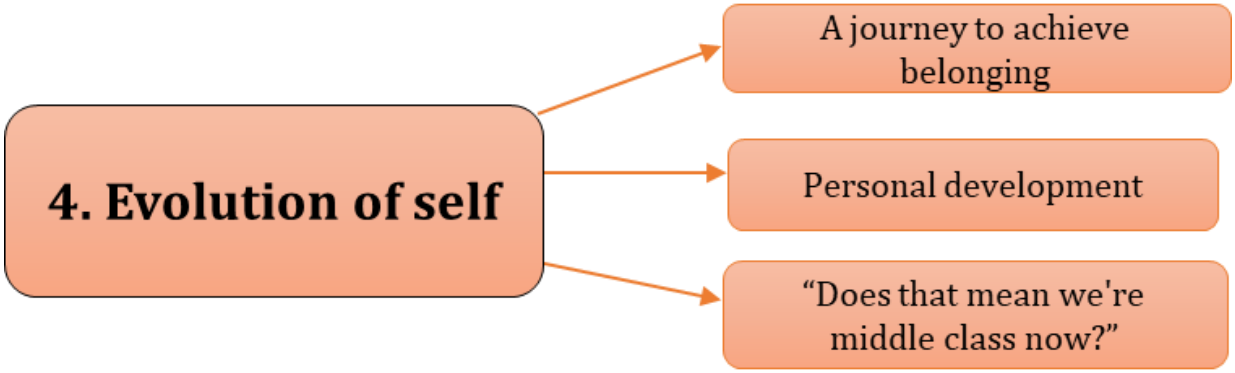

Figure 14: Theme 4 and subthemes

Subtheme 1: A journey to achieve belonging

EPs described their feelings of belonging whilst training, some EPs reported feeling comfortable, due to the context of their university.

"My training at [University] was pretty awesome I would say it was probably one of the few times, where I had felt comfortable in that it didn't feel like it was chock full of people from very privileged middle-class backgrounds." Kerry (82-84)

However other EPs struggled to fit in with their TEP peers whilst training and spoke of finding it difficult to be themselves.

"I felt like I didn't really belong, and I didn't really fit in. And sometimes I didn't fit in like in terms of the attitudes of other people… I think because of growing up in an area of high deprivation, I have a slightly different perspective on things." Esme (238-243)
"When I was a trainee with those two worlds colliding made me feel very uncomfortable and made me put on quite a show, and perhaps pretend to be someone I wasn't." Imogen (421-423)

EPs reflected on their feelings of belonging in the profession as a qualified EP, and acceptance within their EP teams. Participants reported that socially they still feel different on some occasions.

"I feel comfortable now, so I'd never told anybody that I was suspended from school ... I don't even think I told anybody on my course. I feel comfortable with the team that we have now... I felt comfortable to share that with them after these years." Lorraine (337-340)
"There is an expectation around what you do socially, it seems all the services I've been in, there's this kind of this Bohemian and middle-class type of lifestyle that people live... I know I'm different but actually, everybody's quite accepting of that in the profession. My experience on the course was different." Imogen (374-384)

Subtheme 2: Personal development

Participants reflected on their personal development and journeys to becoming qualified EPs, and how they had learned a lot about themselves.

"It's been a really fascinating journey of self-discovery." Liam (384)

EPs shared they had noticed an increase in their confidence since becoming a qualified EP.

"I felt more confident as the time had gone on to speak and to actually give an answer about something and to get things wrong and for it to be OK." Esme (249-251)

Participants also shared that they are more comfortable to be themselves and are less concerned with fitting into a stereotypical idea of what an EP should be.

"Now I'm just like well I don't really care if people judge me for not wanting to go and eat at that place and taking that holiday. I'm a good EP I believe, and it's got nothing to do with my background… I don't have that anxiety anymore that I've got to be that cookie-cutter middle-class EP which I had thought I would have to when I was a TEP." Imogen (423-428)

EPs reflected on the dissonance between themselves and their families and old friends from their LSES background and how they have noticed a shift in their own views.

"I do find it hard the tension between myself, my views and then perhaps old friends and or family member views that who I used to get on incredibly well with and wouldn't challenge or think a second thought about. And then sometimes I have these conversations and I think gosh, we're worlds away now. How did that happen and how do I manage that?" Natalie (751-754)

Subtheme 3: "Does that mean we're middle class now?"

Participants discussed the automatic social mobility they experienced when transitioning from

TEP to QEP. Despite a change of SES, several participants reported not identifying with this higher SES identity and feeling no different.

"I was asking colleagues about this recently; I was like does that mean we're middle class now? You know, because we're qualified, we've got a doctorate, and we've got quite a well-paid job..." Natalie (538-540)
"I've definitely, in some respects have changed my SES, but then I think because I'm still connected to my mum- I'm still supporting her financially- I sort of feel like that that part of me won't go away and it shaped to who I am as well and how I think about things now." Debbie (373-375)
"I'm in a very strange position where I know that I'm not of a low socioeconomic status now, but I still identify in the same way… it's really bizarre. Like kind of going through the process and feeling... Especially because I still live where I live as well, I just feel like I in a sense I haven't changed and I still feel the same" Esme (714-717)

EPs reflected on the dissonance of their new-found 'Dr' status, how other people treat them differently and their discomfort with this in terms of their instilled LSES identity.

"People kind of do treat you with- I would say deference is the word, which I find that which has led to me using it [Dr title] less and less because I find it really awkward." Josiah (742-746)
"I find it disquieting actually to occupy the position that I occupy now, and I still struggle to find a comfortable space in which to be a working-class EP" Kerry (220-222)

Participants discussed their desire not to be seen as better than anybody else, and the pride of their family and friends.

"My family and my friends are probably more proud of it than I am. I am proud of it but then I think that they are more kind of wanting to talk about it and you know, be like 'oh wow, you're a doctor!" And kind of putting me up a little bit and I'm like no no no. I'm still the same person, it's just me!" Esme (692-694)

EPs spoke of a feeling of guilt for their increased financial income, and discomfort with the privileges this afforded them, such as having spare money and being able to buy their own houses. Participants reflected on the sense of betrayal and discomfort of their upbringing in relation to this.

"I feel a huge amount of guilt that I now have money and I've been able to buy my own house…. And I'm able to have some money in savings and I'm even able to start investing a little bit, and I have to be really careful who I talk to that about. Even though I worked really, really hard, I find it very hard to get comfortable with the fact that I'm kind of reaping the benefits of what I've sewn." Kerry (405-411)

"I kind of go around sometimes in my professional life, like knowing what I earn and kind of the way I am now with a sense of guilt, like 10-year-old me would be looking at me just like tutting … I don't know what I'd say to 10-year-old me, like you know, I feel like I kind of betrayed to some extent that young person and that upbringing." Josiah (717-721)

Theme 5: "It's really difficult to talk about."

Theme 5 outlines the difficulties EPs felt existed in terms of discussing and sharing the impact of their LSES background on their experiences. Participants shared their views around a lack of awareness due to the invisibility of LSES, the difficulty in talking about it due to the taboo nature of the topic, and the feeling that there are not currently the forums nor opportunities to speak about their experiences.

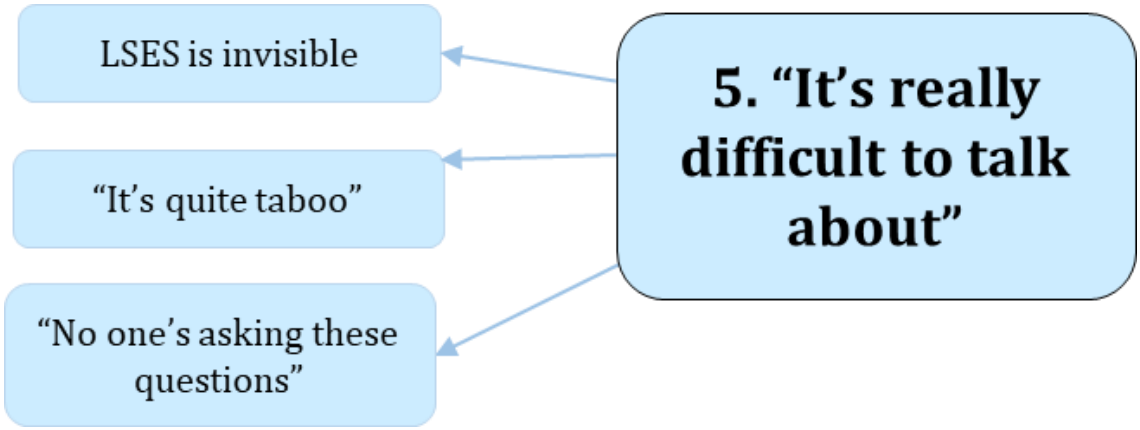

Figure 15: Theme 5 and subthemes

Subtheme 1: LSES is invisible

EPs spoke to the lack of awareness of LSES and hypothesised that this may be due to the unseen nature of LSES in comparison to other areas of difference. EPs discussed how being from a LSES is easy to hide, which led to assumptions being made by others regarding their background. This led to them not feeling understood.

"It's hidden isn't it, unlike being a wheelchair user or being black, that experience of poverty is hidden you don't know that unless someone says. There's nothing about me that would say 'hey this guy grew up without having any electricity over the weekends or you know... having to like sit by candlelight because the electricity has gone out... unless you disclose it, which I think puts it, you know I suppose very similar to like gender identity and sexuality, it's often hidden." Josiah (1059-1065)

"I always thought that nobody kind of got it, where I was in my situation with my level of income. And… nobody like realised because I went to a good university because I've got this accent everybody just assumed I was quite well off." Rosie (106-108)

EPs highlighted the difficulty in sharing their experiences due to these assumptions. This was particularly pertinent in Imogen's interview, as illustrated by the quotation below, her attempt to share her experiences was met with challenge and provoked an emotional reaction.

"There was an assumption that we had all come from really lovely backgrounds... and we all grew up with lots of money, and that wasn't my background, I didn't associate with it. She [tutor] just assumed that was the background of everybody in the room, and that's not where I came from. I was feeling alienated at the time ... I said, you know, 'that doesn't resonate with me'. And we got into this big argument... She [tutor] was challenging me- saying 'no, no you're on this course, and that means you cannot have come from a deprived background, because how on earth could you be here?' … So, and I ended up in tears in the session, which was really embarrassing." Imogen (141-160)

Subtheme 2: "It's quite taboo"

EPs shared their lack of confidence to talk about their LSES experiences due to not feeling confident or safe to do so. EPs also reported they felt a reluctance to complain, and the construction that speaking about such a personal subject is taboo and not generally socially acceptable. The cloak of anonymity provided by this research was cited as a facilitator to having a conversation about the impact of their LSES background on their experiences.

"I think it's really difficult to talk about because when I'm talking about it in relation to me, I feel like I'm sounding 'woe is me', or like I've had it really hard when actually I know that people have it so much harder than me and I'm in a privileged position in many ways." Stephanie (767-770)

"It feels fine to talk about because you know, I know this is anonymous so... It's quite taboo I think, to talk about it openly, I go back to what I was like in that that session with that tutor when I just burst into tears. You know it was so personal to me." Imogen (624-627)

Subtheme 3: "No one's asking these questions"

EPs shared the view that there are seldom opportunities to discuss the present topic in their everyday work lives.

"When you get to my stage you don't tend to talk about the constructs of how things are, and I would say that sometimes when you do have those conversations with colleagues, it resurfaces, that difference in your background." Liam (330-332)

There was some reflection on the salience of LSES on experiences, and a curiosity as to why LSES does not appear to be discussed in line with other areas of difference.

"It would be very helpful for training courses or universities or the wider profession to start thinking about, how to allow people to speak more freely about their backgrounds and the difficulties that some people face in trying to access and manage. And for some people that's going to be layered with race, for example, or disability or maybe sexuality, you know. And we speak about all of these other things, but I'm interested why we don't speak about background or class or whatever, in the same way." Kerry (567-572)

Several participants commented on their motivation for participating in the study and the lack of discussions within the subject area.

"I think it's really great that you're even exploring this and investigating, because no one's been asking these questions, so I think that's the other thing that drew me to this study is no one's been asking these questions." Debbie (609-611)

Theme 6: "Coming from a LSES background can give you all kinds of advantages"

This theme outlines the strengths of coming from a LSES background and the impact on EPs' working practice.

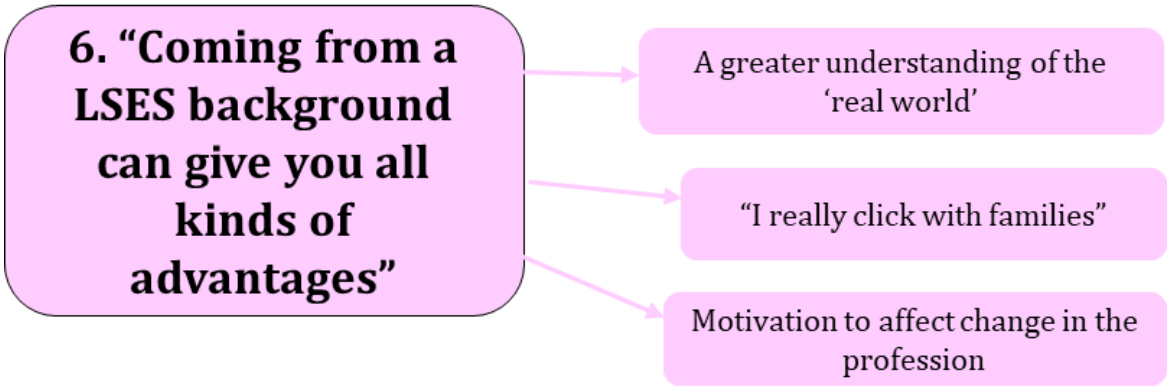

Figure 16: Theme 6 and subthemes

Subtheme 1: A greater understanding of the 'real world'

EPs shared that their experiences of growing up in a LSES gave them a greater understanding of most families' ways of living in the 'real world'.

"One of the things that it- sort of my previous experiences, gave me on the course was... like a sense of 'real worldliness' like hearing some discussions, the theoretical, hypothetical discussions and just kind of thinking like... yeah that's fine but that's not how people live, you know, that's a ridiculous idea." Josiah (364-367)

Participants reflected on their ability to understand the systemic factors, such as lack of money, and the impact of this on families and CYP. EPs viewed their experiences as enabling them to think in a more holistic sense, whereas they hypothesised that those from more privileged backgrounds may not have the same level of understanding.

"I think I'm quite good at thinking about the person within the context and all those things that are stressors and variables upon them." Kerry (376-378)

"I wonder whether people who are more privileged will consider how big a deal not having money is… how much stress it can put on relationships as well. I don't know how much that someone more privileged would reach for straight away. I think they might talk about the secondary issues, which are the mental health or the acrimonious relationship, the tensions there and so on. Or the lack of community engagement that the child's got, but not think back to what that cause is." Stephanie (399-406)

EPs highlighted the value of experiencing coming from a LSES background and the value of being able to understand the people they work with.

"A large proportion of the families we work with come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, so who better to support them and someone who has also come from a lower socioeconomic background and can really understand that adversity? And I'm not saying that those who haven't, are not able to apply the psychology and support them and be empathetic. Of course they are, but I think you know that variety is going to be really helpful in the profession." Imogen (535-540)

Subtheme 2: "I really click with families"

Several EPs discussed their ability to build rapport and develop trust with CYP and their families and enable them to feel at ease.

"I've often felt- throughout my training on placements and since I finished- that I am far more comfortable speaking to parents, and parents have said that they're far more comfortable talking with me than perhaps they thought they would be." Kerry (236-239)

"I can often relate quite well, or people feel a bit more at ease perhaps around me when I go in that I'm not, they don't feel like perhaps they have to put on their heirs and graces when they're speaking to me." Stephanie (355-357)

"Sometimes I really click with families and, not that I tell them my experience, but they kind of like feel, oh you understand. I don't even know if they say that, but you get the body language, you get the feeling that they kind of are trusting you, that you do get it to some extent." Natalie (325-328)

Many participants reflected on their own working practice and ability to relate to service users on a deeper level and be reflexive, based on their own experiences and struggles.

"When I'm talking to parents, I think to myself: If I said that in front of my mum, would she know what I mean?" Kerry (615-616)
"I have a real strong drive towards transparency, democracy, openness, collegiality, collaboration. And I think that comes from a sense of unfairness when you're poor. Lots is very unfair, and you don't really get to know why things have happened, or how they've happened, it just happens to you." Josiah (852-855)

EPs also discussed the benefit on their experiences and how they felt it has gifted them with authenticity which has enabled families to open up without fear of being judged.

"There is very little that a parent or a child or teacher could tell me that could shock me… I've had children disclose different things, I've had parents explain very sensitive histories that they've gone through. And it's been a real privilege that they felt that they were able to share that for the benefit of the child that we're working with. I do think actually that a lot of it is to do with the fact that these things aren't new to me, you know. So, my face doesn't betray me when they're talking about the nastier side of some stuff I guess… I don't just fall into a sense of false pity, you know, I can relate in a way that's not false. There's an authenticity, I think that I'm able to bring to that" Kerry (724-733)
"I think my experience helped. I think I can speak with parents, and they are quite open. Perhaps instead of a bit defensive, which can also happen when a family come up against someone who… exudes that kind of middle-class air, you know, they've never had to worry about things before in that kind of thing." Natalie 380-384

Subtheme 3: Motivation to affect change in the profession

In view of their own experiences and finding it difficult to access information on the EP profession, participants shared their motivation to be a relatable role model and support raising awareness of the existence of the EP profession.

"If a potential candidate came to my service and asked to speak to me I would hope that they would see that I'm not this kind of academic expert in the profession, that old-school view of a psychologist; that I'm quite

approachable and I haven't got a fancy accent. And that I am quite open to all sorts of backgrounds in a real sense." Imogen (540-544)
"I've offered before and I said to school like, if you ever want me to talk about like the career path into educational psychology, I would be really happy to do that. Just because of where it was as well and because of where I live and where I grew up was like it's kind of somebody from a similar background and a similar area of similar educational experience talking to you about how they got into psychology." Esme (775-779)
"I've got one [case] recently in a children's home, and I said, you know, I used to work in place like this and I also used to be in the care system. And I always try and make- try to be the EP who made a difference for me. To show and demonstrate that things... these things are possible." Liam (323- 326)

Discussion

This study explored the perspectives and experiences of ten qualified EPs at different stages of their career. The aim was to gain an understanding of how their LSES backgrounds impacted on their experiences in training and practising as a qualified EP. The results will be discussed in relation to each research question and literature previously reviewed as well as psychological theories and frameworks. Following this, implications for practice are then considered.

Research question 1. What are the experiences of EPs who identify as coming from a LSES background in training to be an EP; what are the facilitators and barriers for accessing and completing the doctorate?

Many of the findings from this research are consistent with those seen in the wider literature:

Facilitators to accessing and completing the doctorate

Participants cited their LSES backgrounds as motivation to train to be an EP, in contrast to Jury and colleagues (2017) whose review suggested that individuals from LSES backgrounds often struggle with motivation to access and attend HE. This finding can be understood as participants believing they have the power to change their situations and having an internal locus of control (Rotter, 1954). In contrast to previous literature, which suggested that being raised in a LSES background and observing one's parents in hardship may cause the construction that their lives are shaped by circumstances out of their control (Shifrer, 2018), and therefore cause them to have an external locus of control (Betthäuser et al., 2019; Rotter, 1954). The EPs in the current study spoke of their determination to secure a career and not suffer the same hardships as their parents. Research has shown that those with an internal locus

of control often attain higher status occupations (Betthäuser et al., 2019), such is the case with the participants within this study.

Despite the psychological and financial barriers, EPs persisted to apply for the doctorate, in some cases multiple times, and spoke of being motivated by their own aspirations to attain a career and achieve financial stability, similar to existing studies (Pitman, 2013; Raven, 2018). These findings can be understood in relation to Maslow's (1943; 1970) theory of human motivation which states the need for growth drives motivation and therefore behaviour.

In support of findings from Pitman (2013) and O'Shea (2016), many participants highlighted the importance of support from their family, friends and partners throughout the doctorate. Consistent with Raven (2018) EPs highlighted the importance of support from teachers and professionals academically and pastorally, as can be seen from Liam and Imogen's accounts. As highlighted by Josiah, parents were supportive of them whilst training despite not understanding what they were studying, in further support of Raven (2018). EPs highlighted the positive impact of the support they received on their resilience, consistent with Crumb et al. (2020).

Barriers experienced to access and complete the doctorate

Prior to commencing study on the doctorate, coming from a LSES background created several barriers for participants to accessing the EP profession, such as a lack of cultural and social capital. This can be understood in terms of Bourdieu's (1967; 1986) notion of cultural and social capital, or the combination of both described as informational capital (Lessky et al., 2021). This is consistent with findings from existing research on students from LSES backgrounds in HE (Reay et al., 2010; Reay, 2019).

Once aware of the EP profession and doctorate, EPs experienced psychological barriers of self-doubt, supporting Jury et al.'s (2017) findings. These findings reflect that of participants in Lehmann's (2014) research who reflected on their negative assumptions and expectations regarding fitting in and experiencing barriers at university due to their backgrounds. Further, Imogen and Liam mentioned being concerned about the impact of their literacy difficulties. These constructions can be understood in terms of Burnham's (2018) notion that individuals construct their experiences based on areas of difference such as class and ability.

Several barriers reported by EPs were due to lack of financial capital both prior to and during the doctorate. EPs reported having to seriously consider whether they were able to accept their place on the doctorate due to the low amount of the bursary and their lack of financial capital, and several EPs cited financial concerns as a cause of anxiety throughout training. The

disruption caused by the lack of financial capital was significant in Stephanie and Josiah's experiences regarding their difficulty affording costs associated with the compulsory need to source and maintain a car. The inability to afford to fix such issues negatively impacted their ability to attend placement, which participants were concerned would impact on their reputation. This supports Singer's (2021) writing in the grey literature.

Participants spoke of struggling financially throughout the doctorate, and Rosie shared her frustrations with not having a financial safety net when her personal circumstances changed, and she was ineligible to access the university's hardship fund. This was a concern also cited by participants in Pásztor and Wakeling's (2018) study. Rosie reported having to seriously consider whether she would have to withdraw from the course because of this.

Stephanie and several other EPs had to work part-time jobs alongside their studies and placement, similar to participants in Taylor and House's (2010) research. EPs reported this led to a difficult balancing act with regards to earning money to afford the cost of living and completing academic work on the doctorate, which negatively impacted their experiences, in support of Roberts' (2011) findings. Participants shared their construction that they had to work harder than their more privileged peers. This is supported by Jury et al.'s (2017) review of worldwide literature in relation to experiences of those from LSES in HE, which concluded that those from LSES face more financial barriers than those from more privileged backgrounds, which negatively impacts their experiences.

Similar to Crumb et al.'s (2020) findings, EPs often felt overwhelmed when trying to balance working to earn money and demands of the doctorate. This highlights the need for systemic change to funding arrangements and consideration of emergency finance arrangements for doctoral students.

EPs also raised the challenge of affording the cost of moving to study on the doctorate. Some participants spoke of having to move to a different area of the UK to access the doctorate, which had financial implications and was particularly challenging for those from rural areas. This finding supports that of Brook and Michell (2012).

Thinking systemically, the financial barriers of the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005), i.e., the low amount of bursary and lack of availability of financial aid, negatively impacted the EP's experiences as they had to work part-time jobs alongside the doctorate. Having to work also impacted the mesosystemic relationships (Bronfenbrenner 1979; 2005) between EPs and their TEP peers during training, as some EPs reported resenting their more privileged peers who did not have to work.

Other barriers whilst training centred around the EPs' perception of their inadequacy of informational capital in comparison to TEPs from more privileged backgrounds. EPs reported they had less informational capital than their TEP peers. This impacted many of the EPs' confidence during training and led to them feeling inferior to their more privileged peers. Six out of ten EP participants mentioned experiencing imposter syndrome throughout their training as a result of this. This supports the findings of Crumb and colleagues (2020) whose participants reported feeling out of place due to their lack of informational capital whilst in university.

EPs also spoke of struggling to fit in and be themselves whilst training. This is consistent with the findings of Reay (2019) and Reay et al (2010). Participants in Crozier and colleagues' (2008) study reported experiencing a conflict between wanting to fit in whilst at university without betraying their identity, which had an emotional impact. The findings of the current study support this finding and were particularly dominant in Kerry's interview.

The journey to achieve belonging was a subtheme gathered from the data and summarises the process of gradually fitting in amongst colleagues within the profession. This supports the idea that belonging is a process rather than a static status (Antonsich, 2010).

Findings suggest that EPs developed their habitus due to their learning from social interactions whilst at university similar to Crozier et al.'s (2008) findings. The chronosystem of time spent on the doctoral course can be considered important to the development of such habitus (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Several participants mentioned the assumptions of others and how this impacted their ability to share their experiences. Participants were frustrated with the assumptions made by others regarding their SES backgrounds, consistent with findings from O'Hara and Cook (2018) who coined such instances social class microaggressions (SCMs). These assumptions discouraged participants from speaking about their backgrounds, consistent with Brook and Michell's (2012) findings. This was particularly highlighted by Imogen, who described her attempt to challenge the assumption of a university tutor and the difficult experience this presented. This finding can also be understood in terms of Burnham's (2018) four quadrants of visible-invisible and voiced-unvoiced, as illustrated in Figure 17.

Visual aspects of a person's appearance such as gender, race, age, culture and other aspects of appearance act as clues for Social Graces outlined by Burnham (2018). In the absence of these visual cues, an aspect of a person's identity becomes invisible (Burnham, 2018). Burnham (2018) explains that these aspects may be unvoiced by the individual or others due to lack of awareness, perception of relevance or cultural rules of politeness. This aids understanding of

theme 5 in relation to EPs feeling as though their LSES was invisible and that it was taboo to talk about, aligning with the idea of in-visible and un-voiced, as highlighted in Figure 17 below (Burnham, 2018).

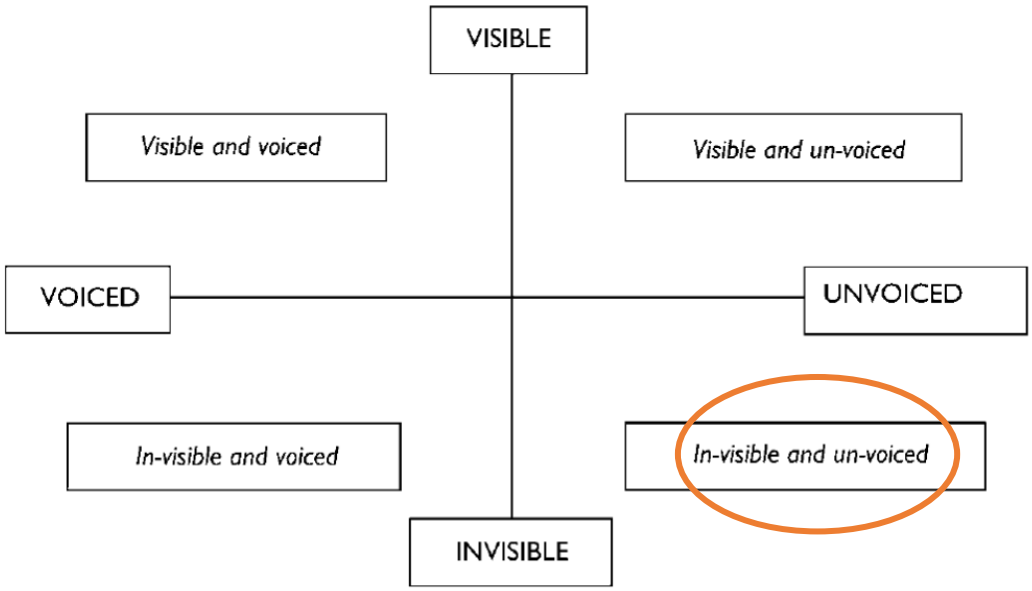

Figure 17: The four quadrants of visible-invisible, voice-unvoiced (Burnham, 2018)

Research Question 2. What are the experiences of EPs who identify as coming from a LSES background practising in the profession; how has coming from a LSES background impacted or influenced this?

The experience of automatic social mobility: a change of identity?

EPs reflected on how their SES identity is assumed to change somewhat automatically upon qualification from the doctorate. In support of existing research from Reay (2019), EPs discussed impact of this and the discomfort it caused for them.

These findings can also be understood in terms of Day et al.'s (2006) research which suggested a circular effect of personal change influencing a person's professional identity, and professional development influencing one's personal identity. Day et al. (2006) explained that the enmeshment of the personal and professional aspects of identity is unavoidable.

Although in the current study, some participants such as Kerry expressed a reluctance to accept their new, higher SES. This can be understood in terms of resisting acculturation, which is the need to adapt to new situations (Gans, 2007). This is consistent with participants in Pásztor and Wakeling's (2018) research who shared that they did not feel as though their life had

transformed as a result of attending HE. Existing research supports these findings whereby participants express resistance to accept the status quo (O'Shea, 2016). An explanation for this was offered by some EPs in this study, who shared their experiences of visiting family who still live in the area they grew up in.

EPs discussed feelings of guilt in relation to their financial status significantly improving as a result of practising as an EP. This finding is also supported by Crozier et al. (2019) who concluded that LSES students often moved between multiple identities with tension between wanting to belong, and concerns that they would betray their LSES roots. Debbie and Esme spoke of their LSES background forming part of their identity, and the importance of maintaining contact with family and old friends. Natalie raised how it can be difficult as her views and interests are different from her family at times, similar to findings from Lehmann (2014), who highlighted the unease caused at being "caught between two worlds" (p. 12).

Kerry and Josiah discussed their difficulty in accepting and relating to the professional privilege and status that their 'Dr' title has gifted them. This offers further support to Lehmann's (2014) findings regarding the sense of unease caused by successful social mobility. EPs spoke of experiencing a journey of achieving belonging and ability to accept themselves once qualified. Imogen spoke of her development of confidence to be herself and feeling accepted by her colleagues. Lorraine also spoke of feeling more comfortable to share stories from her upbringing than she was whilst on training.

The issue of lack of awareness and conversations about the impact of LSES formed a subtheme of these findings. Even when qualified, EPs felt as though there was little awareness of the issue and few opportunities to discuss their experiences. This can also be seen in findings from Brook and Michell's (2012) study, which found that feeling out of place was perpetuated by their feelings of being unable to talk about their families or life experience whilst at university.

Previous literature has highlighted the lack of diversity in regard to doctoral study and suggested this contributes to the lack of diversity of doctoral tutors (Lindner, 2020). The current study shows that this finding can also be applied to the EP profession. There appears to be a lack of diversity and visible role models from LSES backgrounds (AEP, 2021; Lyonette et al., 2019), and a lack of conversation on the subject may be contributing to the lack of diversity within the profession. Considering the impact of circular causality (Juarrero, 2000), it is pertinent to wonder whether there is a lack of diversity within the profession, because there is a lack of conversation about this, and vice versa. This highlights an important implication for facilitating safe discussions of these issues.

"Coming from a LSES background can give you all kinds of advantages": impact and influence on EP practice

EPs discussed the value of their experiences in relation to their ability to have empathy for CYP and their families. Stephanie highlighted her ability to consider the impacts of the exosystem on an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005), such as parental financial resources on CYP. Other EPs including Imogen echo this and highlighted the value of her experiences as most service users she works with often come from a LSES.

Several EPs highlighted their ability to relate to families and help them to feel at ease. Kerry described her ability to practice in a non-judgemental way, which she attributes to her experiences growing up. This can be considered in view of Bourdieu's (1986) notion of habitus. EPs may feel more at ease when working with service users as their previously acquired habitus, or ways of being, are applicable in these circumstances.

As evident from Josiah and Kerry's quotes, EPs reported their experiences were beneficial and influential in their practice, for example using accessible language and ensuring true collaboration and choice. This suggests that EPs experiences impacted their values and therefore their working practice.

Some EPs highlighted the importance of diversity within the profession and spoke of their motivation to speak at open events to ensure greater awareness of the profession. This supports conclusions from existing research regarding the need for increased outreach events (Lessky et al., 2021).

Once qualified, EPs were able to view their backgrounds as advantageous, particularly in regard to being a relatable role model and having a greater awareness of difficulties associated with coming from LSES backgrounds, which supports Lehmann's (2014) findings.

There is currently no existing research on the experiences of EPs from a LSES with which to draw direct comparison of these findings; although the current study suggests that coming from a LSES is less impactful as a qualified EP. This would benefit from exploration in future research.

Summary

Findings of this study suggest that prior to and during training, EPs faced a variety of barriers:

- Financial difficulties and anxiety due to their lack of financial safety net,
- Lack of awareness of the EP profession and route to train,
- Lack of informational capital about the EP profession,

- Having to move and the financial implications,
- Psychological barriers, imposter syndrome and feeling inadequate,
- Difficulty fitting in socially whilst training,
- Feeling as though their identity was unseen and assumed,
- Finding it hard to share experiences of LSES due to these assumptions and the taboo nature of such talk.

EPs reported feeling as though they had an inequitable experience to other TEPs from more privileged backgrounds due to these barriers. Whilst participants found it challenging to access the profession due to these barriers, EPs highlighted that their experiences were supported by family, friends and professionals. The importance of their intrinsic motivation was discussed, which participants viewed as a result of their LSES experiences.

Once qualified most participants recognised the strengths and resources that their experiences in a LSES had equipped them with. EPs shared the view that they are able to have a greater understanding of the real world which is helpful to them in terms of relating to and build rapport with families. EPs also spoke of being motivated to affect change to increase diversity within the profession by raising the profile of the profession and striving to be relatable role models.

EPs still felt as though there is a lack of discussion about LSES within the profession, and there are not many opportunities to highlight the importance of it. EPs discussed the automatic social mobility that comes with qualifying as an EP, and their dissonance with this change in SES identity.

Implications for Practice

Findings from the current study suggest multiple implications for EPs and EP services, training institutions and wider systems. Implications are outlined below in Table 8.

Table 8: Implications for Practice

Implications for EP services and EPs	EPs in the current study reported being unaware of the EP profession and how to train to become an EP. This suggests the importance of raising the profile and increasing visibility of the profession at an earlier stage of education. This could look like making links with local secondary schools and FE colleges and attending careers events to raise awareness of the EP profession. Particular attention should be paid to schools in known areas of relative deprivation and those with low rates of HE participation. EPs in the current study highlighted that outreach and open day events organised by EP services were helpful to them in their EP journey. Where possible, these events should be encouraged across different local authorities, offering a mixture of online and in person events at various times of the day and week to increase accessibility. The findings suggested that EP participants have not felt able to talk about their LSES backgrounds and the implications of this. The BPS (2019) state that EPs should recognise the diversity of the social, economic and cultural context of their work and 'awareness and understanding of these issues are vital ingredients in the training of educational psychologists' (p. 8). In view of this, EPs could provide culturally sensitive supervision, such as ideas presented by Totsuka (2014) and Soni et al. (2021). Facilitation of regular peer and professional supervision within local and regional EP teams could take place to facilitate discussions in this area. These sessions could provide a safe space for EPs from LSES backgrounds to share their experiences, provide emotional support, reflect on their confidence and development and celebrate strengths and resiliency. This initiative could be inclusive of any trainee EPs on placement within the EP services. Organisations could explore the interest for such groups and sessions using social media such as Twitter or forums such as EPNET.

Implications for training institutions and wider systems	The barriers to accessing the profession highlighted by participants emphasise the need for more inclusive environments for TEPs and EPs from LSES backgrounds. The findings suggest that more outreach at an earlier stage of education and to rural areas is important to support increasing diversity. Information should be readily available and shared regarding the entry requirements to apply for funded EP doctorate. A review of how information is currently presented on organisations' websites should take place, such as the universities that offer the EP doctorate, as well as the BPS and AEP websites to consider accessibility and clarity. Consideration should also be given to completing a review of the geographical locations of training institutions, and the possibility of offering more training locations that are accessible for those in more rural areas of the UK should be considered. To further increase accessibility, tutor teams should explore the use of a hybrid model for university teaching sessions as an option, where appropriate. The SMC (2021) suggest that universities should assess what measurements they are using to ensure those from a LSES are accessing their institutions, both as students and staff. Data could be gathered to track the number of applicants from LSES backgrounds and what proportion are accepted onto the course, as well as monitoring attrition rates or interruptions of study. Measuring LSES with free school meals eligibility is useful, however there are many people this measurement misses and there is a need for self-identification in this right. Further, consideration of how accessible interviews are for everybody should also be discussed. Universities could request feedback from applicants on this subject and action any suggestions from this. The findings also highlight the saliency of ensuring access to financial support and consideration of the lack of financial capital of those from LSES backgrounds. Going forward, a review of funding arrangements for students on the EP doctorate should be undertaken, and consideration should be given to increase the bursary in line with the current cost of living. Further, universities offering the EP doctorate should ensure that TEPs are eligible to access hardship support funds if their circumstances change whilst on the doctorate.

	Universities should review the diversity of interviewers for representation. Tutors of the EP doctorate may wish to consider providing a mentor programme for new TEPs to facilitate feelings of belonging. They may also wish to adopt Burnham's (2018) social graces model during professional supervision to provide a safe space to explore the impact of social graces and differences on individuals. Finally, to address the taboo nature of discussing backgrounds as the participants in this study raised, organisations should consider hosting conferences to provide a platform of visibility and celebrate areas of diversity and difference such as LSES. Virtually, a space could be created for EPs from LSES backgrounds to chat online, and the possibility of a working group could be explored.

Strengths, limitations, and areas for future research

Table 9 outlines strengths and limitations as well as areas for future research following the findings of the current study.

Table 9: Limitations and strengths of the research and areas for future research

Limitations of the research	Strengths of the research
• The majority of participants were white (n=7) females (n=8) who had trained and worked in England (n=8). The age range of participants was between 24-44 years, and 9 out of ten participants trained in England therefore there is limited generalisability. • There were other questions that could have been asked on the demographic information sheet such as type of education institution attended and whether EPs had caring responsibilities at the time of training. Further exploration of these factors in future research will be beneficial. • The virtual nature of interviews limited the interviewer's ability to respond verbally to participants throughout the interview due to the	• The demographic data collected from the majority (n=9) of participants aids understanding of the context of the findings and allowed space for the impact of intersectionality; however, this did not feature in the current findings. • The underrepresentation of males within the current study is reflected within the EP profession (AEP, 2021) as well as wider professions in psychology (Palmer et al., 2021). • The researcher was not aiming for generalisability, the perspectives of ten participants from UK give an in-depth understanding of the experiences of people who

risk of an overlap in sound and compromising the video recording. There were a small number of occasions where quality of internet connections made transcription challenging for the researcher. • The interviewer not being in the same physical space as the participant meant that it was never fully known whether the participant was ok following the interview when the video call ended. The researcher spent time with participants at the end of the interviews to ensure that they were feeling ok and give them an opportunity to ask questions or offer reflections. • The researcher was less experienced in interviews due to being a first-time doctoral researcher. • Some participants commented on the difficulties thinking about specific examples of their experiences during interview. Future research may wish to consider two-part interviews or sharing questions with participants beforehand to support this. • Although all EPs who participated were qualified, they are not necessarily a homogenous group. Consideration of the punctuation of this research is pertinent, as EPs were in different stages of their careers, although they were all in a position to reflect positively on their experiences from a position of higher SES and the financial security that accompanied this.	completed the current route to EP training in England and Wales. • Semi-structured interviews allowed an in-depth discussion to allow participants to share their experiences. • Some participants commented that holding the interviews online encouraged them to take part as they perceived it as taking less time and effort than a face-to-face interview. • The online interviews may have helped the participants to feel as though they could speak more freely. • The sample size was appropriate for the small to medium size project (Braun & Clarke, 2013).
Areas for future research	
• Exploration of the impact of intersectionality for EPs who experience multiple areas of difference. • In view of the current cost of living crisis (Institute for Government, 2022), it would be pertinent to explore the experiences of current TEPs from LSES backgrounds. • As raised by Raven (2018), white men from disadvantaged backgrounds continue to be the most underrepresented group in HE, and this underrepresentation continues into psychology professions	

(Palmer et al., 2021). Available demographic information on EPs confirms this is reflected in the EP profession (AEP, 2021). Although two participants within the current study were male, further exploration with male EPs would be beneficial.

- Exploration of the experiences of EPs from rural areas.
- Exploration of the experiences of EPs from LSES backgrounds who trained and work in Scotland.

Conclusions

The current study explored the experiences of ten qualified EPs who identified as coming from a LSES background in accessing and completing the EP doctorate and practising within the profession, and how their backgrounds impacted these experiences. There were six main themes that were developed: “It isn’t going to land in your lap, that’s for sure”; “At times, it felt really unfair”; Finding a way out; Evolution of self; “It’s really difficult to talk about” and “Coming from a LSES background can give you all kinds of advantages”.

These themes highlight the challenges and barriers that EPs faced in terms of accessing the profession, including financial barriers and lack of social and cultural capital. Some facilitators to their experiences existed, including their intrinsic motivation and support from friends and family. Findings from this research have demonstrated that although EPs from LSES backgrounds can experience barriers to accessing and completing the EP doctorate, their experiences can prove helpful for practising within the profession, as EPs felt as though they had a sense of how to relate with families and a greater sense of the real world.

This research raises important implications for EPs, training institutions and wider systems in terms of reviewing current practice to facilitate inclusion into the profession for those from LSES backgrounds. Important implications are also highlighted in terms of the lack of financial capital and the negative impact on their experiences participants reported experiencing as TEPs, and the importance of reconsideration of eligibility for access to hardship funds during training, and consideration of increasing the bursary in light of the current cost of living crisis.

Due to the absence of existing research in this area, this study provides an important insight into the contexts of the ten EPs, who had qualified in the last year to ten years. Further research in this area with current TEPs would be valuable, as well as consideration of other minorities within the profession. In addition, consideration should be given as to how to have such conversations safely to facilitate discussion of the subject.

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Part 3: Critical Appraisal

Word count: approx 7,860

Overview

The critical appraisal will be discussed in two parts, Part A: contribution to knowledge and Part B: critical account of the research practitioner. This appraisal is written in a way which intends to give a reflective and reflexive account of the research process and journey, and the role and development of the researcher within it, therefore critical appraisal will be written in the first person to emphasise this (Willig, 2017).

Part A: Contribution to knowledge

Development of the research topic

My interest in this topic stems from my personal experiences growing up in a single-parent family in a rural area of North Wales. I did not feel different in any way throughout school, perhaps due to my privilege of being brought up in a supporting and loving family, accessing a good education and being academically able (Burnham, 2018). On entry to university, this changed. As the first in my family to attend HE, I was not sure what to expect. I noticed deficits in my own knowledge, and it felt like my eyes were opened to a brand-new world. I had to make an effort to fit in socially because of this, and noticed significant personal development as a result. Academically, I thrived in HE and was excited for my new life as a graduate.

Upon graduating, I worked a series of low-income jobs supporting children and young people (CYP). I strived to become a psychologist, but that career path felt out of reach for me. An assistant EP vacancy came up in my local area and my partner and family encouraged me to apply. I never believed I would be good enough for this role, especially as the salary was almost twice what I was being paid at the time. I got the job and I learned how lucky I was to obtain this highly sought-after role.

During my time as an assistant and Trainee EP I have experienced imposter syndrome when working with other professionals in a formal context, and regarding my academic writing. Imposter syndrome was first coined as imposter phenomenon by Clance and Imes in 1978 when referring to high-achieving women who struggled to internalise their own success. The term is also often used to describe feelings of fraudulence which can cause anxiety and stress (Clance & Imes, 1978).

I noticed that that feeling went away when I was working with CYP and their families and building rapport seemed to come naturally to me. I was able to offer an alternative perspective due to my own experiences, which appeared to be greatly helpful. A poignant example of this was during a consultation with a teacher who expressed frustration that a child had lost their

glasses, and the parent had not ordered a replacement pair. The teacher appeared to be constructing the parent as lazy, however I recognised that this may be due to a lack of finances, and they may feel shame in admitting that for fear of being judged. The differences in our constructions and assumptions sparked curiosity and I wondered whether this was due to my own experiences. I began to recognise this as a strength, to think more holistically about the exosystemic impact of family finances on the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005).

I also noticed that I had developed the ability to speak the language of EPs and code switch when I was working with CYP and families and speaking to my own family. This can be likened to acculturation (Gans, 2007), which is usually applied in research on ethnicity, but can be applied to SES. I reflected at length about the dissonance I had personally in terms of my identity and felt as though this was an isolated experience.

When considering what area to focus my thesis, I headed the words spoken to me by then-supervisor Andrea Higgins who asked me "what gets you going, what are you passionate and curious about?" Inspired by my own personal experience, I completed a scoping review of the literature and realised there was a gap in this area.

Diversity as a hot topic in educational psychology

I noticed that increasing diversity in the EP profession appeared to be high on the agenda of the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP), as they had recently hosted a conference and provided a webpage of resources on the topic (AEP, 2021b). To find out more, I met virtually with the General Secretary of the AEP and two professional policy support officers regarding current issues and the AEP's vision for widening participation. All of whom were interested in the insights the current study had to offer.

Although no qualitative research about the experiences of EPs from low SES (LSES) backgrounds were found, data from recent workforce surveys in Wales (Lyonette et al., 2019) and England (AEP, 2021b) suggested there exists a lack of diversity within the EP profession. According to these surveys, EPs are predominantly white, middle-class women. I wondered whether the classification of middle-class reflected their backgrounds, or whether they had responded in consideration of their current social class as a practising EP. The surveys had highlighted an issue, but no explorations of the nuance of the experiences and the reasons for the lack of diversity had been explored in the literature. Several articles within The Psychologist magazine offered reflections from trainee psychologists on their experiences, such as from Lissack (2020) and Singer (2021). Reading these articles and observing the reaction on social

media such as Twitter highlighted how this was topical, and the importance of exploring it through formal research.

Challenges in reviewing the literature

Issues of terminology

Upon conducting initial scoping searches, I realised that my understanding of the definition of socioeconomic status (SES) was challenged. I learned that LSES and working class are separate constructs, whereas I had originally thought it was the same thing. This is a common construction, and although SES is necessary to defining and understanding social class, social class is not SES in and of itself (Cook & Lawson, 2016). SES is commonly measured in terms of a person's education, income and occupation (Baker, 2014), therefore SES is one aspect of social class that can be more concretely defined. Further, it has been suggested that people think more readily in terms of SES than social class (Manstead, 2018). In view of Cook and Lawson's (2016) definition, I justified including literature pertaining to experiences of being 'working-class' or 'lower-class'.

Some of the key terms used within the literature included terms such as 'disadvantaged', 'non-traditional' and 'deprived backgrounds' which had negative connotations. I noticed most of the literature in this area had an overtly negative focus and often explored the barriers that present due to being from a LSES (Mills, 2021, Marmot et al., 2020) and I felt as though it often positioned those from LSES as victims that needed to be saved. I disagreed with the causality that was implied by some of the literature as this contrasted my own views and experiences. This led to my decision to capture the experiences of qualified EPs from LSES backgrounds.

Constructing the literature review and finding the gaps

I experienced conscious incompetence (Howell, 1982) with regards to the literature search, so I utilised support from the subject librarian to develop my search terms and navigate different databases. The initial question I set out to explore in the literature search was *"what does the current literature say about the experiences of EPs from LSES backgrounds?"* However, there appeared to be no literature in this specific area. Since EPs have to complete an undergraduate degree and doctorate as part of the requirements to qualify, the question was broadened to *"what does the current literature say about the experiences of those from LSES backgrounds in higher education or practicing within psychology professions?"*

Conducting the literature search was frustrating and arduous. I learned the importance of transparency (Yardley, 2000) and saving records of searches during this time and used the

Moher and colleagues' (2009) PRISMA model to outline transparency of my search. As there are no clear guidance on how to write a narrative literature review (Baumeister & Leary, 1997), I had to make decisions on what was relevant to include. Narrative reviews have been argued to be subject to bias from the researcher in selecting research (Siddaway et al., 2019). To reduce this bias, I used specific search terms and inclusion criteria to ensure I did not miss relevant papers that were not discovered in the databases (See Appendix A).

The decision to focus the literature search on studies which had taken place between 2006-2021 was due to the move from one-year EP master's degree to the three-year EP doctorate. I hypothesised that, due to the longer term of the qualification and trainee EP status, this would provide additional challenges than the masters, particularly for those from LSES.

Worldwide research was included to gain wider understanding due to the limited UK-based literature. The difficulty in generalising this research is acknowledged, however the research is useful to reflect on and consider in relation to the current study and highlights the importance of this study.

Hand searches of the grey literature such as government legislation were conducted, and a 'pearl growing' or 'snowballing' (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) approach was used to search relevant websites and journals to minimise the risk of missing relevant information from initial systematic searches (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). I wanted to ensure that I did not miss any important new publications, so the searches were repeated in April 2022. A full outline of the literature search process is presented in Appendix A for transparency.

Literature searches were completed during the development of the research, but most of the focussed literature review was written following data analysis. This was to ensure I remained close to the data.

The themes identified in the critical review of existing literature were:

1. Personal agency and motivation
2. Informational capital and belonging
3. Identity and fitting in socially
4. Self-efficacy, support, and resilience
5. Lack of financial security and managing a work-life balance.

Although these themes were gleaned from research largely conducted with undergraduate students from LSES backgrounds with various limitations (discussed in Part 2), they appeared relevant to the current study and provided rationale for the importance of exploration in this area.

There were no studies within the search regarding the experiences of people from LSES practising within psychology professions. This highlighted an important gap which was salient to explore.

Research aims and research questions

Limitations identified in the research gathered was used to inform the development of the research questions for this study. The overall aim of my research was gaining an understanding of the experiences of EPs from LSES backgrounds, and to outline implications that will support widening participation into the profession via the doctorate. My research questions were refined to include an exploration of the experiences, including positive and negative experiences. I also wanted to explore EPs' constructions about how their backgrounds had impacted their experiences.

Contribution to existing literature

Due to the absence of research in this specific area, the findings give research evidence for what has been mentioned in previous grey literature regarding the challenging experiences of accessing the EP profession (Rhodes, 2021; Singer, 2021).

The findings supported each theme identified in the focussed literature search, and more information was gathered with specific relevance to practising within the EP profession. This study provides an important initial understanding of the experiences of EPs from LSES and a basis on which to build future research.

The findings to research question two suggest that once qualified as an EP and financial concerns reduce, EPs have space to reflect on the benefit of their experiences. EPs highlighted their abilities to relate to and understand families, and their belief that their experiences give them the understanding about why it is so important to demonstrate transparency and collaboration. The EPs within the study also voiced the desire to use their voices as qualified EPs to encourage people from similar backgrounds to access the profession. Lessons learned from their own experiences about the difficulties in accessing and completing the doctorate are helpful for EPs to know what actions to take with this.

Relevance of the findings to EPs and wider systems

The relevance of the current research to EP practice is discussed in parts 1 and 2 of this report.

The findings add weight to the importance of addressing structural inequalities that exist in earlier stages of education to enable those from LSES backgrounds to access the EP profession. The barriers described by participants were attributed to lack of financial and informational capital, which implies the importance of ensuring access to financial support and information about the EP profession is important at an earlier stage.

It is acknowledged that the EP doctorates in England and Wales currently fund many training places and TEPs are paid monthly bursaries for the duration of training (AEP, 2021a). These findings suggest that consideration needs to be given to raising the number of bursaries, particularly in light of the cost-of-living crisis (Institute for Government, 2022). There also needs to be a review of what TEPs are entitled to in terms of financial support or loan eligibility within their training institutions. These actions will be significantly helpful to those from LSES backgrounds who are less likely to have financial support or 'safety nets' (Lindner, 2020, p.27). In consideration of aforementioned psychological theory, the lack of financial security can impact a person's wellbeing and ability to function to their potential (Maslow, 1943, 1970).

The findings also highlight the need to raise the profile of the EP profession, as many participants reported not knowing it existed. These implications are highlighted in part 2.

Areas for future research

The chosen data analysis allowed identification of group themes to gain an initial idea of the topic in the absence of previous research. Subsequent research may wish to consider different methodologies such as Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith et al., 2009) to enable exploration of individual experiences as well as the group.

My research focussed on qualified EPs, however the majority of data was pertinent to their experiences whilst training, and suggested that coming from a LSES background negatively impacted their experiences whilst training more so than when they were qualified and practising EPs. This suggests that the experiences of current TEPs would benefit from exploration.

In consideration of Burnham's (2018) model, there were other areas of difference which impacted on individual participants' experiences that I feel would benefit from further exploration. For example, some participants mentioned being from rural areas impacted their

experiences due to lack of access to opportunities and infrastructure in their hometowns. Future research may wish to explore this in more detail, particularly considering the geographical spread of training institutions currently offered.

The fact that there were many volunteers to participate in this research suggests that this is an important area for researchers to explore and help to make these un-voiced and in-visible difference become voiced and visible (Burnham, 2018).

Dissemination of findings

I feel a sense of ethical duty to share the findings of this research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). The dissemination plan is outlined below in Table 10. Through conversations with key stakeholders such as course tutors, principal EPs and AEP officers, I hope to ignite a conversation to explore developing a working group within the profession. This working group would focus on implementing changes to facilitate widening participation into the EP profession for those from LSES backgrounds.

On a personal-professional level, I will endeavour to be more vocal about such experiences and share the key messages from my findings in my first role as a qualified EP. I will volunteer to speak at open events to raise the profile of the EP profession and hopefully serve as a relatable role model for those from similar LSES backgrounds.

Table 10: Dissemination plan

Action(s):	**Who to contact:**	**Timescale: to be actioned by end of**
To share findings with EP participants in this study, create an overview document and offer to feedback verbally via telephone or online video call.	EP participants in this study.	September 2022.
Sharing findings with EP service I am working with to enable discussion about operationalising some of the implications locally.	Principal EP of service I am working with.	September 2022.
Give an overview of the findings of my research to AEP officers, as previously agreed. It is hoped that my findings may be helpful to prompt strategic discussions. This conversation may generate further actions for sharing my study in other EP	General Secretary of the AEP and Professional Policies Support officers.	October 2022.

forums, such as the National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists (NAPEP).		
Offer to share my findings with Cardiff Doctorate in Educational Psychology (DEdPsy) tutor team to facilitate a discussion about how university can increase accessibility for those from LSES backgrounds wishing to train as EPs.	Course directors of Cardiff DEdPsy.	November 2022.
To reach a national audience, write a blog or magazine article giving an overview of this thesis. To do this, I will read associated guidelines for writing for each website or magazine.	The editors of the BPS Psychologist magazine, and editors of edpsy blog.	December 2022.
To submit my abstract for consideration to speak at the DECP annual TEP conference in January 2023.	DECP.	January 2023
To discuss my research and the topic of widening participation into the EP profession in the UK on podcasts aimed at aspiring and current EPs.	Tim Cox, owner of Agents of Hope podcast.	February 2023.
To allow for a broader audience to be reached and prompt more conversations on this topic, I will publish my research in a peer-reviewed journal such as Educational Psychology in Practice (EPIP) and the BPS' Division of Educational & Child Psychology (DECP) journal. I will research guidelines for publishing and utilise support and supervision where needed. It is hoped that wide dissemination of this research will inspire further study in this under-explored area.	Editors of EPIP and DECP journals.	March 2023.

Part B: Critical account of development of the research practitioner

Position of the researcher and personal identification with the study

As I shared the same identity as my participants in terms of my SES, I had the status of an insider researcher (Gallais, 2008). I recognised the importance of stepping outside of my own experiences to ensure that the research was not shaped to confirm my experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Although it was acknowledged that the researcher cannot be aware of all their unconscious predispositions, nor remove their own experiences from the research and data entirely (Holloway & Jefferson, 2013).

Holloway and Jefferson (2013) emphasised the importance of researcher reflection and reflexivity as a way of providing transparency of analysis. During research, reflexivity involves reflecting in an explicit and self-aware manner to increase integrity (Finlay & Gough, 2008). Willig (2017) highlights the importance of personal and epistemological reflexivity whilst undertaking qualitative research. In consideration of this, prior to data collection I reflected at length both during professional supervision and individually about my own areas of privilege, using the Social GGRRAAACCEEESSS (SG) mnemonic (Burnham, 2018). As prompted in an activity by Totsuka (2014), I considered the areas of the SG mnemonic that I was least drawn to, and what this might suggest about my own privilege.

Berger (2015) highlighted the importance of researcher continuously reflecting and reviewing practice to ensure that they are not shaping participants experiences in any way, or unintentionally seeking similarities with one's own experiences. This consideration was particularly important in the present study due to my insider status (Willig, 2017). Braun and Clarke (2013) describe the importance of awareness of one's own assumptions and to “step outside your cultural membership to become a cultural commentator” (p9). This was achieved through regular supervision to ensure reflection and reflexivity was maintained throughout data collection and analysis.

I benefitted from protected time during professional supervision to explore my initial constructions about the findings, reflect on what the data was telling me and separate my own views (Berger, 2015). I also kept a research diary and benefitted from informal peer supervision with TEP colleagues. Exerts from the research diary are offered in the following section and further insights to data analysis can be seen in Appendix H.

Epistemological and ontological stance

Initially I selected a social constructionist paradigm, which suggests that an objective reality does not exist, but each individual constructs their knowledge and experiences through social interaction (Given, 2008). When developing the idea for this research, I recognised that individuals' experiences are likely to be shaped by both the institution and time at which they completed their training, as well as other protected characteristics such as their age, gender, ethnicity and whether they have any chronic health issues. Through discussions in supervision, I reflected on my own experiences and realised that there were objective truths that impacted my reality, for example I gained a place on the EP doctorate. Therefore, I shifted my ontological positioning to critical realism. Critical realism asserts that social phenomena are better understood in relation to the context in which they experienced, and that participants hold their own subjective realities (Fletcher, 2017). For this research, I was interested in exploring each EP's experiences, or subjective realities, and how they were impacted or influenced by their LSES backgrounds.

Methodology

Design

I decided that a qualitative approach would be appropriate for this study as it acknowledges that researchers bring their own subjectivity into the research process (Robson, 2017), which is in alignment with my critical realist ontological position (Fletcher, 2017).

When exploring methods for data gathering, I briefly considered a focus group as this would have allowed in-depth exploration of how experiences of participants were elaborated in a social context (Wilkinson, 2015). I thought that being in a small group may facilitate a sense of belonging for participants, and may have enabled them to consider their experiences in greater depth (Wilkinson, 2015). However, the risk of a dominant participant biasing the narrative was a salient consideration (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2018). I was concerned that power dynamics may impact the exploration of individuals' experiences in a focus group; for example, less experienced EPs may not have engaged as much in the presence of more experienced EPs (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As the nature of this study explored sensitive topics, I thought that anonymity may be important for participants. Further, as the focus group would have been online, non-verbal and verbal communication may have been lost or more difficult to recognise (Wilkinson, 2015).

Interviews are well suited to research questions exploring participants' experiences, as they allow for greater flexibility and depth of exploration, which produces rich data (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Percy et al., 2015). Semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate due to their

flexibility and potential to gather rich and in-depth data (Duchesne & Mc Maugh, 2018). This was also in consideration of the availability of information from quantitative workforce surveys and absence of qualitative research.

I briefly considered adding an online questionnaire, as I thought this would have allowed for more data to be collected. However, I reflected on this with my research supervisor and realised a greater quantity of responses would not necessarily mean a more complete understanding of experiences. Following completion of the interviews, I reflected on the rich data that I was able to collect through interviews (Duchesne & Mc Maugh, 2018), and reframed my thinking around the necessity of collecting more information separately.

I developed the interview schedule using similar research from Crumb and colleagues (2020) as well as guidance from Given (2008). I recognised the importance of ensuring the questions were open and not leading in any way. I brought my questions to supervision and although I was satisfied that they were not leading, I was concerned about how broad and open the questions were, and whether it would be too vague for the participants. To test whether this worked well I conducted a pilot interview, which is discussed following the next section.

Development of inclusion criteria for participants

I chose to specify that participants must have completed the three-year doctorate in the UK to be eligible to participate, as I wanted to ensure that the findings were relevant to the current dominant route to EP training in the UK.

EPs who trained in Scotland were not eligible for this study due to the different training route. EPs in Scotland train via a two-year MSc in Educational Psychology rather than a Doctorate (University of Dundee, n.d.). This is an area for future research to explore.

I made the choice to exclude current trainee EPs (TEPs) in recognition of the fact that current TEPs are a unique group and may not have the space to reflect on their journey towards becoming an EP as they would still be in the process of this. I reflected that a separate in-depth piece of research would need to be done for current TEPs, which would not have been feasible due to time restraints for the project. This remains a salient area for future exploration, particularly in view of the fact that there is a cost of living crisis in the UK (Institute for Government, 2022), and TEPs are paid a bursary which is significantly below the average UK salary (ONS, 2021). This is likely to significantly impact the experiences of TEPs from LSES backgrounds and research into this may provide important implications for change.

I decided to allow the participants to self-identify as coming from a LSES background to align with the epistemological and ontological positioning of the research. This method allowed EPs to reflect on their own identity derived from their context-specific experiences and references (Rubin et al., 2014). Objective measures of LSES are often unreliable and biased against those from single-parent or BME backgrounds (Jerrim, 2021). Several formal measures of SES are based on individuals' parent occupation and education, whereas allowing participants to self-identify provides a valid assessment of their membership of socially defined groups (Rubin et al., 2014).

Allowing self-identification relies on self-report measures of the participants, and existing research expresses concerns about the issue of misidentification (Friedman et al., 2021). However, Friedman et al. (2021) raised misidentification as a particular issue for survey research and professionals in television and film, whereas the current research took a qualitative semi-structured interview approach with EPs.

In view of the complex, context-dependent variables that determine SES, I could have combined objective measures of LSES with subjective measures, as suggested by Rubin and colleagues (2014). For example, questions could have been included on the recruitment poster such as:

- Were you the first in your family to attend university?
- Did you access free school meals whilst at school?
- Were you from a single parent or low-income family?

I ultimately decided not to use screening questions and make the judgement myself whether a participant was from a LSES. I instead encouraged EPs to reflect on whether they identified as coming from a LSES and created space for participants to explore their constructs of what being from a low SES background meant to them in interview via prompt questions.

Pilot interview

I conducted a pilot interview with a participant who met the inclusion criteria prior to beginning data collection. I did this to refine my skills and gather feedback about my techniques (Robson, 2017). The participant was known to me in a professional capacity, and whilst acknowledging that this would be easier than interviewing somebody I did not know, it was helpful to build my confidence in interviewing, and the participant was able to provide honest feedback on the process. Data gained from this participant was not included in the final analysis.

I undertook the interview virtually and tested the recording function and transcription to ensure I was familiar with the process. The interview flowed well and feedback from the participant was positive. I felt comfortable working virtually, but I wondered whether that may

negatively affect the participants' engagement with the personal nature of the interview questions. During the pilot interview, the participant reflected that this allowed them to feel more comfortable as they were speaking from their own home.

I was concerned that the broad nature of the interview questions may impede participants' elaboration. Following the pilot interview, I reflected on the importance of remaining open to the narrative of the participants' stories and focussed on developing a list of neutral prompt statements and questions (Appendix J). On reflection it is likely that my concerns were more indicative of the pressures I was feeling about undertaking the thesis project, along with my conscious incompetence (Howell, 1982) of being a novice researcher.

The pilot interview was a valuable process as I felt as though my confidence going into the first interview was increased by having this opportunity to practise.

Participant recruitment and selection

At the time of developing this research, Braun and Clarke (2013) suggested between 10-20 participants would be an ideal sample size for TA for a project of this size. Due to time constraints, I decided to recruit ten EPs on a first-come first-served basis. As outlined in recruitment procedure in Part 2, Principal EPs (PEPs) were emailed in the early stages of recruitment for this study. I received several replies from PEPs stating that it was unlikely anybody within their EP team would meet all the inclusion criteria. I wondered whether this construction reflected the actual lack of EPs from LSES who had completed the doctorate, or if this was an assumption made by PEPs. It was helpful to reflect on the impact of the gatekeeper's assumptions during supervision and the impact of this.

I initially wanted to explore the experiences of EP from LSES in Wales qualified to doctoral level, however I was only able to recruit 2 participants. There may be several factors that contributed to a lack of participate uptake such as EPs not wanting to take part in the research due to time capacity, lack of motivation to discuss the topic, or it may reflect the lack of EPs qualified to doctoral level who consider themselves as coming from a LSES. As there are no published data on the number of EPs in Wales qualified to doctoral level, I could not be sure that there would certainly be enough EPs in Wales who fit the criteria and wanted to volunteer. Following discussion in supervision, I widened the pool of participants to include EPs trained via the doctorate from the UK.

Following ethical approval, I contacted the National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists (NAPEP) to request a contact list for PEPs in the UK and sent them information on the study. During this time, the recruitment poster (Appendix K) was also shared on Twitter.

I received a number of emails of interest, and the ten positions were quickly filled. Initially I was concerned that there would not be many volunteers, so I had not considered a recruitment procedure. I quickly recognised the need to put a system in place and several EPs were put on a waiting list. This process is outlined in Part 2.

I was impressed by the number of EPs who volunteered to participate, and it was a shame that I could not give every EP a voice in my research due to time constraints. This highlighted the importance of conducting research in this area.

It is important to consider the motivations of participants who took part in this research. Some participants needed reminding about the topic of the research and had not thought about it prior to interview, whereas others reflected that they had a clear message to communicate. Although participants had different experiences and messages, RTA allowed for contradictions in the data to be considered during data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Demographic information sheet and intersectionality

I collected demographic information to add weight and context to my data analysis and explore implications for future research. This was a decision that I needed to return to ethics for. Two participants had already been recruited and were asked in retrospect to complete the demographic information form, one of which returned the completed form. I chose not to follow up with the participant who did not complete and return their demographic information sheet so that I did not pressure them in any way, and to ensure it was truly voluntary.

The demographic information form was developed using the protective characteristics of the Equality Act (2010) and research I participated in that had not been published at the time of writing. The ethics committee did not approve my asking about sexuality as the relevance to the research was questioned. I recognise that I could have challenged this decision, particularly as sexual orientation is a protected characteristic in the Equality Act (2010). Although, one participant highlighted their sexuality during interview, which suggests that if something is important to an individual's experience, they were likely to disclose this during interview.

Participants spoke to several other areas of difference such as experiencing being a child in care, having dyslexia, experiencing a chronic health condition, and coming from a mixed-race

heritage. Because of this, I found it difficult to separate areas of difference and the impact of intersectionality is very important to highlight. Although this was not a theme within the current findings, this area would benefit from further exploration in future research.

I felt ethically compelled to report the data gathered from participants in a way that would not impact their anonymity, hence the decision to present the data separately in a table rather than combining areas of difference to provide context to individual participants.

Working virtually

Due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic, the interviews had to take place online via video conferencing software, namely Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Virtual interviews have historically been viewed as a poor alternative to face-to-face interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2013), however video call technology development and increase in familiarity with virtual working due to the pandemic meant that this method is more broadly accepted (Gray et al., 2020). This method allowed recruitment from a broader geographical area (Archibald et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2020), and interviews were easier to arrange as all participants were working from home.

There were disadvantages to this method, such internet connection quality (Archibald et al., 2019). To plan for this, I informed participants that I would attempt to re-connect to the interview and if that did not work, we would email to reschedule. However, this was not as much of a problem as originally thought, there was only one interview which suffered from brief periods of poor connection which did not affect my ability to transcribe. The accessibility of virtual interviews meant that many participants were at home, and there were distractions such as pets, phones ringing and knocks at the door. These difficulties would have been present if the interviews had taken place face-to-face (Gray et al., 2020). Although, it is acknowledged that a face-to-face interview may have yielded different results.

Transparency: Interviewing a participant previously known to the researcher

In the interest of transparency (Yardley, 2000) it is pertinent to highlight that one participant was previously known to the researcher in a professional capacity. Researchers interviewing participants who are known to them is common within specialised fields (McConnell-Henry et al., 2010) which can be applied to the EP profession. Following discussions during research supervision, I decided that as the relationship was not ongoing and personal, the participant would be appropriate to include (McConnel-Henry et al., 2010).

Throughout the interview I maintained my researcher role and ensured that confidentiality and anonymity were maintained (McConnell-Henry et al., 2010). This was done by removing all identifying information from the transcript, deleting the recordings within the two-week time frame and completing entries in the reflective diary prior to and following interview. This was also discussed during supervision.

McConnell et al. (2010) suggest that when the researcher and participant have a pre-existing relationship, this may encourage the collection of rich data. This may be due to the participant already having built a rapport with the researcher, which is vital to a successful interview and encourages participants to share their experiences (Holloway & Jefferson, 2013).

Sensitivity to context during interviews

Sensitivity to context is salient within the evaluative criteria of qualitative research described by Yardley (2000) outlined in Appendix I.

I was concerned about the ethical implications of conducting the interviews online, including the impact on ability to build rapport and enabling participants to feel safe to share their experiences (BPS, 2021b). However, participants in Archibald and colleagues' (2019) study reported online interviews as advantageous for building rapport as well as convenience and ease of use. Prior to the commencement of the interviews, I ensured that I spent some time establishing rapport with the participants to ensure they felt comfortable and willing to answer questions (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2018). I reminded participants of the aims of the study and reminded them to share at their own comfort level.

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) highlighted the importance of showing sympathy, honesty, and respect during interviews to ensure ethical interviewing. This was important for the present study as the EPs were being interviewed virtually via online video call. Although all participants were at home and in a place of comfort, several EPs participated during their working day, and were reflecting on past experiences which may have triggered feelings of discomfort. I spent time building rapport and endeavoured to make the space, albeit virtual, feel safe.

Following interviews, several participants commented that they felt comfortable to speak in this way as they were within their own home and under the guise of anonymity.

Reflection on my development as a researcher

I decided not to disclose my insider researcher status so that I appeared neutral and did not impact the answers that EPs chose to give. On reflection, choosing to disclose this information

may have helped participants to feel a sense of psychological safety and encourage them to share more of their stories. On the other hand, this may have meant that participants would have assumed I had prior knowledge and not elaborated on their experiences. I also wanted to limit the possibility of participants wanting to give socially desirable answers in view of this information.

Whilst I did not explicitly state that I was from a LSES background to participants until after the interview, they may have assumed based on my non-verbal communication and affirmative statements such as 'I understand'. This may have affected the research (Jowett et al, 2011). However, this may not have presented as a negative, this may have helped participants to feel at ease and give less inhibited responses (Jowett et al., 2011).

I chose to use prompts in interview to ensure that participants considered the positives and negatives of how their SES impacted their experiences, in the interest of presenting a balanced view. On reflection, this may have been a key way that I affected the research.

Emotional impact of research

An important consideration is the emotional impact of research. Our research can affect us and our emotional process around this can affect the research (Hallowell et al., 2005). There were some interviews which made me feel inspired and hopeful, and there were others where I came away with negative feelings, as can be seen from the extract below in Figure 18.

I felt a little drained after this interview and the participant reflected that they felt as though they had just moaned the entire time. I wonder whether I should try harder to draw out the positives more, acknowledge the importance of validating their experiences and not trying to silver lining everything though. I also think this reluctance to and regret for 'moaning' may be indicative of a broader social norm and narrative of those from LSES.

Researcher field notes (interview 3)

Figure 18: Extract from research diary (1)

I found it useful to write in my research diary following each interview and reflect on my feelings and consider themes that emerged from that interview. I also noted aspects of participants' experiences which I had not considered, as the below extract in Figure 19 illustrates:

I realise the participant mentioned being 'funded to complete' their course by a LA, but they sort of glazed over it… I hadn't considered that somebody from a LSES could take a self-funded position on the doctorate. This participant spoke of being determined and willing to do anything to make their situation work and taking out a bank loan to enable them to move...This prompted reflection on my own assumptions, and that I could have explored this with the participant further. Going forward, I shouldn't assume participants had a funded place, I could ask if they don't state that their place was funded.

(Extract from research diary following transcription of interview 3)

Figure 19: Extract from research diary (2)

As can be seen in Figure 20, one participant emailed me following their interview to voice their frustration that they could not think of specific examples of their experiences. This participant expressed they would have benefited from seeing the questions beforehand. Although this may reflect the difficulty of recalling specific experiences from several years previous, this may have also reflected the difficulty in communicating the nuance of experiences. I decided not to share the questions with participants prior to interview so that their most memorable or salient stories were captured. On reflection, it may have been beneficial to share the questions with participants in advance, as this may have allowed them time and space to reflect back and recall specific anecdotes prior to the interview. I may also have considered undertaking a follow up interview with participants, similar to the approach taken by previous researchers (Crumb et al., 2020; O'Hara & Cook, 2018). This may have allowed for exploration in further depth as the participants may have had more time to think about their experiences.

This participant found it difficult to articulate and describe their experiences throughout the interview despite offering prompt questions and they apologised following the interview, a lot of self-depreciating talk about how others must have had it worse etc.

Researcher field notes (interview 7)

Figure 20: Extract from research diary (3)

It was helpful to transcribe the interviews soon after recording, as I was able to reflect on the prompt and probe questions during each interview, and the reflections could then be actioned in the following interviews. Once I had conducted the first few interviews, I reflected on the differing narratives that participants were bringing. I noticed the varying impacts of age, length

of time qualified, the differences between rural and inner cities on their experiences. This prompted ideas for future study, which are discussed later in this report.

Data analysis

The interviews ranged from 1 hour 15 minutes to two hours long, which generated a wealth of data. I initially had concerns about not getting a rich enough data set, however I ended up with over 10 hours of data.

I made the decision to utilise reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2021) to provide an initial exploration of experiences of EPs from LSES, in the absence of any previous research. I have presented justification for choosing RTA in Table 7 within Part 2 of this report, and a transparent account of my data analysis process is available in Appendix H to help the reader understand how I arrived at the final themes.

Although I had used thematic analysis in two previous small scale doctoral research studies, I wanted to ensure I was competent with RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2021) and I attended an online webinar on the subject (SAGE Publishing, 2021). I engaged with supervision on the subject in addition to this. To ensure the process was reflexive, I kept a research diary and wrote reflections following each interview, as well as other times such as the early stages of research development, participant recruitment, when transcribing interviews and during analysis. Following a reflective entry about how the process was going and how that made me feel, I would ensure that I made a note of what I should do differently, to maintain reflexivity.

Reflections on the data analysis process

Initially the interviews were numbered in the order that I interviewed the participants. I reflected on numbering participants during data analysis, and it felt impersonal. I wondered whether it would make it harder for readers to follow individual narratives or attribute the quotations to an individual. I decided to allocate pseudonyms for each participant to bring the data to life and emphasise that the data reflects actual and real experiences, whilst maintaining anonymity (Given, 2008).

During interviews, several participants made comments about how important the research was, which led me to experience a sense of pressure during data analysis. I wanted to ensure I was doing the best data analysis possible so that I was doing the participants' stories justice, as they had made themselves vulnerable and shared their stories with me. This led to doubting myself

several times throughout the data analysis process. I truly understood the importance of "becoming comfortable with uncertainty and discomfort" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p.11).

When writing the results section, quotations from participants were presented to give transparency and illustrate how I arrived at theme development (Flick, 2018). Many qualitative studies include contextualising information about the participants such as their demographic information, however I chose not to do this to protect the identities of my participants (Flick, 2018). I followed the general rule that participants should be able to recognise their own responses, but readers should not be able to identify participants (Given, 2008). As the EP profession in the UK is a relatively small community, there was a risk of identifying participants with stories that were too specific. I removed the names of specific cities and universities, and used ellipses where details were omitted to ensure the stories were not identifiable.

Whilst coding, I noticed that some people were speaking in an action focussed way rather than talking about their experiences, which is illustrated in the following quote from Rosie:

> *'I think that courses need to do more… like prepping trainees for negotiating employment contracts and what you should be expecting in terms of working conditions… because you can assume that people who have not had that much experience might not know, and they are more likely to be taken advantage of or to end up with less.' Rosie 574-577*

I did not want to assume that participants were talking about their own experiences. I could see the importance of asking participants to elaborate on their experiences that allowed them to arrive at this thought or checked whether they were talking about their own experience to aid clarity.

The outline of my data analysis process is explored in Part 2 and examples from the process can be seen in Appendix H. I found it very helpful to have a post it note displaying the research questions whilst coding, to ensure that I was remaining focussed on the research questions.

I conducted an inductive analysis, and this meant that the major literature review was largely written following data analysis. It is acknowledged that I bring my own biases to data analysis (Langley & Klag, 2019), but I wanted to ensure that I was staying close to the data and not being influenced by literature I had read. I adopted an ongoing and recursive form of 'bracketing' (Tufford & Newman, 2012) engaging in regular reflection and engaging with a research diary throughout data analysis. I also revisited the data following theme development to ensure it stayed close to the participants' narratives.

Reflections on method of data analysis

I found the iterative process of RTA challenging at times, although I was able to remain open to continually developing themes despite this. I wanted to ensure that the data analysis was communicating the participants' experiences and I was staying close to the data. I re-read the transcripts several times during this process. I reflected on the irony that I did not have adequate space in my house to conduct the analysis comfortably, as I spent a lot of time on the floor of my spare bedroom. I recognised the importance of having space away from the data and returning with a fresh perspective

In hindsight, using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, 2009) may have been useful to allow a greater depth of exploration of and analysis into each individual EP's personal stories. I felt restricted by RTA at times in relation to this, whilst reading through and coding transcripts I noticed themes that were dominant for one or two participants, but did not develop as overall group themes.

Role of the researcher vs. role of the TEP

Throughout the research process I grappled with remaining in the role of a researcher and I felt a sense of conscious incompetence (Howell, 1982). It was challenging to work as a researcher in isolation, and I benefitted from regular research supervision and informal peer supervision. I also practised reflection and reflexivity to ensure that I was not slipping back into my role as a TEP whilst conducting the interviews. Although I made a conscious effort to remain impartial, I may have unintentionally been validating the participants via non-verbal communication and Rogerian principles of active listening (Rogers, 1951).

The inevitability of researcher influence on participants is recognised in qualitative research (Langley & Klag 2019), therefore this emphasises the importance of personal and epistemological reflexivity throughout the research process (Willig 2017). It is hoped that this critical appraisal alongside the appendices demonstrates the research journey and can offer some transparency for the reader.

I noticed some participants struggled to articulate their experiences during interview, and some participants voiced their frustration about how easily they were able to recall anecdotes during informal chat following the interviews. This made me wonder whether a focus group may have been a useful method of data collection, however I also reflected that some participants said they enjoyed the veil of anonymity which this study offered.

I offered to talk through the debrief form and chat informally with some participants after I had finished the interviews and stopped recording, and I was happy to self-disclose when I was asked or felt it was appropriate.

Summary

This critical appraisal explored the choices I made throughout the research process and considered its contribution to current knowledge. The epistemological and ontological positions and how these influenced decisions such as the research methods were discussed. Reasons for limitations were addressed, and what I learned and would therefore do differently are discussed. Publishing the findings and speaking at conferences may encourage further exploration in this area. The critical appraisal was a valuable learning opportunity for me in terms of developing as a researcher and engaging in reflective and reflexive practice.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Literature search process

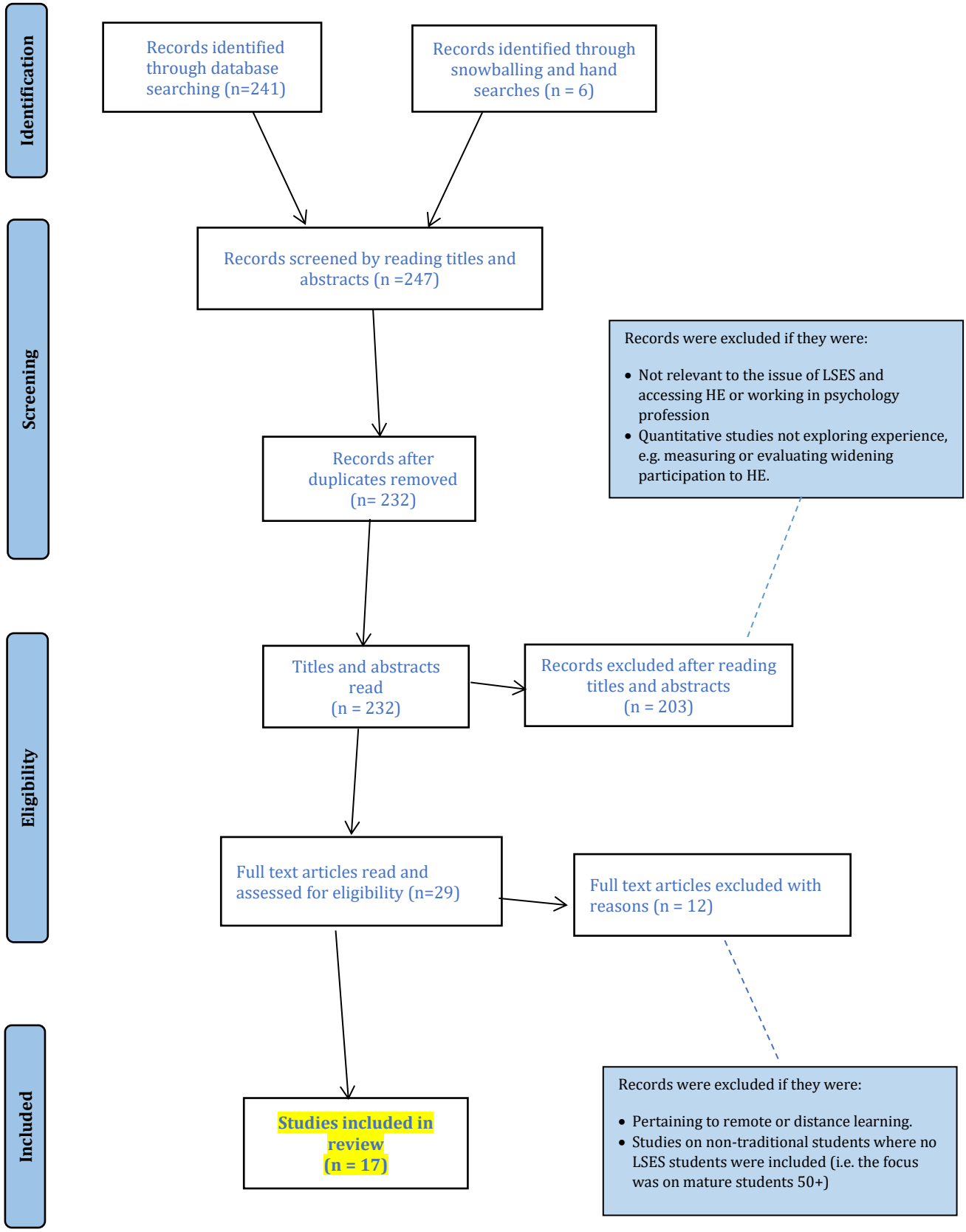
Appendix A(i) Search terms for the literature review.

Search terms	
AND	"Education* psycholog*" OR "trainee educational psychologist*" OR psycholog* OR "clinical psycholog*" OR "School psycholog*" OR "child psychologis*" OR profession* OR postgraduate*OR "Doctora* education" OR "doctorate in education* Psychology" OR "doctorate in child and educational psychology" OR Doctora* OR PhD OR "higher education" OR profession*
AND	"Low socioeconomic" OR "low socio-economic" OR "low socio economic" OR "non-traditional" OR "working-class" OR "low income famil*" OR "First in family" OR disadvantag* OR "Under privileged" OR "underrepresented"
*Asterisk (*) symbol indicates a truncation character used to search for additional letters (e.g. psycholog**ist** or psycholog**y***	

Appendix A(ii) Screen shot of searches to illustrate rationale for using titles only searches for literature search:

Set ▾	Search	Databases	Results
S15	⊞ ti("Education* psycholog*" OR "trainee educational psychologist*" OR psycholog* OR ("clinical psychological" OR "clinical psychologist" OR "clinical psychologists" OR "clinical psychology") OR ("school psychological" OR "school psychologist" OR "school psychologists" OR "school psychology") OR ("child psychologist" OR "child psychologists") OR profession* OR postgraduate*OR "Doctora* education" OR "doctorate in education* Psychology" OR "doctorate in child and educational psychology" OR Doctora* OR PhD OR "higher education" OR profession) AND ti("Low socioeconomic" OR "low socio-economic" OR "low socio economic" OR "non-traditional" OR "working-class" OR "low income famil*" OR "First in family" OR disadvantag* OR "Under privileged" OR "underrepresented") ✔ Limits applied	ERIC	122
S13	⊞ ab("Education* psycholog*" OR "trainee educational psychologist*" OR psycholog* OR ("clinical psychological" OR "clinical psychologist" OR "clinical psychologists" OR "clinical psychology") OR ("school psychological" OR "school psychologist" OR "school psychologists" OR "school psychology") OR ("child psychologist" OR "child psychologists") OR profession* OR postgraduate*OR "Doctora* education" OR "doctorate in education* Psychology" OR "doctorate in child and educational psychology" OR Doctora* OR PhD OR "higher education" OR profession) AND ab("Low socioeconomic" OR "low socio-economic" OR "low socio economic" OR "non-traditional" OR "working-class" OR "low income famil*" OR "First in family" OR disadvantag* OR "Under privileged" OR "underrepresented") ✔ Limits applied	ERIC	2,690
S11	⊞ ("Education* psycholog*" OR "trainee educational psychologist*" OR psycholog* OR ("clinical psychological" OR "clinical psychologist" OR "clinical psychologists" OR "clinical psychology") OR ("school psychological" OR "school psychologist" OR "school psychologists" OR "school psychology") OR ("child psychologist" OR "child psychologists") OR profession* OR postgraduate*OR "Doctora* education" OR "doctorate in education* Psychology" OR "doctorate in child and educational psychology" OR Doctora* OR PhD OR "higher education" OR profession) AND ("Low socioeconomic" OR "low socio-economic" OR "low socio economic" OR "non-traditional" OR "working-class" OR "low income famil*" OR "First in family" OR disadvantag* OR "Under privileged" OR "underrepresented") ✔ Limits applied	ERIC	8,147

Appendix A(iii): Adaptation of PRISMA flow diagram (Moher et al. , 2009)



Appendix A(iv): Articles not included in review

Reference of article	Reason(s) for exclusion from focussed literature review
Naidoo, D. (2015). Understanding non-traditional PhD students habitus – implications for PhD programmes. *Teaching in higher education, 20*, (3), 340-351.	Focussed on PhD students in South Africa and made comparisons to international vs non international students rather than LSES as an emphasis.
Morrison, A., & Andrew Morrison. (2010). "I want an education": two case studies of working-class ambition and ambivalence in further and higher education. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 15*(1), 67–80.	Review of worldwide literature which explored experiences at further education colleges before university.
Fowle, W. (2018). Supporting adult learners from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education*. Widening Participation & Lifelong Learning, 20*(3), 90–108.	Focussed on distance and part time students.
Sanders-McDonagh, E., & Davis, C. (2018). Resisting neoliberal policies in UK higher education: Exploring the impact of critical pedagogies on non-traditional students in a post-1992 university. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, *13*(3), 217-228.	Focussed on evaluation of a module using critical pedagogic approach on one course in one post-1992 university with non-traditional students, rather than experiences in HE more broadly.
Keane, E. (2009). 'Frictional' relationships… tension in the camp: focusing on the relational in under-represented students' experiences in higher education*. Irish Educational Studies, 28*(1), 85-102.	Included international students, part-time students and mature students, no focus on LSES.
Christie, H., Cree, V. E., Mullins, E., & Tett, L. (2018). 'University opened up so many doors for me': the personal and professional development of graduates from non-traditional backgrounds. *Studies in Higher Education*, *43*(11), 1938-1948.	This research was included in the introduction of Part 1 of this thesis, but omitted from the focussed literature review as it involved telephone interviews from participants who studied at universities in 2004, which meant it did not fit the inclusion criteria.

Thunborg, C., Bron, A., & Edström, E. (2013). Motives, commitment and student identity in higher education—Experiences of non-traditional students in Sweden. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, *45*(2), 177-193.	Focussed on Swedish students' motivations to study at HE, drop out of HE and continuing in HE with the goal of classifying students into types through the creation of three student identities.
Lopez, E. C., & Bursztyn, A. M. (2013). Future challenges and opportunities: Toward culturally responsive training in school psychology. *Psychology in the Schools*, *50*(3), 212-228.	Paper reviews existing research on school psychology training in America and proposes actions to develop multicultural training programmes. Does not focus solely on experiences of individuals from LSES or within psychology professions.
Scanlon, M., Jenkinson, H., Leahy, P., Powell, F., & Byrne, O. (2019). 'How are we going to do it?' An exploration of the barriers to access to higher education amongst young people from disadvantaged communities. *Irish Educational Studies*, *38*(3), 343-357.	Interviews and focus groups undertaken with secondary aged pupils from a LSES exploring what barriers exist for them to access HE, therefore no exploration of experiences.
Moreau, M.-P. & Leathwood, C. (2006). Balancing paid work and studies: working(-class) students in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *31*(1), 23–42.	Data was drawn from original longitudinal study from non-traditional students studying in 1999, which is 7 years prior to the inclusion criteria. This article uses data from original study and focusses specifically on students who worked part time during their degree.
Devlin, M. (2013). Bridging socio-cultural incongruity: Conceptualising the success of students from low socio-economic status backgrounds in Australian higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *38*(6), 939-949.	Article does not focus on experiences of LSES students in HE, instead builds an argument for importance of making reasonable adjustments from LSES students who enter HE in Australia as a result of WP initiatives.
Gill, A. J. G. (2021). Difficulties and support in the transition to higher education for non-traditional students. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, *26*(4), 410–441.	Article focusses specifically on the short-term transition period to HE rather than HE as a whole.

Appendix B: Summary of literature included in the focussed literature review.

Author(s), year of publication	Country	Focus	Design	Participants	Analysis	Findings	Critique
Brook & Michell, 2012.	Various: America; Australia	Experiences of WC students at university and what is learned.	Review of autobiographical essays	Not specified- taken from multiple published collections.	Review synthesis	Attending HE was a transformative experience. Social mobility was not straightforward, rather a source of comfort and conflict. Essays wrote of feelings of displacement physically due to moving away from home and socially in terms of belonging.	Includes collections of essays written by working-class academics outside of the UK as far back as the 1950's up until 2005, however despite being written over such a broad timescale, consistent themes can be identified throughout
Crozier et al., 2008.	England	Discuss how middle class and working-class student experiences compare across four different types of higher education institution (HEI)	Mixed methods: critical ethnographic approaches and questionnaires.	Questionnaire: 1209 students Interviews: 88 students from middle- and working-class backgrounds Case study: 27 WC students from 4 different HEIs followed over 2 years. Semi and	Grounded theory alongside conceptual frameworks	There is a polarisation of recruitment between types of universities, there exists a spectrum of interrelated and differentiated experiences across and within the HEIs. These are structured by the differential wealth of the universities, their structure and organisation; their ensuing expectations	Data is gathered over four differing HEIs and consistent themes can be seen. Participants' social class was determined based on parental occupation and education level.

				unstructured interviews were used at key decision moments.		of the students, the subject sub-cultures, and the students' own socio-cultural locations; namely class, gender, age and ethnicity.	
Crozier et al., 2019.	England	Social class and how it is modified, reinforced or transformed through experience of attending HE, particularly in relation to how students develop their learner identities.	Uses some of data gathered in Crozier et al. (2008)'s study: Semi-structured interviews	24 white and BME WC undergraduate students.	Grounded theory alongside conceptual frameworks.	Students demonstrated hybrid identities: they were able to blend in or stand out socially or academically depending on the context. Participants' identities were challenged by others, or by their own perceptions of how others see them in a negative and conflictual way. Tensions between 'assimilation and belonging' and 'betrayal and exclusion'.	Case study methodology provides in-depth data which highlights important conclusions specific to the participants and their context.
Crumb et al., 2020.	America	The lived experiences of working class African American women doctoral students at	Two-phase semi-structured interviews, 2 face-to-face and 8 via video call. Second	10 working-class African American doctoral students.	Hermeneutic Phenomenological analysis	Themes highlighted WC virtues such as strong work ethic, the perception they were overlooked for professional opportunities,	Data analysis was triangulated between researchers and member checking and peer debriefing were used, adding to trustworthiness of

		predominantly white institutions	interviews were one week after the first interview.			development of self-efficacy and reliance and use of personal and academic support systems. Participants were hyper-aware of WC status due to their differences from more privileged peers.	data. Although this study was in America, doctoral counselling students are likely to have similar expectations to TEPs on the doctorate. Participants were African American within a predominantly white institution; therefore, WC status intersects with ethnicity.
Jury et al., 2017.	Includes worldwide research	Exploration of the psychological barriers provided in existing research on students from a LSES in HE.	Review of the literature focussing on psychological barriers in the findings.	n/a	Review of the literature	Outlined psychological barriers faced by LSES students in university as: • Emotional experiences • Identity management • Self-perception and • Motivation Concluded that LSES students face more psychological and financial barriers than those from privileged backgrounds	Provides a useful synthesis of findings from relevant literature Has an overtly negative focus on barriers.

Lehmann, 2014.	Canada		Use of subset of data gathered from 4-year longitudinal study of WC students at one university in Ontario.	22 "exceptionally successful" university students	Qualitative analysis software	participants had a juxtaposition of "allegiances to and dismissal of their working-class roots" (p. 12) Upward SM provoked sense of unease at being "caught between two worlds" (p. 12). Participants noticed a transformation of their habitus towards a more middle-class way of being in their final year, Rather than acting as a barrier, the WC backgrounds provided motivation for wanting to attend and their success throughout HE	This article focussed on those students who had a positive experience and benefitted from HE and does not consider negative experiences and account for drop out or under achievement.
Lessky et al., 2021.	Austria	Exploration of transition to HE for FIF students.	Qualitative, constructivist, 26 interviews (narrative style) over 4 years.	7 students	Grounded theory. Use of Bourdieu's relational theory (1987)	Students gained access to informational capital via peer networks (importance of fitting in and belonging), which was a significant indicator in the success of transition to HE. This	Participants had other areas of difference which may have intersected with LSES to increase disadvantage such as age, ethnicity, and being from a refugee background. It is therefore difficult to

						process was affected by institutional practices within the different disciplines and unspoken nature of some rules and information.	conclude that experiences were solely mediated by LSES.
O'Shea, 2021.	Australia	The impact of FIF status on feelings of belonging within HE and upon graduation.	Narrative inquiry approach – use of existing survey and interview data.	548 surveys and 87 interviews	Data analysed with sociological theoretical framing and line by line analysis	Themes in the data included feeling othered, and fundamental personal change.	Limited ability to generalise to the UK context of HE, although valuable findings.
O'Shea, 2016.	Australia	Experiences of FIF students In HE.	In-depth interviews.	23 students who identified as FIF.	Line-by-line qualitative analysis	Themes of aspirational capital; resistant capital; familiar capital and experiential capital.	This study mainly involved first year undergraduate students so findings are limited by size, context and location.
O'Hara & Cook , 2018.	America	Experiences of social class microaggressions at university.	Semi-structured interviews; 5 participants participated in a second follow up interview the majority of interviews were done over the phone and one online.	11 doctoral counselling students.	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis.	SCMs are observable and had emotional, relational and cognitive significance for participants. Participants reported interactions with their institutions whereby they felt marginalised from the policies and expectations of the university field, and felt a mismatch in terms of their own	Among the small number of participants (n=11) the majority were females from Southern US states and although the majority were from lower or working-class backgrounds, there was one participant who identified as middle-class. An additional consideration is that

						culture. SCMs facilitated the development of resilience.	participants were given monetary incentive to participate in this study and therefore may have been motivated to report favourable answers to the researchers.
Pásztor & Wakeling, 2018.	UK	Explored existing and perceived barriers to entering doctoral study and trajectories to PhD.	Semi-structured interviews.	53 PhD students and recent graduates who had not pursued a PhD at four different HE institutions across the UK.	Not specified	there appears to be structural inequalities which result in distinct and class-based pathways into doctoral education; individuals who came from a more privileged background with parents educated to postgraduate level had more linear trajectories and were better equipped and supported than those from less privileged backgrounds. Further, students from less privileged backgrounds reported disruptions to study caused by financial difficulties.	Included comparison of PhD and non-PhD students across different institutions to increase validity.

Pitman, 2013.	Australia	Experiences of HE for graduates from LSES backgrounds.	Autobiographical research	3 graduates, two of which were mature students.	Conceptual framework of Bourdieu	Findings imply importance of outreach at earlier stages to those who are less likely to access HE to inform gradual familiarisation of cultural capital for these families.	Findings provide an in-depth understanding of three people's experiences, which cannot be applied beyond this. Autobiographical approach to data generation inculcates a tendency towards 'social scripting' (Goodson et al., 2010). That is, individuals sometimes create a life story that conforms to broader expectations of narratives, rather than that which actually occurred.
Raven, 2018.	England	Experiences of young white British men from disadvantaged backgrounds in England who progressed to HE	Life story interviews	14 young white males: 11 undergraduate, 3 postgraduate	Qualitative analysis not specified. Themes were generated.	Factors which influence access to HE includes: personal agency and resilience and having determination despite challenging circumstances such as family health concerns and lack of financial resources. the positive influence of parents, both in terms of witnessing their struggles and	White male students classified as disadvantaged in response to statistics which suggest that as the demographic least likely to access HE however the small and narrow sample from one regional area of the UK cannot be generalised. Although they do give important insights into postgraduates of this

						being motivated not to recreate this life for themselves as well as being encouraged to progress. The positive impact of teachers helped to increase aspirations and confidence.	minoritized demographic
Reay et al., 2010.	England	Compared the social and learning experiences of working-class (WC) students in different types of HEIs across the UK.	Qualitative interview data previously gathered from Crozier et al.'s (2008) research.	27 undergraduate students	Grounded theory and Bourdieusian theory	Participants who perceived themselves as successful learners were more confident at university. There were some observable gender differences, women were more likely to experience self-doubt and anxiety than men (Reay et al., 2010). The academic potential of participants was confounded by their lack of resources such as support and money, participants discussed having to juggle work, family and university this was in contrast to those who were in universities with higher levels of support	Although most participants were FIF (n=25 of 27) and WC, the sample was diverse and included a broad variety of students from various white and ethnic backgrounds, mature students, students with families and caring commitments and differing financial and living circumstances and therefore not a homogenous group.

Reay, 2019.	England	The experiences of WC students through a Bourdieusian lens	Qualitative interview data previously gathered from Crozier et al.'s (2008) study.	9 undergraduate students	Grounded theory and Bourdieusian theory	University experiences exposed the lack of cultural capital of WC students and participants felt like "academic insiders" and "social outsiders" (p.59), in that they felt a sense of isolation due to the perceived exclusivity of the social groups and activities at university, and spoke of struggling to be themselves (Reay, 2019). Prior identities of being high achievers then entering an elite university and subsequently being around more confident students from privileged backgrounds meant that they prioritised academic achievement to help them to fit in.	Reay's (2019) data was collected from a small sample of 9 WC students from one UK elite university in 2008, therefore more up to date data on a larger scale would be beneficial
Roberts, 2011.	England	The role of teaching in HE in retention of students from	Focus group	Five students from one university who self-	Thematic Analysis and use of Bourdieu's	Participants felt they lacked convertible social and cultural capital, which led to	The small sample size means the research is not generalisable, further, those who did

		non-traditional backgrounds		identified as non-traditional. Two mature students and three FIF.	theoretical framework.	them considering withdrawal from their courses. Although it was not the focus of the research, a lack of financial stability was raised as negatively affecting students' experiences.	volunteer to participate may have come forward with a particular grievance to air. This study also does not focus specifically on LSES individuals, 3 participants were FIF and two were mature students.
Taylor & House, 2010.	England	Explored whether and how motivations and identity of non-traditional psychology students differed from one another	Qualitative questionnaires	42 undergraduate students including BME students and mature students.	Thematic Analysis	Concerns reported by participants corresponded to their reason for being classified as non-traditional, LSES students were most concerned about financial issues. LSES students also reported the least change to their identity.	The limited ability of a questionnaire to gather nuance of experiences, particularly considering the relatively small sample size.

Appendix C: Gatekeeper letter

FAO: Principal Educational Psychologist
Address

Date

Dear [sir/ madam/ name of PEP],

I am a trainee educational psychologist studying within the School of Psychology at Cardiff University. I am seeking to conduct research into the experiences of EPs who identify as coming from a low socioeconomic background and what these experiences can tell us about what can be done to increase accessibility and widen participation into the EP profession. I am writing to enquire whether you would be willing to give permission for me to recruit participants from your EP team, and if so, whether you please could share the attached information (recruitment poster, participant information sheet and consent form) with them on my behalf.

All EPs in the UK will be invited to participate should they meet the below inclusion criteria. The aim of the study is to explore the experiences of EPs who have:

- completed the three-year professional doctorate training course

And

- have experience of training and working in the UK

And

- identify as coming from a low socioeconomic status background.

Participation will involve an online interview via Microsoft Teams or Zoom, answering questions related to their experiences in accessing and completing the doctoral training course and practicing as a qualified EP. Prior to the interview, the researcher will send a short form to gather demographic information, this is to consider the impact of intersectionality on participant experiences. **Completion of this form is voluntary.** The interview can take place at a time convenient to the individual and will take approximately 60-90 minutes. All information will be kept confidential and anonymised for the final report.

To indicate your consent for participation from your staff, or for further information, please reply to this email, (PhillipsN11@cardiff.ac.uk) or to speak with my research supervisor, Dr Victoria Biu, please email BiuV1@cardiff.ac.uk .

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request, I would be very grateful for your support.

Kind Regards,

Nicole Phillips

Trainee Educational Psychologist (Phillipsn11@cardiff.ac.uk) of Psychology, Cardiff University Tower Building, 30 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3EU.

Appendix D: Participant information sheet

An exploration of the experiences of Educational Psychologists (EPs) who have trained and worked in the UK and identify as coming from a low socioeconomic status; what can widen participation into the EP profession?

Participant Information Sheet

What is the purpose of this project?

The aim of this part of the study is to explore the experiences of qualified EPs who have experience of working and training in the UK and identify as being from a lower socioeconomic status. It is hoped that this information can provide some insight into what needs to be done to encourage and support more individuals from a lower socioeconomic status to pursue a career in the EP profession.

What will participation in this part of the study involve?

Prior to the interview, the researcher will send a short form to gather demographic information. This is to consider the impact of intersectionality on participant experiences. **Completion of this form is optional** and choosing not to complete it will not prevent you from participating in this study. The interview will involve answering questions in an online interview with the researcher consisting of questions relating to your experiences in accessing and completing the professional doctorate and working as an EP. The interview will take place online via a private Zoom or Microsoft Teams meeting which will require an invitation and password to access. The audio of the interview will be recorded using a password protected device which only the researcher has access to. The recording will be deleted upon completion of transcription up to two weeks after the interview. You do not have to answer all questions if you do not wish to.

How long will participation take?

The interview will take between 60-90 minutes.

Is the interview confidential?

The information shared and discussed during the interview will be kept confidential until the point of transcription, when it will be anonymised. The names or local authority area of the participants will not be disclosed in the report write up and any identifying information shared will be anonymised.

Do I have to participate?

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Participants can indicate their interest by emailing the researcher. There will be ten interviews, the first ten volunteers will be selected to take part in the study. Any subsequent volunteers will be informed that they are placed on a waiting list and contacted should there become a position available. Should you decide to take part, you will be asked to read and sign a consent form to state that you have read and understood the information in this document and confirm that you consent to participating in this research. Should you change your mind about participating, you are able to withdraw prior to the commencement of the interview or up to two weeks after the interview by contacting the researcher by email, without having to give a reason.

What will do you do with the information gained from the interview?

The recording of the interview will be transcribed, anonymised and analysed. Any identifying links to the individual or local authority, will be omitted. The results of the study will be analysed, written up and submitted for assessment contributing towards the researcher's doctorate in Educational Psychology. The anonymised results may be published and used in presentations.

Who has reviewed the project?

This research is conducted within the requirements of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee at Cardiff University and in accordance with both the British Psychological Society's Ethical Code of conduct (BPS, 2009) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC, 2016). This project is being supervised by Dr Victoria Biu, School of Psychology, Cardiff University.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

If you have any questions relating to this research, please contact the researcher or the project supervisor:

Contact details of researcher:
Nicole Phillips Phillipsn11@cardiff.ac.uk

Contact details of research supervisor:
Dr Victoria Biu Biuv1@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 Nicole Phillips. 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 the researcher, Nicole Phillips will have access to this information. Two weeks after the interviews, the data will be anonymised (any identifying elements removed) and this anonymous information may be kept indefinitely or published.

Appendix E: Consent form

Consent form

Please tick the boxes to confirm that you have read and agree to each statement to indicate your consent to participate in this study.

I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet for this project. ☐

I understand that completion of the demographic data form is optional and choosing not to complete it will not prevent my participation in this study. ☐

I understand that my anonymised responses will be used as part of the research project described in the information sheet. ☐

I understand that my participation in this study is **voluntary** and that I am able to withdraw before participating in the interview, or up to two weeks after the interview without giving a reason. ☐

I understand that it is not possible to withdraw my answers once they have been transcribed and anonymised two weeks after the interview. ☐

I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time and I have been given researcher and supervisor contact details to do so. ☐

I understand that examples of my experiences will be recorded and analysed but will be reported anonymously. ☐

I understand that the online interview will be recorded and stored on a password protected device only accessible to the researcher up until the completion of transcription, when it will be deleted. ☐

I agree to take part in this research project. ☐

Participant initials: _____

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 Nicole Phillips. 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 the researcher, Nicole Phillips will have access to this information.

Appendix F: Demographic information sheet

An exploration of the experiences of Educational Psychologists (EPs) who have trained and worked in the UK and identify as coming from a low socioeconomic status; what can widen participation into the EP profession?

The researcher is gathering this information for the purpose of considering the effect of intersectionality on participant experiences. **Completion of this form is optional** and choosing not to complete it will not prevent you from participating in the research. Your information will be stored securely and only accessible to the researcher. Your information will be anonymised and not traceable to you. If you are happy to complete part of all of this form, please do so and return it to the researcher prior to your scheduled interview via email (PhillipsN11@Cardiff.ac.uk).

Participant initials:

Please tick a box to indicate the following:

What is the number of years you have been working as a qualified Educational Psychologist?

0-2 years ☐

3-5 years ☐

6-10 years ☐

11-15 years ☐

15+ years ☐

Where in the UK did you complete your Doctorate?

Wales ☐

England ☐

Northern Ireland ☐

Where in the UK do you currently work?

Wales ☐

England ☐

Scotland ☐

Northern Ireland ☐

What is your Professional position? (Please tick all that apply)

I work within a local authority ☐

I work within a private/ independent EP company ☐

I work as an independent EP/ Locum ☐

I work part time ☐

I work full time ☐

I am a newly qualified EP (qualified in the last 2 years) ☐

I am an established/ main grade EP (qualified for 3+ years) ☐

I am a Specialist EP ☐

I am a Senior EP ☐

I am a Principal EP ☐

What is your age?

up to 24 years ☐

25-34 ☐

35-44 ☐

45-54 ☐

55-64 ☐

65- 74 ☐

75+ years ☐

What is your gender?

Female ☐

Male ☐

Non-binary/ gender diverse ☐

my gender identity is not listed ☐

Do you identify as trans?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Prefer not to say ☐

What is your religion or strongly held belief, if any?

Buddhist ☐

Christian ☐

Hindu ☐

Jewish ☐

Muslim ☐

Sikh ☐

Spiritual ☐

No religion or belief ☐

Other ☐

7. How do you describe your ethnicity?

White - English/ Welsh/ Scottish, Northern Irish/ British ☐

White- Irish ☐

White- Gypsy or Irish traveller ☐

White- Polish ☐

White- Any other background ☐

Asian/ Asian British ☐

Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British ☐

Multiple ethnic groups ☐

Other ethnic group ☐

8. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Thank you for completing this form. If you have any questions or comments about this form, or your participation in the research, you can contact:

The researcher:
Nicole Phillips Phillipsn11@cardiff.ac.uk

The research supervisor:
Dr Victoria Biu Biuv1@cardiff.ac.uk

Cardiff University's Research Ethics Committee:
School of Psychology, Cardiff University, Tower Building, 30 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3EU; email: psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix G: Debrief Sheet

An exploration of the experiences of Educational Psychologists (EPs) who have trained and worked in the UK and identify as coming from a low socioeconomic status; what can widen participation into the EP profession?

Participant Debriefing Information

Thank you for taking part in this study, your participation is appreciated.

The aim of this the study is to explore the experiences of qualified EPs who trained in and have experience of working in the UK, have completed the professional doctorate and come from a lower socioeconomic status. It is hoped that this information can provide some insight into what needs to be done to encourage and support more individuals from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds to enter into and diversify the EP profession.

The information gained from your interview will be used to inform the researcher's thesis project as part of the Doctorate in Educational Psychology. The anonymised results may be published and used in presentations. It is hoped that findings will encourage more research into widening participation to the EP profession.

This is a reminder that the interview recording, and subsequent transcripts will be kept confidentially in a secure location only accessible to the researcher. The interview recording will be kept confidentially up to the point of transcription, at which point it will be deleted, and all transcribed information will be anonymised. You have the right to withdraw your data up to two weeks after the interview, as beyond this point there will be no identifiable link between yourself and your responses.

If the conversation within interview has brought up any worries or if you are concerned about your wellbeing, you may wish to contact:

mind for better mental health

www.mind.org.uk

Education Support

https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/helping-you

If you have any further questions or comments about the research, please contact:

The researcher:

Nicole Phillips Phillipsn11@cardiff.ac.uk

The research supervisor:

Dr Victoria Biu Biuv1@cardiff.ac.uk

Cardiff University's Research Ethics Committee:

School of Psychology, Cardiff University, Tower Building, 30 Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3EU; email: psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix H: Data analysis

Appendix H(i) Raw date extract from interview 8

R: OK, thank you for sharing. We're up to the point now of qualifying and starting to work as a newly qualified EP. So can you tell me about your experiences practicing within the profession so far, and , how your background has affected things?

PP8: So, so I moved to [city]. Which, it was a really lovely experience following on from my experience in [city]. And I don't know. I don't know if it's more diverse in [city], which is strange because you'd think it would be less diverse than [city]. Or, if it's just the posh people in [city] don't seem as posh as the posh people in [city], [laughs]. So it felt much more inclusive, felt much more safe. I felt more of a sense of belonging, I felt safe. I always say to everybody in my team I felt safer and I learned more about the job in my first year of qualifying than I did on the course, when I should have been doing all my learning. But I wasn't because it- my placement didn't feel safe and there was this narrative around me being a bit rubbish. So yeah, so moving to [city] was really good for me. In terms of my practice and my feelings of belonging. I think I've grown out of it, or I've settled into the team because I've been in it so long there was still this kind of like voice like. Again, it's that power, isn't it? That power of voice and having a voice and being able to voice your opinion? So for me. Not so much anymore, but but when I first started. I would only voice something in a meeting or if it felt really, *really* important to me. If I knew that was really, really important, whereas others, when you're in a meeting with other people and you think why are you saying that, we've just spoke about that? Why you reiterating that like right? So yeah, it's yeah. I mean, I probably do that now anyway. But so yeah, so moving to [city], was yeah, quite a good experience. And talking about my childhood didn't feel, I mean there's still some of it is quite different. But not as different. So I remember talking to the head of our service at the time when I first moved about like, you know, when me and my friend were talking about we were convinced like years later that this guy was trying to groom her, and at the time we were kids and we didn't know it. Then like as we were like reflecting on it, that EP I was talking about that with, she then shared her experiences with that with me. And you know, things like, I feel comfortable now. So I'd never told anybody that I was suspended [*detail omitted to protect anonymity*] in secondary school. And I'd never told anybody, I don't even think I told anybody on my course. I feel comfortable with the team, and the team that we have now

is quite a big team. I felt comfortable to share that with them after these years. But I don't think there's anybody else that experienced that. But there were definitely people who have experience kind of working-class comprehensive schools in [city], whereas in [local authority] and on my course it was like an absolute world away.

R: Yeah, ok so you started to speak a little bit better about feeling comfortable with your team. And you did touch on and say a little bit about why experiences might be a bit more, a bit closer to yours... What was it about that in terms of difference from your other experiences with other people in the profession?

PP8: So I suppose, yeah, they had the similar experiences. And not the look of horror when I've exposed stuff [laughs] so. So it's not. You know, even if they have not had those experiences themselves or something that they've come across, whereas looking around that room at those twelve trainees, when I shared my jokey secondary school story- they, I think they thought it was like a really abusive safeguarding concern. And so, it was just the, it was that having that reflected back at you. You know when you see that and you think, oh. It's like you know, yeah, it's like when you're poorly or something and you see the horror in somebody's face and then it clicks in you. It was really like that. It was like oh, so yeah, so there may be- I suppose it's that acceptance. And I suppose there is, so if you're thinking of sort of my generation and older which are most of the people that work on our teams, obviously a few young people. So there was a real upheaval wasn't there in the north, sort of, you know, there was real poverty and there was real upheaval. There was real societal change. If you think about like you know, I suppose most of them will have grew up in the 80s and so they will have experienced that, even if even if they were separated from that and had money and yeah, and didn't have to live it. It would have been part of their community in their life that that makes sense, where with people probably living in [city]… well, I don't know. I don't know if that's me just being maybe being judgey, I'm trying to match and piece it together. I'm not sure. Yeah it was a lack of shock of sharing experiences. and and that it could be built on. So there was a conversation so so they may not have had the exact same experience, but then they could follow that conversation rather than looking at me with horror and not knowing where to go with that information I'm told them. And the idea of humour as well, so I think that was a big thing in our team. I'm not saying I didn't laugh with the people on my course or the people in [placement local

authority], but it was different. A different humour. What's the word I'm looking for?... like it didn't feel like I was saying anything outrageous. And also, an acknowledgement that I suppose. I suppose I qualified and they didn't know my training history, so I probably played into it as well. So and yeah, and actually, you know, receiving positive feedback for the things that I was doing, which creates a sense of belonging as well. I'm trying to think of anything else. There was definitely a real… so whilst at [university], social Justice was a really really big thing there when l studied, social justice was a really big thing for that course. But I don't know whether it was embodied. Does that make sense? Like, so it's talked about and one of the things that they did really, really well was they taught us about the history of IQ and cognitive assessments, and they taught us about the dangers of it. So it wasn't just you know, "we like the BAS and do loads and loads of tests" and things. So at the core heart of it was psychology however, so the course teaching content was social justice and psychology. Whereas, at an individual personal level. I don't know. The people- not the people didn't have a commitment because I think they did, but it's a lack of... a lack of lived experience, a lack of understanding. I don't know. Whereas moving to [city], there probably wasn't, the service I work for, there probably wasn't the voiced commitment to social justice. Other than at a systemic level, but at an individual level it was understood more. I don't know if that makes sense. Does that make sense?

R: Yeah, it sounds like you're describing kind of practicing what you preach and then the underlying ethos of where you are now, and it's just sort of ingrained and you don't need to say it because it's done every day, is that right, is that fair to say?

PP8: Yeah Yeah, yeah, I think it was on a first started. I think on a different track at the minute but but when I first started, yeah it was. Yeah, I think actually this is something that has just popped into my head. One of the really interesting things again, where I felt a bit different. Once I graduated and started working- I'd never really felt this before. So when I had my child, so we live in a really lovely area of [city] with lots of yummy mummies. Lots of yoga classes. Stuff that, you know, I didn't have that growing up and stuff like that, it felt worlds away. And the local school to me is just literally around the corner. It's like an outstanding school, it's got an incredible reputation. People move into this area to get into that school, and I've done a bit of work in there. It's not one of my schools, but just as an EP. And I like, personally, I hate the ethos. I hate it. And I didn't want my child to have these, only privileged friendships. So choosing a primary school for her was really kind of really stressful for me. I also can't really cope with

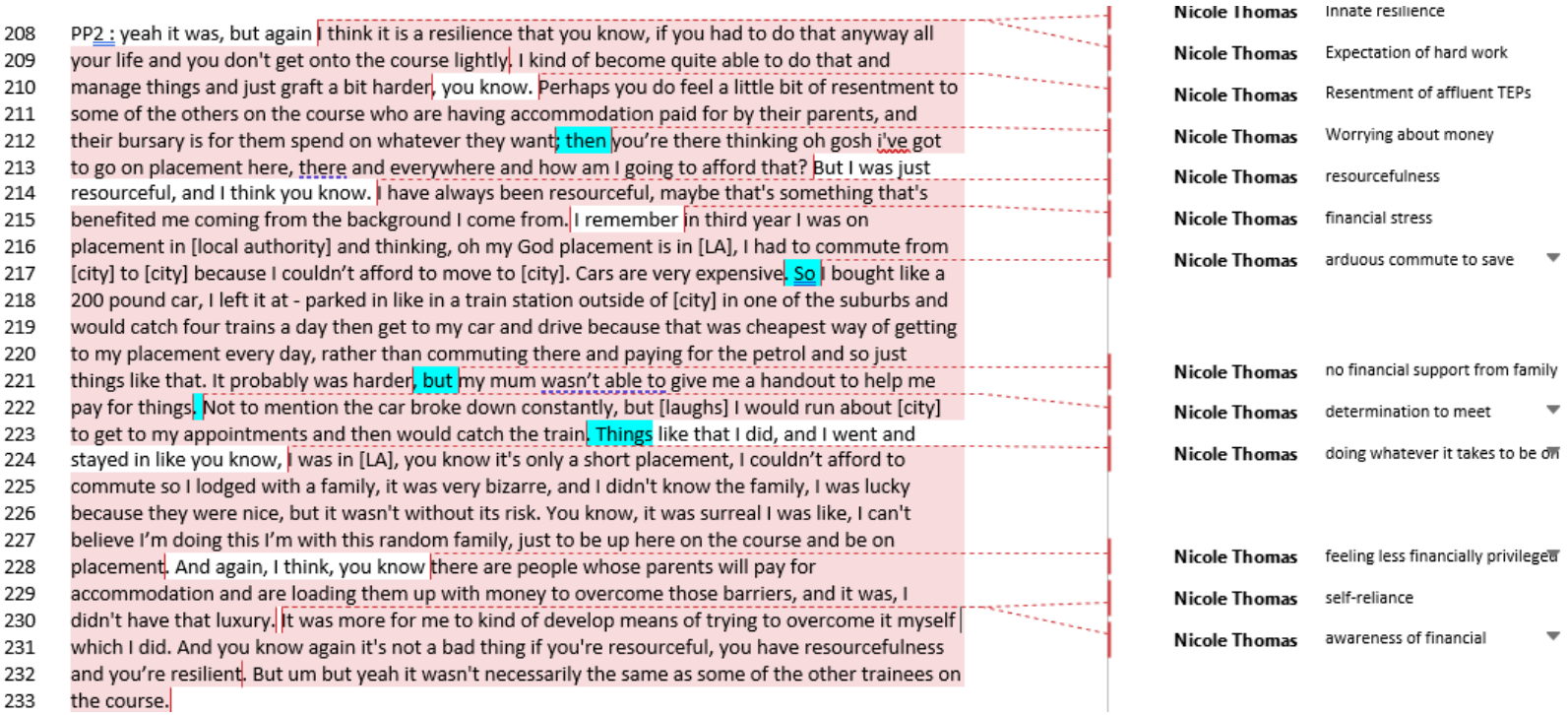
the mummy WhatsApp groups so I had, I sent her to a nursery that was recommended to me by my friends that I work with and like I just couldn't cope with it. Like, yeah the WhatsApp groups. I just really struggle with. The kind of competitive parenting like I just don't want to be part of it. And so I was like, right. I went around to all the schools in the local area. There's a school that I work with who are in [geographical area], which is a isn't a particularly kind of renowned nice area here in [city]. So, the school I work with they've got lots of just got mixed range of people, but there's, it was traditionally like kind of a Caribbean kind of Windrush area. And then there's been a big move in of kind of Somali families and Arab families. And it's an amazing school. So I was like, should I send her there? Like you know, it's an amazing school. I don't know if it would be on the catchment could I? Could I get in there? And so one of the one of my good friends who I work with in [city] said, 'but do you think she'd fit in? Do not think she'd be left out?' And I was like, what do you mean? And she was like 'well, you know, they're all really different to you'. And I was like that is so strange. And then I was looking so there were two other schools in my area. One of them is on an estate. It's a state school. And like it's just a real mixed bag of people and then another one is like again backing on to another estate. And I was like those two of my favourites like though they're going to be my top two because it's just a, they're nice nurturing schools. They listen to parents. One of them is smaller, so I ended up sending her there and I remember one of the EPs, again another one who's my good friend said, you know, 'there's a high level of need there'. And this is a really inclusive EP, right? So she's really inclusive, and a really good friend of mine, but I totally knew what she was getting at. So in her head she was thinking 'you don't want to expose your child to this'. I was like, but that's what inclusion is, and I don't want her to be in this. This is yummy mummy competitive privileged white bubble because [*omitted for anonymity*] so that was really important to me that there was like a variety of cultures and a variety of class and a variety of different exposure to a wide range of people. And then. Another EP said to me when I said oh I'm not sending her to [*school name*], which is the one round the corner and she sent her kids there, I said I'm sending her to [*school name*], which is the smallest state school and she said, 'oh, you just want to be careful what she'll be exposed to there' and I kind of just laughed it off and I said, well, you know they'll be exposed to it when they go to secondary school anyway, won't they? So and also, it's like it's a really lovely school. And I don't know if that's about me as a person or my experiences of class. In the I don't see- 'cause the people that this was a lovely and you know they're kind people. The mums are lovely, the sense of belonging, the people really look after each other and so this this idea that poor people swear and are rough and if you live on an estate, you're not going to be… but it's not said. It's this underlying not said. So yeah, so that was quite interesting when it came to yeah, where I was going

to send my daughter to school that that I think for me that was the only time. Yeah, when I didn't feel when I felt a bit different to the people that I work with now. Yeah, and it was just just those few. Like little offhand comments. Yeah.

R: OK, Thank you. Uh, I'm wondering if, just staying on what you said there about kind of identity. How do you think if at all, that your SES has changed since qualifying? And how does that make you feel?

PP8: Yeah, so I'm working class with money [laughs]. So, so for me my. It's hard, isn't it, right so… It's it really is so for me it's really hard with having a child so. So I want her to have nice things, and I want her to have nice experiences. I want to take her on lovely holidays which I can afford to do. But I also want her to have a breadth of experience and not be in a protective bubble. But then I want to protect her and not exposure to awful things like it's it's really hard, isn't it? So not being able to do things as a child for me, probably felt pretty sh*t at the time, but it's taught me something. There's always a silver lining, right? It teaches you something. Like, my brother is not a nice person, but that's taught me to be really empathetic and not see things in black and white. And to see people in a range of grey. So my brother's, not a nice person, but if I was about to fall off a bridge, the person I'd want there is my brother. So all those things, I would never want my daughter to grow up with somebody like that in her life, but actually it's taught me lots of lovely things. It's that, you can't. You can't force a working-class lifestyle now that I have a middle class wage and a middle class lifestyle. And so I find that really difficult. And there's always. So I love living where I live. It's really weird. It says I want to be part of it, but I actually don't want to be part of it. It's this, like a push pull attachment weird thing. So I love living where I live because the people are really friendly and lovely. There are lots of yoga places which I love to go to and there's lots of organic food shops, right? [laughs] So this is not. This is not what I was brought up with. It is not where I'm from, but I like all those things. But also I don't want to become best friends with all the local mums and do it with them because… because I would feel that different then it's not quite me. So I like I like parts of the lifestyle. But I don't quite fit with the people that have had that forever. Does that make sense? Maybe that's why I fit more in [city]because there are people that live there that like it but haven't had it forever. Yeah, it's it's not answering your question. I forgot what your question was [laughs].

Appendix H(ii): Extract of coded data



208 PP2 : yeah it was, but again I think it is a resilience that you know, if you had to do that anyway all
209 your life and you don't get onto the course lightly. I kind of become quite able to do that and
210 manage things and just graft a bit harder, you know. Perhaps you do feel a little bit of resentment to
211 some of the others on the course who are having accommodation paid for by their parents, and
212 their bursary is for them spend on whatever they want; then you're there thinking oh gosh i've got
213 to go on placement here, there and everywhere and how am I going to afford that? But I was just
214 resourceful, and I think you know. I have always been resourceful, maybe that's something that's
215 benefited me coming from the background I come from. I remember in third year I was on
216 placement in [local authority] and thinking, oh my God placement is in [LA], I had to commute from
217 [city] to [city] because I couldn't afford to move to [city]. Cars are very expensive. So I bought like a
218 200 pound car, I left it at - parked in like in a train station outside of [city] in one of the suburbs and
219 would catch four trains a day then get to my car and drive because that was cheapest way of getting
220 to my placement every day, rather than commuting there and paying for the petrol and so just
221 things like that. It probably was harder, but my mum wasn't able to give me a handout to help me
222 pay for things. Not to mention the car broke down constantly, but [laughs] I would run about [city]
223 to get to my appointments and then would catch the train. Things like that I did, and I went and
224 stayed in like you know, I was in [LA], you know it's only a short placement, I couldn't afford to
225 commute so I lodged with a family, it was very bizarre, and I didn't know the family, I was lucky
226 because they were nice, but it wasn't without its risk. You know, it was surreal I was like, I can't
227 believe I'm doing this I'm with this random family, just to be up here on the course and be on
228 placement. And again, I think, you know there are people whose parents will pay for
229 accommodation and are loading them up with money to overcome those barriers, and it was, I
230 didn't have that luxury. It was more for me to kind of develop means of trying to overcome it myself
231 which I did. And you know again it's not a bad thing if you're resourceful, you have resourcefulness
232 and you're resilient. But um but yeah it wasn't necessarily the same as some of the other trainees on
233 the course.

Appendix H(iii): full list of codes

Adjusting expectations	time out from applying to raise a family	greater empathy from similar experiences
Desire for rewarding profession	Ability to tell their story	motivated to model diversity within profession
Importance of sharing your story	welcoming approach of tutors	Greater understanding of service users from LSES
applying for doctorate despite concerns	feeling accepted by tutors	Motivation to stay true to roots
Moving on from previous life	feelings of belonging within university	ability to connect with people
Success despite adversity	Love for psychology	Motivated to demonstrate change is possible
Importance of self-awareness and development	intrinsic motivation	Need for profession to appear accessible
experienced additional difficulties (literacy)	not feeling Doctorate was possible	approachable nature
LSES as an advantage	glass ceiling of LSES	Motivation to normalise EP profession
Evolution of self	impact of formal nature of interview	Need to increase visibility of profession
Lack of conversations re: LSES	intimidating interview environment	Wanting to appear human as an EP
feeling unwelcomed by course director	importance of financial stability	Wanting to inspire hope in others
Not identifying as higher SES	Unprepared for personal nature of interview questions	importance of raising aspirations
Inability to be satisfied- worried about returning to previous circumstances	Almost not getting into university	motivated to share experience to motivate others
Loss of friendships, moving cities	Importance of one key person	holding others to high standard as result of own success
belongingness facilitating achievement	access to university despite low UCAS points	motivated to improve situations for others
Differentiation between financial and social status	complex EP language	maintaining own values
Feeling connected to CYP with similar backgrounds	no financial support from parents	Inspiration for working practice- encouraging positive futures
Connotations of regional accent	perceived inability to access prestigious university	Experiences enabled specialist EP role
value of speaking to an EP	difficulty understanding EP language	Tutors encouraging and accepting alternative perspectives
determination despite barriers	Lack of experience and understanding of the impact of LSES	Openness of tutor
no opportunity to access EP as a teacher	Experiences that impacted mental health	Gaining validation from university tutor
lack of work experience with EP opportunities	Importance of understanding for those who haven't experienced LSES	Acceptance of own and others' experiences
helpfulness of social media	Getting a sense that families feel stuck in LSES	Hidden nature of LSES background
value of open evenings	difficulty accessing EPs	
frustration with inequality accessing profession	good literacy skills	LSES and negative EP experience
impact of aging EP workforce	feeling intimidated by Doctorate	Negative experience with LA EP
importance of diverse EP workforce	lack of preparedness for Doctoral interviews	EP practice limited by systemic constraints

Concern people change to fit EP stereotype	expectations of aspiration adjusted due to LSES	Motivation to raise aspirations for YP
guilt for having plan B	experience of additional difficulties	Importance of early awareness of profession
greater ability to relate	feeling intimidated by interview process	Motivated to model change as PEP
Social mobility as a QEP	importance of feeling emotionally ready to train	importance of not intimidating service users
encouraged by meeting EPs from diverse backgrounds	Importance of financial planning	Importance of talking about LSES background
Connecting with colleagues from similar backgrounds	having a relatable supervisor	ability to make service users feel comfortable
Attributing success to luck	vocabulary barrier	having greater understanding and expectations for service users
feeling different	accessible language vs sounding professional	Importance of being self-aware and reflexive
feeling Doctorate wasn't meant to be	feeling exposed when not using 'proper' language	Having high standards
experience of difficulty	gap in knowledge: language	Awareness of impact of stressful financial situations
Comfort sharing experience in anonymous forum	Taboo nature of talking about personal experiences	Motivation to help schools be more empathetic
Taking the time to needed to build life experiences	Coming from a rural area	Need for equality of earning with clinical psychology
LSES instilled values	perceived disadvantage (literacy difficulty)	Importance of highlighting benefit for diversity within EP profession
accessing support for mental health	barrier of written test	Consultation with service users re relationship with EPs
feeling alienated due to the way others speak	Resilience	Need for practical advice
Similar interests among EPs	attendance at Doctorate open evening	discomfort with practicing in profession viewed as middle class
Striving to prove oneself	feeling unwelcome to apply	need for diversity within profession
experience of ACEs	expectation of not belonging in prestigious university	ability to build rapport with parents
achieving despite adversity	need to develop own vocabulary	Non-judgemental nature
feeling distanced from family	awareness of others' difficulties	Mindful not to use jargon
applying despite low confidence	Access to resources in foster care	Importance of not making assumptions to demonise LSES
feeling inadequate in comparison to other interviewees	positive experience with an EP	Importance of staying true to one's roots
exposure to different way of speaking	Positive impact of high teacher expectations	Risk of families feeling judged due to assumptions made about EPs

Attending a less prestigious university	Encouragement from EP	Non-judgemental practice
feeling silenced when voicing difference	determination despite hardship/ adversity	Importance of building relationships with service users
Perceived 'luck'	Value of advice from careers advisor	Non-judgmental nature
being used to low-income jobs	Value of assistive technology	Awareness of how to present oneself to gain trust of service users
Stereotypical EP lifestyle	pressure of Doctorate	Motivated to be collaborative
changing dress sense	Love for learning (intrinsic motivation)	Motivated to work in own community
shift in identity	feeling safe in school	Motivated to support individuals' aspirations
EP dress code	Resourcefulness	desire to offer work for free to support others
Acceptance within profession	Lack of awareness of pathways to profession	Wanting to affect change
needing to share story	No sense of belonging in 'fancy' academic setting	desire to offer work for free to support others
Feeling alienated as education level increases	Need to rely on others for networking	Understanding of lack of autonomy for CYP
motivation to report feeling different	reframing LSES as an advantage	Awareness of lack of choice for CYP in LSES areas
Resentment of affluent TEPs	need for financial stability prior to doctorate	Code switching socially and professionally
Being looked after by colleagues	Deciding to be an EP- experiences and familiarity	Importance of appropriate and accessible discussions socially
Social differences	Supportive nature of course tutors	Taking action, starting conversations
Perceived inequality of colleagues' professional connections	Exposure to psychologists	Importance of EP outreach
Needing to work harder from LSES	Need to plan for career progression	Need to raise profile of EP profession
perception of common EP language	feeling less financially privileged than peers	Importance of raising awareness of routes into profession
feeling unseen and dismissed re: LSES	Multiple applications to the Doctorate	Need to raise profile of profession to enable people to make informed choices
Lack of conversation re: backgrounds	Increased exposure to diverse social experiences in foster care	Need to make careers appear attainable
imposter syndrome	not able to relate to EPS	Motivated to help prospective TEPs
lack of conversation re: LSES background	not feeling welcomed by EPS	Motivated to support potential TEPs
Different interests socially	assumption Doctorate requires multiple applications	Changed way of speaking as an EP
Acceptance of difference	need for financial security	Awareness of using accessible language
Discomfort with SES identity as TEP	not able to put life on hold financially	Need to avoid ambiguous language
Feeling secure in oneself as a PEP	Importance of people skills	Awareness not to use jargon
Expectations on oneself as TEP	not being able to apply multiple times	Desire to undertake community-based work
arduous commute to save money	social support	strong work ethic

comfort with identity over time	**self-reliance**	**Experiences allowed them to practice in a non-judgemental way**
Leaving a life behind, evolving	**the need for a backup plan**	**ability to provide authentic empathy**
Personal development	**Self-directed research**	**Motivated to participate in research to promote conversation of EPS from LSES**
Experiencing elevation of social class	**accessing professional career guidance**	**Motivated to practise in a culturally sensitive way**
Feeling professional privilege	**support from professionals**	**Importance of practicing in a non-judgemental way**
frustration of assumptions made regarding TEP backgrounds	**Spending time gathering relevant work experience**	**Still work and live in area raised in**
feeling dismissed when sharing story of LSES background	**motivated to make up for lack of life experience**	**Importance of not making assumptions about different people's backgrounds**
Feeling judged for social activities	**doing whatever it takes to be on Doctorate**	**Importance of challenging the assumptions of others**
Differing values	**awareness of financial disadvantage**	**Importance of having difficult conversations**
feeling othered	**tenacity**	**Confidence to facilitate difficult conversations**
lack of awareness of impact of LSES background	**motivated to pay off student debt**	**Being mindful of how to speak**
attributing success to disadvantage	**Importance of family support**	**being mindful of using judgemental language**
Confidence as a PEP	**Advantage of life experiences**	**Hyperawareness of impact of language in EP reports**
Inevitable change in SES and identity as EP	**importance of life experiences**	**thinking more holistically**
Comfort with colleagues	**additional pastoral support**	**Promoting empathic approach**
Tutors as course and EP representatives	**having somebody to talk to**	**Frustration when parents don't accept support offered**
importance of self-reflection	**importance of relationships**	**motivated to work in less affluent areas**
perception versus reality of belonging	**Experiencing belonging in EP profession**	**Motivation to work for a charity**
experience of imposter syndrome as TEP	**perceived accessibility of profession**	**Motivated to work with challenging and misunderstood population**
self-reliance	**feeling inadequate on Doctorate**	**Being drawn to working with complex families**
Lack of awareness of the profession	**adapting to new terminology**	**Experience has informed interest**
feeling vulnerable	**Belief in oneself**	**Willingness to support others re: careers in psychology**
lack of awareness of tutor re LSES background	**feeling of belonging on the doctorate**	**Motivated to help other prospective TEPS**
Importance of financial and social support	**Importance of role models**	**Discomfort with feeling of professional power**
Aspirations driven by financial security	**Coming from more deprived area than others**	**Importance of research re LSES in EP profession**
Forgoing opportunity to study at prestigious university	**intimidating new vocabulary used**	**Wanting LSES stories to be heard**

Career driven actions	exposure to different way of speaking	Motivated to share own story of EP journey
Discovering EP doctorate by chance	difficulty relating to tutors	Offering to speak at local schools
Doctorate as a way out	feeling intimidated as new TEP	Motivated to be relatable role model
Change in personal circumstances causing further financial difficulty	exposure to new unfamiliar vocabulary	Offering mentoring for school leavers
Close to dropout due to financial stress	feeling academically not good enough	motivated to talk about impact of LSES background
Having to work to pay bills	Social masking	feeling need to make others feel better about their assumptions
money anxiety	accessibility of academic language	Importance of acknowledging own biases
Feeling financially disadvantaged to other TEPS	inability to be oneself at interview	Having a 'real' view of the world
Assumptions made about LSES background	concern about fitting in on Doctorate	Ability to think systemically and holistically
no forum to share story of background	lack of confidence due to accent	Consideration of impact of individual circumstances
Need for equity in entrance to profession	Intimidated by academic language	Ability to offer alternative, holistic perspective
lack of ability to save money when training	Lack of access to EP role models	Importance of not making assumptions about service users
Bursary not salary difficulty	Risk of isolation as NQEP	Motivated to work in a person-centred way
Different Motivation for doing doctorate	Lack of career support	Importance of collaboration with service users
Forced to relocate	no parental financial support	LSES value: fairness and equity
Empathy but no understanding	Not able to be oneself as TEP	need for equity in EP work
Feeling stuck	Encouragement from a teacher	highlighting impact of proper nutrition in EP practice
Personal sacrifices	developing friendships with TEPs	empathy with children whose basic needs are not met
Feeling disadvantaged having no saved money	social support from other TEPs	holistic approach to formulation
Reluctance to compromise standard of living	Middle class LA placement	consideration of systemic factors
Withdrawing socially due to money	Importance of financial support	passion for social justice
Not sharing money difficulties	feeling supported by PEP	motivated to empower people to make their own decisions
Having to be careful with money	Lack of parental academic support/ power of school/ education	drive to be transparent in EP work
Sacrificing social life	Gaps in education	importance of transparency in EP work
Ability to hide away	Additional disadvantage: dyslexia	frustration with unfair systems
Resentment of compromise	Importance of social support network	importance of equity
Tied to funded LA	Need to make sacrifices to train	motivated to advocate for those without power or ability

resentment of compromise	living local to university	motivated to advocate within EP profession
Not feeling understood	Accruement of debt	awareness of own privilege
Resentful of other TEPs	use of assistive technology	Need for diverse role models within EP profession
Social withdrawal	positive relationship with supervisor	Awareness raising for funded EP doctorate
stress related illnesses	appreciative of bursary	Need to challenge assumptions of others
Job enabled saving money	Psychological barriers	importance of conversations about LSES
Refusal to struggle	financial stress	motivated to be a role model
Social sacrifices	importance of support from partner	Importance of bespoke individualised support
Assumptions made about SES	Feeling enabled by partner	Motivation to reduce assumptions about LSES families
Identifying differently to other TEPs	Level of resilience needed to train	Need to reduce judgemental thinking around LSES
Not identifying with middle class label	Importance of taking time to gather experiences	Importance of self-reflection
Attributing success to luck	Value of TEP networks	Feeling inaccessible to service users as an EP
Intense imposter syndrome	lack of access to EPs	Discomfort with power dynamic of being an EP
Lack of conversation re: equal TEP pay	no financial support from family	Increased awareness of things that can affect CYP mental health
Need vs want to complete doctorate	determination to meet expectations	Feeling trusted by families
Taboo nature of discussing money	feeling less different staying local	Ability to build rapport with families
Guilt for earning more than family	Needing to work in addition to bursary	Increased understanding
Assumption that EPs can afford home office	Worrying about money	Greater ability to empathise with LSES families
Service users assuming EP class	High attaining student	ability to relate to families
Older TEPs financial and relationship security	Innate resilience	Need to use jargon to feel like a 'real' EP
Awareness of own assumptions	being used to hard work	Noticing own assumptions
Other's assumption that LSES is less of a disadvantage	Expectation of hard work	Awareness of need to reflect on own assumptions
Assumption that EPs can afford things	stronger work ethic	Awareness of assumptions as a barrier to communication
Cost of EP social life	Importance of being confident	amending working practice to ensure accessibility to families
Taking longer to reach personal goals	Feeling secure enough to help others	Acknowledging challenges of remote working and reaching all service users
Friends' assumption that EPs are affluent	skills from LSES background	Consideration of accessing LSES families
Perception of high salary	Feeling inferior whilst training	Motivated to advocate for equity
Friends' assumptions that EPs are affluent	confident to be oneself	Acknowledgement of professional privilege

Ongoing feeling of being lower class	**unaware of EP profession**	**Motivated to be accessible to families**
Not identifying with higher SES	**Lack of opportunities in rural area**	**Passionate about supporting diversity in the profession**
Guilt for earning more than family	**Financial barrier to complete masters**	**Importance of challenging own assumptions**
SES purgatory- not identifying with LSES or HSES	**Determination to secure psychology job**	**Importance of remaining open to multiple perspectives**
Family tension because of social mobility	**Financial barrier relocating for Doctorate**	**Importance of gathering holistic information**
Feeling resentment from family	**Challenge of compulsory car costs**	**Need to challenge one's own views and assumptions**
Weight of 'doctor' label	**Financial stress to access doctorate**	**need to challenge others ways of thinking**
Friends not understanding profession	**Having to accrue debt to access doctorate**	**Appreciation of privileged position as EP**
Feeling pressured to pay in social situations	**Low doctorate bursary**	**participating in careers events to raise profile of EPs**
Having higher aspirations than home friends	**Inability to access hardship fund due to type of course**	**Importance of self-reflection**
Guilt for having high aspirations	**Financially supporting parents**	**Motivated to be a role model**
Resentment of need for safety net	**no financial safety net**	**Ability to offer alternative perspective**
Fear of being 'poor'	**Career driven**	**resistance to need for formality**
Feeling outcast for bettering oneself	**Lack of access to financial support**	**questioning embedded practises**
Still searching for belonging	**Feeling isolated whilst training**	**motivation to challenge status quo**
Not wanting to live like parents did	**Feeling unable to share financial concerns**	**ability to relate to others' upbringing**
Importance of university outreach to rural areas	**Rural area disadvantage**	**Ability to listen with empathy**
Importance of salary and benefits for TEPs	**Financial stress and discomfort**	**reluctance to accept stereotypes**
Importance of financial equity	**Lack of choice where to train**	**seeing benefit of lessons learned from experiencing adversity**
Consideration of remote access to doctorate	**lack of choice to train in Wales**	**Wanting to challenge stereotypes**
Importance of flexibility to consider individual TEP circumstances	**Increase in car costs**	**advocating need for lifelong learning as opposed to box ticking**
Importance of TEP preparation for working	**physically tiring job**	**Ability to practise containment**
Acceptance into EP team regardless of university	**time commitment of part time job**	**Greater capacity to understand than TEP peers**
Importance of pastoral and financial support for doctoral students	**Not feeling believed about LSES background**	**recognition of importance of individual differences**
Intersectionality of ethnicity	**feeling 'othered'**	**importance of being approachable to service user parents**
Feeling ungrateful for complaining about situations	**No access to AEP positions**	**acknowledgement of own privilege**

Importance of reflection on journey	**Not feeling prepared for Doctorate**	**Importance of acknowledging own biases**
First in family to attend university	**Rural inequality**	**advocating for diverse recruitment of AEPs**
Feeling financially and socially disadvantaged	**Lack of professional contacts**	**ability to relate to vulnerable groups**
taking financial risks to enter profession	**Others having more connections**	**empathy with CYP**
completion of master's conversion	**Unaware of opportunities for professional support**	**prioritising vulnerable groups in EP practice**
moving to complete masters	**deficit in knowledge and experience**	**setting children up to succeed**
lack of belonging whilst completing masters	**Lack of access to opportunities**	**wanting to be down to earth**
lack of social connections on masters	**No access to EPs**	**ability to build rapport with service users**
feeling out of practice	**compulsory car costs**	**empathy with service users**
lack of knowledge re: rarity of AEP role	**Outlaying costs to train**	**Self-disclosure to build rapport**
expectation to apply for Doctorate	**Financial knowledge and support from colleague**	**Family viewing them as 'posh'**
underestimating oneself	**Costs to move for EP job**	**pandemic increasing visibility of disadvantage of LSES**
choosing where to train based on approach of other EPs	**Similar background to service users**	**Feeling busy as an EP**
wanting to train in a university that aligns with personal values	**SES assumptions barrier to service user relationship**	**Wanting to practice as a private EP**
sense of belonging with TEP cohort	**Service users more open upon knowledge of LSES background**	**Change of mindset since qualifying as an EP**
connection with TEP cohort	**Feeling isolated due to background**	**Frustration with time constraints as an LA EP**
feeling academically equal on doctorate	**Lack of professional connections**	**Assuming difference to others**
not worried about drop in wage	**Lack of belonging**	**Feeling competitive with TEP peers**
feeling as though parent TEPs had it harder	**High level of empathy**	**Positive impact of LSES on identity**
cost of travel	**First in family to attend university**	**Discomfort with experiencing social mobility**
time spent searching for cost effective way to travel	**Resilience**	**LSES forming part of identity**
pressure on personal relationship	**Intrinsically motivated to better oneself**	**Success and social mobility despite glass ceiling LSES**
pressure on personal relationship	**Intrinsically motivated**	**Success despite barriers**
isolation as TEP in family	**Ability to work to deadlines**	**Discomfort with change in SES**
not feeling compelled to talk about concerns with tutors	**Tendency to overcommit to work**	**Sense of betrayal to family still in LSES**
not wanting to feel sorry for oneself	**Inequity of access to AEP jobs**	**Noticing more progressive way of thinking**

just getting on with it	**Feeling intimidated about other TEPS' experiences**	**Feeling different to some family and friends**
tutor assumptions about TEP SES backgrounds	**Geographical inequity of access to AEP roles**	**EP training prompting more open-minded progressive way of thinking**
assumption that individuals with LSES backgrounds couldn't access Doctorate	**Importance of awareness of EP profession**	**Feeling that Doctorate doesn't address some LSES issues**
feeling proud of LSES background	**Importance professional networking**	**Feeling an outsider to some family members**
personal struggle working in a middle-class profession	**Social media as a resource**	**Enjoyment of practicing as an EP**
Increase in confidence	**Access to EPs on social media**	**Desire for psychology to be a core subject**
Assumption that EPs are middle class as a barrier to engagement	**Value of open evenings**	**lack of awareness of EP profession**
Enjoying working as an EP	**Open days increasing access to EPs**	**exclusivity of EP profession**
Different ways of working as an EP	**Open days value in humanising EPs**	**profile of EPs low**
Impact of how you dress as an EP	**Value of professional networking**	**unintentional exclusion due to lack of awareness**
Constructions of regional accents as indicator of SES	**Lack of understanding of EP role**	**delaying starting a family for fear of sacrificing Doctorate**
View of other professions as middle class	**Supportive nature of EPs**	**feeling lucky to be paid to train**
Difficulty articulating double identity	**Attendance at selective grammar school**	**determination to speak to EP**
Guilt for high earning	**Lack of experience of EPs**	**negative reputation of EPs in school**
Reluctance to show off about earning well	**Career-driven**	**Shame of LSES**
Guilt for high earning	**Unsure of options to aspire to**	**Money as a taboo subject**
Discomfort with SES identity	**doing own research**	**Feeling awkward about high earnings**
Lack of awareness of LSES backgrounds	**lack of financial support**	**pointing out accessibility considerations**
Being corrected for the way they speak	**AEP role opportunity**	**feeling guilty for bettering oneself**
Weight of 'doctor' status	**supported by EPS to apply to doctorate**	**Feeling different to friends and family**
Lack of understanding of EP profession	**not all Universities accessible financially**	**Noticing shift in oneself**
Family showing pride towards them	**feeling as though they belong on Doctorate**	**Multiple doctorate applications**
Feeling lucky for being accepted by home friends	**benefit of life experience due to age**	**Competitiveness of admission to EP Doctorate**
Good childhood despite LSES label	**lack of awareness of EP profession**	**Family culture of learning**
attributing success to luck	**familiarity with living on a tight budget**	**Aspiration to become an EP**

Need for revision of funding arrangements	**disadvantage from rural area**	**Family prioritising getting a job for financial security**
Time taken to budget for commute	**four-hour commute to university**	**Opportunity to volunteer abroad**
Need for EPs to be more visible at career events	**ability to complete placement close to home**	**Spending time gathering work experience**
Need for TEPS to have security of salary	**having to move house to access opportunities**	**No desire to teach (pre doctoral requirement)**
Need for financial safety net	**significantly more time spent commuting than other TEPs**	**Fear of being trapped in teaching profession**
Need to facilitate discussions about impact of LSES	**disadvantage of coming from rural area**	**Self-directed research**
Consideration of SES in line with other protected characteristics	**tiring commute**	**Contacting EP services**
Sensitivity to weaponizing class	**resilience**	**Attributing success to luck**
Consideration of intersectionality needed	**determination**	**angry that other TEPs had it easier**
Attributing success to luck	**parents unable to financially support**	**Other more privileged TEPs unaware of privilege**
Feeling as though they fell into profession	**family unable to academically support**	**Feeling disadvantaged to other TEPs**
Potential for unfamiliar EP language to alienate people	**lack of professional connections in family**	**Feeling angry about others falling into the profession**
Feeling constricted to affect change	**experience of chronic health condition**	**awareness of own privilege**
Reluctance to complain about situation	**ability to build rapport with parents**	**Lack of diversity amongst TEP cohort**
Realising competitiveness of profession	**Lack of opportunities in rural areas**	**Feeling judged by other TEPs**
Education placement sparked interest in educational psychology	**Difficulty relating socially to other EPs**	**Not feeling safe to share stories from upbringing**
Finding out about opportunities too late	**difficulty contributing to conversations with EPs**	**Feeling that other TEPs couldn't relate to experiences**
Feeling lost and unsure how to get into profession	**Frustrated by labels of disadvantage**	**Feeling different to others on Doctorate**
Getting a foot into the door of psychology profession	**strong work ethic**	**Feeling academically inferior to others**
Getting foot into the door of psychology profession	**Lack of knowledge rather than lack of aspiration**	**Feeling others had more academic support from connections**
Exploring EP Doctorate after unsuccessful on clinical Doctorate	**New EP language**	**Voicing alternative perspective**
Panic about not having a career	**Unfamiliar EP language**	**Feeling patronised by other TEPs**
Multiple applications to doctorate	**Unaware of career path into psychology**	**Feeling unintentional microaggressions**
Multiple applications for doctorate	**Lack of awareness of Doctorate requirements**	**Difficulty affording social events**
Working multiple jobs at the same time	**Unaware how to get into EP profession**	**Feeling left out of TEP social events**
Need for a backup plan	**Ability to network with psychology professionals**	**low amount of bursary**

Vast experience due to lack of awareness of how to access psychology profession	**Value of information gained from open day**	**difficulty affording TEP social events**
Need for a backup plan	**Value of information gained from open day**	**assumptions made about financial circumstances**
Time taken to figure out path into profession	**Lack of awareness of EP Profession**	**feeling left out socially with other TEPs**
Taking longer to progress into profession	**Lack of professional connections**	**not feeling safe to share stories with TEPs**
Constant treadmill to secure career	**Inability to take opportunity of voluntary work**	**feeling pitied by others for LSES**
Concern for lack of backup career	**Inability to take opportunity of voluntary work**	**feeling out of place in LA placement**
Inability to save money	**Lack of knowledge of profession**	**not feeling good enough as second year TEP**
Difficulty in gaining paid work experience	**Taken longer to figure out career path**	**developed confidence as QEP over time**
TEP colleagues having financial support	**Lack of access to opportunities**	**feeling like a burden on placement**
Struggling to financially support oneself	**Figuring out path into profession alone**	**expectation that TEP will be ready made EPs**
long-winded journey to becoming an EP	**Lack of access to knowledge**	**feeling out of place at 'posh' LA placement**
SES identity based on geographical location	**Lack of cultural and social capital**	**deference to academia**
Frustration over 'disadvantaged' label	**Less access to social and cultural opportunities**	**experiencing imposter syndrome**
Feeling intimidated going onto Doctorate	**Parents unable to financially support**	**parents emphasising personal accountability**
Impostor syndrome	**resilience**	**reluctance to challenge those in positions of power**
Lack of confidence	**varied experiences to fall back on**	**regret for not challenging narrative in the past**
Feeling less confident than colleagues	**Lack of access to opportunities from disadvantaged backgrounds**	**lack of confidence to challenge authority figures**
Impostor syndrome	**Lack of confidence**	**family not understanding EP role**
Lack of self-belief	**Increase in confidence throughout Doctorate**	**feeling accepted in different city**
Feeling inadequate	**lack of confidence to challenge**	**feeling safe amongst likeminded people**
Feeling less confident than TEP peers	**Not engaging for fear of being judged**	**moving to a new city increasing belonging**
Assuming difference because of LSES background	**Supportive university tutor**	**needing confidence to assert yourself**
Lack of belonging on Doctorate	**Taught by relatable tutors**	**feeling comfortable sharing story with EP Team**
Feeling drawn to down to earth peers	**Tutor from LSES background**	**sense of belonging and acceptance within EP team**
Not getting to know peers for fear of being judged	**Concern of being judged for how you speak**	**feeling accepted by EP colleagues**
Increase in confidence throughout Doctorate	**Working where you live and greater ability to relate to people**	**feeling judged by TEP colleagues**
LSES background causing perfectionism tendencies	**Preconceptions about being judged**	**Lack of practise at university to facilitate social justice**

Feeling more aware of impact of LSES than peers	**Need to work to make up for loss in income**	**Lack of lived LSES experiences of university tutors**
Lack of awareness of others about impact of LSES	**Reduction in income when accessing Doctorate bursary**	**Tendency of colleagues to judge schools**
feeling different to peers	**Enjoyment of working with people**	**Not identifying as middle class**
shocked by assumptions made by peers	**Lack of preparedness for career**	**seeing Benefit of lessons learned from experiencing adversity**
Feeling judged for where you live	**Lack of alternative choices for careers**	**Dissonance with SES identification**
Resentment of assumptions made about people based on geographical location	**Lack of preparedness for career**	**Feeling separated from environment of upbringing**
feeling judged by people from different backgrounds	**Lack of access to knowledge about careers**	**Not fitting in with those who are born into privilege**
Imposter syndrome	**Ability to identify with families**	**Lack of money growing up**
Importance of exposure to different backgrounds to facilitate understanding	**Feeling intimidated**	**Feeling that others had it worse**
Feeling patronised	**Lack of confidence**	**Dissatisfaction with unequitable bursary**
Feeling underestimated	**Lack of confidence**	**Lack of time to train assistant EPs**
Feeling isolated because of difference as a TEP	**Value of EP open evening events**	**Lack of time to train TEPs on placement**
Not fitting in with other TEPs	**Low profile of EP role**	**Frustration with homogeneity of EP interview panel**
Not feeling part of TEP group	**Value of EP open evening**	**lack of LA funding constraining EP time**
Need to change their way of speaking with other TEPs	**Value of EP outreach events**	**lack of availability to AEP posts**
No meaningful connections made with TEP colleagues	**Importance of experience of EP language**	**no time to consider how to support diversity in profession**
Feeling others have lived sheltered lives	**EP language**	**stress of moving house several times during doctorate**
Feeling like an outsider because of LSES	**benefit of placement opportunities**	**struggling to afford to live whilst studying**
Impact of parental opinion and narrative about LSES	**feeling disillusioned at time taken to qualify as EP**	**Parental Lack of confidence**
Impact of parental opinion and narrative about LSES	**knowledge of gaining relevant work experience**	**first in family to attend university**
Needing to work throughout doctorate	**lack of conversation re: LSES background with EPS**	**feeling misunderstood by family**
Achieving Doctorate despite not being a high achiever	**Having a relatable role model**	**guilt for not spending time with family during doctorate**
Motivated to work in local area	**Lack of awareness of the profession**	**feeling as though they've had to work harder than peers**
Receiving praise from SENCos	**Aspiring to be an EP**	**stigma for working alongside doctorate**
Frustration with constraints of LA working	**compulsory UCAS fees**	**no choice of placement location**
Weight of the 'Dr' status	**Lack of preparation for UCAS fees**	**difficulty managing time between work and doctorate**
Family and friends proud of 'Dr' title	**Student loan facilitating financial freedom**	**lack of encouragement to aim high**

Not wanting to be put on a pedestal as a 'Dr'	Lack of professional connections	Feeling split between two separate lives
Not wanting to be seen differently as a 'Dr'	Opportunity to meet school's EP	Struggled to relate to TEP colleagues
Supportive friends	no social media resources	working in a service that is not ethnically diverse
Viewed as knowledgeable	lack of information about application to doctorate	pride in own independence
Friends impressed by 'doctor' status	self-directed research	comfort with diverse accents
SES has changed but feel no different	unsure how to write Doctorate application	feeling need to fulfil all criteria
Aware of own privilege	familial view of education driving social mobility	no financial stress as QEP
Feeling that others take position for granted	parental support	lack of awareness that doctorate is fully funded
Discomfort with being positioned as expert	intrinsically motivated	ability to access funded doctorate
Feeling financially comfortable as an EP	parental support	Lack of conversations re: LSES background
Being viewed differently by others	lack of awareness and understanding of EP role	living close to universities
Lack of understanding of EP role	family supporting to best of their ability	Importance of family support
Need for profile of EPs to be raised	doing application alone	resilience
Need for more information at earlier stage of education	Expensive fees for professional bodies	Feeling stuck in teaching profession
Having to find information without support	Working whilst at university	Feeling stuck in teaching profession
Benefit of job security following Doctorate	living at home when applying for doctorate	Difficulty accessing AEP roles
Importance of equity of access to EP profession	Difficulty attending interviews due to work commitments	Difficulty gathering professional references
Noticing increasingly good practice for supporting prospective TEPs	Difficulty attending multiple interview days	importance of family support
validity of all individuals' life experiences	Lack of preparedness for personal interview questions	Love for learning
learning not to feel constrained by background	Personal boundaries during interviews	Lack of exposure to psychology
discomfort talking about LSES background	Welcoming university environment	Awareness of EP profession through college tutor
lack of opportunities to talk about impact of LSES backgrounds	Relaxed interview atmosphere	EP assessment methods not aligning with personal values
assumptions made about SES of EPs	Down to earth approach of tutors	Inability to pay for EP masters
openness in interview under anonymity	Ability to relate to course tutors	Motivation to become an EP
feeling judged for where you live	Unfamiliar sociolect of course tutors	Lack of professional connections
Straightforward journey into profession	Feeling financially secure from bursary	Lack of professional network
Aspiring to go to university	Satisfaction with bursary amount having no dependents	Opportunity to meet with PEP

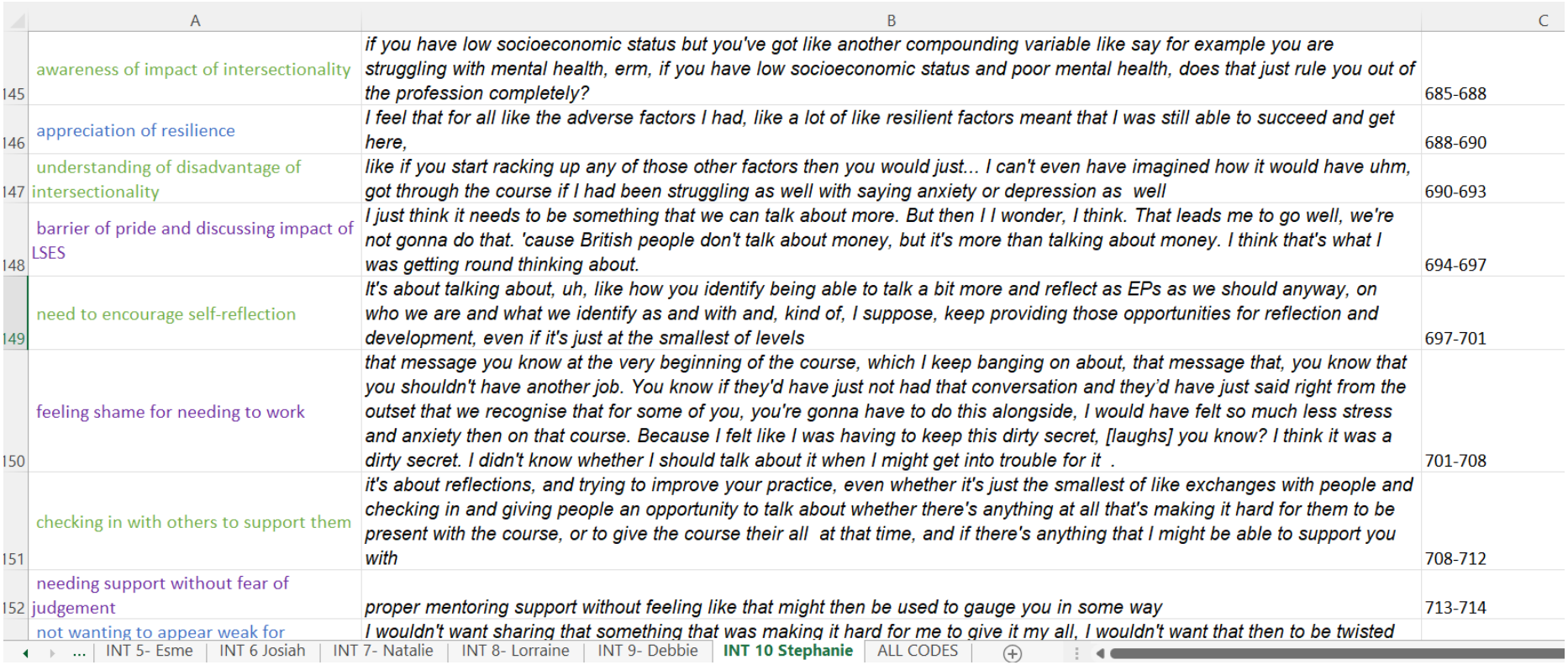
worrying about compulsory UCAS fees	Sensible with money	Lack of awareness of EP profession
Worry about financial support	Feeling financially disadvantaged compared to TEP colleagues	Value of speaking to PEP
Accessing undergraduate student loans	Feeling financially disadvantaged to other TEPs	Support from school job to meet EP
Feeling financially inferior to peers	Car failure impacting placement	Opportunity to meet and learn from EP
Difficulty fitting in at university	having a 'posh' accent	Strange interview experience
Difficulty relating to peers' rich experiences	High achiever	Moved closer to multiple universities
Perception of EPs as inaccessible	Acculturation during undergraduate degree	Financial support from partner
aspiration to work in fulfilling careers	Social learning during undergraduate	Lack of career awareness
success despite disadvantage	Student finance enabled social learning	Parents working non-professional jobs
persisting despite difficult circumstances	Impact of money on experience	proactive
assumptions about TEP financial circumstances	Cognitive load and stress of LSES	value of opportunity to meet with EP
Tendency to undersell skills and experience	perceived financial barriers to applying	EP supporting doctoral application
Frustration of online application fee	Perceived 'exclusive' nature of profession	Lack of academic support from professional contacts
Having to move into own property to study	Lack of flexibility within EP doctorate	Financial support from partner
Unaware of housing costs	Online accessibility of professional bodies	Financial support from partner enabled doctoral study
Learning 'real world' money skills	EPs willing to share knowledge online	ability to build relationships with TEP colleagues over time
Ability to budget and save	EPs willing to help prospective TEPs	feeling unprepared as TEP
learning 'real world' money skills	Importance of believing in oneself	feeling disadvantaged to other TEPs with professional connections
Feeling thrown into the deep end of learning life skills	Feeling of needing to stay in your lane	needing time to learn and understand role of EP
Lack of experience with financial concepts	access to online resources	needing more time to learn and understand role of EP
learning new life skills whilst training	value of free EP open evenings	lack of formal EP skills
Grateful for opportunity to train	importance of ensuring accessibility to open evenings	not feeling confident in TEP role
Appreciative of fully funded doctorate	ethical implications of sharing LSES experiences	feeling uncomfortable in unfamiliar situations
Living further from university due to budget	LSES is not visible	lack of confidence to use voice as TEP
Other TEPs financially supported by family	Lack of conversations about LSES background	Lack of diversity on Doctoral interview panel
Acceptance of commute time	Early awareness of EP	Resources on social media
Judgemental nature of other TEPs due to lack of awareness	Aspiring to be an EP	Value of EP open events
Financial stress caused by needing a car	Conscientious	advantage of connection with somebody on interview panel

Feeling as though others don't understand 'real' world	Parents value education	Lack of diversity on doctorate interview panel
Frustrated with colleagues' assumptions about service users	opportunity to study educational psychology	Value of networking with EPs
Growing up in poverty	Access to relevant work experience	Needing support with written application
sense of guilt for spending money	Lack of support from careers advisor	social media facilitating accessibility to EPs
Not sharing LSES background	Self-directed research on how to get into profession	value of free online training resources from EPS'
incidental learning during childhood	Value of open EP information events	accessibility of online open events
frustration about assumptions made of TEPs	Feeling disadvantaged because of lack of connections	high expectations for TEPs to already be EPs
Assumptions made by others due to accent	Feeling disheartened prior to applying	inequity of paid EP masters
Changing constructions of 'expensive'	Value of open EP information event	willingness to share LSES experiences
Noticing entitlement of others	Following application advice from EP	financially supporting family
treating service workers with kindness	lack of time to prepare for interview due to work commitments	need to be financially stable
Feeling financially poorer than friends	Desperate to be an EP	utilising existing connections
Noticing a sense of entitlement in others	needing to take time off work for interview	anxiety as new driver
Ability to conceal LSES background	uncertainty of doctorate reserve list	feeling different to peers at undergrad
Difficulty relating to others socially	perseverance in face of challenges	determination to progress career
accruing debt to experience travelling	financial challenges	burnout during doctorate
Knowledge that other TEPs are affluent	lack of professional connections/ networks	working multiple jobs to afford undergrad
Assumptions of others regarding the bursary	student finance grants enabling access to university	own assumptions barrier to sharing personal information with colleagues
being financially independent	feeling as though future was predetermined due to LSES	Importance of widening participation
Excluding oneself from social plans due to money	importance of financial security	Importance of accepting training is not an entitlement
Division of funded vs self-funded TEPs	student finance making university accessible	Experience of discrimination in education
Impact of difference on relationships	parents' unable to financially support	Need to make oneself vulnerable
Frustrated with assumptions made by others	fear of accruing debt from university	sense of acceptance of discomfort of social mobility
Not feeling understood	fear of accruing debt from university	shame of LSES
Entitlement to FSM	lack of professional connections/ networks	LSES as a spectrum
Experiencing stigma of being poor	lack of understanding of role of EP	High social and cultural capital, low financial capital
lack of Money causing social disadvantage	careers advisors lack of awareness of EP profession	Experience of diverse socio-cultural experiences

Blurred lines of 'working class'	perception of EP world as exclusive	Having more world knowledge than more affluent peers
feeling different to others	value of parental encouragement	Systemic impact of growing up in poverty
Feeing affluent once qualified	Family under financial stress	being vulnerable sharing information about LSES background
Awareness but not understanding of LSES	Stressful upbringing and the need to 'get on with it'	Exposure to EP due to brother's ALN
Lack of understanding of impact of LSES	Pressure and worry caused by LSES	Awareness of EP profession through experience
Feeling alone due to childhood experiences	LSES background limits aspirations	Negative impression of LA EP
experience of family struggling financially	Difficulty relating to examples given by tutors	Positive experience of private EP
professionals unaware of impact of financial stress	Lack of awareness of impact of LSES	Observing positive influence of EP
different constructions of 'no money'	Difficulty articulating LSES experience	Attributing success to luck
lack of understanding of financial stress	Feeling uncomfortable on the doctorate	uncertainty of interview reserve list
feeling guilty for high earnings	feeling heard by university tutor	experience of bullying due to LSES
need to justify spending money	Financial support from partner	low self-esteem
feeling guilty for spending money	Living close to university	impact of parental views
discomfort with change in financial circumstances	Moving back to parents' when needed	feeling distanced from parental views
being treated favourably due to 'Dr' title	Travel expenses paid	negative impact of parental views
discomfort with status of Dr title	Feeling inferior due to lack of vocabulary	working alongside undergrad
discomfort with power of Dr title	Difficulty understanding EP language	detrimental effect working during undergraduate
guilt for being financially comfortable	Inaccessibility of psychological jargon	feeling 'less than' EP world
feeling guilty for own privilege	Financial reliance on partner	people from LSES having low expectations
guilt for improving SES	Ability to buy own house with partner	feeling different to extended family culture
guilt for earning more than parents	Parental support	difficulty articulating nuance of LSES experience
experience of impact of basic needs not being met	Value of colleagues' support	Feeling that others had it worse
feeling enraged with lack of choice for those from LSES	Not having opportunity to study psychology prior to A Level	Attributing success to luck
dissatisfaction with privilege of making judgements	Incidental exposure to EP profession	Positive learning experience on doctorate
frustration with hypocrisy of EP profession	feeling intimidated by Doctorate	Disconnect between TEP and QEP practice
feeling disheartened by lack of awareness of inequality in EP profession	value of encouragement of others	Automatic SES increment when QEP
need for systemic change	lack of understanding of EP language	Lack of teaching re: impact of LSES

Lack of self-awareness amongst privileged professionals	**inaccessibility of EP language**	**Parents discomfort with new way of thinking**
Importance of EP outreach	**lack of understanding of EP language**	**Disconnect between mindset of EPs and families**
Difficulty voicing areas of intersectionality/ difference	**value of speaking to an EP**	**Finding confidence to share alternative perspective**

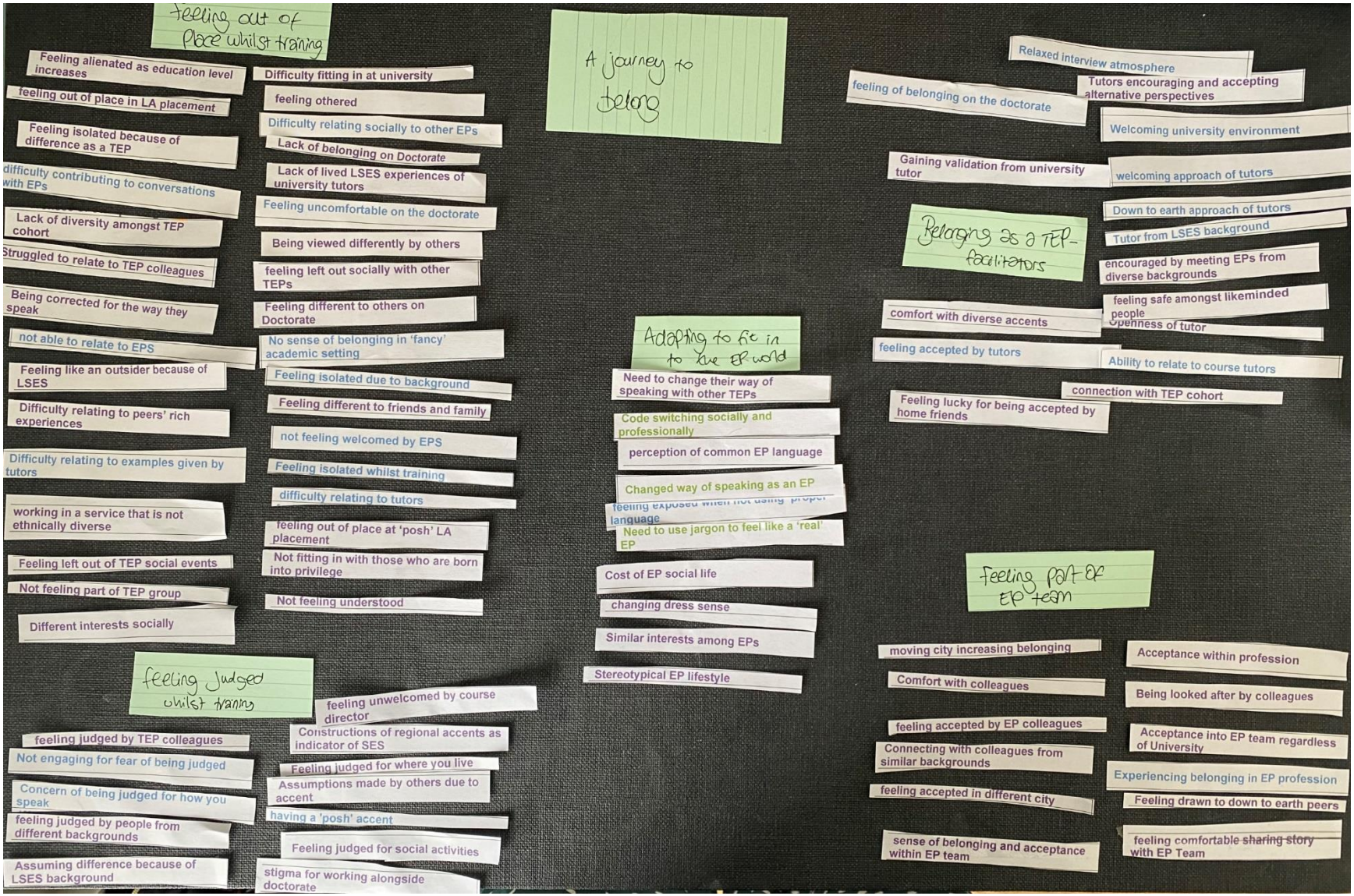
Appendix H(iv): extract of coded data and corresponding quotations



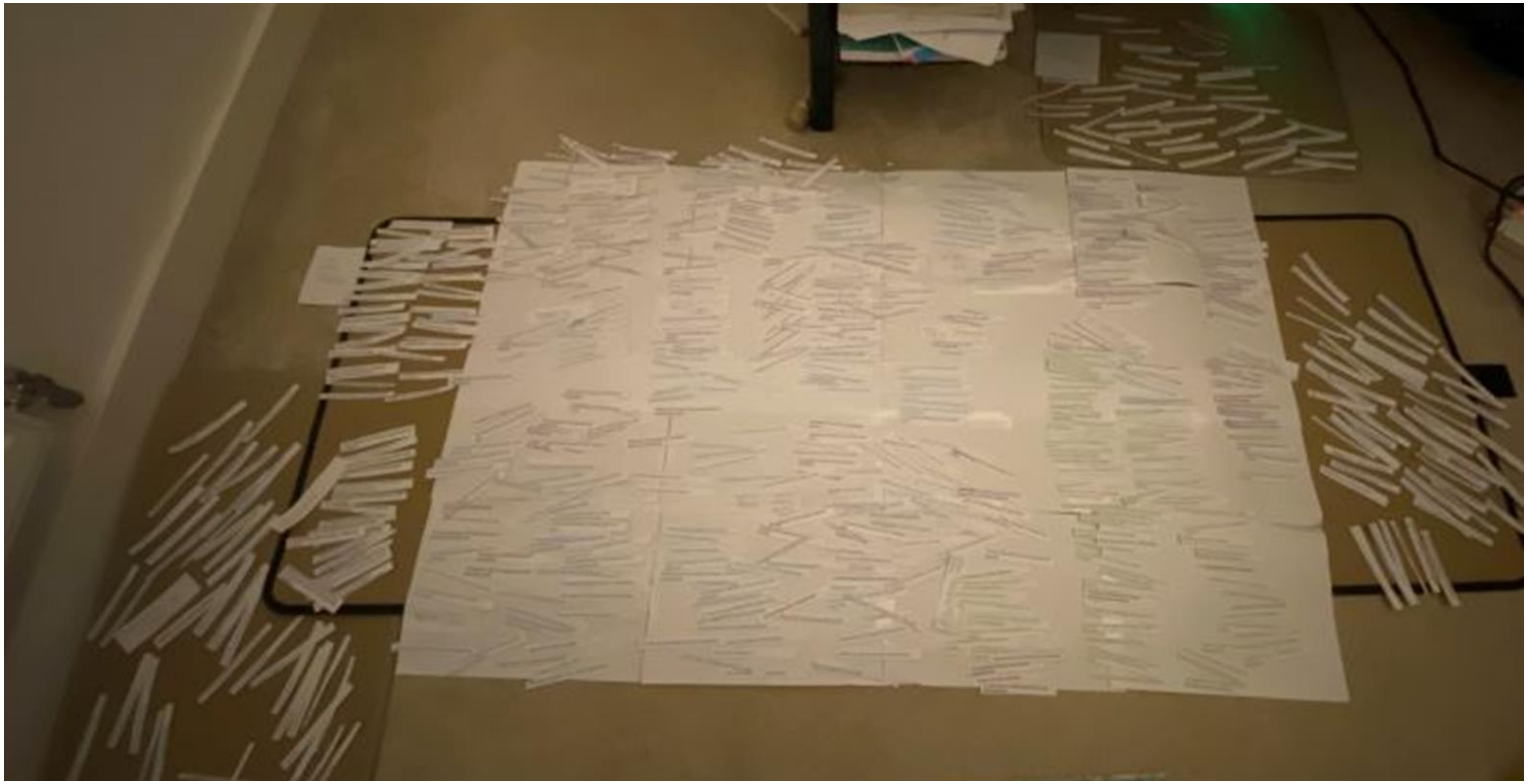
	A	B	C
145	awareness of impact of intersectionality	*if you have low socioeconomic status but you've got like another compounding variable like say for example you are struggling with mental health, erm, if you have low socioeconomic status and poor mental health, does that just rule you out of the profession completely?*	685-688
146	appreciation of resilience	*I feel that for all like the adverse factors I had, like a lot of like resilient factors meant that I was still able to succeed and get here,*	688-690
147	understanding of disadvantage of intersectionality	*like if you start racking up any of those other factors then you would just... I can't even have imagined how it would have uhm, got through the course if I had been struggling as well with saying anxiety or depression as well*	690-693
148	barrier of pride and discussing impact of LSES	*I just think it needs to be something that we can talk about more. But then I I wonder, I think. That leads me to go well, we're not gonna do that. 'cause British people don't talk about money, but it's more than talking about money. I think that's what I was getting round thinking about.*	694-697
149	need to encourage self-reflection	*It's about talking about, uh, like how you identify being able to talk a bit more and reflect as EPs as we should anyway, on who we are and what we identify as and with and, kind of, I suppose, keep providing those opportunities for reflection and development, even if it's just at the smallest of levels*	697-701
150	feeling shame for needing to work	*that message you know at the very beginning of the course, which I keep banging on about, that message that, you know that you shouldn't have another job. You know if they'd have just not had that conversation and they'd have just said right from the outset that we recognise that for some of you, you're gonna have to do this alongside, I would have felt so much less stress and anxiety then on that course. Because I felt like I was having to keep this dirty secret, [laughs] you know? I think it was a dirty secret. I didn't know whether I should talk about it when I might get into trouble for it .*	701-708
151	checking in with others to support them	*it's about reflections, and trying to improve your practice, even whether it's just the smallest of like exchanges with people and checking in and giving people an opportunity to talk about whether there's anything at all that's making it hard for them to be present with the course, or to give the course their all at that time, and if there's anything that I might be able to support you with*	708-712
152	needing support without fear of judgement	*proper mentoring support without feeling like that might then be used to gauge you in some way*	713-714
	not wanting to appear weak for	*I wouldn't want sharing that something that was making it hard for me to give it my all, I wouldn't want that then to be twisted*	

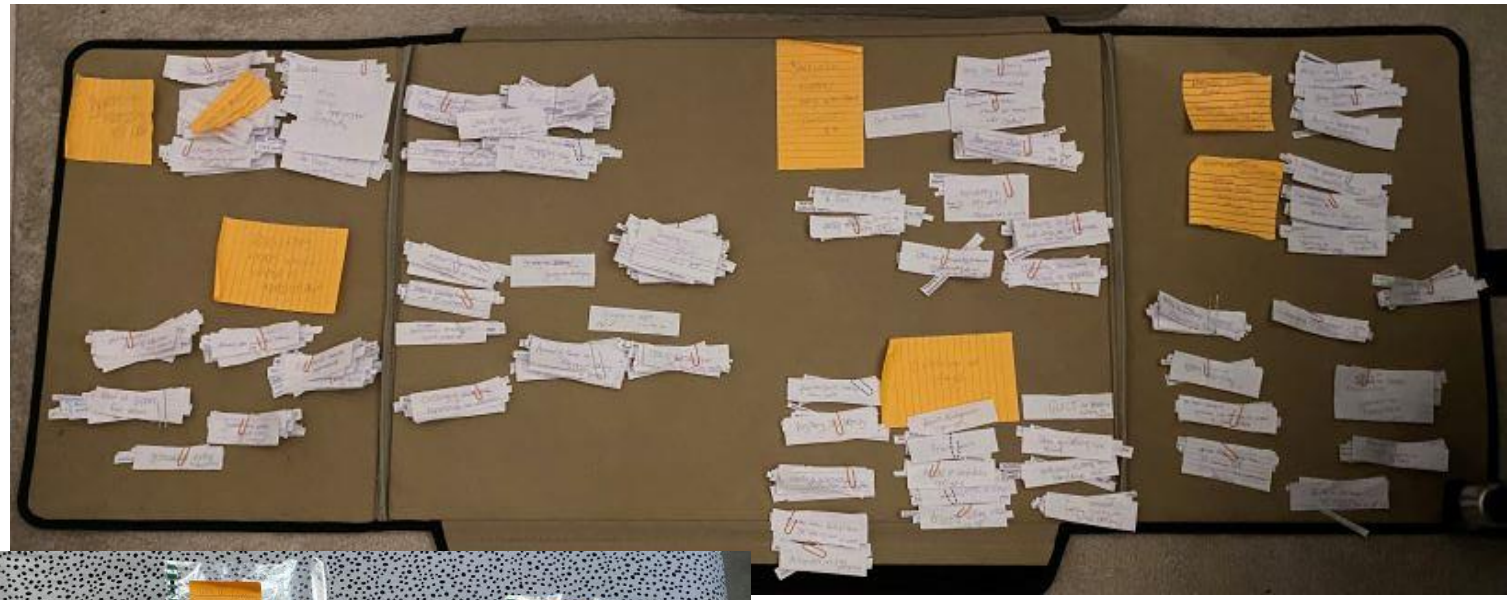
... | INT 5- Esme | INT 6 Josiah | INT 7- Natalie | INT 8- Lorraine | INT 9- Debbie | **INT 10 Stephanie** | ALL CODES

Appendix H(v): *All codes corresponding to subtheme 1 of theme 4: A journey to achieve belonging.*

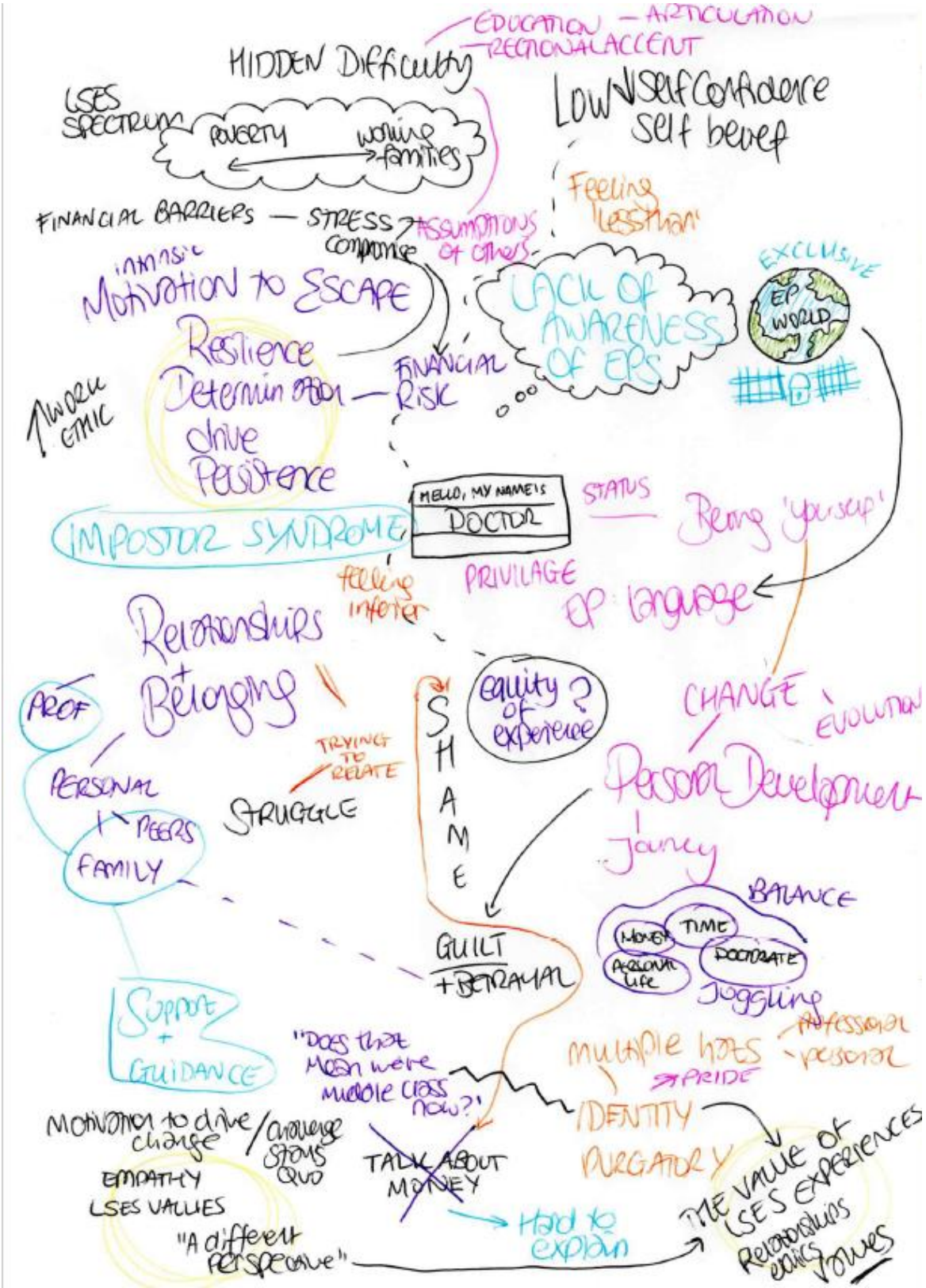


Appendix H (vi): Photographs of the process of developing the final thematic map.





Appendix H(vii): Extract from research diary, noting themes in data.



Appendix I: Summary of the validity and reliability considered using Yardley (2000)'s framework

Yardley's (2000) core principle	Evidence of consideration and actions within the current study
Sensitivity to context	• A research proposal was submitted, and ethical approval was gained from the Cardiff University's Ethics Committee. • To support the researcher's awareness of the topic and ensure the researcher understood the current context of the topic, a thorough narrative literature was conducted of the current literature. • Open-ended questions and probing statements were used in the interviews to elicit a detailed and accurate account of the participant's individual experiences. • Four overarching interview questions were used facilitate exploration and give participants space to share their experiences in a way that was meaningful to them rather than the interview being shaped by the researcher's constructions of what is important to discuss (Braun & Clarke, 2013). • The schedule was used as a guide whilst allowing space for participants to share relevant information, to resemble a flowing conversation (Choak, 2012). • Both the relevance and contribution to EP practice are discussed, along with implications for training institutions and wider systems.
Commitment and rigour	• The researcher took part in regular supervision throughout the research process. • Previous literature was used to develop semi-structured interview questions (Crumb et al., 2020). • The researcher undertook a reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2021) and followed their six-step process. • An inductive approach was adopted to limit researcher bias. The main bulk of the literature review

	was written following completion of data analysis to remain close to the data. • I adopted an ongoing and recursive form of 'bracketing' (Tufford & Newman, 2012) engaging in regular reflection and engaging with a research diary throughout data analysis. I also revisited the data following theme development to ensure it stayed close to the participants' narratives. • Further detail of data analysis can be found in Appendix L. • The researcher remained immersed in the data, including through transcription and coding/theming. Substantial time and commitment were given to data analysis to improve its rigour.
Coherence and transparency	• The narrative literature review provided a clear rationale for the current study and its relevance to EP practice. • The epistemological and ontological perspectives were carefully considered and reflected on during supervision before the research design was developed. • Throughout the development, data collection and analysis process the researcher utilised a research diary and routinely reflected on their own assumptions, expectations, choices, and actions (Finlay & Gough, 2008). • One participant was previously known to the researcher in a professional capacity. The researcher highlighted and considered this during research supervision and took steps to ensure the role of the researcher was maintained. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participant was ensured throughout the transcription process. Further reflection on this is available in Part 3.

	• A clear account of the research journey has been offered in the Appendices of this report, and a critical reflection of decision making throughout the research process can be found in Part 3 of this report.
Impact and importance	• A significant gap in the literature was identified after a comprehensive search of databases and grey literature. • Limitations of the current literature helped to develop the current research. • The current research and research questions were developed to gain initial understandings of the topic. • The study helped to explore the experiences of EPs who identify as coming from LSES backgrounds, and how they make sense of how their backgrounds impacted their experiences of training and practice. • The findings informed implications for EP practice.

Appendix J: Interview schedule

Question 1: **Can you tell me the story of your journey to becoming a qualified EP, and how your socioeconomic status (SES) affected these experiences?**	
Prompt questions	• *What does coming from a low SES mean to you?* • *What were your experiences accessing and applying for the doctoral training?* • *How did your experience compare to your peers on the course?* • *Can you tell me about any challenges or additional considerations you may have encountered when deciding to pursue a career in educational psychology? (e.g. family commitments, geographical location, financial implications)* • *What were your experiences throughout the doctoral training course?* • *Can you tell me about your experiences practicing within the profession so far?* • *How do you think your SES background has influenced your choice of work context (privately, part/ full time, in LA, geographical area) and your working practice?* • *How do you think your SES background has influenced your constructions of or assumptions about CYP, families and professionals you work with?* • *How do you think your SES has changed, if at all, after qualifying as an EP? How do you feel about that?* • *How does your family and friends view your professional position? How has your background impacted relationships with your colleagues and service users (CYP and their families)* • *What strengths and resources did your SES background equip you with?*
Probes	• *What was helpful?* • *What did that feel like?* • *Can you explain what you mean by…?* • *If you are comfortable, could you elaborate on what you meant by…?* • *Can you tell me more about that?*

	• *What were the challenges you faced?*
Question 2: **What would you like to see in the future in terms of improving access/ support and therefore widening participation to the EP profession for those from low SES?**	
Prompt questions	• *What should education settings/ training institutions do to improve accessibility for those from LSES to the EP profession?* • *What should EPSs be doing?* • *What proactive steps did you take to improve your chances of getting onto the doctorate course and who supported you with this?* • *What advice would you give to someone from a low SES who wants to pursue a career as an EP?* • *What else might be important to consider that might be helpful?*
Probes	• *Can you tell me more about that?*
Question 3: What do you think needs to happen to achieve this?	
Prompt questions	• *What was helpful for you?* • *Have you noticed any good practice in this area?*
Probes	• *Can you explain what you mean by…?* • *Can you tell me more about that?*
Question 4: **We are coming towards the end of the interview now, is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences training and practising as an EP from a low SES background?**	
Prompt questions	• *Have you had similar conversations about this topic elsewhere?* • *How did it feel to reflect on your experiences in consideration of your SES?* • *Why did you decide to participate in this research?*

Appendix K: Recruitment poster

PARTICIPANTS WANTED FOR DOCTORAL RESEARCH STUDY

School of Psychology

An exploration of the experiences of Educational Psychologists (EPs) who have trained and worked in the UK and identify as coming from a low socioeconomic status; what can be done to widen participation into the EP profession?

Research aims:

- To explore the experiences of EPs in the UK who identify as coming from a low socioeconomic status background in accessing and completing the Doctoral course and practicing as an EP.
- It is hoped that this study will provide implications for widening participation to the EP profession.

Inclusion criteria: can you participate?

If you're a qualified EP who:

✓ Has trained and worked in the UK.

AND

✓ Has completed the professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology.

AND

✓ Identify as coming from a low socioeconomic status background.

What does participation involve?

An online interview via Zoom or Microsoft Teams answering questions regarding your experiences of accessing and completing Doctoral training and practicing as an EP. The interview should take between 60-90 minutes. Participants will also be asked to complete a demographics information form prior to interview, however this is optional.

For more information, or to express your interest in participating please contact the researcher, Nicole Phillips via email: PhillipsN11@cardiff.ac.uk

This research is conducted within the requirements of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee at Cardiff University and in accordance with both the British Psychological Society's Ethical Code of conduct (BPS, 2009) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC, 2016). This project is being supervised by Dr Victoria Biu, School of Psychology, Cardiff University (BiuV1@cardiff.ac.uk).

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