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‘What should the Cis-tem look like?’

A Critical Thematic Analysis Investigating the Views of Young
People and their Ideal Trans*-Inclusive School'

A Thesis Submitted to Cardiff University’s School of Psychology in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology

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And to my dad – who didn't get to see this amazing adventure. We did it!

Summary

The thesis consists of three distinct, but connected, parts; a major literature review, an empirical paper, and a critical appraisal of the research process. Together they aim to explore the views of trans and gender diverse youth (TGDY) pertaining to the development of trans*-inclusive schools.

Part One: Major Literature Review

Part One is presented in three sections. It initially provides a narrative review synthesising the current understanding surrounding trans*-inclusion within the societal, historical and political context of the United Kingdom (UK). Learning is taken from an exploration of relevant psychological concepts and paradigms before a systematic review of the available literature explores contemporary trans*-inclusive practices in UK secondary schools. Presented across four themes, the systematic review provides discussion and critical consideration of contemporary practices within the context of wider social context. Finally, a synthesis of the narrative and systematic reviews allows conclusions regarding contemporary knowledge, practice and rationale for the empirical paper.

Part Two: Major Empirical Research Study

Part Two presents the current empirical study which aims to provide an exploration of what TGDY perceive to be important features of a trans*-inclusive school with consideration of factors that may influence the development of such practices. An overview of relevant literature is provided followed by an in-depth account of the employed research paradigm. Results of the critical thematic analysis are provided across four themes, exploring participants' ideal trans*-inclusive school within the wider context of power, hierarchy and societal ideologies. These are further discussed in relation to relevant literature, and synthesised in the Systems View of School Climate of Trans*-Inclusion, which considers wider systemic factors, and the possible role of the Educational Psychologist in practice.

Part Three: Critical Appraisal

The critical appraisal provides an overview of the current research in relation to its contribution to knowledge and a critical account of the research practitioner. It therefore provides a reflective and reflexive account of the research process from the view of the primary researcher. In engaging in this process, the rationale of key decision-making points is explored and implications of these discussed in relation to the research process and researcher learning. Implications of such are discussed in relation to learnings regarding ethical practices and biases. A detailed dissemination strategy provides a multi-level approach to sharing results of the study, the SVSC of trans*-inclusion as well as ethical practice considerations/recommendations at individual, group and systemic levels.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Summary	iii
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	vii
Abbreviations	viii
List of Appendices	viii
Part 1: Major Literature Review	0
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1. Method and Structure of the Literature Review	1
1.2 Positioning of the Researcher – Ontological and Epistemological Stance	1
1.3 Search Terms and Sources	2
1.4 Transparency and Reporting	4
2.0 Narrative Review.....	6
2.1 Gender – A Broad and Evolving Term	6
2.2 The UK Context	7
2.2.1 Social-Political Climate in UK.....	7
2.2.2 Transgenderism in UK Schools.....	9
2.3 Relevant Psychological Concepts and Paradigms	12
2.3.1 Sense of Belonging	13
2.3.2 Agency and Self-Advocacy	14
2.3.3 Language as a Tool for Inclusivity.....	16
2.4 Summary of Key Findings from Narrative Review	18
3.0 Systematic Literature Review	18
3.1 Rationale of the Literature Review	18
3.2 Analysis.....	19
3.3 What does the research tell us about contemporary trans-inclusive practices towards TGDY in UK secondary education settings?’	19
3.3.1 A Spectrum of Support.....	20
3.3.2 Developing Informed and Reasoned Actions.....	27
3.3.3 Centralising Trans* Voices	29
3.3.4 The Victim Narrative: Persisting or resisting?	32
3.4 Summary of Key Findings from the Systematic Review.....	35
4.0 The Current Study	37
References.....	40
Part 2: Major Empirical Research Study	55

Abstract	56
1.0 Introduction	57
1.1 Summary of Current Context	57
1.2 Relevance to Educational Psychology and the Current Research Study.....	59
2.0 Research Paradigm.....	59
2.1 Axiology.....	60
2.2 Ontology.....	60
2.3 Epistemology.....	60
2.4 Method.....	62
2.4.1 Participant Information and Recruitment	62
2.4.2 Procedure	64
2.4.3 Transcription.....	65
2.4.4 Data Analysis Process.....	65
2.4.5 Ethical Considerations.....	68
3.0 Result of Data Analysis.....	70
3.1 Thematic Map:.....	71
3.2 Dis/Empowering the Trans* Voice	72
3.2.1 The Victim Narrative: Sustained by Necessity.....	72
3.2.2 Primed to Not Trust	73
3.2.3 Fostering Hope.....	75
3.3 Challenging Entrenched Cisnormativity.....	76
3.3.1 Binary Gender as an Organising System	77
3.3.2 Express Yourself	78
3.3.3 'It's not just something weird that some random kid's doing'	79
3.4 Knowledge as Power.....	81
3.4.1 Exploring Gender	81
3.4.2 Accommodation is not enough	83
3.5 Bigger than Schools	85
3.5.1 Trans* - a taboo topic	85
3.5.2 Complex nature of change.....	86
4.0 Discussion.....	88
4.1 Systems View of School Climate.....	88
4.1.1 Climate	91
4.1.2 Structure.....	97
4.1.3 Process	100

4.2	Implications for Educational Psychology (EP)	103
4.2.1	Training	103
4.2.2	Policy and Curriculum Development	103
4.2.3	Ethics in Practice and Research	104
4.3	Strengths, Limitations and Future Research	107
5.0	Conclusion	108
	References.....	109
	Part 3: Critical Appraisal	123
1.0	Overview	124
2.0	Critical account of the research practitioner	124
2.1	Development of the Research Topic	124
2.2	Review of the literature	125
2.2.1	Challenges in refining the literature search.....	126
2.2.2	Quality Appraisal.....	127
2.3	Philosophical Underpinnings	128
2.3.1	Ontology	128
2.3.2	Epistemology	129
2.4	Methodology.....	130
2.4.1	Ethics.....	130
2.4.2	Participant Selection and Recruitment	130
2.4.2.1	Who to travel with?	130
2.4.2.2	An Evolving Recruitment Strategy.....	131
2.4.2.3	Diminished Accessibility	131
2.4.3	Reflections on Data Collection Design and Procedure	132
2.4.4	Reflections on Data Analysis	135
2.4.5	Effects of Positioning	137
2.4.5.1	A Gendered Outsider	137
2.4.5.2	Brave	138
2.5	Emotional impact of research	138
3.0	Contribution to knowledge.....	139
3.1	Contributions to existing knowledge.....	139
3.1.1	The Results of the Research.....	139
3.1.2	Learnings from the Research Process.....	140
3.2	Areas for future research	142
3.3	Dissemination of findings.....	143

4.0	Conclusion	146
	References.....	147
	Appendices.....	154
	Appendix A – Rationale for Excluded Papers.....	154
	Appendix B – Critical Appraisal of Key Papers	155
	Appendix C – Data Extraction Table	158
	Appendix D - Ethical Approval	172
	Appendix E – Gatekeeper Letter.....	173
	Appendix F - Participant Information Sheet.....	174
	Appendix G - Consent Form.....	178
	Appendix H – Debrief Sheet	180
	Appendix I – Interview Schedule and Rationale	182
	Appendix J – Exert of Transcript.....	187
	Appendix K – Exert of Transcript (Initial Familiarisation)	188
	Appendix L – Initial Codes	189
	Appendix M – Open Coding Process	192
	Appendix N – Closed Coding Process	193
	Appendix O – Extract from Research Diary (First Thoughts).....	194
	Appendix P – Initial Draft of SVSC.....	195

List of Figures

Figure. 1	PRIMSA	Page 4
Figure. 2	Critical Thematic Analysis	Page 67
Figure 3.	Thematic Map	Page 71
Figure 4.	SVSC Model of Trans* Inclusion	Page 90
Figure 5.	Components of Trans*-Inclusive Schools	Page 106
Figure 6.	Hand Search of Common Keywords	Page 126
Figure 7.	Funnel Method	Page 127
Figure 8.	Considered Data Analysis Approaches	Page 135
Figure 9.	Dissemination Strategy	Page 145

List of Tables

Table 1.	Search Strategy	Page 3
Table 2.	Literature Review Inclusion Criteria	Page 5
Table 3.	UK Trans*-Inclusive Policies	Page 10
Table 4.	Trans Inclusion Staged Model	Page 20
Table 5.	Rationale of Participant Inclusion Criteria	Page 62

Table 6.	Participant Details	Page 64
Table 7.	Ethical Considerations	Page 68 and 69

Abbreviations

Trans*	Umbrella term for binary transgender, gender diverse and non-binary identities
TGDY	Trans* and Gender Diverse Youth
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual +
SVSC	Systems View of School Climate
UK	United Kingdom
CTA	Critical Thematic Analysis

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Rationale for Excluded Papers
Appendix B	Critical Appraisal of Key Papers
Appendix C	Data Extraction Table
Appendix D	Ethical Approval
Appendix E	Gatekeeper Letter
Appendix F	Participant Information Sheet
Appendix G	Consent Form
Appendix H	Debrief Sheet
Appendix I	Interview Schedule and Rationale
Appendix J	Exert of Transcript
Appendix K	Exert Transcript (Initial Familiarisation)
Appendix L	Initial Codes
Appendix M	Open Coding Process
Appendix N	Closed Coding Process
Appendix O	Exert from Research Diary (First Thoughts)
Appendix P	Initial Draft of SCVC

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Part 1: Major Literature Review

12, 299 words excluding tables, references, and textboxes

1.0 Introduction

1.1. Method and Structure of the Literature Review

The major literature review is presented in three distinct sections (Boland et al., 2017). Adopting a hybrid approach, incorporating both narrative and systematic elements in a clear and curated manner to allow for a compelling yet efficient methodology (Turnbull et al., 2023).

The initial section provides a space for broad scene setting. Utilising a narrative review style, this initial section allows for summary of the current state of knowledge in relation to TG DY in education settings. In doing so it provides an exploration of key psychological concepts as well as debates relating to the UK social, political and historical contexts within which the research is framed (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Popay et al., 2006).

Section two provides a systematic review of relevant literature. The systematic methodology allows for a robust but flexible method by which to synthesise and integrate relevant interdisciplinary studies and knowledge from a heterogenous and complex body of literature (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Utilising this approach, the researcher is able to present a critical examination and synthesis of the emerging evidence pertaining to the literature review question (DiCenso et al., 2010; Moher et al., 2015; Peterson et al., 2017).

Section three summarises the review, exploring its relevance to practice, thus providing rationale and research questions for the current empirical study.

1.2 Positioning of the Researcher – Ontological and Epistemological Stance

Literature reviews are inherently informed by the researcher's ontological and epistemological positions. Positioned within a relativist ontology, the research is underpinned by social constructionism (Burr, 2015), critical psychologies (Roen & Groot, 2019) and Foucauldian methodologies/understandings (Gallagher, 2008; Phillips, 2023). Psychologies of this nature provide a 'post-structuralist critique of identity' (Roen & Groot, 2019, p. 97) that allows one to acknowledge a multiplicity and fluidity of gender identity (Burr, 2015). The integration of these theories affords the researcher tools through which to conduct a nuanced and comprehensive exploration of trans-inclusive practice literature (Phillips, 2023). Additionally,

this provides a lens through which critical examination of the literature can be conducted whilst exploring, from differing perspectives, the role that the literature documents power, discourse and embedded systemic assumptions have on these practices (Ballard et al., 2017; Doyle, 2023; Roen & Groot, 2019). Further discussion of the underpinning epistemological stance and reflexive practices are detailed in the 'Part Two: The Major Empirical Study' and 'Part Three: Critical Appraisal' respectively.

1.3 Search Terms and Sources

The purpose of the literature review was to explore and examine the contemporary culture and climate of secondary education settings in UK with regards to trans*-inclusive practices. To answer the Literature Review Question: **'What does the research tell us about contemporary trans-inclusive practices towards TGDY in UK secondary education settings?'** the researcher drew upon five electronic databases; APA Psych INFO, British Education Index (BEI), Scopus, ProQuest, and Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC). The search was conducted between September 2023 and November 2023 with full results detailed in PRISMA (See Figure 1). These databases were chosen due to their coverage of relevant literature in education, psychology, and social science fields as well as the nascent methodologies and foci associated with doctoral theses (Siddaway et al., 2019).

A comprehensive search strategy was designed, with key search terms being informed by terminology used in recent articles identified in a hand search of relevant literature, as well as discussion with an expert researcher in this field (conducted between November 2022 and January 2023). From this, key search terms were identified (See Table 1). The Boolean category OR was included between each key search term with AND included between each search string in order to capture papers that included all search terms.

Table 1 - Search Strategy

Key Word Search Terms	Rationale
<i>"Trans"</i> <i>"Transgender"</i> <i>"Gender divers*"</i> <i>"Nonbinary"</i> <i>"Non binary"</i> <i>"Gender nonconform*"</i>	The review intended to discuss articles pertaining to the transgender and gender diverse communities, LGBT was not included to ensure papers captured included a trans* and gender rhetoric that was not conflated with sexuality (Francis & Monakali, 2021; Parodi et al., 2022). Additionally, terminology was explored in the hand search (November 2022 – January 2023)
<i>"Support*"</i> <i>"Inclusi*"</i> <i>"Equal*"</i> <i>"Interve*"</i>	The review aimed to capture articles that document what support, intervention and inclusive and equitable education practices were/were not occurring.
<i>"Secondary school"</i> <i>"Secondary education"</i> <i>"High school"</i>	The review intended to generate articles that involved practices of secondary/high schools
<i>"Youth"</i> <i>"Young people"</i> <i>"Young person"</i> <i>"Pupil"</i> <i>"Student"</i>	The study was predominantly concerned with the inclusion of TGDY and therefore specified this within the search to ensure the review captured practices associated with inclusion of young people and not, for example, TGD staff or parents.

It should be noted that, informed by the hand search, the search term trans* was initially included within the search strategy as a term to encompass the multiplicity of gender identities within the community (Hines & Sanger, 2010). This presented a unique dilemma when searching within electronic databases as an Asterix * is used as a truncation character. Including the term trans* expanded the search much wider than the intended scope of the trans* community producing over 7,000 papers in Scopus alone. With advice and guidance from a University Specialist Librarian, trans* was removed from the search strings and alternatives to this term gleaned from the hand search. This allowed the search to capture the

intended community whilst increasing search precision as well as keeping the review manageable.

Due to the lack of universal terminology and in aiming to ensure the comprehensiveness of the search strategy the search strategy was further developed. Recommendations from the literature suggest systematic searches be supplemented by additional search methods (Hirt et al., 2020). The current study therefore utilised citation tracking (Hirt et al., 2020); relevant references cited in bibliographies were sourced using Google Scholar and were included to enable a more thorough and comprehensive search of the literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Siddaway et al., 2019).

1.4 Transparency and Reporting

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) was used to clearly depict the search strategy for exploring the LRQ (See Figure 1.) In total, 16 papers were generated for consideration with 6 additional papers generated from citation tracking to be considered for the review.

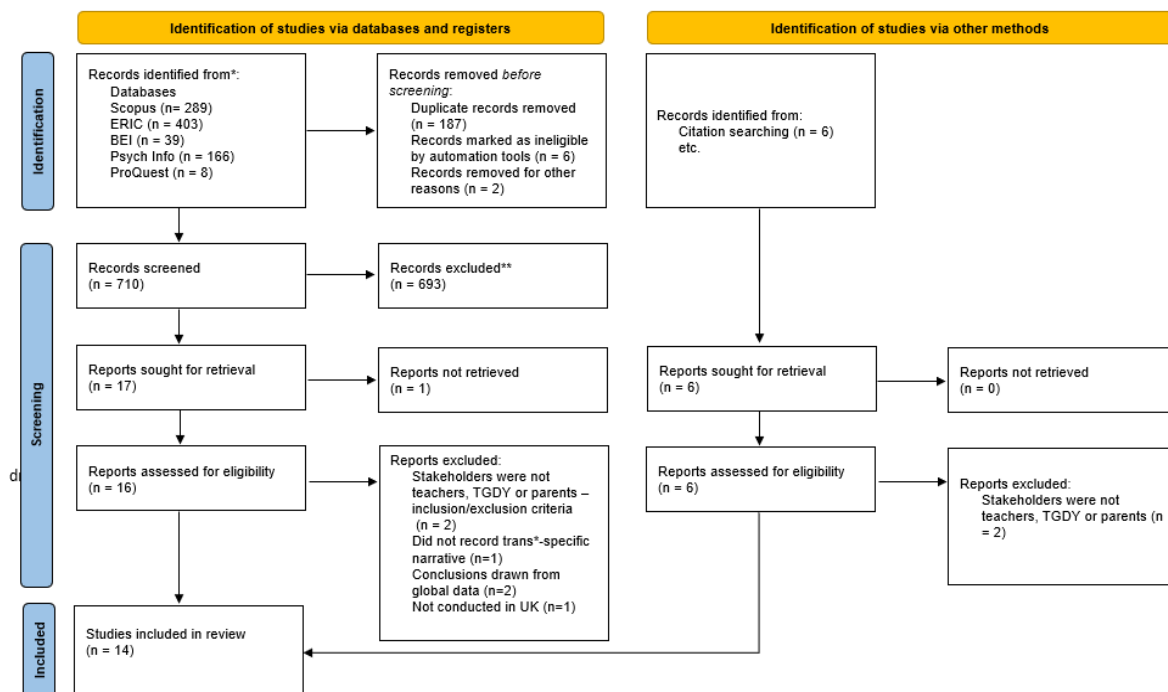


Figure 1 - PRISMA

From the initial search results, articles were included for review based on the inclusion criteria (Table 2) this was developed in an iterative manner as the literature search was conducted and resulted in the following criterion. Articles were therefore only included if they met the below criteria. Conversely, articles were excluded if they did not meet the below criteria (details of rationale provided in Appendix A).

Table 1 – Literature Review Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Rationale
<p>Location: Literature conducted in/pertaining to the UK (Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England) was included</p>	<p>All research practices took place within the UK. As noted in Section 2.2: Positioning of the Research, the context in the UK is complex and nuanced, and thus the search strategy aimed to gather information pertaining to this context.</p>
<p>Publication Date: Published during/after 2010</p>	<p>2010 marked the implementation of the Equality Act thus marking the beginning of statutory obligations for schools to begin developing practices that protected TGDY.</p>
<p>Methodology/Epistemology: The literature includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative or mixed methods that align with the paradigm of the current research • Commentary, guidance, or theoretical framework relating to supporting TGDY • A systematic or narrative review of relevant literature 	<p>The area of trans-inclusivity is nascent and therefore, no hierarchy of study methodology was imposed so as to gather as much relevant information as possible</p>
<p>Publication Status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Un-published doctoral thesis • Published in an academic, peer reviewed journal 	<p>Both published articles and doctoral thesis research will have undergone extensive scrutiny, further ensuring the quality of their work</p>
<p>Participants: The literature references views, experiences, and perspectives of key stakeholders (TGDY, school staff and parents) regarding support of TGDY in schools</p>	<p>The review aims to explore a broad account of trans*-inclusive practices developing in the UK. Limiting the review to TGDY only would have substantially limited the number of papers available</p>
<p>Relevance of Topic: The literature focuses on inclusive practices supporting TGDY in secondary education settings</p>	<p>Empirical studies identify adolescence, and therefore secondary school, as a key point of identity development. The experience in such settings is also referenced as notably different and therefore cannot be conflated with other education settings such as universities</p>

2.0 Narrative Review

The narrative review draws upon both grey and empirical literature from across the globe to provide a broad overview of the current state of knowledge pertaining to transgenderism in schools. Such literature then provides contextual information relating to the UK milieu.

2.1 Gender – A Broad and Evolving Term

Gender is a broad term, holding a variety of meanings across the world. Gender can be conceptualised as the ‘attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours’ that are culturally and normatively conflated with being male/masculine and female/feminine (Freedman, 2019, p. 24; Newman, 2002). Historical theories based in essentialist paradigms suggest that biological sex governs one’s gender identity and expression (Hyde et al., 2019). Such beliefs determine that one’s gender should be congruent with one’s sex assigned at birth, presuming it ‘natural’ (Nagoshi et al., 2012, p. 407) for corresponding traits and aptitudes associated with a male/female binary (McGowan et al., 2022; Ullman, 2022). This is known as being cis or cisgender. Such notions that the binary, sexed-anatomy has direct influence upon gender identity and expression, led to those experiencing and/or displaying incongruence and dissonance between their sex and gender to be pathologised (Newman, 2002).

Across the world however, it is considered that each continent is home to at least one culture espousing multi-gender systems and elements of gender variance (Tharp, 2016). Examples can be noted across the globe; such as Two spirited in Canada (Robinson, 2019); Muxe in Mexico (McNabb, 2017); Hijras in India and multiple identities across Polynesia (McNabb, 2017). These are considered a third gender, to which sex is not linked or influential. Despite their complex and multi-faceted cross-cultural differences, many cultures have historically ‘carved-out’ spaces within which identities across, within and outside of a binary hold important social roles (Gonzalez-Salzberg & Perisanidi, 2021; McNabb, 2017). Each culture holds a culturally specific understanding of an interconnectedness of gender and fluidity. This allows hypotheses to be explored suggesting that a sex-determined gender binary may be a social, historical, and cultural concept specific to modern western societies (McNabb, 2017).

Such Western conceptualisations of gender have however evolved in recent years, with research documenting conceptualisations that transcend determinism (Wilson et al., 2023). Contemporary paradigms influenced by evolving epistemology such as trans theory, post-

structural feminism, and queer theory, consider gender to be a fluid, diverse construction existing along a continuum (Wilson et al., 2023). This suggests multiplicity in the possibilities of how gender can be experienced by an individual, disputing the perceived ‘inextricable’ link between gender and the binary, sexed-anatomy (Allen-Biddell, 2021).

The ever-expanding understanding and conceptualisation of gender is exemplified by the expansive use of language to capture diversity of gender identities. One common term used is trans*, for which no single definition exists (Spade, 2015). Therefore, within the current context, trans* can be considered an umbrella term to describe a heterogenous group of gender diverse identities encompassing a range of presentations falling ‘across, between or beyond stable categories of man and woman’ (Hines & Sanger, 2010, p. 1). This includes behaviours, expressions and identities of gender that differ to those associated with sex assigned at birth (Rafferty et al., 2018) which may exist within or outside of the traditional binary paradigm of gender (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018; Parodi et al., 2022). For example, transgender man, transgender women, non-binary, and gender diverse. Embodiment of such genders can be expressed in a multitude of ways (Butler, 2006), and although some may be static others may ‘oscillate’ between and beyond the traditional bounds of masculine and feminine (Francis & Monakali, 2021; Furman et al., 2019, p. 716). Psychological paradigms and methodologies have therefore evolved to be inclusive of diversity within gender identity, the way in which this is formed, and the lived experience of those considered gender diverse (Doyle, 2023).

2.2 The UK Context

2.2.1 Social-Political Climate in UK

As stated, the current project is underpinned by social constructionist, critical and Foucauldian epistemology. It is therefore considered imperative to explore the context within which this review and wider research practice is situated (Phillips, 2023) to provide transparency as to the socio-historical and political milieu of the time.

Over recent decades, the narrative of the trans* community has expanded exponentially (Fiani & Han, 2019; Nicolazzo, 2017) with a quantitative increase in trans* visibility and representation across sport, politics, and popular culture (Billard & Zhang, 2022; Hines, 2007). Discourse surrounding trans* and gender diverse identities has become a global zeitgeist in

social and political forums (Allen-Biddell, 2021; Farley & Leonardi, 2021; Fiani & Han, 2019) with the qualitative experience of being trans* centring much discussion. In the UK, this is punctuated by highly polarised debate (Zanghellini, 2020) surrounding trans*-rights and trans*-inclusive practices within social, work and school settings.

Within the UK, numerous legislative acts impact upon, and aim to support, the rights of trans* people. For example, the Gender Recognition Act (2004) enables people over the age of 18 to legally change their gender (UK Government, 2004). At the time of enactment, the act was considered 'ground-breaking' in global transgender politics (Hines, 2020) as it became the first law to delineate gender non-conformity from psychopathology and the subsequent requirement for sterilisation (Honkasalo, 2018). Later, the Equality Act (2010), which considers gender reassignment (identifying as a gender other than that assigned at birth) a protected characteristic, was enacted as a means of legislative protection from direct and indirect discrimination.

Although initially considered vanguard in international equality and inclusion practices, contemporary critique of the acts acknowledge the use of outdated terminology (Russell, 2023). Rooted in binarism (Fiani & Han, 2019; Hunter, 2018) the legislation does not explicitly encompass the expanding vocabulary of gender identities, thus limiting its impact on inclusivity for those who identify outside of the traditional gender binary (Fiani & Han, 2019; Hunter, 2018). However, recent years have seen efforts be made to reform and develop the application of these acts.

A recent UK court ruling saw non-binary and gender fluid identities being protected under the Equality Act (Renz, 2024). Such rulings have increased applicability of the Equality Act to a wide range of gender diverse identities. Additionally, the 2018 'Reform of the Gender Recognition Act: Government Consultation' saw a call for reformation of the original act to delineate gender recognition from medical and psychological assessment as well as lower the age at which one may apply to change their legal gender (Fairbairn, Pyper & Balogun, 2022).

This consultation was met with a gender-critical rhetoric (Zanghellini, 2020) that strongly opposed such changes (Armitage, 2020). Protected as a philosophical belief under the Equality Act (Cowan & Morris, 2022; Patten, 2024) the gender-critical paradigm stems from the essentialist belief that sex is immutable, considering gender as solely male and female.

Although these views are not nascent within political and academic fields (Shaw, 2023), the contemporary wave of gender critical feminism, popularised through increased press and social media coverage (Montiel-McCann, 2023), has reframed the trans* community as a threat to cis women, other LGBTQIA+ people and established gendered norms (Armitage, 2020; Hines, 2019) leading to criticism of increased efforts towards trans*-inclusivity.

The existence of such widely polarised beliefs, underpinned by vastly different epistemological stances on gender, provide a catalyst for complex debate around the acknowledgement, integration, and inclusion of the trans* community within wider society (Zanghellini, 2020). Manifestation of such debate is exemplified in discourse surrounding not only trans* and gender diverse adults, but the support offered to trans* and gender diverse youth (TGDY) in UK schools.

2.2.2 Transgenderism in UK Schools

As with trans* adults, there has been an increase in the visibility of (known) TGDY in the UK (Bower-Brown et al., 2023; Horton & Carlile, 2022). Schools have therefore been required to quickly develop practices to support TGDY within the limited scope of contemporary laws and guidance (Bragg et al., 2018).

Despite a growing social awareness of non-normative gender identities developing (Nicolazzo, 2017) it is well documented within the literature base that TGDY have fundamentally different lived experience of school than their cisgender counterparts. Some contemporary studies highlight students having positive experiences in secondary school settings, experiencing accepting and supportive school environments within which they can thrive (Freedman, 2019; Leonard, 2020). However, empirical studies have created a long-established narrative of secondary schools as potentially hostile environments (Davy & Cordoba, 2020) in which trans* gender identities are considered non-normative. Being held as non-normative by both staff and students can cause erasure and invalidation of trans* identities within the school settings (Horton, 2023b). TGDY therefore experience increased prevalence of discrimination for their differences (Bradlow et al., 2017), incidence of feeling unsafe (Bower-Brown et al., 2023) due to exposure to victimisation (Bradlow et al., 2017; Lough Dennell et al., 2018), as well as pervasive bias-based bullying through physical and verbal acts of violence (Lough Dennell et al., 2018). This can lead to increased incidence of

truancy and school avoidance (Lough Dennell et al., 2018) due to being unable to assimilate and be accommodated within cisgendered school structures or conform to gendered expectations of them (Freedman, 2019). Effects of this nature can have lasting adverse implications on mental health and academic outcomes (Wilkinson et al., 2021).

UK governments and charities have commissioned numerous reviews to explore the qualitative impact that legislation has afforded minority groups in schools. Elucidating findings of global academic and empirical research studies (Horton, 2023b; McBride, 2021), the results of such reviews suggest reformation and reconceptualization of effective inclusive practices that further encompass the needs of TGDY alongside other minority groups. In response to

Table 2 - UK Trans-Inclusive Policies*

Country	Relevant Policy
Scotland	Document named 'Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools: Guidance for Scottish Schools'. Non-statutory guidance detailing possible actioning planning necessary to be inclusive of TGDY needs including rights-based decision making and person-centred planning.
Wales	Contemporary Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) guidance from Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). The document is written to be respectful of all gender identities and provide 'relevant, factual and supportive' RSE for all pupils, including TGDY. This was subsequently challenged by parents for promoting and teaching gender ideology. A court ruling noted the importance of gender being taught in a pluralistic manner thus supporting the implementation of the diverse RSE curriculum
Ireland	Document titled 'Guidance for Schools, EOTAS Centres and Youth Service on Supporting Transgender Young People'. Non-statutory guidance that supports schools to act within the best interest of all children whilst working to improve equality and inclusion by providing individualised support. Notes the importance of whole school equality, diversity and inclusion approach that includes staff, leaders, and governors.
England	Detailed in text

such advice, local and national governments across all constituent countries of the UK have devised policies, guidance, or curricula with an aim of more effective inclusivity of TGDY as well as the wider LGBTQIA+ community. Details regarding content and context are provided in Table 3.

At the time of this review, a draft of non-statutory guidance for schools regarding ‘Gender Questioning Children’ was released for consultation by UK Government. The guidance does not use the term trans* or transgender and defines gender identity as a ‘contested belief’ (Department of Education, 2023a). The draft also outlines the importance of involving of parents, the impact of support on the wider school community and notes the ‘rare’ and ‘exceptional cases’ in which schools should accept and support aspects of social transition such as pronoun changes (Department of Education, 2023b).

Such guidance holds the importance of safeguarding and school’s obligations to all students and parents at its core (Department of Education, 2023b) highlighting the importance of supporting TGDY in a manner that upholds their legal duty of care. This is similarly reflected in guidance documents published by a charitable organisations and local authorities across UK, providing a clear stance on keeping TGDY safe as the major, and sometimes sole, priority (Horton, 2020). Horton (2020) argues that guidance documents of this nature situate safety against violence as an ultimate goal of trans*-inclusion, without recognition of the trans*-personhood. Conclusions of this nature purport this to be symptomatic of a narrow definition in what it means to be safe at school, with overt transphobia and violence being the centre of concern.

Concerns of this nature are echoed by charities such as Stonewall who suggest that in providing an exemplar of ‘narrow ideology’ (Stonewall, 2023) that considers TGDY as a ‘contested belief’ (Department of Education, 2023a), this approach not only delegitimises the lived experience of TGDY in schools but contradicts established equality law (Stonewall, 2023). Stonewall, a leading LGBTQIA+ charity in UK, states the guidance is akin to the ‘overshadowing’ negative impact of Section 28 (Russell, 2023, p. 11; Stonewall, 2023). Enacted between 1988 and 2003, Section 28 prohibited the promotion of homosexuality (Warwick et al., 2001). Although not directly associated with TGDY, academics argue the legacy of such legislation (Drury et al., 2023), has left a residual effect on policy, pedagogy, and ideology towards the trans* and wider LGBTQIA+ community in UK schools (Lee, 2023).

Critical feminist literature considers the move away from a broad strategy of affirmation, a positive development (Jeffreys, 2012). Such theoretical stance espouses views elucidated by the new guidance, in that affirmative care should be very limited and provide a focus on

fostering celebration of one's own body within the binary. Such views conclude that TGDY with associated gender dysphoria should be treated medically rather than through social affirmation (Davies-Arai & Matthews, 2019), focusing on the biological realities in lieu of those linked to emotions and societal expectations (Davies-Arai & Matthews, 2019). Views of this nature permeate into consideration of school pedagogy. Arguing that the introduction of gender diversity creates a risk of conflation between sex and gender in a manner that can cause confusion to younger cisgendered children who are not yet aware of their own sex (Williams, 2020). Conclusions of this nature highlight critical considerations; illuminating the importance of creating systems that support students to develop a secure knowing of themselves in a way that is cognisant of their age and developmental stage.

The reaction to the new government guidance exemplifies the stark juxtaposition between the advice and non-statutory guidance that schools receive (Horton, 2020). The dichotomy and polarisation of views and beliefs towards trans* inclusivity in the UK creates a complex, nuanced, and highly changeable context within which TGDY are living. It is therefore acknowledged that the current thesis punctuates the narrative of trans*inclusivity at a time of increased debate in both public and political forums.

The review does not aim to examine or make judgement upon which stance is most suiting to inform school practices. Instead, the researcher aims to acknowledge the empirical evidence within the literature. This highlights TGDY experiencing adverse effects on both trans* personhood and outcomes in schools. The researcher therefore holds the quality of lived experience of TGDY at the centre of the research practices henceforth.

2.3 Relevant Psychological Concepts and Paradigms

In recognition of the differential outcomes and experiences TGDY have in education settings (McBride, 2021) schools have evidenced a shift towards developing trans*-inclusive practices. These are underpinned by diverse psychological concepts and paradigms of effective inclusivity (Horton, 2020; Horton & Carlile, 2022) such as sense of belonging, developing agency, and use of language. Subsequently, there is a nascent and growing body of literature exploring the application of such psychological concepts within trans*-inclusive practices. It should be noted that this agenda does not aim to abolish gender from within the education

system but establish policies and practices that attend to and challenge inequality in education (Martino et al., 2020).

2.3.1 Sense of Belonging

Belonging is a fundamental human need and motivational drive (Baumeister & Leary, 2017). A sense of belonging is the experience of having a deep connection to individuals, groups, and physical and metaphorical spaces (Allen et al., 2021). Empirical literature depicts the potential positive impact TGDY experience when feeling connected to their school community; mediating the effects of victimisation and associated negative psychological and physical outcomes (Hatchel & Marx, 2018; Hatchel et al., 2019; McGowan et al., 2022) as well as improving educational attainment through increased attendance (Wilkinson et al., 2021). Findings of this nature exemplify the potential positive impact that connection and belonging can have on the lived experience of TGDY in schools. This highlights the importance of supporting TGDY's emotional and mental wellbeing (Barr et al., 2016) and being cognisant of the holistic needs of the trans* personhood.

Contemporary paradigms of support therefore stress the importance of developing a sense of belonging and connectedness in schools (McGowan et al., 2022; Parodi et al., 2022) with elucidation of such effects evident in practice. One iteration of supporting a sense of belonging is developing relationships between TGDY and the wider school staff for example teachers, support staff and counsellors (Allen-Biddell & Bond, 2022; Mackie et al., 2021; Paechter et al., 2021). When characterised by actively supportive, respectful attitudes (Mackie et al., 2021) and showing accepting, validating practices, relationships with individual staff members can make a marked positive impact on a TGDY's lived experience in school (McBride, 2021; McGowan et al., 2022; Ullman, 2022). Personal relationships and connections with 'safe adults' are key (Seelman et al., 2015). These mediate TGDY's perceived safety in school (McGuire et al., 2010) as well as being impactful on their academic engagement and outcomes (Seelman et al., 2015; Ullman, 2017). In some settings overt relationships with key staff are not possible due to wider school climate. Therefore, in order to foster a sense of belonging, novel ways in which TGDY can build and rely on these staff-student relationships are being developed using trans* technologies; applications whereby connection can be made between TGDY and school staff without the need for overt communication (de Lima et al., 2023).

Developing belonging and connection is often translated into practice through models of peer support and LGBTQIA+ groups (McBride & Schubotz, 2017; Pampati et al., 2020; Poteat et al., 2020) typically manifesting as Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) (Adelman et al., 2022; Sutherland, 2019; Toomey et al., 2011). TGDY report to experience these as affirmative spaces (Fayles, 2018; McBride, 2021) where they not only have an opportunity to socialise and perform their gender identity in a safe environment (Adelman et al., 2022; Fayles, 2018; McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018) but build a network of 'solidarity' (McBride & Neary, 2021) through shared narratives that normalises being 'non-normative' (McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018). This is particularly important when wider, whole school practices and attitudes towards TGDY are lacking (Airton et al., 2022).

Although GSAs positively contribute to increased sense of belonging (Jones et al., 2016; McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018) critique of this model suggests that pupil-led GSA's in lieu of inclusive whole school practices, are not only ineffective but place the loci of responsibility to within the trans* community rather than ensuring inclusion is the responsibility of the wider school population.

2.3.2 Agency and Self-Advocacy

Agency can be described as behaviours that exert influence over decision making processes that pertain to one's own life (Asakura, 2016; Hillier et al., 2020). In conceptualising agency through a social reproductive theory lens (Hillier et al., 2020), this reframes acts of resistance such as breaking uniform rules and speaking out, as a means of challenging cis-normative practices and structures. Some TGDY deem this an act of social responsibility; a duty to advocate for themselves and the wider trans* community. This can occur on individual and collective levels. Through exploring the views of TGDY and staff, Omercajic (2022) identifies GSAs as hubs of activism and advocacy within which TGDY engage in powerful, collaborative acts of activism and advocacy. This in turn supports the mobilisation of trans-inclusive practices across school cultures therefore improving a TGDY's sense of situated agency within the school setting (Hillier et al., 2020).

Engaging in such acts positively impacts TGDY sense of self, with those TGDY noting increased affirmation in their trans* identity, lower incidence of depression and feeling that their actions positively 'add to the world' (Jones et al., 2016). Assertions of this nature highlight the

importance of developing a sense of agency through acts of advocacy, and the positive impact this can have on trans* personhood. In doing so the literature provides a new lens through which to view a population previously characterised within the literature as vulnerable to victimisation, devoid of a voice and thus in need of protection from the adults around them (Hillier et al., 2020). Instead, this shift allows for TGDY to be conceptualised as young people who can not only take an active role in the journey towards inclusive practice (Hillier et al., 2020), but who thrive in doing so (Jones & Lasser, 2017).

To further build opportunities and mechanisms through which to develop agency, school settings look to person-centred decision-making as a central tenet in developing inclusive practices of TGDY (Frohard-Dourlent, 2018; Martino et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2016). Highly valued in the inclusion of many other groups, person-centred decision-making involves taking the TGDY's lead in planning and accommodating their idiosyncratic needs. In asking TGDY for their 'unique and highly valued contributions' to inclusive practices (Meyer et al., 2016), schools can engage in affirmative activities that increase feelings of validation for the TGDY (Leonard, 2020; Mackie et al., 2021). This can include taking the TGDY's lead on practical actions such as their name, pronouns, and preferred access to gendered spaces (Fayles, 2018) but also how they wish to be supported holistically, for example through the use of music and arts (Millett, 2021; Nichols, 2013; Sweet, 2022) or access to a counsellor (Mackie et al., 2021).

This is seen to be experienced as most effective when considered in a proactive, collaborative manner, for example prior to a young person entering the school (Sweet, 2022); meeting with leadership prior to starting high school. This increases staff awareness of their responsibilities and provides clarity on respectful ways by which TGDY wished to be included. Approaches of this nature mark a significant power shift in which TGDY can enact agency over their lived experience (Frohard-Dourlent, 2018; Hillier et al., 2020). Framing TGDY as an 'expert in their own lives' schools can positively impact multiple areas of a young person's psychological wellbeing. Such a shift relies on the TGDY feeling they are able to assume the power being afforded to them. However, adults may underestimate the emotional toll advocating for oneself incurs (Meyer et al., 2016), with many experiencing this as a burden (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018).

Contextual factors are seen to mediate not only the effectiveness of, but the willingness of staff to engage in, person-centred decision making. In studying the views of 60 teachers within

the Canadian education context, Frohard-Dourlent (2018) explored the experience of working within a person-centred approach. Analysis depicts tensions arising for some staff when considering social transition and TGDY's age, especially during adolescence. Gendered decisions and creativity in expressing their trans* gender identity at this developmental stage is evidenced to evoke questions of stability of gender identity and the presumed irreversibility of social transition. Concerns and subsequent practices of this nature exemplify the deep-rooted cis-normativity in school systems embodied by the prominence of essentialist construction that frames gender as a static construct and negates the possibility of multiplicity and fluidity of gender over time (Jones et al., 2016; McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018). This leads to non-action; ignoring their requests and delegitimising their agency, framing TGDY as 'unreliable narrators' of their own gender identity (Frohard-Dourlent, 2018, p. 335). Such practice undermines the essence of a person-centred approach.

Approaches of this nature highlight the reliance on visibility of TGDY as a catalyst for support (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017; Martino et al., 2020; Phipps & Blackall, 2021). Although teachers experience increased visibility of TGDY as an opportunity to increase their knowledge of effective trans-inclusive practices (Martino et al., 2022) this inherently fosters a highly reactive process that only affords support to those comfortable to disclose their gender identity (Davy & Cordoba, 2020). In doing so, schools may inadvertently expose TGDY to increased risk factors. Evidence demonstrates some TGDY experiencing being 'sacrificial lambs'; becoming 'identifiable and targetable' to gain support (McBride & Neary, 2021, p. 4) and consequently enduring increased transphobic bullying as peers conflate changes within the school settings with individual pupils (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018). It is therefore considered that in order to further develop practices that foster individual TGDY agency, school settings may explore the collective agency through mechanisms such as advisory committees and GSAs (DuBois & Losoff, 2015).

2.3.3 Language as a Tool for Inclusivity

Studies exploring developing trans*-inclusive school climate highlight the importance of language. Language can be a powerful tool through which a system of joint understanding can be co-constructed without leading to climates wherein the need for the young person to explain themselves or elements of the trans* culture with staff is eliminated (Mackie et al., 2021).

The reviewed literature highlights key affirming practices using appropriate language; most commonly by discussing 'pronouns'. The purpose of expressing pronouns is to signify the disconnect between gender and sex (McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018). Thus, much of the literature noted providing the opportunity for TGDY to change their pronouns, allowing for social transition and identification by their gender and not biological sex - a practice many TGDY find affirming (Fayles, 2018; Leonard, 2020). However, this is not experienced homogenously, with social transition and use of pronouns experienced as a very personal and subjective process throughout which an individual explores and acknowledges who they are (Jones et al., 2016).

McGlashan and Fitzpatrick (2018) describe how some TGDY experience relief from being able to express fluidity through pronouns, 'cementing their legitimacy' in living as their authentic self (2018, p. 9). However, those exploring their gender or who identify as non-binary/gender-fluid, may find it highly uncomfortable and dysphoric to determine their pronoun. Conclusions such as these draw attention to an important nuance in trans-inclusive language. Enforcing the use of pronouns can reenact gender norm hierarchies based upon essentialist values of gender as a stable notion (McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018). Practices of this nature favour those with binary and/or static gender identities. This can be encapsulated in a term called binary privilege wherein those who identify within the traditional dyadic model of gender, for example cis wo/men and trans wo/men, are afforded privilege that conversely leads to discrimination of those who identify outside of the binary (McBride, 2021).

It is therefore argued that assumptions should not be made regarding the homogeneity of language use and adaption for all TGDY. Assertions of this nature highlight the complexity and tensions of pronouns and gender identity (Allen-Biddell & Bond, 2022; McBride, 2021). Affirmative practices may therefore aim to ensure the importance of self-assigned/identified pronouns, possibly leading with the opportunity to change name, in a nuanced and person-centred manner.

2.4 Summary of Key Findings from Narrative Review

The narrative review provides a wealth of information pertaining to the broader concept of trans*-inclusion, with specific contextual information provided regarding the UK socio-political context. From this exploration of the literature, key findings can be summarised as;

The conceptualisation of gender is broad and differing across cultures, with western conceptualisations noting recent expansion and diversification away from being inextricably linked to sex to encompass identities such as trans* (Allen-Biddell & Bond, 2022; McGowan et al., 2022). The socio-political climate pertaining to the trans* community within the UK is, however, complex, and nuanced; characterised by highly publicised debates in which dichotomous views regarding TGDY and inclusion are held (Jeffreys, 2012; Zanghellini, 2020).

Much of the evidence base pertaining to this topic relies on using life-narrative and reflections from TGDY. This not only supports nuanced understanding of lived experience but facilitates exploration of complex social milieu (McAdams, 2012; Nichols, 2013). Lived experience of TGDY within UK secondary schools depicts them incurring increased negative outcomes across academic, health and wellbeing (Bradlow et al., 2017; Lough Dennell et al., 2018). Despite this, there is no official statutory guidance for schools across any constituent country in the UK, with non-statutory guidance from governments, charities and organisations making recommendations based on differing agendas, evidence, and epistemologies (Horton, 2020). Practices from across the globe evidence implementation of psychological concepts such as belonging (McGowan et al., 2022), agency (Hillier et al., 2020) and the importance of language (Omercagic, 2022) to provide a deeper understanding in how to ameliorate such effects, when

3.0 Systematic Literature Review

3.1 Rationale of the Literature Review

The systematic review aims to explore a specific LRQ; **‘What does the research tell us about contemporary trans-inclusive practices towards TGDY in UK secondary education settings?’**.

Within the nascent and developing field of research pertaining to UK specific trans*-inclusive practices within schools, there are a multitude of papers exploring the experiences of key stakeholders. However, it was evident that there was a dearth of comprehension in how these findings link together to create a deeper understanding of trans*-inclusive practices within UK secondary settings. The present systematic review therefore aimed to present a critical examination and synthesis of the emerging evidence pertaining to current and contemporary development of trans*-inclusive practices within UK secondary settings. From this the

researcher hopes to provide a rich picture from which consideration of further development within which psychological, pedagogical and policy arenas can be informed.

3.2 Analysis

In total, 15 papers met inclusion criteria. These were appraised and critiqued prior to review. Trustworthiness and relevance were appraised using The Critical Appraisals Skills Programme (CASP) checklist and The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT; Hong et al., 2018) (detailed in Appendix B). Data extraction and synthesis were informed by principles espoused by Creswell et al., (2017; Appendix C). This involved coding the empirical data and research conclusions during multiple readings of the texts and categorising these codes into themes. Additional information pertaining to the methodology of each study was also captured in order to provide context and further opportunity for critique.

3.3 What does the research tell us about contemporary trans-inclusive practices towards TGDY in UK secondary education settings?’

The systematic literature review aims to critically examine and ‘bring nuance’ to the research pertaining to trans*-inclusive practices within UK secondary school settings (Horton & Carlile, 2022, p. 169). Discussion of the literature is therefore presented under four broad themes; A Spectrum of Support; Developing Informed and Reasoned Actions; Centrality of TGDY Voice; and Victim Narrative. This is followed by a concluding synthesis of the literature to provide rationale for the current study.

3.3.1 A Spectrum of Support

Synthesis of the contemporary literature depicts inclusion to be a spectrum of praxes, highlighting there to be a wide array of approaches occurring across UK secondary school settings (Horton, 2023b). As a way of exploring the different approaches to inclusion, Horton and Carlile (2022) propose a model of trans*-inclusive practice. Grounded in empirical research findings, the Trans Inclusion Staged Model (TISM; See Table 4)) is a conceptual staged

Table 3 - Trans Inclusion Staged Model - Horton and Carlile (2022) with commentary

Stage	Commentary
Trans-oppressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underpinned by beliefs that delegitimise being TGDY • Experienced as active discrimination and transphobic acts such as being told transgenderism is an ‘illusion’ (McBride & Neary, 2021) • Non-intervention is received as rejection
Trans-Assimilative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TGDY are acknowledged and legitimised • Expression of trans-personhood is absorbed by the cis-normative system • System finds assimilation of those identifying outside of the binary model of gender, difficult
Trans-Accommodative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TGDY’s identities continue to be conceptualised as non-normative • Person centred adaptations for individuals are negotiated • Characterised as short-term change to status quo • Received as additional burden by some TGDY
Trans-Emancipatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds trans*-liberation and gender justice central to decision making • Power shift towards cisgendered and TGDY being equal • Systemic change that is not reactive to ‘presence of trans* bodies’ but is proactive in nature

model of trans*-inclusive practice. The model captures the dynamic nature of trans*-inclusivity development, providing a tool to categorise the variation in approach to trans*-inclusivity across settings.

In capturing their lived experience, studies characterise some TGDY being ‘let down’ by their schools (Leonard, 2020, p. 90) at points throughout their secondary school careers whilst others are embraced and accommodated in a proactive, and highly-inclusive manner

(Leonard, 2020). This can be encompassed as a spectrum across trans-oppressive to trans-empowering practices (Horton & Carlile, 2022). It is considered that to further understand this variation in more depth, the review will examine areas of practice exemplifying differential levels of inclusion across the UK. Variation was particularly evident in the manner in which schools are approaching meeting TGDY's basic needs and the diversification of school's aiming to meet holistic needs through relationship building and curriculum. In conducting a synthesis of research findings, it is however deemed important to remain cognisant of the purpose and underpinning theoretical frameworks within which studies are conducted. As these can affect the manner in which positive and negative experiences within school settings are narrated by informing the way qualitative research and interview questions are framed. This may influence the amount and type of data gathered pertaining to negative and positive experiences and thus how this is then reported.

3.3.1.1 Meeting TGDYs' Basic Needs

Synthesis of the available literature depicts a central zeitgeist of assimilation and accommodation of TGDY within the physical space of secondary school settings (Horton & Carlile, 2022). An emphasis on the practical inclusion of TGDY within school settings suggests a focus on meeting the basic and physical needs of TGDY (Leonard, 2020). Ensuring basic needs are met, such as providing increased accessibility to appropriate toilets, is important in facilitating improved health-related behaviours (Paechter et al., 2021). This is exemplified with many TGDY across the evidence base were noted to avoid using the bathroom throughout the school day, leading to potential health complications (Paechter et al., 2021). Flexibility in the use of such gendered spaces in a manner aligning more readily with their gender identity, was found to afford TGDY additional privacy (Leonard, 2020). This is experienced not only as affirmation of their trans*-identity through mindful acknowledgment and legitimisation of their identity (Drury et al., 2023; Leonard, 2020) but supportive of their wider health needs.

However, the literature review presents a field wherein societal underpinnings and norms are considered to be directly influential on the manner in which accommodations are offered. Staff such as those interviewed by Drury et al. (2023) evidence the boundaries and limits within which decision making realistically takes place. Using semi-structured interviews presented in a non-fiction monologue, the study explored staff experiences of working to support TGDY. Drury (2023) concludes that decision making was seen to be consistently reliant

on clear categories based on the traditional duality of 'boy' and 'girl' and how the expression of trans*-personhood could be absorbed by the current system of sex-segregated categorisation (Drury et al., 2023). For example, allowing TGDY the freedom to 'swap' Physical Education (PE) groups (Drury et al., 2023, p. 1127) or toilets, to 'whichever group' they felt most suited their gender (Phipps & Blackall, 2021, p. 11); the boys or the girls.

Although evident of a developing inclusive climate, the literature presents a field within which a narrow window of conceptualisation is embedded with cultural cisgenderism and cisnormativity (Phipps & Blackall, 2023), continuing to underpin approaches to inclusivity. Normalised and entrenched societal expectations of binary gender, known as cisnormativity, have constructed a social hierarchy privileging cis-individuals and others those with diverse gender identities (Phipps & Blackall, 2023). Within schools, cisnormativity provides system of organisation within which cis-genderism and gender norms are rooted (Freedman, 2019) through architectural structures and cultures. Evident in the categorisation of physical structures such as toilets, uniforms, and Physical Education (PE) classes within a gender binary of boys and girls (Drury et al., 2023), this also permeates curriculum, policy, and pedagogy (Phipps & Blackall, 2023). This privileges the assumption that everyone identifies within the gender binary, meaning that gender binary splits are normal practice (Phipps & Blackall, 2023).

It is well documented throughout the literature that the adverse effects TGDY experience in secondary schools may stem from being required to exist in school systems underpinned by cis-gendered norms (Horton & Carlile, 2022). As noted by Drury, within the UK context options and support are offered within the constraints of wider cisnormativity that reproduces gendered logic. This purports that support is constructed as how to help TGDY fit into pre-existing gendered systems efficiently without deeper reflection of the wider gender spectrum and the need for systemic reform (Paechter et al., 2021; Phipps & Blackall, 2023). Although not meaningfully transphobic or trans-oppressive, the literature suggests this leads to experiences of erasure and invalidation for TGDY, thus limiting the effectiveness of trans*inclusive practice of this nature (Phipps & Blackall, 2023).

Conclusions of this nature were found to hold particular relevance for those who identify outside of the gender binary, such as non-binary and gender fluid youth. For this cohort, use of highly gendered spaces led to increased incidence and intensity of dysphoria (Bower-Brown et al., 2023; Paechter et al., 2021). Within the limited scope of this paper, non-binary and

gender fluid identities are subsumed into the TGDY umbrella. However, empirical studies evidence that the lived experience of non-binary young people is distinct from binary transgender men and transgender women (Paechter et al., 2021).

Paechter et al. (2021) identified how schools routinely offered alternative options, such as access to disabled toilets, in lieu of non-gendered provision. Although this was found to afford some young people additional privacy, many across the review experienced this as having negative effect on their wellbeing (Leonard, 2020; Phipps & Blackall, 2023). Practices of this nature can lead TGDY to feel that their gender diversity is conflated and equated to a disability, further substantiating feelings of 'other' within their school community (Freedman, 2019; Leonard, 2020; Paechter et al., 2021). For example, in analysing questionnaire responses from 25 non-binary young people, Bower-Brown et al. (2023) demonstrates how, being denied access to gendered spaces can be internalised and consequently negatively impact on one's sense of identity and self, as well as trust in administrative systems.

In actively working to develop ways to negate the 'paucity of non-gendered toilet provision' (Paechter et al., 2021, p. 706) the literature notes some practitioners developing gender-neutral spaces. Practices of this nature aim to dismantle the underpinning binary organisation systems of schools and create areas of neutrality accessible to TGDY (Paechter et al., 2021). However, when accommodations of this type are not implicitly integrated into the school structure but are implemented in an ad-hoc manner, this can be problematic for all TGDY (Paechter et al., 2021). In creating spaces for TGDY away from the cisgendered school population, feelings of other, danger and fear of bullying for using this specific provision can become exasperated (Paechter et al., 2021). Instead, it is considered that change of this nature must be conducted in a systemic and systematic manner, affording all young people access to gender neutral facilities (Paechter et al., 2021) so as not to be an additional or alternative provision that singles out one population but creates a change in the fundamental cis-normative structure underpinning school climate.

3.3.1.2 Safety

The available literature documents a narrative in which safety is a core component and consideration when implementing trans*-inclusive practices in UK. Horton (2023b) exemplifies the developing narrative of TGDY's feelings of being unsafe and the target of abuse

in secondary school settings. This is furthered substantiated by parental reports of TGDY being persistently victimised (Horton, 2023a).

Through exploration of the literature, it is evident that such positioning may however be perceived by staff as providing legitimate reasoning for inconsistent application of trans*-affirmation on the basis of safety measures (Horton, 2023a; Phipps & Blackall, 2023). Practices underpinned by this notion manifest as restricting the accessibility of toilets and changing facilities offered to TGDY in order to keep them safe from peers (Phipps & Blackall, 2023). This exemplifies that initial mobilisation of including TGDY within UK secondary school settings involves decision making centralising safeguarding; relying on laws and legal requirements that prioritise safety and minimise risk of harm to TGDY (Leonard, 2020).

Although maintaining safety in schools is paramount, further consideration of such conclusions within the context of the trans*-personhood exemplify how safety encompasses more than physical safety from violence (Horton, 2023b; Leonard, 2020). It is considered that although findings such as those documented by Horton (2023b) legitimise a focus on safety as priority, this may be balanced with elaboration and expansion of this definition to be inclusive of wider needs such as emotional and psychological safety (Horton, 2023a; Horton, 2023b). This would require challenging the taken for granted knowledge of systems within which trans*-phobic violence is prevalent. Such respectful challenge, and fostering an aspirational nature within inclusive practices, may support schools to not only aim to meet TGDY's basic health and safety needs but develop systems within which they can be happy and thrive (Horton, 2023b).

3.3.1.3 Relationships

Research pertaining to the development of inclusive practices notes a conceptual shift in practices pertaining to meeting the holistic needs of TGDY (Freedman, 2019; Leonard, 2020). Contemporary studies depict emergent practice of schools developing highly inclusive ethos. Such affirmative, inclusive ethos is characterised by non-judgemental, positive school climates (Gavin, 2021) that aim to normalise trans* experiences (Freedman, 2019) and foster relationships with peers and teachers (Leonard, 2020).

Considered a novel approach in comparison to other papers in the review, Leonard (2020) utilised a positive psychology lens through which to analyse TGDY's experiences. This provides

a unique frame of analysis in which the most valued aspects of trans*-inclusive practices can be considered. Drawing conclusions from their semi-structured interview study, Leonard notes TGDY value relationships with open, accepting, and reliable members of staff (2020). This is notably different from whole school support in that it provides a 1:1 space within which to gain holistic support. Such trusting relationships are characterised by mutual respect, empathy and active interest and engagement in improving trans*-inclusive practices (Leonard, 2020). Findings of this nature are elucidated by the views of secondary school staff who perceive such relationships as containing for TGDY; particularly when having difficult and emotive experiences in school (Gavin, 2021). Establishing positive student-teacher relationships that have a containing function allows for TGDY to experience a safer school climate and increased sense of belonging and connection to aspects of their school community (Gavin, 2021; Leonard, 2020).

McGowan (2022) argues the importance of developing relationships and connection that can support psychological wellbeing and provide a function of containment (Gavin, 2023; McGowan, 2022). Containment aims to support TGDY develop when experiencing times of heightened emotions regarding issues pertaining to their gender identity. TGDY experience these as most effective when the relationship develops organically with staff whom they build a level of trust with over time (Freedman, 2019). Conversely, teachers can find these relationships difficult to maintain due to the lack of support and therefore containment they themselves receive from leaders (Gavin, 2021). Therefore, indicating the importance of a cohesive approach that fosters reciprocity and communication between schools and wider local authority systems through which containment and support can be offered to those engaging in such work.

3.3.1.4 Curriculum

Synthesis of the lived experience of TGDY across the reviewed literature highlights a lack of trans* visibility within UK curriculum. This exemplified with some participants noting that they did not experience hearing of the word trans* or trans* related topics within the secondary school settings, putting additional strain on the understanding they held of their own identity. Many required to use the internet or other sources of information.

Educators have responded to findings of this nature by engaging in curricula development to include trans* and wider LGBTQIA+ issues within lessons. Most practice noted the nature of this diversification being limited within the scope of Physical Social Health and Economic (PSHE) education, affording mention within the context of gender discrimination and privilege. Despite the limitations, small diversifications have supported TGDY. Increased exposure to varied language captures the expansive nature of gender and supports the construction of discursive categories imperative for formation of all gender identities (Freedman, 2019; Leonard, 2020). Possessing such language allows TGDY to not only construct a reality within which their gender identity is valid but provides a source of empowerment for TGDY in having a manner through which to further understand and articulate their self-identification in a confirmatory and intelligible manner (Davy & Cordoba, 2020; Leonard, 2020).

The reconceptualization of inclusion curriculum has aided teacher's creativity in the manner that they adapt their lessons. A thesis project conducted by Gavin (2021) aimed to explore the views of school staff and educational psychologists (EPs). When focusing on the secondary school staff perspective, Gavin noted staff making a conscious effort to diversify their pedagogy and teaching materials to be inclusive of a wider range of identities. To embed this in a meaningful way, staff aim to 'synthesise' diverse content across all curriculum areas. Practice of this nature normalises genders outside of cisgendered norms (Freedman, 2019) allowing for all students to learn about diverse communities. Exposure to these issues in an embedded and naturalistic manner, not as ad-hoc lessons, creates opportunities for meaningful conversation through which knowledge, understanding and disassembly of cisnormativity values is facilitated, supporting the development of informed citizens within an inclusive climate (Gavin, 2021; Markland et al., 2023). The literature review therefore demonstrates a range of practices developing within which creative and forward-thinking inclusive practices that aim to dismantle the cis-normative underpinnings of wider school systems are becoming evident.

Changes of this nature can however be difficult to navigate. In interviewing staff, Markland et al., (2023) concluded that such limited diversification of curricula stems from fear of parental resistance from those in the wider school community who espouse essentialist beliefs. Teachers reported this to be most prominent when practicing in an area of increased diversity. Thus, education professionals are actively attempting to balance the complex power

differential involved in meeting the needs of all pupils in a manner respectful of many community beliefs (Markland et al., 2023). This may pose a barrier to staff engagement with proactive curricula development. It is therefore considered that leadership play an important mediating role in staff engagement with curriculum development, by providing space and permission for staff to focus on establishing a commitment based on collective values (Gavin, 2021). This therefore acknowledges the role of leaders as key stakeholders in the development of trans*-inclusive practices. This helps staff feel supported through having leadership and policy that reinforces and protects them in their actions (Gavin, 2021).

3.3.2 Developing Informed and Reasoned Actions

Throughout the literature, reference is made to teachers, their practice, and their experiences, thus evidencing them as key stakeholders within the development of inclusive practices. Within the review, many studies explored the views and experiences of secondary school teachers. Within these, school staff are represented as being predominantly supportive of developing trans*-inclusive practices within their school setting. This conclusion is proposed with a critical caveat. Staff who find value and purpose in developing trans*-inclusion may be more inclined to participate in studies of this nature. Thus, possibly skewing conclusions that staff attitudes towards the development of inclusive practices are predominantly positive and willing.

Despite their acceptance and positivity (Markland et al., 2023), many school staff practice within ever changing and somewhat turbulent political climates, with very little in terms of official guidance and 'underdeveloped policies' (Markland et al., 2023, p. 2). Thus, the research evidences multiple areas of difficulty that they encounter in their practice. Most notably, these difficulties were frequently reported to be characterised by apprehension and fear (Markland et al., 2023). Within the reviewed literature, this manifested as a nexus between staff commitment and capacity to engage in trans*-inclusive practices (Davy & Cordoba, 2020; Gavin, 2021). Exasperated by the wider context of highly polarised and politically charged debate regarding the most appropriate manner by which to support TGDY, staff working in UK secondary schools are considered 'brave' by peers for helping TGDY (Gavin, 2021, p. 94).

Such fear may stem from concerns that staff's innocuous actions may coalesce with cis-normative structures to worsen the experience of the TGDY in schools (Markland et al., 2023); a fear exasperated by a paucity of accessible and contemporary information to guide staff (Markland et al., 2023). This depicts staff as not yet having the knowledge and/or skillset to support TGDY effectively (Drury et al., 2023). Markland (2023) conducted a study exploring the beliefs of 15 secondary school teachers in Southeast England. When considering the development of their practice, practitioner comments discussed being ill-equipped to support TGDY. In not accessing learning opportunities, teachers observe a lack of preparedness and decreased self-efficacy in adequately meeting the needs of TGDY (Markland et al., 2023). Synthesis of teacher voice therefore highlights a lack of clarity in what trans*-inclusion is aiming to achieve, as well as a lack of guidance depicting ways in which this can be reached, (Markland et al., 2023; Drury et al., 2023). As Leonard (2020) notes the importance of teacher-student relationship in creating a supportive and safe space within which TGDY can thrive (Leonard, 2020), conclusions of this nature suggest such nurturing relationships may be impeded by teacher feelings of unknowing and fear. In synthesis of findings across the review, such fear can lead to non-intervention becoming common practice (Horton, 2023b).

When accessed, training through structured learning activities is considered inadequate by staff due to its primary focus on legalities and terminology (Drury et al., 2023). Charitable organisations are however developing diverse training packages aimed at disseminating practical advice regarding how to support the wider LGBTQIA+ population (McBride & Schubotz, 2017). Access to this is limited and determined by leaders being open and receptive to new inclusive initiatives in a climate where balancing focus and resources on both datafication and social justice issues can be difficult (Drury et al., 2023). This leads staff to take ownership of their own learning, turning to the 'objective' expertise of outside agencies (Gavin, 2021, p. 102). Staff also draw on the previous experience of other teachers in supporting TGDY, as a means to expand their knowledge (Drury et al., 2023; Freedman, 2019). Although motivated by good intentions, professional development of this nature characterises contemporary practices as highly unregulated due to the variety of ways through which staff are acquiring knowledge. Current offers of training are therefore termed as ineffective by staff in supporting the type and manner of skill acquisition they are requesting, consequently restricting their knowledge and practice (Drury et al., 2023). This creates a climate wherein,

through aiming to ameliorate this themselves, staff may be leaving themselves liable to 'getting it wrong' (Markland et al., 2023, p6) in the eyes of TGDY, their school policies or the law.

Assertions of this nature highlight wider systemic issues pertaining to lack of staff support. In locating the loci of responsibility for developing trans*-inclusive practices within school staff, the wider system may assume responsibility and accountability in the development of staff skillset pertaining to trans*-inclusivity. The reviewed literature currently evidences that the UK has not yet developed a sustainable infrastructure of support that affords staff containment and confidence in their role with TGDY (Markland et al., 2023). Appropriate support mechanisms and opportunities for knowledge development should ensure practice is developed in an informed, reasoned but also safe manner. This involves a commitment to ongoing continued professional development opportunities that provide clarity regarding the aims of trans*-inclusion and the manner by which this can be achieved (Gavin, 2021).

3.3.3 Centralising Trans* Voices

The variability in how affirmative provision and accommodations are implemented and experienced highlights the nuanced and idiosyncratic nature of trans* personhood development and thus the complexity of effectively developing trans*-inclusive practices. It is hypothesised that due to reasons of this nature, many schools and settings hold the voice of the young person highly, using person-centred practices as a way to meet the needs of TGDY. Developing person-centred trans*-inclusive practices involves listening and understanding individual needs as per direction of many of the guidelines received by teachers (Markland, 2023). Through the creation of a space in which TGDY have an active role, approaches of this nature permit a highly individualised and thus meaningful package of support that celebrates diversity rather than framing TGDY as a problem. Co-constructing support with the TGDY being central to the decision-making process supports the development of agency over their support and transition (Leonard, 2020; Gavin, 2021).

McGowan et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative exploration of 10 adolescent TGDY's experiences in secondary schools underpinned by social constructionist epistemology. The researcher utilised semi-structured interviews which were then analysed using reflexive

thematic analysis. Such an interpretivist analytical approach allowed for exploration of meaning through dialogic exchange, granting the researchers an in-depth understanding of the lived experience of TGDY. Analysis of the interview data acknowledged the importance of person-centred approaches. TGDY described these as affording them agency over the support that was offered to them (Leonard, 2020; McGowan et al., 2022) thus highlighting person-centred approaches as a key affirmative practice. Increased agency over the support offered to them is considered preferable to rigid processes that do not afford TGDY a voice (McGowan et al., 2022). Reviewed literature therefore depicts an evolution in the way support is conceptualised in UK settings, holding the TGDY's voice and bespoke needs at the centre (Horton & Carlile, 2022; McBride & Schubotz, 2017; McGowan et al., 2022). Despite this shift, it is considered that for this to be done effectively, TGDY must be aware of their rights. In knowing these, TGDY can make informed contributions regarding the types of accommodations permitted (Leonard, 2020). However, some argue that very few TGDY are able to exercise these readily (Horton, 2023b) due to a lack of clarity and rights-based information provided to them by schools, with many obtaining such from alternative sources to inform their actions moving forward (Leonard, 2020).

Where proactive person-centred decision-making is not common practice, evidence suggests that some TGDY advocate for themselves by requesting support from their school leaders (Leonard, 2020). Many TGDY however, do not feel empowered enough to challenge or make request of the system (McBride & Schubotz, 2017). In lieu of self-advocacy, some are therefore reliant on parental advocacy (Horton, 2023a; McBride & Schubotz, 2017). Synthesis of the available literature therefore highlights parents/caregivers as a potential source of support (Davy & Cordoba, 2020), with their involvement increasing the likelihood of effective person-centred support being put in place (McBride & Schubotz, 2017). McBride and Schubotz (2017) noted this to be most effective when parents and schools engage in proactively; collaborating in an ongoing and dialogic manner to support TGDY as issues arise. However, this is not experienced homogeneously. In gathering the views of 30 parents of TGDY, Horton exemplified how societal factors influence parental engagement with school systems (Horton, 2023a; McBride & Schubotz, 2017). In exploring their experience of navigating school support, Horton noted the impact of social status on power differentials within these exchanges. This manifests as children of higher social status parents being afforded more opportunities to negate and

ameliorate discrimination through the implementation of person-centred practices than those without such 'family circumstance' (Horton, 2023a, p. 200). Patterns of discriminative practice based on power imbalances and social inequalities therefore characterise person-centred decision-making (McBride & Schubotz, 2017).

Conclusions of this nature highlight the importance in understanding the heterogeneity of the TGDY population, with gender identity being only one aspect of the self. In acknowledgement of this, application of intersectionality is held with importance. The researcher acknowledges a sparsity in acknowledging intersectionality amongst the UK literature base. Some studies were conscious of religious and racial diversity within their wider school system and the impact this had on practice. However, none were evidenced to explore the intersection of identity markers that TGDY themselves hold. This suggests that in order to more impactfully support TGDY, it is important to gain a well-rounded understanding of the student as a whole, in acknowledgement of their multiple, intersecting identities to better enable an approach that is cognisant of social inequalities and injustices (Drury et al., 2023).

When implemented in an effective manner to dialectically explore best practices as pertaining to the TGDY at the centre of the decision-making process, centralising the voice of the child and enacting this in an ethical manner can be an extremely powerful and affirmative tool in trans*-inclusivity (Leonard, 2020). It is however argued that framing trans-inclusion within individualistic/humanistic discourse can prove reductionistic (Horton, 2023b). Framing the TGDY in this way and erroneously conflating the issues around trans*-inclusion to individual students diminishes and de-politicises the discrimination they may face by leaving the underpinning cisnormativity unchallenged and unquestioned (Horton, 2023b). It is therefore argued that in order to develop trans*-inclusive milieu in which TGDY are not accommodated but are included, a more comprehensive approach is needed in which agency is developed at a social, as well as an individual level (Davy & Cordoba, 2020)

The application of this concept is exemplified through narrative and lived experience of both TGDY and school staff within the UK literature. An integral part of working in a person-centred manner is actively listening to the TGDY (Horton, 2023a). Therefore, for person-centred conversations to not be a tokenistic element of trans*-inclusive practice (Leonard, 2020), meaningful action must be taken based upon the TGDY's contributions. Such practices can present situations that cause dissonance between intention and action with practitioners

being willing but cautious of enacting pupil-led trans*-inclusive practices (Davy & Cordoba, 2020; Drury et al., 2023).

Staff reported being mindful of their duty of care to *all* pupils, discussing how actions must be fair to, and not disrupt the comfort or safety of, cisgendered pupils (Phipps & Blackall, 2023); inhibiting staff ability to enact trans-inclusive practices more readily. Such an approach centralises fairness and safety, thus leading some to deny affirmative action and characterising schools as highly restrictive environments (Bower-Brown et al., 2023). Critics suggest that such practice not only upholds but exasperates cis-privilege as the wellbeing of cisgendered young people is prioritised above minorities such as TGDY (Horton, 2023b; Horton & Carlile, 2022). This highlights ethical implications for effective person-centred practices as it can be highly detrimental to actively encourage pupil voice and agency, without having the systemic processes to support its enactment. This can lead to non-intervention that is experienced by TGDY as active rejection (McGowan et al., 2022). Internalisation of this may lead to negative self-perception regarding their gender identity. Effects of this nature exemplify how trans*-inclusion cannot be effective if cis-normative and systemic power differentials are ignored (Horton, 2023b).

Critiqued for absolving the wider system of its responsibility, person-centred trans*-inclusive practices are experienced by many as validating and affirming of their trans*-personhood, supporting the development of agency (Leonard, 2020). Critiques of the above therefore epitomise how trans*-inclusion is a complex process thus warranting further investigation considering the balance of change at multiple levels. The researcher therefore suggests parallel processes of change at individual and systemic levels are required to develop effective trans*-inclusive practices within schools; creating school climates that champion individuality and agency whilst challenging entrenched cisnormativity through a collective sense of responsibility (Davy & Cordoba, 2020).

3.3.4 The Victim Narrative: Persisting or resisting?

The literature depicts a climate wherein issues of power are ubiquitous within debates and developments surrounding the inclusion of TGDY. The notion of power is complex and permeates not only our actions but the constructions we have of the world.

In synthesising the available literature, the notion of a victim narrative pertaining to the way in which TGDY are framed in practice and research is evident. Such a wide-reaching conceptualisation establishes TGDY as individuals who need protection from the system within which they live, due to their perceived non-normative identity and the reprise this may engage (Bower-Brown et al., 2023). Framings of this nature are cognisant to the issues pertaining to safety raised in Section 3.3.1.3. Transphobic bullying can be pervasive and acute, negatively impacting on TGDY's developmental and educational outcomes (Davy & Cordoba, 2020) as well as causing distress for their support network (Davy & Cordoba, 2020). Secondary school settings are characterised as fearful places for some, creating a space where many TGDY may suppress their trans* identities, struggling to balance being safe with living authentically (Bower-Brown et al., 2023). Thus, schools establish practices concentrated on protection from harm through the manifestation of specific anti-bullying policies (Markland, 2023). This rhetoric is considered a central zeitgeist within the reviewed literature. The majority of papers discuss the use of such strategies in the journey towards trans*-inclusion (Phipps & Blackall, 2023) as they support the initial mobilisation of trans*-inclusivity by facilitating a safer environment within which TGDY can assimilate and learn (Horton, 2023b).

The response to transphobic bullying can however be 'patchy' (Paechter et al., 2021, p. 704) dependent on the visibility of TGDY in the setting. Thus, it is considered that cisnormative underpinnings effect not only the organising structures but permeate the value systems of schools (Phipps & Blackall, 2023). This may translate into staff practising with unconscious biases making it difficult for them to gain understanding of how normalised behaviours may have nuanced and discriminatory effects on TGDY (Phipps & Blackall, 2023). This exemplifies how shifts in discourse create climates within which cisgendered people may not notice their participation in implicit transphobia (Phipps & Blackall, 2023).

It is argued that in framing TGDY within the sole scope of an anti-bullying rhetoric, this approach encourages a narrow conceptualisation of the population as victims in need of protection (e.g., in Phipps & Blackall, 2023). Leading TGDY to feel perceived as a persistent 'safeguarding concern' (Bower-Brown et al., 2023). This not only sustains the long-established victim narrative apparent within the trans*-literature but facilitates imbalances and inequities in power differentials that characterise TGDY as disempowered and passive in the inclusion process (Freire, 1996).

However, the literature search noted emergent practices evidencing a theoretical shift in the conceptualisation of TGDY as active agents of change in their school careers, resisting cisnormativity such as binary uniforms and actively advocating for change (Leonard, 2020; McBride & Schubotz, 2017). The development of agency and the opportunity to self-advocate is imperative for TGDY feeling heard and experiencing their school climate as affirmative. Advocacy is considered a responsibility for manner TGDY (Leonard, 2020) facilitating empowerment for the wider trans* community and supporting the development of situated agency (Leonard, 2020).

The literature therefore depicts a developing climate wherein some contemporary practices embrace a resistance of the victim narrative, framing TGDY as active agents in their own change journey. However, development away from a victim narrative is not experienced homogenously (Leonard, 2020).

The reviewed empirical studies present the reader with a complex landscape of inequity. Leonard (2020) describes a juxtaposition of practices in which some TGDY are afforded space to engage in self-advocacy, respectfully challenging practices ubiquitous with cisnormativity. However, many others are framed as disruptive and challenging for doing so (Leonard, 2020). Differential perceptions of advocacy are hypothesised to be symptomatic of a system's readiness to engage in the change process, as this can affect the lens through which acts of advocacy and agency are interpreted (Gavin, 2021). Upon reflection of this, actions aimed to curtail efforts to exercise the right to self-advocate and expand cisnormative systems, although not aimed to be intentionally oppressive, may illustrate a lack of readiness to change and ability to embrace new norms.

Findings of this nature hold implications for school staff, positing that individual acts of inclusion may be unsustainable. Collective commitment at a systemic level is highly important in supporting and engaging with trans*-inclusion to enable the change process to move forward (Gavin, 2021). This demonstrates how school staff and leaders hold a 'unique authoritative power' that can affect trans*-inclusion in both positive and negative manners (Bower-Brown et al., 2023, p.82) through influencing the way in which their actions are framed. It is however considered imperative that those who hold power within systems take responsibility of taking steps towards its re-distribution; engaging in exercises that explore readiness to change to examine systemic pressures and barriers to facilitating trans*-inclusion

in an equitable manner that affords TGDY agency and increased empowerment in the process (Freire, 1996).

It is therefore concluded that the role and distribution of power throughout practices, interactions and hierarchies within schools and wider education systems may directly influence the sense of empowerment experienced by TGDY. Mediated by the role of readiness to change (Gavin, 2021), collective commitment to the development of such practices can support a movement from the disempowerment involved in sustaining the victim narrative, towards a diversification in the conceptualisation of TGDY. Who, with appropriate facilitation of proactive, pro-social opportunities, can contribute meaningfully to the changes pertaining to their lives (Gavin, 2021).

3.4 Summary of Key Findings from the Systematic Review

Synthesis of the literature across the four themes '***A Spectrum of Support***'; '***Developing Informed and Reasoned Actions***'; '***Centrality of TGDY Voice***'; '***Victim Narrative: Persisting or resisting***', facilitates conclusion that contemporary practice towards trans*-inclusion is emergent, with multiple, intersecting proximal and distal systems influencing its development. This manifests as a broad spectrum of practices aiming to develop both the physical and metaphorical space within which TGDY can not only feel safe, but learn and thrive (Freedman, 2019). These are seen to be inconsistent as some schools solely aim to meet their legal obligations of physical safety of the individual; sustaining a victim narrative pertaining to TGDY through implementation of practice and policy framing their needs within an anti-bullying rhetoric (Horton, 2023b).

Factors pertaining to the implementation of such practices evidence the highly influential nature of cisnormativity as not only an organising structure, but permeating constructions and values underpinning norms within school systems (Horton & Carlile, 2022). Thus, restricting the breadth and creativity within which staff feel they are able to explore methods by which to meet the needs of TGDY in their care at individual and community levels (Drury et al., 2023). Current practices aiming to support therefore, are depicted as primarily responding the needs of individuals; utilising TGDY as sources of knowledge by which to inform decision making

(McGowan et al., 2022). Supportive of assimilation into the school setting, these do not aim to dismantle the cisnormative systems but support TGDY in accessing existing provision in a way that is safe and meaningful to them (Horton & Carlile, 2022).

The reactive nature of such practices affords support for those TGDY comfortable to disclose their gender identity, however, highlights ethical considerations regarding the equity of provision available for those who are not. Such assertions purport the embedded nature of trans* as non-normative and thus, the social hierarchies that influence the implementation and access to equitable support. This may be explored through developing mechanisms through which self-advocacy and agency can be channelled in a meaningful way (Gavin, 2021) as well as opportunities to explore underlying biases through open and curious conversations that challenge cisnormativity and unknown biased assumptions (Markland, 2023).

Emergent emancipatory practice is evident within contemporary literature, depicting a shift in schools actively striving towards trans*-emancipation at a holistic and whole school level (Gavin, 2021; Horton & Carlile, 2022). This currently manifests as developing gender-neutral provisions (Paechter et al., 2021), supporting relationship and belongingness development (Leonard, 2021) as well as embedding trans* issues within wider school curriculum (Gavin, 2021). Systemic change is however complex, especially when pertaining to underpinning organising structures, values, and beliefs of systems; with the readiness of systems to engage with the change process being an influential factor.

Studies pertaining to the lived experience of school staff evidence a lack of joint understanding across school systems; not only in what the aims and parameters of trans*-inclusion are but the way in which trans*-inclusion can be enacted within education. This is considered exasperated by the complex social-political climate within which debate regarding this topic is located, as well as the lack of statutory guidance pertaining to practice development. Noting the importance of developing an infrastructure within UK settings that can support knowledge and skill acquisition pertaining to trans*-inclusion for all staff in a containing manner.

Synthesis of the literature therefore depicts contemporary practices to be multi-faceted, with development influenced greatly by systemic issues thus, epitomising how the implementation of trans*-inclusion is a complex process. The researcher considers the importance of holding parallel processes in mind to support exploration and development of provision at individual

and systemic levels within schools; creating school climates that celebrate individuality, diversity and equity whilst challenging entrenched cisnormativity through a collective sense of responsibility (Davy & Cordoba, 2020).

4.0 The Current Study

In setting out to answer what the research can tell us about contemporary trans*-inclusive practices towards TGDY in UK secondary education settings, the review of the literature presents a field wherein inclusion of TGDY within schools is vast and multifaceted, involving the interplay of a multitude of interacting subsystems.

Although important themes can be drawn, the researcher must consider some key limitations of the studies included in the review.

- It is noted that four studies within the review are not only written by the same author but draw upon the same data set, thus risking the researcher engaging in recursive argument building.
- Aligned with the ontology and epistemology of the current research study, generalisability was not actively sought. However, aspects assessed through the critical appraisal process relate to transferability. Some studies did not however provide thick description of participants and context thus limiting transferability for the reader. It should be noted however that this may be in line with ethical considerations so as to avoid issues such as patchwork identification.
- Education throughout the UK is devolved with each country supporting decision making pertaining to inclusion. Only some studies provided additional information pertaining to which country the studies were conducted in, which may have provided additional contextual information regarding policies.
- The review employed inclusion criterion exclusive of those stakeholders considered distal such as counsellors or educational psychologist (EPs). Such views may have provided additional systemic information and perspective of the process of inclusion.

Despite these limitations, it was evidenced across the literature that factors pertaining to multiple stakeholders, classroom pedagogy (Drury et al., 2023; Freedman, 2019), school policy as well as wider societal values and beliefs (Markland et al., 2023) contribute to the current landscape of contemporary practices. Proposed conclusions and changes purported by the literature indicate the systemic nature of change required should trans*-inclusive practices

become more thoroughly embedded within UK school systems in a sustainable and effective manner (Horton, 2023b).

Due to the systemic nature of suggested changes, relating to multiple levels across schools and society, many researchers and academics utilise the vast applications of systemic models such as Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory (BEST, Bronfenbrenner (2005)) within which to locate and discuss their research (Gavin, 2021). The theory argues that individual development is influenced and impacted upon by interacting ecological systems. Contained within these systems, individual development is therefore both directly and indirectly effected by changes in proximal and distal systems. This highlights the importance in gaining an understanding of how such systemic factors manifest in schools as a means of supporting individual and collective TGDY development.

Iterations of this model are considered helpful when considering systemic development of schools. The researcher therefore suggests that a model rooted in BEST, may provide an increased relevance to developing an understanding of schools and the climates they foster regarding the inclusion of TGDY.

The climate cultivated within a secondary school setting can be highly impactful on the experience of identity development for all students, including those in minority groups such as TGDY, in both positive and negative manners (Pampati et al., 2020) and thus is an important consideration when developing trans-inclusive practices. Conceptualising this through a systems lens, utilising models such as Systems View of School Climate (SVSC; (Rudasill et al., 2018)), allows for a greater understanding in the nuanced interaction and reciprocal nature of elements that effects school climate. Devised from empirical research, the SVSC is a derivative of BEST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) providing a systems specific conceptualisation of school climate. Delineating proximal and distal systems, the model highlights the relevance and importance in considering a wide range of subsystems when looking to make impactful systemic change that leads to effective support for TGDY (Fantus & Newman, 2021).

Frameworks of this nature allow for an in-depth view of factors pertaining to trans*-inclusion. These centralise TGDY whilst placing additional focus on the wider systemic workings of a school and the ways in which these are not only experienced but can be improved and

strengthened. Such framings enable a move away from pathologizing TGDY as non-normative, whilst acknowledging and looking to the wider system for agents of change and adaptation.

It is therefore considered that within the UK, work needs to be undertaken to systematically and systemically to allow for the generation of creative and aspirational trans*-inclusive practices and policies that are implicitly built into school cultures and climates. Developing practice at climate and institutional levels allows for settings to be supportive of all TGDY, including those who choose not to disclose their gender identity. In exploring the prospective future of trans*-inclusive schools, it is considered important to engage the TGDY community as the central tenet of transformational work (Kean, 2021). This aims to consult those for whom the prospective system is designed for (Gill-Peterson, 2018) whilst also working to negate persistent social hierarchies and power differentials. Facilitating conversation regarding the development of trans*-inclusive practices, whilst acknowledging the complex societal systems within which this is located, supports a co-construction of new knowledge supporting the development of systems in a way that is meaningful to TGDY. Such development supports the promotion of agency not only at an individual but at a community level. The current project therefore aims to explore the research questions (RQs) below.

RQ1: What do TGDY perceive to be important features of a trans*-inclusive school?

RQ2: What factors (systemic or otherwise) do TGDY perceive as influencing the development of trans-inclusive schools?

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'What should the Cis-tem look like?

A Critical Thematic Analysis Investigating the Views of Young
People and their Ideal Trans*-Inclusive School'

Part 2: Major Empirical Research Study

12,058 words

Abstract

Schools are long documented to be difficult places for adolescents, especially those with gender diverse identities. Trans* and Gender Diverse Youth (TGDY) can experience secondary school settings negatively with increased incidence of victimisation, bullying and consequential adverse outcomes. Education professionals including Educational Psychologists (EPs) are therefore working to improve the lived experience of this population and minimise negative outcomes through the development of inclusive practices. In this research, a qualitative research paradigm was informed by social constructionist, critical and Foucauldian psychologies noting the influence of power, hierarchy, and societal ideologies throughout. Semi-structured interviews and a dyadic interview were conducted with four trans and gender diverse youth (TGDY) and analysed using critical thematic analysis. Four key themes were generated; Dis/Empowering the Trans* Voice; Challenging Entrenched Cisnormativity; Knowledge as Power; Bigger than Schools. Given the systemic orientation of the themes, an application of the Systems View of School Climate model is utilised as an analytic tool by which to explore TGDY's comments in relation to the wider systemic context. From this, further discussion is presented regarding implications for practice and role of educational psychology in the development of trans*-inclusive practices. Strengths and limitations are presented and directions for future research are proposed.

Keywords: Transgender, Gender Diverse, Non-Binary, Secondary Schools, Inclusion

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Current Context

The concept of gender is evidenced to hold ever-developing conceptualisations as epistemologies, philosophies and psychologies regarding gender evolve over time (Butler, 2024; Wilson et al., 2023). Contemporary conceptualisations describe the multiplicity of gender, broadening the scope for how gender is not only expressed but experienced. Trans* can be considered an umbrella term to describe a heterogeneous group of gender diverse identities encompassing a range of presentations falling “across, between or beyond stable categories of man and woman” (Hines & Sanger, 2010). This includes behaviours, expressions and identities of gender that differ to those associated with sex assigned at birth (Rafferty et al., 2018) which may exist within or outside of the traditional binary paradigm of gender (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018; Parodi et al., 2022). For example, transgender man, transgender women, non-binary, and gender diverse.

Within the UK context, there has been a substantial increase in the number of visible trans* and gender diverse youth (TGDY) within education settings (Bower-Brown et al., 2021; Horton & Carlile, 2022). Research by UK-based charities such as Stonewall, evidence secondary schools as places that can be detrimental to TGDY wellbeing (Bradlow et al., 2017). For example, one report notes the commonplace of TGDY suffering increased incidence of bullying and discrimination due to their gender diversity, with 64% of TGDY reporting transphobic acts from both staff and pupils (Bradlow et al., 2017). Additionally, the report notes non-intervention and lack of support from school systems in accessing gendered spaces in an affirmative manner (Bradlow et al., 2017). Elucidated by empirical findings, conclusions support the notion that schools require reformation and reconceptualization should effective trans-inclusive practices be developed as TGDY currently feel physically and psychologically unsafe in their school environments (Horton, 2023b).

At the time of writing, there is a highly publicised and polarised political debate regarding the manner through which TGDY should be supported in schools (Zanghellini, 2020). Identifying as trans* is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (UK Government, 2010) therefore schools must show due diligence to uphold their legal duty of care (Department of

Education, 2023; Leonard, 2020). However, additional guidance regarding support and inclusive practices within UK education settings is non-statutory and largely unregulated, with a diverse range of recommendations dependent on the underpinning epistemologies and conceptualisations of gender held by the publication body (Horton, 2020).

Research in this area is beginning to explore and understand the lived experience of both TGDY and key stakeholders within the wider school systems in the UK. A review of the literature indicates a context wherein pedagogy and policy aiming to further support TGDY is emergent, creating a diverse array of practices across UK settings (Horton, 2020; Horton and Carlile, 2022). This evidences contemporary practices in supporting TGDY to be characterised as a spectrum across which intersecting distal and proximal systems hold great influence. Many studies depict practices centralising anti-bullying and individualised support as central tenets (Horton, 2020; McGowan et al., 2022). However, emergent practices aiming to develop this, reconceptualising support to accommodate for holistic needs through proactive, whole-school approaches (Gavin, 2021) are evident.

Although nascent and therefore still developing, critique of current practices notes the reactive nature of the majority of current trans*-inclusive practices, limiting support to visible TGDY comfortable enough to disclose their gender identity in school (Davy & Cordoba, 2020). Secondly, framing trans-inclusion within individualistic/humanistic discourse erroneously conflating the issues around trans*-inclusion to individual TGDY diminishes and de-politicises the discrimination they face by leaving the underpinning cisnormativity unchallenged (Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021). It is therefore argued that in order to develop trans-inclusive milieu in which TGDY are not accommodated for but are included, a more comprehensive approach is needed (Farley & Leonardi, 2021) as trans-inclusion cannot be effective if cis-normative and systemic power differentials are ignored (Gill-Peterson, 2018). Critiques of this nature epitomise how trans-inclusion is a complex process and thus warrants further investigation. It is considered that for this to be meaningful to TGDY their voice should be at the centre of the reform to ensure change is not irrelevant and prescriptive (Farley & Leonardi, 2021; Horton & Carlile, 2022).

1.2 Relevance to Educational Psychology and the Current Research Study

Understanding key stakeholders' (such as TGDY, parents and teachers) views and perspectives is imperative when developing inclusive practice, to ensure decision making is not only informed and reasoned but considered meaningful and beneficial by those being affected (Cook-Sather, 2002). Involving TGDY in the process of reform in education allows for active participation in a way that begins to negate the underlying societal factors such as power differentials embedded between cis-normative systems and TGDY (Simmons et al., 2015). Cook-Sather (2002, p. 3) suggests that 'there is something fundamentally amiss about building and rebuilding an entire system without consulting at any point those it is ostensibly designed to serve'.

The current study therefore aims to gain insight into what a trans*-inclusive school would look like from the perspective of TGDY themselves. Through facilitating discussion, research of this nature aims to provide an exploration of what TGDY perceive as being important features of a trans*-inclusive school environment, supporting the construction of new knowledge around trans*-inclusive practices. This may hold implications for developing trans*-inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogy in an informed and reasoned manner as a mechanism of support for the emotional health and wellbeing of this minority group (Horton, 2023a). This rationale has therefore led to the development of the below research questions (RQs) that the forthcoming methodology will aim to explore.

- RQ1: What do TGDY perceive to be important features of a trans*-inclusive school?
- RQ2: What factors (systemic or otherwise) do TGDY perceive as influencing the development of trans-inclusive schools?

2.0 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm of any given study consists of multiple elements and philosophical assumptions (Brown & Dueñas, 2020) such as axiology, ontology, epistemology, and method.

A researcher's philosophical positioning underpins and directs thinking, action and decision making (Brown & Dueñas, 2020; Mertens, 2019). Thus, prospective consideration of the research paradigm and its alignment with research design is believed to be imperative for rigorous research (Teherani et al., 2015). Space is therefore given to explicitly note these aspects of the research paradigm to enhance clarity for the reader in framing the researcher's decision making, research design and data interpretation (Mertens, 2019).

2.1 Axiology

Axiological assumptions held by the researcher align with those of emancipatory research in that they value the importance of knowledge in challenging inequities and hold a commitment to exploring ways of supporting social change (Rose & Glass, 2008).

2.2 Ontology

Ontology refers to the assumptions one holds about the nature of reality and its relationship with human interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Brown & Dueñas, 2020). Ontological stances in research vary greatly in their positioning, however these fall predominantly within the dichotomy of realism and relativism (Moon & Blackman, 2014). Realism assumes that one observable and measurable reality and truth exists independent of human practices and interpretation (Moses & Knutsen, 2019). It therefore claims that the production of knowledge is not susceptible to bias as reality can be separated from the human experience (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Conversely, relativism proposes there may be multiple, constructed, and subjective realities (Brown & Dueñas, 2020). This situates knowledge and reality as a product of experience and understanding that is dependent on time, context, and location (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). The researcher espouses a relativist ontology and therefore proposes that no one perspective can be valorised over another on the basis of truthfulness as no truth exist, only subjective interpretations (Wiling, 2008).

2.3 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to assumptions regarding what is considered knowledge and the process through which this can be acquired (Bråten, 2010). The researcher holds a social constructionism epistemological stance. This proposes knowledge is not derived from observation of an objective world, as meaning is not inherent in objects (Biever et al., 1998)

but created and sustained through social processes, discourses, and the systems within which we exist (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Burr, 2015).

Framed within the topic of gender, a 'post-structuralist critique of identity' (Roan & Groot, 2019, p. 97) allows consideration that traditional binaries and dichotomies associated with sex and gender (male/female and masculine/feminine respectively) are socially constructed through experience of, and interaction with, culturally and historically specific norms (Biever et al., 1998; Burr, 2015). This notion therefore widens the possibility of experiences articulable within gender discourse (Butler, 2006) allowing for the recognition of the plurality and multiplicity of gender identities (Monro, 2005) such as transgender, non-binary and gender fluid.

The researcher is further informed by theoretical frameworks of critical pedagogies (Freire, 1996; Roan & Groot, 2019) and Foucauldian methodologies/understandings (Gallagher, 2008; Phillips, 2023). These principles posit a link between gender (and other) identities, marginalisation, and power relations within society due to existing, restrictive categories constructed through discourse (Burr, 2015; Butler, 2006). Research underpinned by this epistemology therefore offers an opportunity for exploring wider societal issues (Brickell, 2006) and their nuanced role in the oppression as well as emancipation of trans* people (Johnson & Mughal, 2024). The integration of these theories affords the researcher tools through which to conduct a nuanced and comprehensive exploration of the research data (Phillips, 2023). Additionally, this provides a lens through which critical examination of the data can be conducted whilst exploring, from the perspective of TGDY, the role that power, discourse and embedded systemic assumptions have on school practices (Ballard et al., 2017; Doyle, 2023; Roan & Groot, 2019).

2.4 Method

2.4.1 Participant Information and Recruitment

To take part in the study, participants were required to meet all inclusion criteria (See Table 5). Recruiting participants who meet the inclusion criteria allowed for a level of homogeneity within the sample.

Table 4 - Rationale for Participant Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Rationale
Be aged between 16–25-years-old	Firstly, this age range has been chosen to afford potential participants, who are 16 or over, the opportunity to provide primary consent (Lyons & Thomas, 2024). Whilst adhering to British Psychological Society Code of Human Research Ethics (Oates et al., 2021), this was also considered facilitative for those TGDY who may wish to take part but are not yet ‘out’ in the home setting. Secondly, it is considered that in order to provide thorough insight into the ways in which the secondary school system could be more trans-inclusive, participants will have had substantial lived experience of this system and therefore can provide retrospective reflection.
Identify as trans* (transgender, non-binary, gender diverse/fluid – a gender different to that assigned at birth)	The aim and purpose of the project was to capture the views of the TGDY and therefore this criterion ensured participants were part of the target population.
Be socially transitioned – this can be determined as having changed their pronouns in a setting	Research evidences that trans youth who have socially transitioned have a markedly different experience to those who are not yet out in any social setting. Therefore, to obtain coherence and homogeneity within the focus group, it is determined that all participants will have socially transitioned.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling and included multiple recruitment routes.

- Gatekeeper letters were emailed to LBGTQIA+ charities and supporting organisations (Appendix E). To aid recruitment, the strategy was later widened to include all colleges and universities in the UK (262 and 145 respectfully). This process involved emailing

gatekeeper letters to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) contacts at these institutions. Gatekeeper letters outlined a request for gatekeepers to share a recruitment poster and social media advertisement (see Appendix E).

- The researcher posted the social media advertisement on their personal social media which was then shared forward by interested individuals.
- Snowball sampling was utilised through asking those who had participated to share the recruitment poster with anyone they felt may be interested in taking part (Silverman, 2013).

Participants then self-identified and opted-in to the study by email. Due to the nature of the recruitment strategy, participants were recruited from a wide geographic range across the UK. In order to not only anonymise but further encourage authentic contribution (Braun & Clarke, 2013), the institution/method through which participants were recruited is not detailed in the research paper. Further information regarding the process of developing the recruitment strategy and deliberations experienced regarding reporting, can be found in Part 3.

The recruitment strategy successfully recruited four participants who met criteria. All identified within the Trans* community but ranged in both age range and trans* identity (see Table 6.). Safety and security of participants was considered paramount throughout the project therefore a duality of recruitment through interview and dyadic interview was offered. This allowed participants to take part in 1:1 conversation with the researcher, as well as provided opportunity for interested participants to bring a friend/ally with them to the interview as a source of support (as noted on the advert and consent forms). This aimed to increase feelings of safety in the research process for TGDY. Two participants took part via individual interviews, and 2 chose to participate together in a dyadic interview. These lasted 35-50 minutes and 65 minutes respectively. It should be noted for the reader that those taking part in the dyadic interview were therefore known to each other, having an awareness that the other was participating before the dyadic interview commenced. Although known to one another, participants had differing experiences of their gender identity and school which became apparent through the dyadic interview process.

A combination of single and dyadic interviews allowed for the researcher to gather more data than if a single modality had been offered (Ehlinger et al., 2022). Importantly, providing options supported participant engagement and contribution in a format most conducive to developing feelings of comfort and safety in an environment with limited perceived demands and increased sense of security (Ehlinger et al., 2022; Liamputtong, 2011; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014).

Table 5 - Participant Details

Participant	Current Pronoun	Age
P1	He/Him	17
P2	He/Him	20
P3	She/Her	17
P4	He/	17

2.4.2 Procedure

The procedure was constructed using underpinning ethical principles (See Table 7). Upon opting in to the study, participants were sent an information sheet and consent form (Appendix F and G, respectively). An informal virtual space was offered through MS Teams to discuss these documents in more depth. Following receipt of a signed consent form, participants were invited to interview through a modality of their choosing; 1:1 with the researcher or through a dyadic interview modality with a friend/s. Interviews and dyadic interviews were conducted online via the university provided MS Teams and recorded via Dictaphone, reducing the need for video recording (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Holding the data collection in this manner supported not only a wide geographical recruitment area by eliminating the need for travel but additionally supported privacy as participants could choose whether or not to have their camera on.

Before each interview/dyadic interview a short briefing took place. Here key information was discussed including reiteration of the study purpose, processes regarding GDPR and data handling as well as safeguarding and their right to withdraw. Additionally for the dyadic interview, this involved co-constructing ground rules (or guidelines) with the participants. These aimed to co-construct a safe and secure space within which TGDY could engage in the research process with confidence. The researcher included reiteration of internal and external confidentiality and anonymity (Sim & Waterfield, 2019), management of expectations as well as guidance around the positive, solution focused nature of the study.

Both the interview and dyadic interview structure utilised a semi-structured format to enable the researcher to facilitate in-depth, participant led discussion that talked to the RQs whilst allowing for unforeseen ideas to be explored organically (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Franz, 2011). A schedule of questions and prompts was compiled using guidance from the literature (Appendix I; Braun & Clarke, 2013; Gill et al., 2008; Krueger & Casey, 2014)) to ensure they were purposeful in relation to the RQ. The schedule utilised a solution focused format to allow for facilitation of reflections aiming to move the conversation regarding inclusive practice forward. The schedule consisted of questions such as ‘what would the ideal trans*-inclusive school look like’ as well as prompts to allow for exploration of participant led discussion points in more detail.

Post interview, the researcher remained online for 30 minutes to provide a space for participants to discuss any thoughts and/or concerns they may have had. Participants were also sent a debrief sheet (Appendix H).

2.4.3 Transcription

Voice recordings were uploaded from the Dictaphone and transcribed using Word (Appendix J). The transcription was checked multiple times by the researcher to ensure the quality and accuracy of transcription (Silverman, 2013; Appendix K). This ensured no information was lost and supported the researcher’s ability to conduct a thorough analysis (Willig, 2012). Two weeks post interview, the voice recordings were deleted, and the transcripts anonymised. This involved the removal of all names and identifying features from the transcription. Documents were stored on the university provided One Drive.

2.4.4 Data Analysis Process

The research paradigm underpins the aim of exploring perceptions within the context of wider societal ideologies. The data analysis strategy utilised in the study was therefore required to encompass social constructionist, critical, and Foucauldian philosophies that allow an in-depth analysis of patterns of meaning and the subsequent implications for the realities this creates in relation to societal ideologies (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Critical Thematic Analysis (CTA) was therefore applied as the data analysis strategy (Lawless and Chen (2019); see Figure 2).

CTA develops the use of thematic analysis by 'systematically identifying shared phenomena among participants, as well as power relations, status-based hierarchies, and larger ideologies' (Lawless & Chen, 2019, p. 104). By acknowledging language as a 'social practice' (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 164) and the recognition of 'power' in our 'taken-for-granted knowledge' of society (Cannella & Lincoln, 2015, p. 244) this critical approach allows for comment to be made on common themes emerging from the discourse between participants in relation to the wider systems, ideologies, and societal phenomena.

The researcher engaged in multiple readings of the interview transcripts (Appendix K) to develop increased familiarisation with the data. Following CTA process, primary stages of analysis used open coding informed by the principles of recurrence, repetition and force (Owen, 1984; See Figure 2). This supported an initial analysis of the data that prioritised understanding based upon frequency, meaning and tone of linguistic phrases (Owen, 1984). Hundreds of codes were produced (Appendix L) that were then synthesised to generate initial open codes (Appendix M). The second phase of analysis supported a robust process in which concepts of power, hierarchy and societal ideology became embedded into the analysis process. Closed coding provided opportunities to link open codes with prominent societal structures and ideologies to generate nuanced and critically informed themes. Exploration at this level supports the questioning of how and why themes are functioning in relation to societal and hierarchical power relations (Lawless and Chen, 2019, p. 98; Appendix N). Although depicted as a linear process in Figure 2, such questioning during the closed coding stage means CTA was utilised as an iterative process through which the researcher explored the data in a natural and recursive manner, revisiting open codes as new questions and links arose (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Appendix L, Appendix M and Appendix N). This supported a fluid exploration of the data in a way that was conducive to developing understanding, interpretation and theme generation over time before a developed analysis was reached.

Additionally, utilising this derivative of thematic analysis allowed for acknowledgement of the views, values, and beliefs that the researcher holds through the process of reflexivity (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This aims to enable clarity for the reader in how the researcher's philosophical stance and axiological assumptions impact the interpretation of the data.

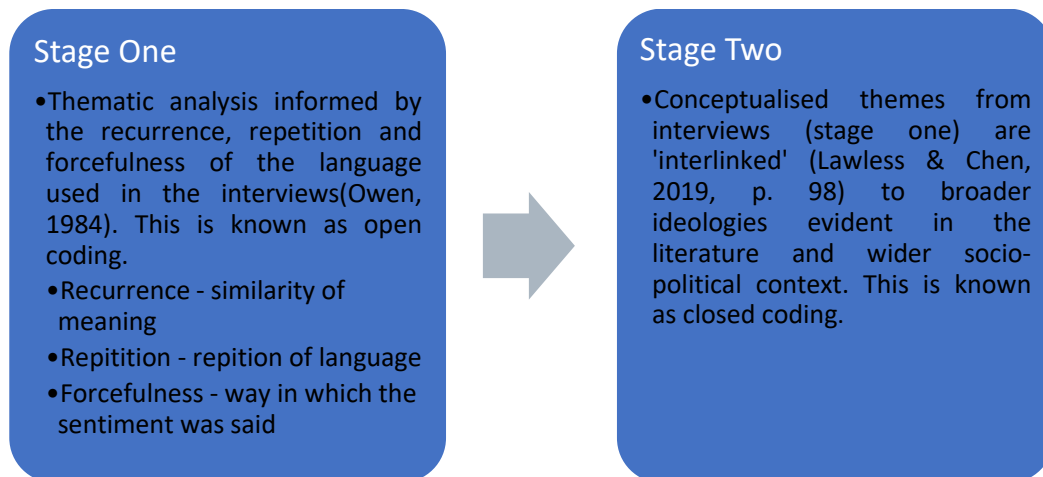


Figure 2. Process of Critical Thematic Analysis based on practices by Braun and Clarke (2022), Lawless and Chen (2019) and Owen (1984).

2.4.5 Ethical Considerations

The current study obtained ethical approval from SREC (Appendix D). Much consideration was given to the ethical principles and duty of care that underpin decision making. Participant recruitment and procedure are informed by best practices in conducting ethical research with the trans* population (Horton, 2023b; Horton & Carlile, 2022; Rosenberg & Tilley, 2021; Vincent, 2018). Reading highlighted five particular areas of practice that required careful ethical consideration to ensure the comfort and safety of participants. These are outlined in Table 7.

Table 6 - Ethical Considerations

Ethical Considerations	Practice
Informed Consent	Informed consent was obtained from participants by sharing the information and consent forms via email when the prospective participants declared an interest in taking part in the study. Prospective participants were offered a virtual space on Microsoft Teams through which to ask any questions or gain further information about the study should they wish. Adams et al. (2017) notes how meaningful, informed consent is imperative with this population therefore lengths were taken to provide prospective participants with detailed descriptions of the meaning and purpose of the research, what taking part would entail and their right to not take part/withdraw. All written communication was constructed with specific care given to factors that may affect accessibility such as literacy and use of academic terminology (Health Care Professional Council, 2016; Martin & Meezan, 2009). The researcher additionally used the briefing section of the interview/focus group to verbally reiterate key points of information.
Anonymity and Confidentiality	<p>The study design worked to limit the possibility for patchwork identification wherein different parts of demographic information reported in studies are pieced together to identify a participant (Horton, 2023b). Therefore, only demographic information to ensure participant inclusion criteria was gathered. Age and pronouns were reported to provide context for the reader, but all other identifying variables were removed.</p> <p>Dyadic Interview Only: Although generalisations cannot be made, privacy and sensitivity are qualities documented as being important in the trans* community (Horton, 2023a) and therefore internal confidentiality is extremely important to consider in the research design. Internal confidentiality relates to participants observation of the agreed upon ground rules and not sharing information outside of the group setting. To this end, it was important to use the briefing as an opportunity to discuss and explore the concept of internal confidentiality (Adams et al., 2017; Sim & Waterfield, 2019; Tolich,</p>

2009). Wording informed by Tolich (2009) was included in the information, consent and debrief forms to acknowledge the limits in confidentiality of the study.

Risk of Harm and Debrief

Due to manner in which this research project was formulated, with the aims, purpose and paradigm cumulating in a procedure that was solution-focused in nature, it was not anticipated that data gathering would cause participants psychological harm or discomfort. However, solution-focused questions about ideals may have incurred reflection on their school experience therefore a graduated response to distress was planned by the researcher including staying online for 30 minutes after each interview/group to allow for discussion if needed.

All participants received a debrief sheet for their records. This thanked them for their time and detailed how their data would be used/stored, as well as withdrawal and university complaints procedures. This also included important contacts and means of accessing support should the participant require this.

Right to Withdraw

Participants' right to withdraw was iterated within all written communication as well as verbally before and after their taking part. As per the approved ethical procedure, participants were given two weeks to withdraw from the study. As detailed in the information and debrief forms, participants were unable to withdraw after such time, as anonymisation of the data had occurred and the audio recording deleted thus making their contribution untraceable.

Online Security

As noted, additional security measures were utilised, such as using a Dictaphone, not video recording and allowing participants to have their camera off, to ensure participants' security whilst engaging online via MS Teams. It was ensured that all data gathering, and storage took place using university provided email, MS Teams and One Drive programmes to allow for end-to-end encryption and higher levels of security.

It is considered that in synthesising learnings from texts such as Vincent (2018) and Rosenberg & Tilley (2021) noted above, with the detailed global and UK narrative provided from the literature, the underpinning ethical principle of all decision making is the facilitation of safety for TGDY in the research process. As noted in section 2.4.1 and 2.4.2, decision making regarding recruitment and procedure was not only guided by but emphasised the concept of safety as paramount in facilitating access to the research study. Further discussion and exploration of this in the context of further research procedures is presented in section 4.2.3 and Part 3.

3.0 Result of Data Analysis

This section initially presents a thematic map providing a visual overview of the four themes generated through CTA. These are Dis/Empowering the Trans* Voice; Challenging Entrenched Cisnormativity; Knowledge as Power; Bigger than Schools. These were generated through both open and closed coding. Single directional arrows show relationships between themes, with bidirectional arrows demonstrating lateral relationships between themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

3.1 Thematic Map:

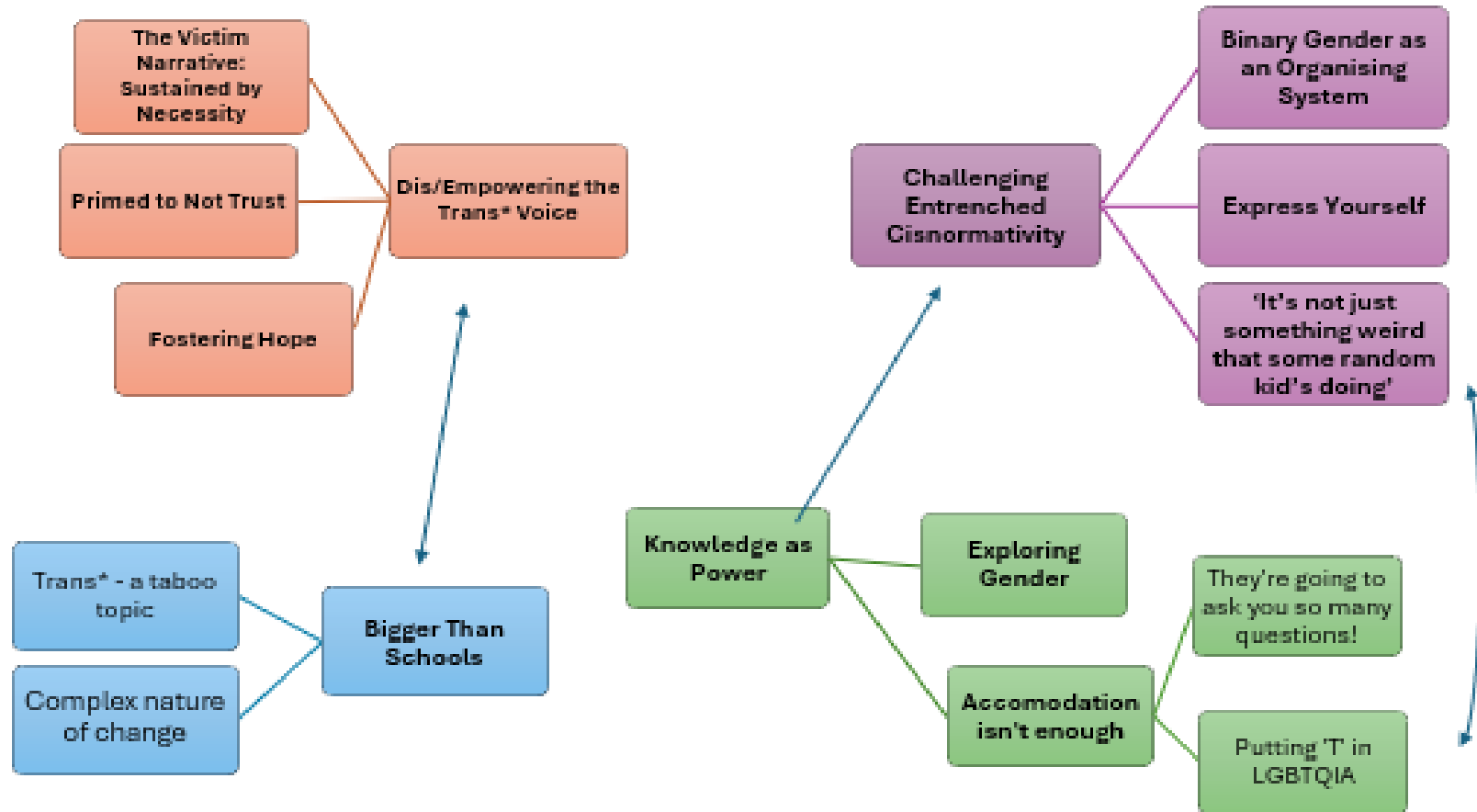


Figure 3. Thematic Map

3.2 Dis/Empowering the Trans* Voice

This overarching theme reflects discourse pertaining to how participants conceptualise schools' and wider society's role in maintaining and resisting the effects of entrenched societal marginalisation of TGDY. This will be explored in three subthemes; The Victim Narrative, Primed Not to Trust, and Fostering Hope. Within these, participants acknowledge the complex nuances of sustained disempowerment, exemplifying how some necessary actions may reinforce and/or are reinforced by marginalisation in a cyclic nature. Participants also explore practices to develop and embrace opportunities for empowerment within school settings.

3.2.1 The Victim Narrative: Sustained by Necessity

In exploring ideas regarding their ideal school, all participants placed a fundamental emphasis on safety. In recounting incidences of confrontation, transphobia, and hostility in school that led to feelings of awkwardness, annoyance, and 'strife' (P2), participants noted that the current ethos creates settings within which they do not always feel safe. Therefore, TGDY noted the primary goal, and important initial first step of inclusivity, as creating a space 'where you feel safe' (P1). Participants spoke to their concerns regarding safety in typically gendered spaces in schools, fears that were exasperated and intensified, especially for Participant 3, when considering the safety in wider society.

I was just always worried about being confronted if I ever went to... If I ever went to the toilet, like either toilet, really. I was worried about being confronted. I was personally lucky enough to... I have. I have a disability so I can use the disabled bathroom. But if I hadn't been able to do that, I just wouldn't have been able to go to the toilet in school. Ever. Because I would be so scared of being confronted. – P3

You don't want a situation where like, someone's too scared to, like, be able to walk home or... I mean only about a year ago of like trans person was like murdered in the middle of the park and only 16 – P3

Creating safe school environments was described as not just desired, but 'paramount' (P3) to schools successfully becoming trans*-inclusive. This exemplifies how a current perceived

threat of confrontation necessitates participants to consider mechanisms through which TGDY can have their basic needs of safety and security met.

Discussion led participants to highlight the importance of 'people to protect' (P2) them. These were nominated staff members so provided increased feelings of safety. To this end, increased accessibility to individual staff members who can protect and advocate for TGDY was noted to facilitate an 'easier' (P4) existence in school.

And we all kind of like... Usually when people say like 'ohh you, know you can come to us if like anything happens' but... Like. It doesn't. It was a lot more like comforting to know that these teachers specifically, like, are very much like on our side and stuff. – P1

Thus, to initially mobilise trans*-inclusivity, participants reflect how their experiences necessitate a reliance on staff members to instigate change. Staff provide sources of safety and comfort in climates TGDY experience perceived disempowerment to affect their own situation as they are 'not in a safe situation to actually say [anything]' (P1). TGDY are accepting of this support as 'the first priority would be like... Would be making sure that trans* students are safe and comfortable' (P3).

3.2.2 Primed to Not Trust

Throughout data gathering, holding distrust towards the cisnormative system manifested across the dichotomy of both sustaining and resisting marginalisation and disempowerment. In not trusting the wider system within schools, participants spoke of the 'very personal, very deep' (P2) nature of exploring their own gender identity, the initial disclosure of which is only considered to those with established trusting relationships based on a 'personal bond' (P4) and genuine care.

I'm more likely to tell them that I'm trans... because my... the people I live with, I can't really come out to. So, if I thought I had like a more personal bond with a teacher... I was more, I was more likely to tell them that I'm trans*, because I wouldn't put it on the school system – P4*

Discussion centralised the importance of having individuals and systems that facilitate autonomy when disclosing one's gender identity and beginning the process of social transition. Proposal of systems wherein TGDY are not afforded confidentiality, and parents are informed of their desires to socially transition were characterised as problematic by TGDY and a source of worry for them regarding the safety of younger members of their community.

But a lot of people are worried about the like, the new school guidelines that the government put out because they've required teachers to like out trans to the parents....*

...because like, if a child's keeping a secret from their parents, it's probably a reason... [Silence] – P3

Such reflections nominate consent and confidentiality as central tenets in ideal administrative systems that are derived to support TGDY in schools. When decisions are made that disregard aspects of confidentiality, TGDY shared that they develop distrust in staff and schools, becoming disempowered in their own transition. Participants therefore shared that mobilisation of support should occur 'as long as like the person like wants to' (P3), involve trusted adults, and be delivered at a pace governed by the TGDY.

Conversely, such distrust can also stem from inaction as well as unwanted actions. This led contributions from participants to be characterised by frustration in the wider school systems.

They just wouldn't do anything – P4

There's lots of people sitting on their hands at the moment – P2

This metaphor exemplifies how TGDY feel staff fail to act, help, or intervene, when necessary, despite having the ability to do so. Throughout the interviews this was noted to be experienced heterogeneously, with some participants demonstrating how inaction and distrust can lead to feelings of exclusion and the need for self-reliance. Experiences of being 'pushed out' (P1) exasperate feelings of being 'othered' (P1) and contributes to sustained disempowerment.

Like, sort of figure out myself and to figure out how to deal with things – P2

Like I might be on my own and I have just dealt with it – P1

Participants made links between experiencing inaction and distrust and the necessary means by which to find an alternative manner of creating change for themselves and their community. However, this led some participants to feel empowered to generate mechanisms through which to strengthen the sense of community from within. Such experiences were noted to empower participants to consider ways in which the trans* community can support themselves without reliance on cisnormative systems. Three participants suggested the manifestation of this to be through the development of a Trans* club. Clubs of this nature were characterised as being a place of sanctuary and ‘finding each other’ (P3) with the potential to provide ‘a community that will support you if something bad happens’ (P1) and additional strength when considered as a collective.

However, it was noted that participants stress the implementation of these would need to be considered with care so to ensure the safety of TGDY attendees as ‘you don't want people showing up and trying to harass them’ (P3). This highlights how reliance on the trans* community may stem from necessity to ameliorate feelings of fear and disempowerment within wider society.

3.2.3 Fostering Hope

Participants acknowledged that current school settings are ‘in the middle’ (P1) with development of inclusive practices continuing to be ‘quite far!’ (P3) from the ideal. Throughout the data gathering process, participants recognised the complex and ‘quite broad’ (P1) journey towards ‘long term inclusivity’ (P2) on which few are ‘sure where to begin’ (P3). However, discourse reflected participants’ shared belief that the system does have a propensity and potential to improve, building upon current ways of working to provide more inclusive support.

It's sort of started becoming more proactive and inclusive... it will probably get better like over time – P1

I think we are living in one of the times of all, of all eras when it comes to inclusivity – P2

It's getting better because there are a few members of staff who are aware of what being transgender is for students – P4

Participants offered the view that whilst hopeful, there are limitations to the reality of change as inclusivity will 'never quite be perfect' (P2). In acknowledging the limitations of inclusive practices, TGDY were able to sit with the current imperfection of the school system due to holding hope that continued positive change is possible as is evident in the increased diversity seen in wider societal settings. Participant 2 shared reflection that the ultimate goal of trans*-inclusion was for TGDY to be able to 'live well' as their authentic self.

Some participants positioned the trans* community as collective, active agents for change. Participant 2 shared that in order to harness the hope and desire for change in a meaningful way, mechanisms need to be constructed through which further empowerment and active engagement in the change process can occur.

When you have someone who's motivated, energized and there's lots of them, there's nothing that they cannot do - P2

Participants stated these need to be visible manifestations of trans*-inclusivity designed to not only support the process of normalisation but catalyse a sense of pride, celebration, and esteem. Suggestions include display boards, flying the LGBTQIA+ and Trans* flags as well as creating visually appealing installations that celebrate the trans* population in a creative manner.

3.3 Challenging Entrenched Cisnormativity

This theme reflects the entrenched nature of cisnormativity and the consequential impact of privileging an understanding of reality that centralises cisgender principles. This will be explored in three sub-themes; Binary Gender as an Organising System, Express Yourself and 'It's not just something weird that some random kid's doing'. Alternatives to long-established practices underpinned by cisnormative, binary organising systems are presented by participants as a way to challenge and question such practices in order to create settings that are trans*-inclusive.

3.3.1 Binary Gender as an Organising System

This subtheme highlights how gender is hegemonic in secondary school organising systems and practices, the effect of which can be experienced as highly detrimental to the wellbeing and personhood of TGDY. Participants explained how in the ideal trans*-inclusive school, TGDY would not be expected to assimilate into cisgendered spaces but have access to gender neutral options such as unisex toilets and gender-neutral changing rooms that afford TGDY additional privacy and eliminate feelings of awkwardness.

Participants stressed how beneficial this would be to all students, not just TGDY, as they perceived the wider teenage population to value additional privacy at this stage of development. As with other areas noted by participants, this exemplifies how TGDY consider adaptations to the current school systems would be to benefit all students, cis and trans* alike.

Participants noted how in addition to the expectation to assimilate into gendered spaces, gender was arbitrarily utilised to categorise students within lessons. Participants offered reflections detailing how practices underpinned by binary gendered principles were not only commonplace but customary; exemplifying the dominant ideology of cisnormativity. This left those who hold identities considered non-normative to be accommodated ad-hoc.

I don't know, like PE lessons. They're always divide... They're, like, often divided between boys and girls... – P4

Like organising an event or like doing a PE lesson. They just never think about it until they like... Like the trans people are and after thought – P3*

Initially experienced as 'annoying' (P1), such practices had the potential to create difficult situations for participants.

One thing that annoyed us was, like in lessons, sometimes teachers would split the class into like boys and girls. Honestly, and some of us were just sort of stand in the middle and were like, well, I don't know what group I'm meant to be in.

But cause like that has a lot less opportunity to make things like... choose which side of the room had to stand on. And you have to try and figure out like, am I going to do what wouldn't make me feel bad about myself, or am I going to do what wouldn't out me to everyone or whatever, you know? – P1

Statements such as 'I don't know what group I'm meant to be in' (P1) exemplify the ubiquitous nature of binary (boys/girls, male/female) within prevalent social constructions of gender. The quote from Participant 1 illustrates the potentially harmful effect of seemingly benign cisnormative practices that are considered the norm within pedagogical approaches. These place TGDY in the centre of an internal debate regarding decisions to lessen harm to their trans*-personhood.

All participants in the study expressed strong feelings that in an ideal trans*-inclusive school, gendered practices would be removed from the classroom. In their place, teachers may utilise any random systems such as number allocation to provide categorisation; as long as no visible or invisible characteristics are drawn upon to provide criterion for categorisation in the classroom.

3.3.2 Express Yourself

Participants spoke of the importance of being able to express themselves in a manner that is cohesive with their gender identity rather than their sex assigned at birth.

Initial conversation centred on uniform, and the 'weird distinctions' (P3) between male and female uniform policies and the 'uncomfortable' (P3) nature of wearing clothes distinguished by the gender binary. Participants 3 and 4 both noted that ideally, schools would absolve the need for a uniform all together. However, in acknowledgement of the hegemonic nature of uniform in UK schools, participants suggested leaders 'loosen' school uniform restrictions. This would facilitate a visible expression of gender identity through the adaptation of uniform

restrictions 'so you can express yourself more' (P4). Participant 4 additionally noted how this would support the expression of individuality not only for TGDY but for all students who are navigating their identity formation. This again provides comment on how uniform works to homogenise the student population, limiting individuality, whilst simultaneously strengthening hierarchy and gender differences based on the essentialist notion of gender.

TGDY note that further adaptations in the ideal school would stem from the recording of gender in school systems. Participants discussed how both names and pronouns are a visual/verbal representation of gender in the school administrative systems. Being allowed to change these within school systems was noted to enable participants to express their identity more readily, should they wish to. Across participants this manifested as wishing ideal schools to offer proactive administration systems that could be accessed in an idiosyncratic manner, depending on the TGDY's preference.

Repetition and recurrence of the phraseology including 'enable' and 'allow' (P2) instigates the need for permission to engage in expression of gender identities that are outside of the cisnormative binary. This exemplifies how current cisnormative systems act to disempower identities considered non-normative.

Participant 2 felt it necessary to explain that expression through pronouns is not an attempt to disempower the cisgender population, rather generate equality of power in being able to express their own identity safely and authentically.

'There's a misconception that, while in in the trans community, we're quite forceful, we're gonna force these pronouns... and that's not the case at all. It's a byproduct of 'I'm saying who I am...'

not so much preach about trans inclusivity, but it's to make people aware that these people are around you' – P2*

3.3.3 'It's not just something weird that some random kid's doing'

Throughout the interview process discourse centred around diversity, with recurrent and forceful comments pertaining to practices that influence feelings of difference and exclusion. Such comments underscore the interlocking nature of trans* identities with non-normative and cisnormative oppressive ideologies that continue to isolate and 'other' TGDY.

All participants expressed how current practices promote difference and inequality in secondary school settings with practices that 'single us [TGDY] out' (P1) and lead TGDY to feel 'really weird and uncomfortable' (P4).

Participants voiced that in an ideal school, everyone would think differently about difference; engaging in practices that normalise a variation of gender identities as part of the tapestry that makes up the school community and wider society. Repetition and forcefulness of the word 'normalise' was noted. This acknowledges the importance TGDY place on the process needed to ensure those with diverse gender identities are considered as genuine equals to their cisgender peers. This would eradicate cis-privilege and create a system untied from cisnormative values, wherein trans* and cisgender identities have equality.

If more people have like pronoun pins and put their like pronouns at the end of emails with their name and stuff, it doesn't make you feel as weird if you have to specify for people, because whatever they'd assume wouldn't line up with what you actually use? – P1

Like a teacher would like, wear a pronoun pin, like, even if it's not. But yeah, it's just not like a big thing to be made out of if somebody uses, like, they/them or something – P4

Repetition and recurrence highlighted a salient suggestion in which staff would lead a culture change by modelling gender identity expression. Participants noted that in trans*-inclusive schools staff may engage in the visible performance of gender identity, actively sharing their identity through use of pronoun pins and email signatures. Participants shared the hope that such practices may foster a climate wherein it is considered the norm to share one's gender identity, regardless of being cis or trans*, as difference would be considered normal and an everyday occurrence in a diverse society.

It is hypothesised that elongated pauses within the quote from Participant 1 may exemplify possible cognitive dissonance between their understanding of their own identity and the awareness of societal ideologies that construct their identity as non-normative.

They're less likely to think... [Pause]

You know... [Pause]

You're outside like the norms and stuff – P1

Participants acknowledged successful increased normalisation would be evident when peers and staff would not make assumptions that everyone in the room was cisgender, regardless of the visibility of TGDY. This would allow TGDY to be 'less likely to try and hide' (P3) and embrace their trans*-personhood more readily. Comments of this nature provide commentary to how participants believe in order to be trans*-inclusive, work is required to disrupt the underpinning cisnormative structures and dismantle hierarchy to distribute power to those across the gender continuum. This would not aim to eradicate difference but create a climate where difference is normal and 'expected' (P1).

3.4 Knowledge as Power

This theme reflects discourse centring around how teaching, sharing, and generating new knowledge can have lasting and wide-reaching effects on the lived experience of TGDY in school settings as well as wider positive implication for the trans*-personhood. This takes into consideration TGDY being positioned at an intersection of gender critical and cisnormative belief systems that question the validity of diverse gender identities. This is explored through the sub-themes of Exploring Gender and Accommodation is Not Enough.

3.4.1 Exploring Gender

There was a sense of frustration from participants in how secondary schools currently approach teaching about sex, gender and identity that led to experiences of erasure and invalidation from curricula and staff. This highlights how information regarding cisgendered identities are privileged within the UK curriculum at this time.

*In like high school biology, you get a lot like... these are the two ways to be.
There is no other way to be – P1*

Between participants, a consensus emerged in their desire to alter the way in which gender is approached in schools.

It's about enabling exploration because... It is all development in the end of the day, development of who you are and your identity – P2

Participant 2 spoke of how TGDY could be allowed to explore their identity through everyday experiences. Being able to engage in exploration through activities and play in a way that was not limited by gendered expectations. Such suggestions highlight how the generation of new knowledge regarding gender and identity formation can occur through experiential and naturalistic learning where students are afforded opportunities to explore in settings that are underpinned by dynamic and expansive notions of gender.

Conversely, others in the study focused on the provision delivered through direct teaching. Participants noted experiencing teaching regarding trans* identities as 'never formally part of the curriculum' (P4). Three participants suggested that this be best situated across the curricula but particularly in PSHE and biology lessons.

A lot of people just don't realise until like later because they don't know that... That's like an option of a way to be... We don't really get taught about it, so we have to figure out a lot of it for ourselves, which is difficult when we're already, like, dealing with high school and stuff – P1

They never told us much about trans people at all – P3*

[then] you can understand that... 'Ohh, this isn't... this is something that I don't have to be that confused about' – P3

Like in, like PSHE and stuff... just talking about the fact that it exists – P4

Participant 3 elaborated that direct teaching of this nature is purposeful in raising awareness that trans* is a gender identity; illuminating the axis of gender for students. Participants hoped that increased awareness would allow TGDY understanding that transgender or gender diversity is common praxis, supporting a reduction in the confusion inherent in the formation

of gender identities currently considered outside of the gender binary dichotomy.

3.4.2 Accommodation is not enough

Discourse captures participants' developed understanding of systemic issues surrounding their inclusion within school systems underpinned by cisnormative principles. Participants note that the presence of TGDY in schools does not create a culture shift, because 'people think what they think' (P1). Participants therefore propose an offer of education in multiple forms to facilitate an evolution of understanding and practice.

3.4.2.1 *They're going to ask you so many questions!*

Repetition and recurrence highlighted the importance participants placed on ideal schools raising awareness of trans* as a valid gender identity of which there is a presence in school settings. By 'educating people about trans* people' (P3), participants hoped ideal trans*-inclusive schools would foster increased awareness about trans* identities that would in turn 'help many, many people' (P2). An ideal trans*-inclusive school would provide opportunity for teaching of queer and trans* specific topics within dedicated lessons and generalised inclusive curricula.

Participants hypothesised many possible benefits of increased awareness but ultimately discussed the impact on transphobia, hostility and bullying from peers, noting a lack of understanding as a cause of hostility.

You know, like a lot of people who would be like, hostile towards trans people - like don't believe in them, which sounds silly but... it's just because they haven't... They, it's just because they were never educated or they were educated like, poorly... - P3*

I think information will like, bring down bullying too. Because it wouldn't just be like... it'd be something that, you know, what's happening about - P4

Primarily, participants would value adults facilitating increased education and awareness by modelling being respectful of the trans*-personhood. This was considered a fundamental aspect to developing trans*-inclusivity with the forcefulness of the comments elucidating the importance of respect to TGDY.

Discussion reflected a consensus that cisgender students would be receptive to the inclusion

of 'queer topics' being embedded in planned teaching and learning opportunities. This would cover topics of trans* culture and history.

Sometimes, like if you're the... the only trans kid in your class. When like, when people start like finding out they're going to like, ask you so many questions – P1

They were curious and genuinely cared – P2

Girls were coming up to me and, like, asking me, like, my gender and stuff – P4

Discourse regarding cis-students centred around their persistent questioning. Secondary school cisgendered students were characterised as curious, with a desire to understand their peers. However, were noted as currently having very little formal routes through which to gain answers to their questions in an informed and measured manner.

Participants nominate teachers as active agents of change in this process whilst being aware of their possible limitations. This manifested as participants suggesting that in an ideal school, there would be a division of labour and responsibility for delivering education to include staff and members of the community such as adult trans* persons (not TGDY) that hold specialist knowledge.

Participants believe a collaborative approach, drawing on the situated expertise of 'the right people' (P2) from within and outside of the community could be utilised effectively to break down barriers of cis-privileged hierarchy and co-construct knowledge to increase awareness in schools. Inherently this would require a willingness of schools staff to engage in the process.

People act like kids aren't going to understand, but kids understand just fine. People just aren't willing to teach them – P1

3.4.2.2 *Putting the 'T' in LGBTQIA+*

In discussing how education can support trans*-inclusion, participants also discussed who should access this opportunity for knowledge development. It was suggested that *all* staff, including roles such as receptionists, should have access to some training in order to improve awareness of trans* issues and ensure the reaction to TGDY is appropriate and affirming.

Participants discussed how one aim of educating staff would be to ensure they more thoroughly understand the nuance of trans* issues and not conflate the needs of the trans* community to that of disability or sexual diversity 'cause it's quite different to a lot of the other stuff!' (P3).

Participant 2 acknowledges the level of specialised support different minority groups have access to in education settings. In suggesting that leadership afford this community the same level of care and consideration, the ideal trans*-inclusive school would grant TGDY access to specialised systems of support. Other participants noted in order for this to be effective, there must be designated staff within schools that access additional training in an iterative manner as effective 'approaches rely on always keeping us up to date and keeping ourselves aware' (P2). This would supersede awareness and give them knowledge to provide TGDY insight into how to access more specialist services such as counselling and NHS gender services in an informed and timely manner, as they can be confusing and 'complicated' (P3).

3.5 Bigger than Schools

This theme reflects discourse centring around how aspects of developing trans*-inclusion are inextricably linked to systems and influences outside of schools. This takes into consideration changes relating to TGDY being positioned as a societal, and not only school, issue. This is explored through the sub-themes of Trans* - a taboo topic and Complex Nature of Change.

3.5.1 Trans* - a taboo topic

Participants were cognisant to current societal ideological framings of trans*-inclusion as a 'sensitive' and highly polarised political (P2) topic that may frame schools as negative in the media for being supportive of trans* rights. Erasure and invalidation were both acknowledged as part of the undercurrent surrounding their community.

I've had few run ins of people who don't necessarily believe in trans inclusivity. But it's a very hush hush topic – P2*

Some people, like, don't believe in them [trans], which sounds silly – P3*

Being aware of such beliefs led participants to feel cautious of ‘pointed questions’ (P2) that may be involved in change talk, leading them to consider the appropriateness of TGDY having a seat at the table when discussing change at whole school levels for fear of exposing them to distressing conversations with those who hold gender critical views.

Some participants acknowledged wider systemic framings of the trans*personhood that require addressing to ensure change in provision is both impactful and meaningful. Others such as Participant 1, focused on the general underlying societal attitudes as highly influential on cisgendered students and staff.

I think a lot of people think that... If everyone's got, like, a pronoun pin and there's gender neutral bathrooms, that all the transphobia goes away. But that's not like 100% true. Like it like it would help but... People will still think what they think...

I mean it's just like general attitudes, I guess.

I mean, a lot of kids. If it's the first time they're hearing about it, then they'll either be like, chill with it or they'll say whatever their parents say, which... could be good, but, you know, it could be bad. So, I think a lot of, a way to stop what happens in school is just... is somewhat indirectly controlled by general society and what people think - P1

In this sub-theme, the participants conveyed a perception that the attitudinal positioning of wider society may be static and deterministic in the success of trans*-inclusion; unchangeable to influence, therefore a possible barrier to removing negative aspects of current practice such as transphobia.

3.5.2 Complex nature of change

Participants hold hope for change whilst acknowledging that inclusive schools and wider society are inextricably linked. Participants shared beliefs that inclusion should exist everywhere, using the inclusion of other minority groups within society as an impetus to argue for their own inclusion.

Participants demonstrated a construction that creating a trans*-inclusive school would be a multifaceted, complex, and ‘big’ (P1) task due to the many elements of change necessary,

exemplifying the entrenched nature of gender binary and cisnormative organising systems. In the ideal school, trans*-inclusive provisions would be commonplace, consistent, and regular in nature so that they are effective and long lasting. However, Participant 2 expressed the importance of making sure the change process can be iterative in nature. Participants emphasise the need for reflection and evaluation when making changes to ensure their efficacy within the evolving paradigm of gender and effective practice.

Reflections from Participant 2 particularly acknowledge that this would require strategic planning to support the change process at an institutional level. Three participants discussed the importance of trans*-friendly and trans*-specific policies and processes at a whole school level that would increase the 'efficacy' (P2) and 'ease' of accessing support (P3). This captured the systemic nature of change that they believe needs to occur. Participant 3 and 4 both suggest this may manifest as creating proactive administrative systems and gender-neutral uniform policies.

It was important to participants that such policies and procedures are not only informed by laws and legislation but hold the rights of TGDY at their centre. In being aware of such legislation, only 1 participant held knowledge of their rights within the school system demonstrating a possible lack of understanding held by the trans* community regarding legislation and subsequent rights within school settings.

*We'd already be sort of covered, obviously, like any human rights act and...
Sort of the declarations that allow people like their freedom.*

But in the policies that you would consider would also be influenced from that, but the content would be really about... A really focused rights-based approach – P2

Regardless of content, TGDY stress the importance of following through on help and support offered to the community in order to develop and maintain trust between TGDY and cisgendered support systems. This provides comment on the ethical distribution of power

within the change process with institutions underpinned by cisnormative principles instigating change 'to' rather than 'with' TGDY.

Think about the application really heavily... there have been so many times where people have tried to really help like the trans community and LGBTQ. But haven't executed it properly and it's just lost trust - P2*

4.0 Discussion

The current study investigated the perspective and views of four TGDY. The aim of the study was exploratory in nature, seeking to further investigate the nuance of how TGDY conceptualise supportive mechanisms, in relation to developing trans*-inclusive schools and practices in the UK. Participants' thoughts and reflections were facilitated in a solution-focused manner in the interest of moving previously held knowledge forward in a manner sympathetic and responsive to both lived experiences and the current socio-political climate. Discussion of the CTA pertaining to each RQ is provided; **RQ1: What do TGDY perceive to be important features of a trans*-inclusive school?** and **RQ2: What factors (systemic or otherwise) do TGDY perceive as influencing the development of trans-inclusive schools?**

This aims to give insight to how these TGDY conceptualise meaningful trans*-inclusion and how this may be achieved. Following this, implications for practice, critique of the current research, as well as suggestions for possible future research are considered.

4.1 Systems View of School Climate

Participants' reflections regarding the development of trans*-inclusive practices were multifaceted and complex. However, much of their discussion centred around concepts captured within a systemic conceptualisation of schools and their systemic influences. It is therefore considered that a systemic model be used as an analytic tool through which to explore their conclusions and the involving interplay of a multitude of interacting subsystems. Conceptualising this through a systems lens, utilising models such as System View of School Climate (SVSC) allows for a greater understanding of the nuanced interaction and reciprocal nature of elements that effects school and it's climate. Delineating proximal and distal

systems, the model highlights the relevance and importance in considering a wide range of subsystems when looking to make impactful systemic change that leads to effective support for TGDY (Fantus & Newman, 2021). It is considered that in holding TGDY at the centre, the researcher can provide a means by which to systematically discuss participant's reflections regarding the ideal trans*-inclusive school in the context of wider school climate.

A visual representation is devised through synthesis of all reviewed literature and current project conclusions (See Figure 4). However, discussion is limited to TGDY's reflections in relation to the most relevant elements of the school microsystem (Climate, Structure, Process; See Figure 4). Although reference is made to the interacting subsystems when relevant, these three sections of the microsystem were found to be the most discussed and impactful to participants.

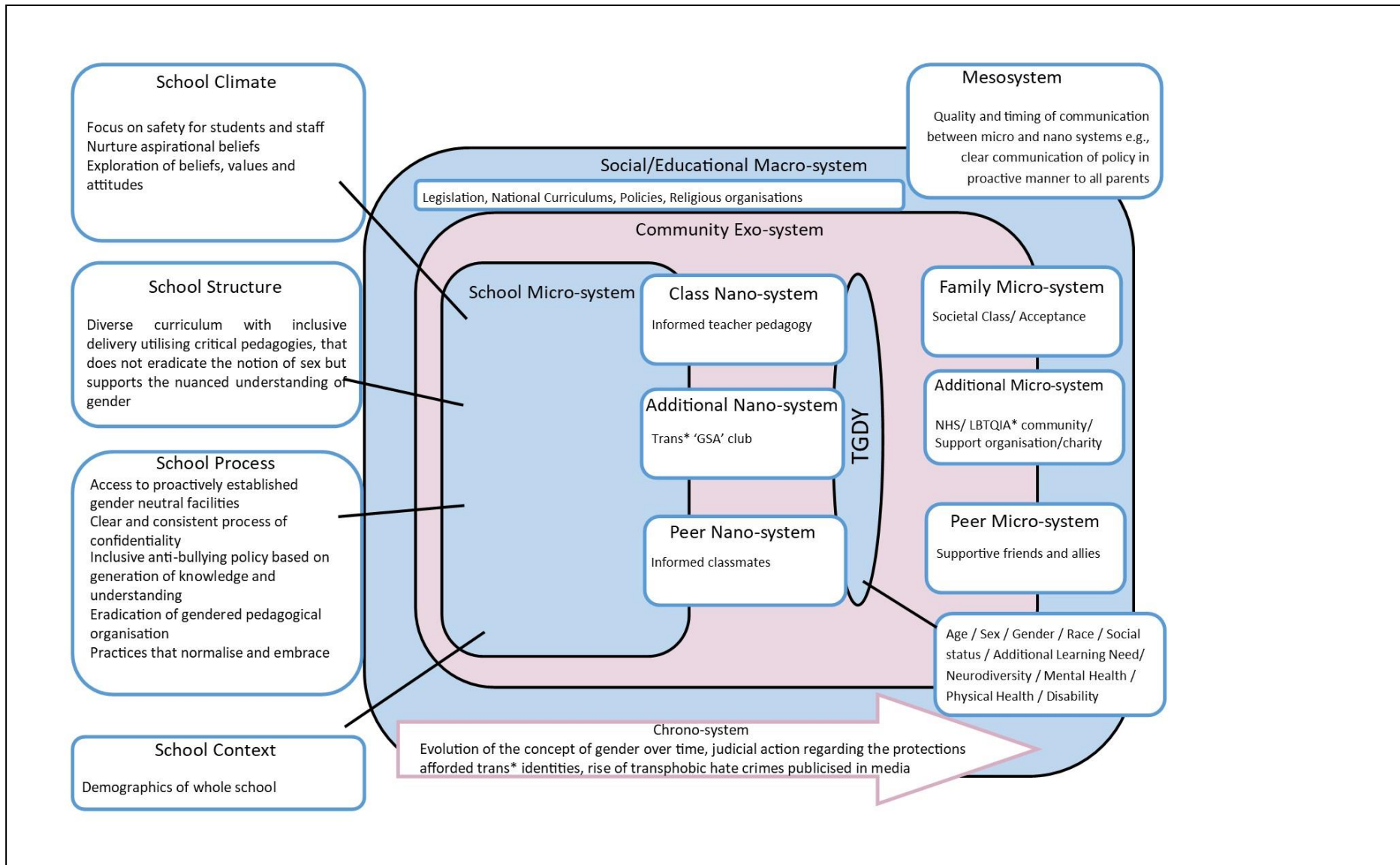


Figure 4. SVSC Model of Trans*-Inclusion

4.1.1 Climate

Climate is created through the integration of perceived feelings of safety, relationships, and shared values/beliefs (Rudasill et al., 2018). When considered in the response to participants' reflections, it is considered that these interact to create a complex dynamic in which to develop trans*-inclusive practices. Throughout which the perceived feelings of safety are considered a golden and influential thread.

4.1.1.1 Safety

Participant reflections noted in the subtheme ***The Victim Narrative: Sustained by necessity*** highlight the continued and persistent need for a focus on establishing feelings of safety (Russell et al., 2020). Throughout the interview data there is a sense that safety and anti-bullying are primary concerns to be addressed in the development of trans*-inclusive schools. The literature recognises the importance of safety noting the incidence of transphobic bullying and violence against TGDY that led to feelings of victimisation and lack of safety (McBride, 2021; Russell et al., 2020). Such reports have incurred trans*-inclusion in schools being ubiquitous with protection from harm.

TGDY in this study mirrored this ethos by sharing recollection of the ongoing 'transphobia', 'confrontation', and 'strife' that TGDY tolerate as well as persistent feelings of disempowerment in being able to affect this (Horton, 2023b). This was exemplified in the findings, as participants noted their wish for a reduction in transphobic bullying; considering an attempt of eradication of transphobia, an impossible and unrealistic feat due to societal attitudes. Such comments illustrate minimal aspiration above that of establishing safety (Maslow, 1943). This is hypothesised to be affected by interconnected systems of influence on TGDY's perceived levels of safety in schools (Rudasill et al., 2018). Notably a converging influence of the macro and chrono systems in the framing of TGDY (Rudasill et al., 2018). For example, participants commented on the difficulties of living in an environment where the media reports the death of trans* teenagers and there is an undercurrent of trans*-invalidation evident within wider political spheres (Zanghellini, 2020). Participants noted these to be harmful to trans*-inclusion. This exhibits how distal systems bare indirect influence on the perceived lack of safety enacted within schools. Thus, establishing lack of

safety as a complex systemic issue TGDY believe should be addressed through ideal trans*-inclusive practices in schools.

Findings of this nature elucidate holding safety as a central tenet in trans*-inclusive practices and thus aligns with many of the UK's non-statutory guidance documents (Horton, 2020; Phipps & Blackall, 2023). These prioritise the role of legal duty of care, safeguarding and centre around an anti-bullying rhetoric enacted through discipline of overt transphobia (Horton, 2020; Leonard, 2020). Such hyper focus on safety is criticised within the literature for establishing a victim narrative that disempowers TGDY, sustaining gender hierarchies whilst creating a context in which trans* is ubiquitous with discrimination and victimisation (Marston, 2015). The current study therefore considers how the wider social macrosystem influences TGDY's necessity to rely on being framed as disempowered in order to obtain protection.

Challenges to such a narrative are considered complex when situated within a multifaceted socio-political climate. Practices that uphold the victim narrative are challenged by contemporary paradigms of support (Freedman, 2019). Emergent in the global literature, priority is given to the reconceptualization of the persistent victim narrative, reframing TGDY as active agents of change underpinned by opportunities to develop situated agency (Hillier et al., 2020). The research base clearly demonstrates such diversification positively impacts a sense of self in TGDY through increased positive affirmation of their trans* identity and development of autonomy (Hillier et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2016).

In application of these findings to UK context, Horton (2020) advocates to swap the common safety zeitgeist for development of aspirational outcomes for inclusivity where leaders are motivated to create a climate in which TGDY do not just survive, but thrive (Horton, 2020). The present study argues that mobilisation of trans*-inclusion in this way can encourage TGDY to become hopeful for future progress in inclusive spaces.

Participant's contribution to conceptualising the ideal trans*-inclusive school facilitated consideration of the role of hope and motivation in moving forward the process of trans*-inclusion. Within the subtheme of *Fostering Hope*, only one participant notes the importance of 'living well'; accessing opportunities and life prospects afforded to their cisgendered peers

in order to live authentically, whilst reaching their potential and goals. Findings of this nature are substantiated by the wider global literature that suggests policies focusing on accommodation and safety are experienced by TGDY and other stakeholders such as parents as being tokenistic and not effective in providing appropriately aspirational provision (Farley & Leonardi, 2021).

Participants shared potential mechanisms through which staff can foster a sense of pride (Horton, 2023a), celebration, and esteem within TGDY. Suggestions include display boards, flying the LGBTQIA+ and Trans* flags as well as creating visually appealing installations that celebrate the trans* population in a creative manner. This suggests that creating spaces in which TGDY feel nurtured through development of motivation and pride may be effective in re-addressing the power imbalance sustained by the victim narrative (Frohard-Dourlent, 2018) and afford TGDY an approach to inclusion that meets their needs in a more holistic and aspirational manner (Horton, 2020).

This would incur a paradigm shift from policies that protect, accommodate, and assimilate, to 'ongoing, dynamic project of gender justice' (Martino et al., 2022, p. 90). Measured and considered policy implementation can be a catalyst (Meyer et al., 2022) to structurally and holistically reconceptualise how schools foster a climate that is inclusive of TGDY's rights and aspirational goals (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017; Connor & Atkinson, 2022; Howell & Allen, 2021).

Throughout the reviewed literature education professionals such as teachers and other school staff are nominated as active agents of change in the inclusion process (Leonard, 2020). However, multiple comments throughout subthemes such as ***Primed to not Trust***, ***Accommodation is not Enough*** and ***Trans*- A taboo topic*** exemplify frustration at the level of inaction by school staff, perceived by TGDY as an unwillingness to engage in the inclusion process (Horton, 2023a). Findings of this nature are contradictory to that emerging in the literature.

Global and UK based studies evidence staff to be willing but ill-equipped to support TGDY effectively (Martino, 2022). Findings purport that teachers experience feelings of unknowing, incompetence and fear, offering an alternative explanation for non-intervention (Markland et al., 2023; Drury et al., 2023). Such feelings are found to be underpinned by concerns that

their innocuous actions may coalesce with cisnormative systems to worsen the lived experience of TGDY (Martino, 2022). In the UK this is found to be further exasperated by the fear of parental resistance and challenge to the pedagogical and systemic choices staff make with the aim of becoming more inclusive of students' diversifying needs (Markland et al., 2023). Thus, exemplifying a complex power dynamic between the school and family micro systems that directly impact teachers' self-efficacy in inclusive practices (Martino, 2022; Ullman, 2018).

It is therefore considered that perceived non-intervention and inaction may be underpinned by the concept of psychological safety (Newman et al., 2017). This manifests as staff feeling unsafe in the change process and therefore unable to engage in accommodation or inclusivity at any level. Non-intervention is internalised as an unwillingness to be supportive and thus experienced negatively, as active rejection (McGowan et al., 2022). This leads to negative self-perception regarding their trans* gender identity. Such findings exemplify that trans*-inclusion cannot be effective if the development of psychological safety in staff is ignored (Horton, 2023b). Such findings demonstrate the need for systemic mechanisms to provide containment in a proactive manner (Bion, 1962; Burka et al., 2007) that affords staff the tools necessary to engage in change and inclusion more readily (Gavin, 2021).

Noted in the theme ***Knowledge is Power***, participants acknowledge the importance of training in the development of staff understanding and skill set. The UK currently lacks the infrastructure necessary to support staff in developing their knowledge through formal training (Markland et al., 2023). TGDY within the current study share that this is a significant factor in the success of trans*-inclusion and stress the importance of staff accessing training to support their understanding of trans*-specific issues in an iterative manner, to ensure knowledge is up-to-date with developing paradigms in an arena of ever-diversifying trans-inclusive scholarship within complex socio-political climates (Jarpe-Ratner et al., 2023). Findings from the global literature establish an evidence base of such approaches, highlighting the efficacy of formal training in effecting staff feelings of preparedness and containment when embarking on the trans*-inclusion journey (De Pedro et al., 2016; Jarpe-Ratner et al., 2023).

4.1.1.2 *Beliefs and Values*

Methods by which to adapt school climate, structure, and process to be inclusive of TGDY are considered ineffective if the belief systems underpinning practices are not cohesive with the intended outcome. Captured within the themes of ***Accommodation is not Enough, Trans* - a taboo topic*** and ***Fostering Hope***, TGDY acknowledge some wider systemic framings of the trans*-personhood to be underpinned by cisnormative and essentialist beliefs, thus impacting the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

Synthesis of conclusions from the present study within the context of the UK literature base, highlight

how some actions such as persistent misgendering or 'patchy' reactions to transphobic slurs may be symptomatic of underlying values, beliefs, and attitudes of the school climate that are underpinned by cisnormativity (Horton, 2023b; Paechter et al., 2021). This suggests that some staff and pupils may be acting with unconscious biases that make them unknowing of how behaviours may negatively impact TGDY (Phipps & Blackall, 2023). It is argued that this exemplifies how shifts in discourse create climates within which cisgendered people may not notice their participation in, and complicity to, transphobic and hostile school climates, regardless of their intent (Horton & Carlile, 2022; Phipps & Blackall, 2023).

TGDY in the current study are encouraged that the system has propensity to change, however exemplify incongruity in their beliefs that underlying values and attitudes can evolve. Some participants share their views that deeply entrenched societal attitudes, primarily influenced by family micro- and social macro-systems, are static and thus may act as a permanent barrier to effective inclusivity. Whereas others acknowledge the flexibility of attitudes in the presence of new information (Horton, 2023b).

Findings within both UK and global literature support notions that attitudes, values and beliefs are both created and disassembled through conversation (Burr, 2015) elucidating their flexibility and placing importance on the centrality of discourse (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018). Through interactive and ongoing discussions designed to stimulate critical reflection, staff can engage in a process of exploration of their own self, values, and biases (De Pedro et al., 2016). Findings of this nature advocate for the development of practices that embody ongoing

opportunities to build knowledge within a culture of conversation that promotes critical consciousness (De Pedro et al., 2016; Slesaransky-Poe et al., 2013). Engaging in this process in a safe manner can support the development of understanding in how biases and beliefs impact on practice (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018). Processes of this nature can incur reflection, respectful challenge, and productive dissonance that support making biases conscious; encouraging deeper understanding regarding their role in inclusive practices (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018).

4.1.1.3 Relationships

The psychological concept of sense of belonging is consistently demonstrated to be beneficial to the holistic development of TGDY (Mackie et al., 2021); substantially improving the way in which they connect and build relationship with the school community (Allen et al., 2020). Such is found to be particularly important when wider school and societal practices and attitudes towards TGDY are lacking (Airton et al., 2022). The present study argues that the establishment of a sense of belonging is an important yet highly nuanced element of effective trans*-inclusion with UK settings (Gavin, 2021).

Comments noted in the theme ***Primed not to Trust*** are consistent with existing literature pertaining to the importance of establishing key relationships within school settings (McGuire et al., 2010). Within the current study, these primarily focused on relationships with key staff as well as other TGDY within the trans* community (Pampati et al., 2020; Ullman, 2022). Participant reflections facilitated the consideration that staff in ideal trans*-inclusive schools would, very simply, be trustworthy adults (Freedman, 2019). These were further characterised as people with whom TGDY can organically build a bond due to them demonstrating genuine care (Freedman, 2019). Thus, being framed as supportive allows staff to have a markedly positive impact on TGDY lives (McBride, 2021; McGowan et al., 2022). In placing importance on relationships with key staff, findings of this nature substantiate conclusions in the literature noting safe adults as an important building block in feeling connected to the wider school system (Seelman et al., 2015). This further elucidates themes such as 'Containing Relationships throughout the School Community' reported by Gavin

(2021) in which secondary school staff view their primary role in trans*-inclusion as providing opportunity for the function of containment through relationship building (Burka et al., 2007).

Mirroring findings in the global and UK literature, participants noted the value in developing a sense of belonging and community with others in the trans* community through the establishment of 'trans* clubs' or Gender Sexuality Alliances (GSAs). Experienced as affirmative spaces (Fayles, 2018; McBride, 2021), the global literature notes how GSAs provide opportunity to socialise and perform their gender identity in a safe environment (Fayles, 2018) and build a network of 'solidarity' (McBride & Neary, 2021, p.1093).

When applied to the UK context, exploration of this mechanism for support highlights a nuance in comparison to the global literature. Participants in the current study describe the purpose of developing a sense of belonging to both staff and the trans* community as ameliorating the effects 'when something bad happens' (P4). Again, highlighting the prominence of consideration of safety and security on TGDY decision making regarding ideal trans*-inclusive provision. The effectiveness of the relationships noted above in functioning as a tool to increase feelings of safety was experienced as being mediated by the level of trust. Prominent in themes ***Primed not to Trust*** and ***Complex Nature of Change***, interview data exemplifies a sense that participants are distrustful and weary of people and systems around them. Empirical studies suggest the use of clubs such as GSAs should not be used in lieu of development of sense of belonging to the wider school system. However, the present study argues that a perceived lack of safety within UK secondary schools currently necessitates the development of support mechanisms that are reliant on resources within the trans* community as an initial mobilisation of support. The present study therefore does not negate previously held knowledge regarding belonging but offers further nuanced understanding of the previously reviewed literature when applied to the current UK context.

4.1.2 Structure

The SVSC model refers to aspects of internal structures such as curriculum as a key proximal system.

Captured within the subtheme ***Exploring Gender*** and ***Accommodation is Not Enough***, participants noted the lack of trans* visibility within the current iteration of the UK school system (Martino, 2022). They placed importance on facilitating forms of both direct and

indirect learning opportunities that acknowledge and cement the legitimacy of the trans*-personhood within the learning environment (Drury et al., 2023; Leonard, 2020; McGlashan & Fitzpatrick, 2018).

Initially proposing increased use of gender variant language in classroom, participants echoed both global and UK literature that purports this to aid the development of discursive categories through which all adolescents are able to form their gender identity (Freedman, 2019; Leonard, 2020). Participants shared that knowing trans* was an 'option' was supportive of them understanding and articulating their gender identity in an intelligible manner. This was experienced as highly empowering for TGDY in the present study and across the literature; having the ability to name their gender identity ameliorated confusion and supported their mental wellbeing (Leonard, 2020).

Whilst being understanding of the current placement of trans* issues within PSHE, participants' comments within subtheme *Exploring Gender* suggest a new way of approaching gender and sex in an embedded, diverse curriculum delivered through inclusive pedagogy is imperative for the development of all students. Discussed more thoroughly in the subtheme *They're going to ask you so many questions!* participants were hopeful that increased presence and raised awareness of trans* issues within the curriculum would support peers to be more understanding and less hostile towards TGDY.

In a movement away from direct teaching of queer issues in standalone lessons, critical pedagogical approaches suggest the inclusion of media, literature and question posing as powerful tools through which to achieve embedded synthesis of learning opportunities across the curriculum (Freire, 1996; Gavin, 2021; Johnson & Mughal, 2024). Building learning around these stimuli can encourage all learners to consider, question and interrogate taken for granted knowledge regarding trans* issues (Greathouse, 2016) in a way that supports co-construction of new understandings through discussion and exploration (Burr, 2015). Conclusions of this nature support the notion that reconceptualises schools as institutions that provide a space for more than information give, but as a host of education for development (Gadotti & Torres, 2009). Schools are considered hubs of individual development; learning about oneself through identity formation in all its iterations, as well as

learning how to become a citizen of an ever evolving and developing society (Freire, 1996; Johnson & Mughal, 2024). Conceptualisation of schools in this manner facilitates opportunities for meaningful conversation through which knowledge, understanding and disassembly of cisnormative values can occur, supporting the development of informed citizens – TGDY and cisgender - within an inclusive school climate (Gavin, 2021; Markland et al., 2023).

Barriers to effective curriculum development and implementation were raised throughout review of the literature. A neo-liberal focus on the ‘datafication’ of education was evidenced to subsume staff motivation to engage in such change in pedagogy, with social justice issues being lost in the drive towards ‘performance-driven’ goals (Drury et al., 2023, p. 1127; Johnson & Mughal, 2024, p. 3). It is considered that an approach of this nature supports the sharing of trans* perspective, without burdening teachers to provide answers or individual TGDY to share their narrative – a notion participants held in great importance throughout the subtheme ***They're going to ask you so many questions!*** Dialogic inquiry illuminates the bi-directional nature of learning through which all stakeholders can learn (Freire, 1996; Meyer & Leonardi, 2018); engaging in open and curious conversation to explore, challenge and embed the essence of inclusive education as a collective. This shifts responsibility and onus of trans* inclusion from TGDY or teachers and creates a sense of societal agency (Davy & Cordoba, 2020; Hillier et al., 2020) within which all members of the school community are accountable.

Lack of engagement in developing inclusive curricula for fear of reprisal from parents and wider communities is considered an additional barrier to inclusive practice. Parents may oppose the teaching of trans*-issues for a number of reasons; religious affiliation (Meyer et al., 2016) or students’ age (Frohard-Dourlent, 2018). Implementation of a trans*-inclusive curriculum therefore raises the importance in considering methods of effective mesosystemic communication (Ullman, 2018). Open communication between school leaders and parent/carers is integral; with emphasis on carefully curated communication that prioritises sharing of information in a clear way (Ullman, 2018). This aims to foster an ethos of equity and diversity wherein staff are enabled to widen the boundaries of inclusive practices without fear of reprisal (Ullman, 2018). This helps staff feel supported through having leadership and

policy that supports them and protects them in their actions (Gavin, 2021; Martino et al., 2022). Approaches of this nature exemplify how embracing meaningful change at a systemic level fosters a school climate that holds potential to permeate via a 'cultural flow' of values from within the school system to wider community systems (Ullman, 2018, p. 505).

4.1.3 Process

In relation to SVSC, process considers the interaction between instructional praxis and physical environment with further acknowledgment of how these are both influenced and implemented by effective leadership (Rudasill et al., 2018).

Within the theme '**Challenging Entrenched Cisnormativity**', participants explored the real-life applications of trans*-inclusivity in day-to-day practice. Of particular concern to participants was the problematic nature of cisnormative principles. Reflections highlighted participants' aspiration for schools to dismantle the cisnormative nature of praxis through eradicating the erroneous use of gender as an organising structure. This was exemplified by participants reporting that seemingly benign actions of categorising young people by gender can have distressing and detrimental impacts on their personhood (McBride, 2021). Findings of this nature demonstrate how assimilating TGDY within wider systems underpinned by cisnormativity can be detrimental to their wellbeing and sense of identity as such praxis cumulates in TGDY experiencing insecurities and a 'painful sense of not knowing oneself' (Austin, 2016; McBride & Neary, 2021, p. 1102). In eradicating the cisnormative use of gender as an organising system, participants hope for a widely felt impact of change at a process level; facilitating *all* students' exploration and expression of their identity in a meaningful and safe manner (McBride & Schubotz, 2017). Elucidating previous empirical research, notions of this nature encompass how lessened pressures for gender conformity may positively support whole-school wellbeing (Vantieghem & Van Houtte, 2020). Evidenced within subtheme '**It's Not Just Something Some Weird Kid Is Doing**', participants acknowledge this to involve creating new practices that challenge the pathologisation of TGDY and create a school culture and climate in which diversity and variance are normalised (Martino et al., 2022; depicted in Figure 4).

In a movement away from individual accommodation, developing a system in which cisnorms are no longer reproduced, identifies a shift in the conceptualisation of underpinning

structures to support affirmative actions. Thus, depicting a need for balance between both first and second order change: visible, practical actions sustained by transformational reconceptualization of inclusion (Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2017; Connor & Atkinson, 2022; Horton, 2023b). Such reconceptualization was captured within the subtheme **'Complex Nature of Change'**, with participants exemplifying their understanding of trans*-inclusion as a complex process within which strategic planning is a key consideration in promoting lasting change towards their ideal trans*-inclusive school (Leonardi & Staley, 2020). When considered in response to participant reflections, the role of policy is highlighted as a central tenet in the way process can be effectively developed and managed (Meyer et al., 2022; Ullman, 2022).

Global literature depicts that a lack of policy supporting trans*-inclusivity is considered by stakeholders to be a powerful recognition of the lack of support for this community (Farley & Leonardi, 2021). However, parents feel that tokenistic policies are just as negligent as they reinforce the notion that schools are doing 'enough' to accommodate their children without making any effective or lasting changes (Farley & Leonardi, 2021). It is considered highly problematic to encourage policy discourse based solely on logics of assimilation and placing focus on the 'allegory of the bathroom' to formulate policy (Farley & Leonardi, 2021; Martino et al., 2022) as this is proposed to be reductionistic and an oversimplification of both proximal and distal systemic issues leading to unsustainable changes (Meyer et al., 2022; Ullman, 2018). This praxis creates a fallacy that accommodation of TGDY is not only appropriate but aspirational for schools (Farley & Leonardi, 2021; Horton, 2020).

In elucidation of such findings participant comments acknowledge collaboration to be integral for meaningful change policies to be enacted; establishing trans*-emancipatory practice in which TGDY hold active roles in the change process towards inclusivity (DuBois & Losoff, 2015; Horton & Carlile, 2022; Johnson & Mughal, 2024). Such approaches aim to induce equity across school systems by employing a conceptual shift in the power differentials; developing empowerment whilst providing respectful challenge to oppressive practices (Horton & Carlile, 2022; Johnson & Mughal, 2024). As noted in subtheme **'Trans* - a taboo topic'** such practice must be built on trusting relationships between key stakeholders involved, through which valuable discussions can be held in a way that does not burden TGDY to 'lead the way in solving a problem they did not create' (Meyer et al., 2022) but generate co-construction and

division of responsibility across the school community. In developing community agency of this nature, practices empower young people to have active roles in effecting their environment and their future (Hillier et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2016; Leonard, 2020).

Although challenge and discomfort are usual elements of this change work (Johnson & Mughal, 2024) TGDY should not be exposed to discrimination in such settings. This highlights a strategic role for leaders in curating teams (Mangin, 2020). Participants acknowledged the importance of them not being afforded privilege over their cisgender peers. Successful engagement in such shifts therefore requires a whole school readiness for change in which all students are constructed as partners; redefining power differentials to embrace equity between all stakeholders (Freire, 1996; Horton & Carlile, 2022).

4.2 Implications for Educational Psychology (EP)

Typical core functions of EP work include five key domains; assessment, intervention, training, research, and policy development (Scottish Executive, 2002) to support the school experience of all young people. This involves working at individual, group, and systemic levels. As evidenced within the present study, and the application of the SVSC of trans*-inclusion, the nature of change involved in developing trans*-inclusion is systemic in nature. It is therefore considered that EPs may be well placed to engage in the systemic change process by being alongside schools in their training and policy development.

4.2.1 Training

Elucidated by the global and UK literature, participant reflections on the need for *all* staff to develop an increased knowledge and understanding of trans*-inclusion highlight the need for professional development across UK secondary schools (Markland et al., 2023). In working closely with staff EPs are well placed to engage schools in this process, utilising their skills of training and development to support knowledge and skill acquisition amongst staff groups. Stimuli such as that depicted in Figure 5 may be a useful tool from which to build accessible and practical training for all staff. Written as synthesis of participant reflections and empirical findings from across the literature, training using such stimulus is aimed to generate enhanced knowledge and awareness of trans* issues. It is hoped that this would lead to staff feeling confident to support provision development in an informed and reasoned manner.

4.2.2 Policy and Curriculum Development

In engaging their knowledge of the change process, implementation, as well as important information pertaining to policy content, EPs are considered to have appropriate skillset to support schools in robust policy development and effective implementation. It is considered important for this role to be alongside key stakeholders; collaborating and working ‘with’ them as opposed to imposing change on them in order to build collective agency in the change process from within the system itself (Davy & Cordoba, 2020; Freire, 1996).

Additionally, EPs would be required to be mindful of a system’s readiness to change (Gavin, 2021). Here EPs can offer a unique contribution to consider the positioning of stakeholders

through assuming the role of critical friend for schools who are developing trans*-inclusive policies and curricula (Mat Noor & Shafee, 2021). A critical friend provides space in which to explore and respectfully challenge practices. Thus, providing a marrying of critique and support; developing the quality and depth of conversation through critical questioning in order to move understanding forward. In light of the above discussion this is considered an important role for which EPs are well placed. It is considered that models such as Social GRRRAACCEEESSS framework (Burnham, 1993) and peer supervision may provide a structure through which to safely explore elements of identity and bias that may impact practices (Bion, 1961). Thus, facilitating understanding of oneself, their practice and development of psychological safety through which to engage in the change process (Newman et al., 2017). Such a role does not aim to force a change in viewpoint of stakeholders but support their development of cognisant thought regarding their values and biases in a containing manner (Iszatt-White & Ralph, 2016).

4.2.3 Ethics in Practice and Research

It is considered important that EPs practice ethically when engaging with issues of trans*-inclusion. The global and UK literature provide a narrative of a quickly evolving and developing field. It is therefore considered imperative that EPs supporting TGDY directly or indirectly access continued professional development. This will aim to support EPs in staying cognisant to contemporary approaches, guidance, debates, and developments in practice to insure they are working within their level of competencies in an informed, reasoned and ethical manner (British Psychological Society Ethics Committee, 2021; Gameson & Rhydderch, 2017; Health Care Professional Council, 2016).

As applied psychologists, EPs engage in research activities as a core pillar of their practice (Topping & Lauchlan, 2013) both in their work with schools and at an institutional level. Additional implications for EP practice therefore stem from learnings from the research process itself. As noted throughout Part 1 and 2, few studies in the UK support the facilitation of TGDY voice. Guided by the methodological paradigm, a central tenet of decision-making throughout the current research project was the underpinning principle of safety. Working to redistribute power to support a sense of safety and increased empowerment whilst resisting

counterproductive biases, enabled increased participant recruitment and feelings of security in the research process. Ultimately supporting the facilitation of TGDY voice in the research field. EPs may therefore consider the application of safety in a respectful, measured and creative manner that challenges biases to support the engagement of groups whose voice may seldom be represented in research, such as TGDY. Further discussion of this is provided in Part 3.

Important Components of the Ideal Trans*-Inclusive School

As noted by Trans* Participants

First Order Changes – What People Do

- Gender-neutral toilets available to all students
- Changing facilities that provide increased privacy
- Clear processes of confidentiality that are upheld by staff
- All adults trained to understand queer/trans* rights and issues
- Rights-based policies and procedures that are reviewed regularly
- Open expression of gender by all adults
- Gender-neutral practices in classrooms such as when needed to split classes
- Teaching of inclusive curricula to all students by staff and designated adults from within the community
- Spaces such as Trans* clubs, where TGDY can come together to feel safe
- Opportunity to express and perform gender through relaxed uniform policies that are gender-neutral
- Adults to follow through when change is promised
- Activities and visible displays of diversity that celebrate, and encourage a sense of pride within, the TGDY community
- Reduction of bullying and transphobia – increased staff awareness so they can respond quickly and appropriately to effectively stop any bullying that does occur
- TGDY afforded a voice whilst being protected from transphobia and gender-critical views when appropriate
- Flexible administration systems so TGDY can change names/pronouns
- Proactive systems that allow for reliable and consistent provision without needing to ask/discuss access to provision

Second Order Changes – How People Think / Feel

- ALL students feel safe. Establishing schools wherein TGDY have a sense of physical and psychological safety is the main priority
- Gender diversity to be normalised and accepted
- An assumption is held by all that diversity is present everywhere
- Trusting relationships with staff that provide containment
- Normalisation of gender diversity - Encouragement and opportunity to explore identity in a setting without gender pressures
- Increased awareness and acceptance of TGDY and trans*-specific issues

Figure 5. Components of Trans*-Inclusive Schools

4.3 Strengths, Limitations and Future Research

The researcher notes areas strengths and limitations that are important for the reader to consider in their evaluation of the current research.

- The researcher formulated a recruitment and data gathering procedure that limited the requirement for superfluous demographic information being collected. This was limited to that necessary to obtain informed consent and be respectful in addressing the participant by their chosen gendered pronoun and name. This worked to limit possibility of patchwork identification; facilitating the prioritisation of confidentiality and anonymity. However, inclusion of additional demographic characteristics may have provided additional thick description of participants and have been beneficial to the reader in establishing transferability; applicability of the research conclusions to their context/setting (Kuper et al., 2008).
- The research procedure offered multiple options of engagement for participants, notably via 1:1 interview or in creating a focus group with known friends/allies. Additionally, all data gathering was conducted online via MS Teams, where participants could choose their camera settings (on/off). The options offered measures to support feelings of safety within the interview context as well as confidentiality for TGDY. Although there are inherent limitations to conducting interviews online (Robson & McCartan, 2016), it is considered that this increased accessibility to the project by providing agency and autonomy in TGDY's manner of participation.
- Although all TGDY met inclusion criteria, they may not be considered a homogenous participant group. Due to limited scope of the study the use of trans* as an umbrella term was adopted; encompassing different gender diverse identities. Research suggests that binary and non-binary TGDY experience social settings such as schools differently (e.g., (Paechter et al., 2021)) and therefore this should be held in mind when considering the transferability of conclusions of this study.
- The research was formulated using a social constructionist, critical and Foucauldian lens. Amalgamation of the three approaches facilitated a unique perspective. Framing data collected from participants in this manner supports conclusions pertaining to the effective implementation of trans*-inclusion by moving away from approaches that pathologised TGDY and acknowledging power, hierarchy and wider systemic influences on this process.

In order to further develop understanding in this area, future research may wish to explore the application of SVSC of Trans*-Inclusion in the design and implementation of trans*-inclusive practices. Due to the systemic nature of factors proposed by this model, it is considered important to facilitate reflections of key stakeholders in relation to its use. Participant reflections note the specific roles of leaders and staff as active agents within the

change process towards inclusive practice. It is therefore suggested that future research engages these stakeholders in participatory research, such as action research, through which thoughts, facilitators, barriers and additional factors to consider in implementation can be explored. This may better inform the applicability of the model within the context of schools.

5.0 Conclusion

The current study offers a unique exploration of TGDY views and ideas pertaining to the development of trans*-inclusivity and factors that may affect this occurring. The research paradigm facilitated the conceptualisation of many practical and creative elements of trans*-inclusion that were considered highly important to TGDY within the study. These are noted in Figure 4 for additional clarity. Participants note the highly impactful nature of intersecting meso-, macro- and chrono-systemic factors on the development of trans*-inclusive practices. These are evident across the four main themes Dis/Empowering the Trans* Voice; Challenging Entrenched Cisnormativity; Knowledge as Power; Bigger than Schools. Exploration of these highlights that without change at a systemic level, sustained inclusion and equity may not be achieved. It is therefore considered that in applying the SVSC model of trans*-inclusivity, practitioners can readily consider factors pertaining to climate, structure, and process in the conceptualisation of parameters of trans*-inclusion and the way in which this may effectively be implemented. The researcher considers that through embracing critical pedagogies, practitioners may support such development through the exploration of social hierarchies in the co-construction of knowledge, with students acting as active partners in the journey towards trans*-inclusion. Thus, raising important implications for the way in which trans*-inclusion is approached from both individual practitioner and wider systemic levels.

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'What should the Cis-tem look like?'

A Critical Thematic Analysis Investigating the Views of Young
People and their Ideal Trans*-Inclusive School'

Part 3: Critical Appraisal

7056 words

1.0 Overview

The current critical appraisal presents a narrative review of my research journey and the bidirectional nature of impact and influence between the research and myself as a researcher (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). To provide clarity to the reader, the review is written with the aim of encapsulating the reflective and reflexive manner of key decision making over time. To do so I will explore the critical account of the research practitioner and contribution to knowledge. I have chosen to complete this appraisal within the first person (Braun & Clarke, 2022b); to capture the active role I as a researcher had on the project (Willig & Rogers, 2017, p. 35) and acknowledge the 'inseparable' (Tang & John, 1999, p. 33) nature of the self and knowledge generated about my own, subjective research experience.

2.0 Critical account of the research practitioner

2.1 Development of the Research Topic

In order to fully explain the development of my research topic, it is considered important to explore my experiences, roles and knowledge construction that led me to choosing this area of study. Throughout my career I have always considered the impact of societal issues, the context in which we live, and how this shapes our experiences of the world. To that end, when applying my psychological knowledge, I firmly engage with the paradigm of systemic change and its potential to incur positive impact on human experience. As my understanding of psychology has evolved, this more specifically became a belief that psychology could have a positive impact in supporting the development of adaptable school systems and climates that support all young people to be the best they can be (Dowling & Osborne, 1994). Thus, I knew that I wanted to conduct a study that aligned with these beliefs – but was unsure of the particular topic.

A specific interest in supporting trans* and gender diverse youth (TGDY) began during my tenure as a secondary school teacher in 2015. In supporting a number of TGDY in my practice, I began questioning the best way to support them effectively; particularly in regard to what could (or could not) be adapted, which guidance should be followed and how the system could support and educate TGDY in an inclusive manner. Resulting in feelings of conscious

incompetence (Sedgwick, 2019), this experience began my interest in equity and social justice issues within the education system through which I strived to improve my understanding and enact meaningful change for minority groups in education.

My views regarding the role of psychology in this field became more concrete throughout my time as an assistant psychologist, and then further on the doctoral training course. Through engaging in consultation, Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) supervision and whole school development plans, I noted an increasing presence in discourse surrounding TGDY and best practices to support them to thrive, coupled with perceived increasing levels of caution from school and local authority staff. To develop my understanding of the role of psychology, I regularly attended a working party aiming to explore research and dissemination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual (LGBTQIA+) issues within the educational psychology community. Through this, I was able to share ideas and learning experiences with lead practitioners. Attending this group helped to solidify my enthusiasm for this area of study through broadening my understanding of the possible impact that the application of psychology at individual, group, and system levels, could have on the lived experience of TGDY in schools.

I initially was cautious of choosing a research topic that I had previously experienced as a teacher. I sat with the discomfort of not knowing whether this was the right decision for my thesis. I considered the ongoing balancing act between choosing a topic that would provide me with drive necessary to get through the rollercoaster of a thesis, whilst also keeping myself safe during the process. I am very glad that I held on to this and followed a topic I was passionate about. This enabled me to stay driven and determined, even enjoying the process, despite being met with trials and tricky situations to maneuverer around at various stages. This thesis is therefore a reflection of my genuine interest in this area and how educational psychology may have potential to facilitate positive change in a meaningful manner to support all young people from diverse groups, including TGDY.

2.2 Review of the literature

Before the doctoral course, I held very little prior experience and knowledge regarding the nuance of research, especially the skills needed to conduct and write a literature review.

information in a meaningful way. I drew on supervision to explore the purpose and value of the literature review within the wider context of the whole thesis. This involved devising a literature review question to provide clarity in the purpose of the review – providing insight into the state of knowledge regarding UK trans*-inclusive practices. This guided thinking and decision making when developing inclusion and exclusion criteria, to ensure the search was appropriately situated within the intended context of trans* literature (Siddaway et al., 2019).

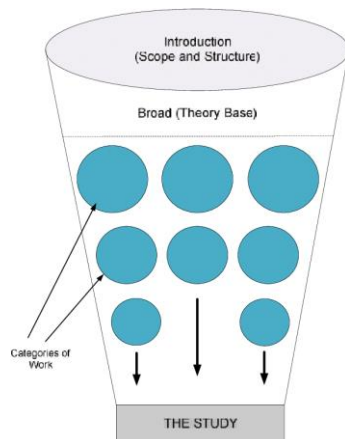


Figure 7 - Funnel Method - Hofstee (2006)

Decisions of this nature were informed by learnings from models such as the funnel method of literature review structure as presented by Hofstee (2006; See Figure 7). This supported a rationale for two distinct approaches (Boland et al., 2017). Firstly, scoping the international literature to provide a nuanced outline of the global context and current knowledge pertaining to the role of psychology, before then becoming more specific and focused on the contemporary practices within the UK (Hofstee, 2006).

Given the different focuses I chose to present the review in distinct sections (Boland et al., 2017). Adopting a hybrid approach, incorporating both narrative and systematic elements in a clear and curated manner allowed for a compelling yet efficient methodology (Turnbull et al., 2023). The narrative element provided an opportunity to explore and synthesise a large amount of literature, supporting a nuanced understanding of the use of psychology across the global landscape. Wherein the systematic element afforded the review added clarity, robustness and quality assurance when selecting UK research papers for the review. This was not only important for providing transparency for the reader but provided a clear trajectory to the research questions. I feel that using this approach has further developed my literature review not just from an organisational view but in supporting me to develop a more structured argument.

2.2.2 Quality Appraisal

Moving through the literature review process, I drew on learning from the doctoral course to inform decision making regarding quality appraisal. The aim of the review was not to consider papers based on hierarchy of quality, for example privileging study based on design (Braun &

Clarke, 2013). However, using a quality appraisal tool allowed for consistency of approach in choosing literature that was clear to the reader, increasing accountability of my choices as a researcher (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme UK, 2023). I chose to utilise CASP (2023); a tool with which I had grown familiar through its use in other projects. I felt that this tool offered an appropriate amount of questioning to determine appropriate studies without providing me with a 'truth' of what constitutes good/bad in a strict and dichotomous manner. In addition, I utilised the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT). This supported the inclusion of studies with mixed methodological approaches within the review. In particular, the MMAT developed my appraisal technique to include the nuanced elements of quantitative of research studies, providing detailed questions and prompts through which to explore the data presented. Both these tools allowed me to use the hints to support deep consideration of papers in an informed, clear and consistent manner regardless of methodological underpinnings. Details of this process are documented in Appendix B.

2.3 Philosophical Underpinnings

In knowing this would underpin all my decision making henceforth, I spent much time researching, consulting colleagues, and accessing supervision to reflect on my philosophical paradigm and reflexively consider the impact of this on the research (McSweeney, 2021). I was aware that my philosophical positioning would provide a map to guide the research journey and therefore be impactful on all research activities including the literature review (Teherani et al., 2015). To ensure clarity for the reader, I therefore made an intentional choice to include a short section regarding this within Part 1, that was later explored in more detail in Part 2.

2.3.1 Ontology

I strongly believe that one of the biggest changes I have undertaken throughout the doctorate course is in regard to my ontology. Exploration of my own ontological stance has been an iterative process over my academic career (Brown & Dueñas, 2020). This was influenced heavily by the manner in which I was taught, with my master's and doctoral courses opening up new possibilities that undergraduate had not afforded me (Gough & Lyons, 2016).

Within the context of research, I very much consider myself, what Kvale (2012) would call, a 'traveller' – wandering freely through a landscape to be explored through conversation

alongside people, without agenda or a 'map'. Thus, providing opportunity for new meaning to unfold (Kvale, 2012). Braun and Clark further capture this in their discussion that qualitative research can be underpinned and motivated by a drive for understanding and meaning; not truth (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This is differentiated from a 'miner' for whom research is an opportunity to mine for, and uncover, particular information in a pursuit for an objective truth (Kvale, 2012). I was driven to use a philosophical underpinning that acknowledged my belief that knowledge is created and not discovered – and thus looked to relativism (Amat, 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2013) to provide a philosophical culture within which I could explore the landscape of trans*inclusivity.

2.3.2 Epistemology

My initial thought when considering the most appropriate epistemological stance was 'if I am a woman studying gender diversity, must/should I take the position of feminism? Can I take any other stance?'. I am thankful that I did not settle for this being a 'good enough' decision and investigated epistemologies and their positionality on gender more thoroughly as there is much nuance to be captured in the different philosophies available.

I considered how the notion of feminism acknowledges the diversification of womanhood and therefore an evolving construction of gender over time and context. Through my research diary and activities such as Social Graces (Burnham, 1993), I explored what gender meant to me. In doing so I identified my belief in a post-structural critique of gender (Burr, 2015) whilst also considering my values of gender equity and the distribution of power between all genders. Investigation and exploration of epistemological stances regarding gender diversity led me to an article by Phillips (2023) noting a convergence of three epistemologies; social constructionism, critical psychology, and Foucauldian understandings. Through careful consideration and access to supervision space, I gained understanding of how these provided a link between gender (and other) identities, marginalisation, and power relations within society. Phillips offered a stance that allowed for 'inclusive exploration of diverse perspectives and versions of reality' whilst providing a tool through which to 'foster a nuanced comprehension of social phenomena' (Phillips, 2023). This provided me with a eureka moment in making my beliefs intelligible. Providing me with the lens and language through which to express my thoughts regarding gender, in a manner informed by psychology.

2.4 Methodology

2.4.1 Ethics

As detailed in the prominence of safety throughout Part 2, I hold ethical considerations at the forefront of my practice, with research being no different. As the journey of this research project unfolded, so too did the ethical challenge and barriers to conducting research of this nature. Due to their iterative nature, reflections regarding the ethical considerations taken are noted throughout the next section of the appraisal, providing a golden thread for contemplation.

2.4.2 Participant Selection and Recruitment

2.4.2.1 Who to travel with?

When I first considered exploring trans*-inclusion in secondary schools I battled with who might be considered the most appropriate stakeholders with whom to travel and explore the landscape of trans*inclusivity with. I held it important to centralise the voice of those most effected by the ongoing process and debates around developing trans*-inclusive practices in schools. This led me to consider parent/carers, school leaders and TGDY themselves.

In planning, I was drawn to the concept of social relevance – leading me to really consider *why this project? Why now?* In thinking about the *so what* of the research, I gained clarity in the participant group to focus on in order to ensure the purposeful nature of the knowledge generated from the study within the place and time it was being carried out (Gough et al., 2003). I therefore decided to consider the voice of TGDY more deeply.

To solidify my developing rationale, I again attended the LGBTQIA+ interest group/working party group. Here I noted reflections regarding the absence of pupil voice within the UK evidence base; a reflection I shared after conducting the initial review of the literature. The literature within my initial search utilised very few UK data sets that involved TGDY, with most affording a voice to parents and leaders. Additionally, when facilitating the voice of TGDY, researchers tended to facilitate a telling of the trans* narrative, focusing on the negative lived experiences. This led me to consider how the literature was guiding me to generate literature to add to the current tapestry of knowledge by not only facilitating the voice of TGDY in a

meaningful manner but doing so utilising a different lens that was not burdensome. Thus, providing a robust rationale for my choice of participants.

The age range of these participants was then considered, and I turned to the British Psychological Society Code for Human Research Ethics (Oates et al., 2021) for additional guidance. It was considered that hosting young adults aged 16-25 would ensure they had recent and therefore relevant experience of the UK secondary education system. This age range was considered to provide agency when deciding whether to take part as it afforded TGDY the opportunity of primary consent (Lyons & Thomas, 2024), whilst also being deemed facilitative for those TGDY who may wish to take part but are not yet 'out' in the home setting.

2.4.2.2 An Evolving Recruitment Strategy

The initial strategy situated the study within Wales, drawing on charities and organisations as a source of gatekeepers through which to gain access to participants in a safe and ethical manner. In receiving very few positive responses from charities and support groups, I looked to broaden the recruitment strategy and thus the accessibility of the study. This was a decision that weighed on me heavily. I had started off holding contextualism, and specifically the Welsh context, at the heart of the project in order to design a study that would generate meaningful information for the context within which I live and work. In widening the recruitment strategy, I was aware that I would lose this in lieu of gaining participants – which in the end was something I was required to do out of necessity.

In discussion with colleagues at different institutions, I gained supervision in the additional mechanisms through which recruitment might be more fruitful. A multi-faceted strategy was designed in which the method of recruitment and the data collection procedure (see 2.4.3 for more details) was adapted. This involved distributing gatekeeper letters to all colleges and universities in the UK as well as publicising the study on social media.

2.4.2.3 Diminished Accessibility

Given the intended population, I utilised guidance from Vincent (2018) and Rosenberg and Tilley (2021) to construct forward-facing documents that were not only accessible but respectful of potential participants. Throughout the iterative process of gaining ethical consent at different stages of the study, direction was given by the Cardiff University school

research ethics committee (SREC) to add additional points to afford prospective participants additional clarity, particularly around GDPR and data storage. Suggested wording was also provided. Some of this was procedural and other aspects were due to participants being categorised as vulnerable.

I willingly utilised this wording as I had become worried that ethical approval was a pipe dream and would not be granted. I now recognise this decision as rash. The wording was, what I would consider, jargonistic. Safeguarding young people is always at the forefront of my practice. However, I wonder how the consequence of conceptualising TGDY as vulnerable and thus a 'belt and braces' approach in the amount of language provided on forms may have negatively affected the accessibility of the documentation involved in the project. For example, the additionality of legal jargon in relation to GDPR that is included in the majority of front facing documents.

I believe there to be potential for pieces of work to construct protocols for ethical research through which to strike a balance between ensuring the safeguarding of all participants whilst also increasing accessibility of the documentation provided to interviewees.

2.4.3 Reflections on Data Collection Design and Procedure

From the outset, I considered the need for an alternative method to holding 1:1 interviews with the sole purpose of exploring TGDYs' experiences of secondary school. Not only might this simply replicate previous studies and theses, but I felt that an approach of this nature may run the risk of conflating individual experience with a within person, not societal and systemic, issue. To supplement this, and in light of findings that TGDY find explaining and supporting acquisition of knowledge in cisgender adults a burden, I sat with the concept of being 'burdensome' for some time (Frohard-Dourlent, 2018).

Through reading and supervision, I considered multiple lenses and landed on a solution focused approach (Morgan, 2016). This provided a lens through which to structure questions in a forward-thinking way, looking for possibility and consideration of ideals. I had received a large amount of training in Solution Focused Brief Therapy during my placements and felt that I was within my competencies in utilising such style of questioning. I considered this would

not only support the research questions in a meaningful way, but additionally provide a protective mechanism in focusing the conversation on moving forward rather than on potential negative and harmful reflections of retelling life experiences. Thus, providing an ethically informed rationale for using solution focused questioning as the basis of the interview schedule.

The primary design involved utilising an in-person focus group method of data collection. Initially, this method was chosen over alternatives such as individual interviews, as they are evidenced to be effective in reaching and including the voices of minority groups. This may be due to the opportunity they offer, through mediated dialogue, to discuss important issues with 'like' individuals (Liamputtong, 2011). It also reduces the demand exerted on participants by the researcher inherent in a 1:1 setting (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014), by discussing topics in a more naturalistic, dialogic context with peers (Wellings et al., 2000).

My approach however, adapted over time, as the process of recruitment developed (noted in 2.4.2). In consulting with LGBT/Trans* charities and other researchers within this field, the current climate within the trans/gender diverse community in the UK is understood to be difficult due to the very public and dichotomous debate surround trans* rights (Zanghelleni, 2020), especially in schools (Horton & Carlile, 2022). The researcher therefore strived to make accommodations within the research design e.g., supporting the use of snowball sampling, invitation to include allies/friends and extending the method to include 1:1 interview. Such diversification in methods aimed to facilitate accommodation for all participants and provide a safe and secure environment in which the potential participants could take part and share their views (Ehlinger et al., 2022; Horton & Carlile, 2022) Dyadic interviews and interviews were offered online via Teams. Not only did this extend the geographical range within which the study could be conducted, widening the accessibility within the gender diverse community, it also provided an additional sense of control, empowerment and anonymity within a population which may require this for potential participation to feel safe (Ehlinger et al., 2022), as participants could chose to have their cameras on or off (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

At the time I believed that the additional mechanism of data gathering via a dyadic interview would solely involve a different forum through which to gather information. Upon reflection, I believe a more thorough reconsideration of the interview schedule would have been appropriate to make the questions more conducive to, and facilitatory of, group discussion.

When considering the data that was generated from the dyadic interview in relation to the RQ, I feel that more creativity in developing the questions may have led to more conversation and co-construction of joint understanding (Jay, 1993).

Although I acted ethically and considerately throughout all aspects of the research, a potential gatekeeper raised questions regarding the project that were solely based on SREC privacy processes. These were then considered at a higher institutional level. Upon reflection I now understand that this resulted in my being hyper-cautious in my questioning. However, on reflection of participant comments I wonder if what I perceived as caution may have been received as respect? In not leading the conversation and allowing naturalistic dialogic flow, participants reflected that I did not ask pointed questions but 'we had a really good conversation'. I held this deeply as I felt it epitomised my goal of being a traveller in my journey through this project, and not mining TGDY for specific information.

Exploring their thoughts and reflections alongside such enthusiastic TGDY felt like a privilege and an experience I thoroughly enjoyed.

2.4.4 Reflections on Data Analysis

When choosing the appropriate analytic strategy, I put great consideration into the most appropriate approach (See Figure 8).

Analytic Approach	Pros	Cons
Reflexive Thematic Analysis	Flexible approach Acknowledges my stance and experience	Interpretation of data through researcher held lens that does not consider idiographic nature of comments
Grounded Theory	Findings are very tightly connected to the data	Time bound process
IPA	In-depth and across group analysis underpinned by idiographic lens	Not aiming to afford primary focus to the experience of being trans* Might lose systemic nature of change
Critical Thematic Analysis (CTA)	Appropriate for interviews and groups Underpinned by critical and Foucauldian psychologies Researcher is an active agent in knowledge production	Little written guidance Not replicable by others – a different researcher would have a different interpretation of the data
Critical Discourse Analysis	Critical stance is embedded throughout	My limited knowledge of linguistics Difficult to transfer to

Figure 8 - Considered Data Analysis Approaches

From consideration of the above, I considered it appropriate to use the flexible foundational method of thematic analysis. Described as an approach that can capture the creativity and reflexivity of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2022a), I initially considered this a flexible approach that was well suited to my project. I had utilised thematic analysis in my previous research projects and had therefore gained a thorough understanding and familiarisation of its process. In consideration of my underpinning philosophies, I opted for a critical rather than reflexive analytic tool. CTA is described by Lawless and Chen as “systematically identifying shared phenomena among participants, as well as power relations, status-based hierarchies, and larger ideologies” (Lawless & Chen, 2019, p. 104). Given my underpinning epistemologies

as well as the systemic and societal aspects of trans*-inclusion highlighted in the literature, I felt it imperative to utilise a tool that would support me in exploring these effectively.

I thoroughly enjoyed using CTA. Although it was daunting having not engaged in this analytic method before, I felt that it provided a nuanced lens by which to analyse the data. I found the integrated nature of ideology and social hierarchies to increase the depth of analysis it afforded me. The embedded nature of these within the analysis itself sustained a more robust process in which concepts of this nature were not considered ad-hoc but as a central tenet of analysis, supporting a more thorough discussion of issues of power and hierarchy. Despite the relative downfalls noted above, CTA provided an opportunity for me as the researcher to be an active agent in knowledge production, supporting the applicability of the analysis to the RQs (Braun & Clarke, 2022b). Although CTA provided a clear method by which to analyse the data, Open and Closed coding proved difficult to depict due to lack of guidance regarding

Travel leaves you speechless, then turns you into a
storyteller

- IBN Battuta (in Dunn, 2012)

presentation of results. Due to the lack of instruction, I drew on my learnings from other thematic derivatives and created a thematic map by which to depict the complexity of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022b). Should I engage in this approach again, I would work to more closely consider the presentation of the results to improve the quality of the diagram in a way that is informed by CTA.

When reflecting on the journey I had taken, I came across a famous quote by IBN Battuta. The seminal quote struck me as providing a powerful description of my research journey and the want to tell the stories of the participants – a task I sometimes found overwhelming when sitting with the transcribed data. Responsibility to share the *right* story was negated by grounding myself in my philosophical choices as well as drawing on the concept of interpretation and embracing the possibility that this supports (Ho et al., 2017). This is beautifully captured in by Braun and Clarke (2013) who suggest that analysis is like quilting. Putting together pieces of material in a ‘particular pattern to tell a particular story’, that is personal to the researchers conducting the analysis.

2.4.5 Effects of Positioning

2.4.5.1 A Gendered Outsider

Throughout this journey I became very aware that research does not happen in a vacuum and that wider chrono and macro systemic changes will impact the research journey in unsuspecting ways (Rudasill et al., 2018). Choosing to work alongside a participant group at the centre of very public and political debate left me extremely worried that I was not going to recruit any participants. This worry was exasperated by an ongoing narrative in the media regarding UK government policy, strategy and guidelines that were published at various points during my ethics, recruitment and data gathering processes.

Diary Extract – I've sent out so many emails to charities and groups throughout the whole of July and August, but I have received 0 replies from gatekeepers. Have they opened it? Shared the study without replying? Why am I not getting any responses?

- *Wrong people?*
- *Not enough people?*
- *Wrong time of year?*
- *Something bigger?*

In discussion with a leading researcher in this area, I learned that charities and organisations to support trans* and LGBTQIA+ people had become more difficult to reach having 'shut their doors' to outsiders. I considered how this may be reflective of the lack of trust in the researcher relationship and whether this was something that through my practice, I could have built and developed, or whether this was symptomatic of wider systemic issues?

Soon after, I received a reply from a charity willing to advertise the study, if I myself identified as trans*. I noted being positioned as a gendered outsider by a community wherein trust was not always a commodity they were afforded (Johnston, 2018). To trust that I, as a straight, cisgender woman, was genuinely conducting research that was in determination of improving the lived experience of TGDY, and not underpinned by a hidden agenda, was a big ask (Johnston, 2018). This created an internal tension for me as a researcher, as I noted my privilege in this situation. I wanted to conduct this research as I believed it important,

however, in designing this study I had assumed the community would be willing to let me in. Here, the concept of being an outsider researcher went deeper than misinterpretation of data or misunderstandings in language (Levy, 2013) but was deep rooted in the impact of power and positionality that I, as one lone researcher, felt impossible to reconcile. As noted in Part 2, the concept of physical and psychological safety was paramount throughout the project. I worked hard to establish procedural protocols that established safety in a way that empowered participants and resisted counterproductive biases with the aim of facilitating their participation.

2.4.5.2 Brave

Throughout the research journey, I ventured to discuss the project through supervision with colleagues. Within these spaces I was positioned multiple times as 'brave' for exploring the topic of transgenderism in schools. Paired with my ethical approval rollercoaster, I have spent a lot of time considering how being positioned by fellow psychologists as 'brave' may have influenced my direct impact on the study. Although it initially panicked me, through reflective and reflexive exercises, I concluded that it may have increased the passion for the topic. I consequently felt a sense of responsibility that influenced the determination I had to keep TG DY voice as a central tenet in the research when faced with recruitment difficulties.

2.5 Emotional impact of research

'Travel isn't always pretty. It isn't always comfortable. Sometimes it hurts, it even breaks your heart. But that's okay. The journey changes you; it should change you. It leaves marks on your memory, on your consciousness, on your heart, and on your body. You take something with you. Hopefully you leave something good behind too.'

– Anthony Bourdain (in Williams, 2022)

We often discuss the impact of the researcher on the research process and thus the importance of reflexivity. But this project has definitely had an effect on me. Through being present in the reflexive process, I have become intimate with my previously unconscious biases and really become knowing of myself; deeply understanding my values, thoughts, and beliefs. Mauthner and Doucet (2003) discuss how reflexivity should leave a researcher

changed, and I now have a new appreciation for this comment. I read somewhere that the process of reflexivity is 'brave' and likened to a 'never ending hall of mirrors'. I believe that my developing maturity as a practitioner psychologist has enabled my engagement in the 'brave' process in a safe and measured way. For example, knowing when to draw on supervision to create a supportive space and provide containment in the exploration of some of my unconscious biases (Health Care Professional Council, 2016).

I believe that the process of this project has had quite a profound effect on me as a practitioner psychologist and researcher. It has affected the way in which I work with all minority groups and deepened my understanding and appreciation of the role of educational psychology in the implementation of effective ethical and systemic change.

3.0 Contribution to knowledge

3.1 Contributions to existing knowledge

3.1.1 The Results of the Research

Considering the conclusions of the present study within the wider scope of both UK and global literature bases provides an in-depth exploration of the data pertaining to UK practices. In conceptualising trans*-inclusion through the novel application of the SVSC model, the study explores possible avenues for change and development. This provides a method of mobilisation of the change process towards equity and inclusive practice that both substantiates and builds on theoretical models provided in the UK literature whilst being inclusive of systemic factors.

The study substantiates claims that trans*-inclusive practices are moving away from policies grounded in assimilation in gendered, cisnormative systems, and towards the development of emancipatory systems of support (Gavin, 2021; Horton, 2020). Conclusions made throughout the study support the notion that reconceptualises schools as institutions that provide a space for more than information give but as a host of education for development (Gadotti & Torres, 2009). Schools are considered hubs of individual development; learning about oneself through identity formation in all its iterations, as well as learning how to become a citizen of an ever evolving and developing society. Participant reflections support conclusions that TGDY

support practices that enable and facilitate *all* voices in the process of planning meaningful change (Johnson & Mughal, 2024). Becoming partners with their teachers and peers to engage in co-construction of new knowledge, through which new understanding and paths forward can be explored in a system of equity and inclusion (Freire, 1996).

The research conclusions highlight potential ways in which TGDY could be more effectively supported whilst simultaneously acknowledging the systemic and systematic nature of change needed for this to be embedded in a lasting and meaningful manner. In doing so participant reflections acknowledge the ongoing effects of the chrono and macro systems on the development of school climate at all levels and thus the limited scope for change without facilitating conversation (De Pedro et al., 2016; Meyer & Leonardi, 2018). For example, the diversification and evolution of gender over time within the chronosystem and the conceptualisation of societal norms within the macro system, converge within schools to influence both lived experience and systemic/pedagogical practice. This is of particular relevance when considering school climate, with societal events and debates surrounding trans* rights influencing the perceived safety of both students and staff in schools (Drury et al., 2023). It is considered that without spaces within which individual and collective beliefs, values and biases pertaining to these can be explored, pedagogical and systemic changes will be less successful as their underpinning epistemologies regarding societal norms will remain unchanged (Horton, 2020).

3.1.2 Learnings from the Research Process

3.1.2.1 *Timing of the study*

When working to establish this project as a viable thesis study, the issue of time became an issue to contend with. The study was conducted at a time when societal attitudes and politicised debates were evolving (Zanghellini, 2020). Thus, making the topic of trans*-inclusion a 'hot topic'. It is considered that, societal debates meant that the study was timely however I was ever-aware that it was also timebound. Upon reflection, the way in which trans*-inclusion was being discussed and framed within the media may have impacted on the process of obtaining of ethical approval from SREC as well as the process of recruitment (See 3.1.2.2). For example, the process of obtaining ethical approval incurred barriers and obstacles due to the participant group being constructed as vulnerable and at-risk (Haggerty, 2004). This in turn led to it being an iterative and lengthy process that involved additional safeguarding

measures centring sensitivity and transparency (Haggerty, 2004; Johnston, 2018). A process necessary to ensure the safety and safeguarding of participants in the study. Working with minority groups may incur additionality in order to ensure the study is ethically well-informed. It is therefore my suggestion that researchers not only engage with specific ethical guidance to inform their working with the trans* population (Adams et al., 2017), but that they proactively factor time for ethical revisions and long recruitment processes into their proposed timelines to ensure they are able to complete their study within the time boundaries given to them by course procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2022b; Silverman, 2013).

3.1.2.2 *Trusting Relationships*

Throughout the process of recruitment and data collection, the concept of trust became very apparent to me. It is the relationships with gatekeepers that were built through open and honest communication over time, fostering a sense of trust, that I consider to be the most successful (Johnston, 2018). Trust did not necessarily mean a willingness to support the engagement of TGDY in research, but afforded the opportunity to discuss the study, front-facing participant documents and the implications of the wider context of social-political events. Throughout these conversations I noted the requirement for me to be honest, open to critique, and mindful of my positioning as a cisgendered heterosexual female (Rachlin, 2009). It is therefore considered extremely important for prospective researchers to be prepared to engage in periods of building trusting relationships with key stakeholders. Not for the purpose of improved recruitment but for the opportunity to collaborate and learn from one another in a respectful and safe space.

3.1.2.3 *Biases; Journey of the Self and Institution?*

The implications of the learning in Section 3.1.2.1 and Section 3.1.2.2 are wide reaching but ultimately culminate in one key conclusion; being prepared to get very familiar with yourself, your values, and your biases. In identifying as a cisgendered heterosexual female, I was extremely aware of my positioning prior to starting this research study. However, experiences such as being asked directly to disclose my gender status, provided me with additional confirmation that who I was as a person would have impact on the study (Johnston, 2018). Engaging in reflective and reflexive practices to further understand myself and possible biases I may hold was key to me engaging in the research more openly, readily and, not without bias, but with awareness of how who I am intersects with the work I am conducting (Darawsheh,

2014). Experiencing this as a journey of deep reflection and learning about the self, highlights the importance of engaging in supervision (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). It is a suggestion to those wanting to conduct research in this area, that creating a supervisory space for exploration of biases is integral for further understanding being generated in a safe way as this may prove highly beneficial to the study (Elliott et al., 2012). Such reflections also indicate the importance of concepts and principles proposed by Schumm, (2021) in owning ones biases, actively working to acknowledge them and implement strategies to minimise risk of confirmation bias. I felt supervision provided the space to explore this, particularly in the inclusion of information pertaining to the gender critical rhetoric and open discussion regarding the limitations of my study.

Throughout the research process as my understanding and experience of the interplay between ethics and bias developed, I wondered how one may impact or infringe upon the other. Although my work was underpinned by an emancipatory axiology, increasingly strict ethical boundaries prohibited aspects of proposed emancipatory actions such as member checking. The process of balancing ethical and emancipatory practice fuelled consideration and reflection that recommendations and protocols employed by ethics committees to rightly protect participants may be based on assumptions that reinforce counterproductive biases. For example, the synonymous use of vulnerable and minority when discussing participant groups. It is a suggestion to those institutions developing inclusive research practices that ethics boards liaise closely with the populations they consider vulnerable to explore and co-construct protocols and ethical research guidelines that not only challenge bias but more openly support research participation in an accessible, empowering and meaningful manner for all groups. The aim of such is to facilitate a diversification in the voices being heard as a product of institutional research projects.

3.2 Areas for future research

Given the incomparable amount of research conducted in other western countries in comparison to the UK, the sparsity of research is in itself and area for development. Therefore, conducting more studies in this field may be considered important in the development of sufficient support for TGDY in secondary settings. As it was interesting to note the lack of research centralising the voice of TGDY this may be of particular value when developing

practices that not only assimilate but look to inform a conceptual shift in the equity of voices pertaining to equality and diversity in school systems.

However, I believe there to be value in the facilitation of lived experience of all who are involved in this process, including school leaders and policy makers. Findings implicate the role of staff and leaders as active agents of change within the journey towards trans*-inclusion. Exploring their views, through modes such as active research, using the SVSC of trans*-inclusion as stimulus, could be considered helpful to investigate with school staff/LA officers the barriers and facilitators to the changes proposed by the current research.

Additionally, through empirical and theoretical design, the SVSC for trans* inclusion may be given further consideration. Exploration of its relevance to practice and how it could be implemented may be of use to the wider education, as well as educational psychology, fields.

Future research studies within the UK context may consider utilising underpinning paradigms of positive or solution orientated psychologies. This may provide a mechanism through which TGDY are reframed as active agents in their own change process. This lens opposes utilising paradigms that are negative, and deficit focused, therefore providing question of the continuing victim narrative and thus challenging disadvantage and discrimination in a more active manner.

3.3 Dissemination of findings

The thesis project may provide a timely contribution to the field of trans*-inclusion as topical discourse and debate is present within not only the field of educational psychology but more broadly across education. Welsh and wider UK Governments are due to release guidance pertaining to developing trans*-inclusion. It is considered noteworthy that the Welsh Government document is proposed to be informed by empirical research with TGDY and thus I will work to situate my results in the context of this when published.

Participant 2 shared reflections that conducting research with the TGDY community is only impactful should meaningful change be enacted as a result. Therefore, implicating the concept of dissemination as an important issue. Due to the systemic nature of the study, a multi-level strategy of dissemination is assumed most appropriate (See Figure 8). I therefore aim to complete actions that share how the results of the present study may be applicable to

individuals and small groups, EP teams and wider systems. It is considered that in devising an informed and reasoned plan of dissemination, the results of this study may be wide reaching, potentially impacting multiple levels implicated with the process of developing trans*-inclusive practices.

Level	Activity	Purpose
Individuals and small groups	Key findings shared with participants, individual EPs, and school staff	Share key conclusions
Groups	Hold dissemination sessions with local EPS teams with whom I work, as well as the LGBTQIA+ working party for EPs	Provide opportunity for EPs to gain continued professional development
	Devise a training package based on the results of participant reflections that is accessible to school staff and key stakeholders	Support schools in developing actions towards trans*-inclusivity in a manner that is practical in nature and informed by empirical data
Wider systems	Collaborate with wider systems such as local authorities and Welsh Government regarding exploration of practice development and implementation. This includes the hope of designing and conducting a research project exploring the applicability of the SVSC with stakeholders such as school and council leaders.	Explore possible factors pertaining to implementation e.g., facilitators and barriers associated with the changes highlighted by SVSC of trans*-inclusion, as well as ways in which such changes could be mobilised
	Discussion with tutors and the researcher's university to explore the facilitation of an Ethics Board working party to develop liaison with vulnerable groups	To explore and co-construct ethical practices that challenge counterintuitive bias
National	Poster presentation of SVSC in Trans*-Inclusive Practices at Cardiff University Educational Psychology Conference in which representatives from Welsh EP and education systems will be present	Extend the accessibility of the research results and conclusions to those who have an interest in the field through making these public and providing space within which applicability can be discussed
	Consider opportunities to present my learning of both the study conclusions and the research journey at applicable conferences and events held by organisations such as the Association of Educational Psychologists, International School Psychology Association and Doctoral in Educational Psychology courses.	
	Publish the research in an appropriate peer-reviewed journal	

Figure 9 - Dissemination Strategy

4.0 Conclusion

From the beginning of this process, I wanted to be a traveller (Kvale, 2012) and can state that the process of conducting a thesis research study has provided a journey for me to undertake. The route was characterised by many diversions but holding the illumination of new knowledge that centralised the voice of TGDY, provided me with the drive to continue when I faced difficult decisions and crossroads. Although I believe in the value of every twist and turn in the development of myself as a researcher as well as the construction of the finished thesis, the process has ultimately taught me the true potential of supervision in all its iterations. Without the space to vent, think and reflect in a reciprocal and dialogic manner, I do not believe I would have worked through the barriers and made progress with the project to the extent that I did. And I will forever be grateful for those who provided this space in such a containing and supportive manner.

During the process, I always held in mind the scarcity of UK studies that accessed the primary voice of TGDY. I initially constructed this as the importance of focusing on the role of school staff who have an active role in enacting change. However, many studies suggest gaining the voice of TGDY as appropriate next steps in the research field (for example Horton and Carlile (2022)) that so far, few have enacted. My experience of completing research with a minority group was characterised by a myriad of boundaries underpinned by societal, contextual, and institutional factors. I personally believe this may play a role in the openness of researchers to engaging in such topics, which is then reflected in the lack of TGDY voice in the UK literature base. Researchers should not be positioned as 'brave' for wanting to provide a platform through which to generate new knowledge just because it is considered a subject of topical debate. Reducing barriers in conducting research with minority groups may facilitate a diversity of voices being facilitated in psychological research. It is hoped this would challenge disparities and inequities in the type of knowledge being generated; a change that could possibly support the conversation of inclusion and equity moving forward in a timely and meaningful way for all.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Rationale for Excluded Papers

Reference	Rationale for Exclusion
Allen-Biddell, D. (2021). Facilitating Inclusion in Schools for Gender-Diverse Children and Young People Including Those at the Intersection of Neuro and Gender Diversity (Publication Number 28841373) [Ed.D., The University of Manchester (United Kingdom)]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. England.	Did not meet inclusion criteria: Stakeholders were not teachers, TGDY or parents
Bragg, S., Renold, E., Ringrose, J., & Jackson, C. (2018). 'More than boy, girl, male, female': exploring young people's views on gender diversity within and beyond school contexts. <i>Sex Education, 18</i> (4), 420-434.	Did not meet inclusion criteria: Stakeholders were not teachers, TGDY or parents
Connor, J., & Atkinson, C. (2022). Contemporary practice for supporting transgender and gender diverse students: A framework synthesis. <i>Educational & Child Psychology, 39</i> (1), 88-104	Did not meet inclusion criteria: Conclusion were drawn from global, not UK data
Epps, B., Markowski, M., & Cleaver, K. (2023). A Rapid Review and Narrative Synthesis of the Consequences of Non-Inclusive Sex Education in UK Schools on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Young People. <i>Journal of School Nursing, 39</i> (1), 87-97.	Did not meet inclusion criteria: Conclusion were drawn from global, not UK data
McBride, R.-S., & Neary, A. (2021). Trans and gender diverse youth resisting cisnormativity in school. <i>Gender and Education, 33</i> (8), 1090-1107.	Did not meet inclusion criteria: Conducted outside of UK
Read, J. (2019). An Exploration of Children, Adolescent and Young Peoples' Attitudes Towards the Transgender Population (Publication Number 30533598) [D.Ed.Psych., University of Southampton (United Kingdom)]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. England.	Did not meet inclusion criteria: Stakeholders were not teachers, TGDY or parents
Wilkinson, S. D., & Penney, D. (2023). A national survey of gendered grouping practices in secondary school physical education in England. <i>Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy. 1-16.</i>	Did not meet inclusion criteria: Did not record trans* specific narrative

Appendix B – Critical Appraisal of Key Papers

CASP										
	Section A: Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Section B: Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Section C: How valuable is the research? (Will the results help locally?)
Bower-Brown et al. (2023)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Davy and Cordoba (2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Drury et al. (2023)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Partially – all except relationship with researcher	Yes	Yes	Yes
Freedman (2019)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gavin (2021)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Horton (2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes		Not noted			Not noted	Yes	Yes
Horton and Carlile (2022)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Horton (2023a)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Horton (2023b)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leonard (2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Markland et al. (2023)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

<i>McGowan et al. (2022)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Paechter et al. (2021)</i>	Yes	Yes	Partially	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Phipps and Blackall (2021)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes

Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool - MMAT

McBride and Schubotz (2017)

Screening questions: Are there clear RQs? Do the collected data address the RQs?	Yes Yes
Qualitative: Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the RQ? Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the RQ? Are the findings adequately derived from the data? Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis, and interpretation?	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes
Quantitative non-randomised: Are the participants representative of the target population?	N/A

<p>Are measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention (or exposure)?</p> <p>Are there complete outcome data?</p> <p>Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis?</p> <p>During the study period, is the intervention administered (or exposure occurred) as intended?</p>	
<p>Quantitative descriptive:</p> <p>Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the RQ?</p> <p>Is the sample representative of the target population?</p> <p>Are the measurements appropriate?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>

Appendix C – Data Extraction Table

Reference	Outline	Design and Methodology	Participant Information	Findings	Critiques/Limitations	Conclusions/Real World Applications Pertaining to LRQ
<p>Bower-Brown et al. (2023)</p> <p>Binary-trans, non-binary and gender-questioning adolescents' experiences in UK schools</p> <p>Journal of LGBT Youth 20 (1)</p>	<p>Empirical study exploring the school experiences and navigation strategies of gender-diverse adolescents in the UK, by examining the experiences of binary-trans, non-binary and gender-questioning adolescents separately</p>	<p>Large scale questionnaire study using open and closed questions</p> <p>Qualitative methodology employed to explore experience of school systems</p> <p>Thematic analysis using both deductive and inductive themes</p>	<p>74 Trans* adolescents</p> <p>25 Binary trans 25 non-binary 24 gender questioning</p> <p>Aged 13-16</p>	<p>Negative lived experiences and high levels of overt discrimination and bullying were noted by peers and staff</p> <p>Decision making based on laws</p> <p>TGDY 'not allowed' access to physical spaces</p> <p>Current experiences impact views and future expectations of themselves and systems around them</p> <p>Social hierarchy – society underpinned by binary structure</p> <p>Staff currently hold very little understanding of binary and non-binary trans categories</p> <p>Teachers hold 'unique, authoritative power' to impact their school experience</p> <p>Balance between being safe and expressing one's true gender identity</p> <p>Allies and peers enable TGDY to overcome negative incidents</p> <p>Condemning the condemners – strategy to discredit bullies</p> <p>'Activism' – going against the cis-normative structures and micro-aggressions in school</p>	<p>Study omits intersectionality from analysis process therefore does not acknowledge the number of identities a YP holds and the impact that may have in their lived experience</p> <p>Due to recruitment technique, the responses may be skewed to those with negative lived experiences</p> <p>Parental consent was not required to take part – wider range of participants accessed</p> <p>Clarity of definitions and rationales provided – supported reader with nuance of language</p>	<p>Ethical implications to asking TGDY about person-centred care if the system cannot accommodate their requests</p> <p>Unique lived experience of binary and non-binary identities</p> <p>Interpretation of laws leads decision making when staff are unsure and uninformed</p> <p>TGDYs seek social connection and sense of belonging through supportive LGBTQIA+ peers</p> <p>UK schools currently lack structural/institutional mechanisms to genuinely meet TGDY needs – 'fundamental restructuring' is needed</p> <p>Language is powerful – it is ever changing and will continue to expand</p> <p>Staff hold a unique role and could be identified as a agent of change due to their level of influence</p>
<p>Davy and Cordoba (2020)</p>	<p>Qualitative interview study exploring parental views and experiences of school climate and subsequent trans*-inclusive practices to support their child</p>	<p>Qualitative methodology underpinned by phenomenology and feminist epistemology</p>	<p>23 parents of TGDY</p>	<p>Parents are presented as active information seekers – wanting to prepare and learn</p>	<p>Positionality of researchers was explored in a reflexive and clear manner</p>	<p>Parents who hold knowledge will/can advocate for their child</p>

<p>School Cultures and Trans and Gender-diverse Children: Parents' Perspectives</p> <p>Journal of GLBT Family Studies 16(4)</p>		<p>Deductive and inductive thematic analysis strategy employed to analyse interview data</p>		<p>Schools work closely with parents in dialogic exchanges to negotiate changes</p> <p>Made changes in a reactive manner to TGDY coming out – staggered and gradual process based on individual and familial need</p> <p>Processes and practices within schools recreate and re-enforce gender hierarchies and cisnormativity</p> <p>Although schools are generally supportive and facilitative, there is a nexus between what is desired and possible in school setting (official exam board)</p> <p>Those who do not require change of name/pronoun or access to different gendered spaces can sometimes be overlooked and thus not supported because they do not require immediate structural changes</p> <p>Although mostly supportive, some staff have low self-efficacy regarding affirming TGDY's needs in class – language, getting it wrong, not knowing</p> <p>Bullying in secondary schools creates a toxic environment which is often not challenged by staff</p> <p>Teaching moments occur from bullying incidents</p> <p>Potential antagonistic situations/remarks from other children and parents prompted school to address inclusive policies</p>	<p>No information about interview structure/type/questions was presented</p> <p>Biases of recruitment techniques were explored at length to support clarity for the reader</p> <p>Only those who support their TGDY were offered interviews. Consideration is given to how this may skew conclusions</p>	<p>Much support is led and determined by accommodation of TGDY in physical space – not holistic support of whole YP</p> <p>Although staff are willing, schools must work within wider rules and regulations that impact and limit their practice</p> <p>School staff are very reactive in their practice however increased visibility of, and experience with, TGDY supports proactivity and confidence</p> <p>There is an emotional toll to trailblazing</p> <p>Biases such as cis-privilege can leave staff unaware of covert and nuanced bullying based on transphobic beliefs, especially when no visible TGDY are present. This is developed by instilling a critical consciousness about gender</p> <p>Meeting bullying through teaching/challenging can challenge social norms and marginalisations</p> <p>Agency may not be an individual phenomenon but a social and therefore relational one</p>
<p><i>Drury et al. (2023)</i></p>	<p>Nonfiction monologue presentation of small-scale empirical study exploring experiences of secondary school PE teachers working with TGDY</p>	<p>Qualitative methodology underpinned by critical interpretivist stance</p> <p>In-person, semi-structured interviews lasting 30-40 minutes</p>	<p>7 secondary school physical education teachers from various schools in northern England</p>	<p>Knowledge of trans* issues is training/experience dependent with increased knowledge leading to more responsive and reactive inclusive practice</p>	<p>Ontological implications of presenting analysis of data as a nonfiction monologue – however this was noted by researchers and</p>	<p>A person-centred approach is considered important and successful by teachers</p>

<p>The transformative potential of trans*-inclusive PE: the experiences of PE teachers</p> <p>Sport, Education and Society</p> <p>28(9)</p>		<p>Schedule covered topics of curriculum, pedagogy and prompted reflection of trans* awareness and experience of working with TGDY</p> <p>Recruitment conducted via professional contacts of one of the researchers</p> <p>Thematic analysis conducted by multiple researchers and critical friend interrogated themes and effect of positionality/experience on these</p> <p>Analysis presented using story format to make sense of the data collected</p>	<p>Age range 20s – 60s</p> <p>Teaching experience ranged from 2-30 years</p>	<p>Teachers demonstrate confusion and thus caution in using trans-specific terminology and pronouns for fear of causing additional harm if incorrect</p> <p>Within the wider system, PE is the subject most influenced by underpinned cis-normative structures</p> <p>Teachers show willingness to learn how to support TGDY, but their understanding limits their readiness to deal with difficult situations</p> <p>Teacher training was experienced as inadequate to develop competency in this area thus leading to significant gaps in knowledge (especially where CPD was not offered)</p> <p>Some teachers have ideas regarding improved inclusivity such as whole-school approach and flexible use of PE curriculum and uniform</p> <p>Balancing act between meeting TGDY's needs in changing facilities/classes and the impact this has on cis-counterparts</p> <p>Practice is pupil-led – acknowledgment that the umbrella of trans* does not mean a homogenous experience or approach</p> <p>Acknowledgement of zero-tolerance but diversity in confidence in, and therefore application of, anti-bullying policies</p> <p>Some school practices are to simply 'swap' the TGDY's classes</p> <p>Equality, diversity, and inclusion can become displaced by emphasis on performance</p>	<p>countered by the use of a critical friend</p> <p>Consideration is given to the impact of previously held relationships with the participants and one of the researchers and the possible effect this may have had on their willingness to participate and their honesty of response – this was not raised in the ethical considerations</p>	<p>Safety is a considerable concern of teachers – decisions were made based on the perceived safety of TGDY</p> <p>Culture of fear/uncertainty where unknowing can/may lead to non-intervention</p> <p>Teachers have multiple ideas for developing their trans*-inclusive practices demonstrating a willingness to alter and develop their practices with inclusive intent. However, these ideas are very often rooted and restricted to practices within the binary and therefore are a manifestation of 'binary gendered logic'</p> <p>Teacher attitude, values, and beliefs impact upon trans-inclusivity</p> <p>Not being able to identify transphobia and transphobic bullying exemplifies cis-privilege in schools</p> <p>Effective and entrenched equality and inclusion is not always a priority in a culture of performance driven appraisal</p> <p>Analysis leads to the consideration of power – Restricting inclusive practices based on concern regarding the impact of inclusion of cis YP highlights cis-privilege and frames TGDY as non-normative and a threat</p> <p>Teachers and leaders need further education regarding transgenderism and trans*-inclusive practices</p> <p>Critical Praxis is an important concept to explore moving forward</p>
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<p>Freedman (2019)</p> <p>The experiences of transgender young people and their parents: informing the work of Educational Psychologists</p> <p>Unpublished Thesis</p>	<p>Small scale research project exploring the experiences of transgender young people and their parents with regard to home, community, and school</p>	<p>Qualitative and exploratory study</p> <p>In person, semi-structured interviews – 7 in participants’ homes and 2 in local cafes</p> <p>Schedule questions developed based on literature</p> <p>Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis used</p> <p>Four clear research questions posed – derived from review of the literature, exploring experience, facilitators, and barriers of inclusion</p>	<p>Four secondary school-aged transgender young people</p> <p>Five mothers of TGDY</p>	<p>Interesting that negative experiences are always listed prior to positive ones</p> <p>TGDY perceive gender roles and how society views these as ‘looser’ with increased TGDY visibility making the process easier for those not yet out</p> <p>Dysphoria can lead to negative feelings such as confusion and frustration that may result in self-harm when not addressed and supported. This is particularly important to consider during puberty</p> <p>Transition is a complex process littered with expectation and anticipation of rejection/acceptance. Feelings of safety influence who and when TGDY chose to disclose their identity to family</p> <p>Social transition was experienced as a positive and impactful on the psychological of TGDY as it alleviated dysphoria</p> <p>Therapeutic support has extremely long waiting lists that impact on access to TGDY specific support and medical intervention</p> <p>Institutionalised cisnormativity is experienced as ubiquitous with inability to change in some settings, leading TGDY to feel actively rejected by schools – a rejection experienced second hand by families</p>	<p>As with much of the literature the sample was small</p> <p>Information was given to support readers in effectively deciphering transferability of the findings to their context. For example, all TGDY were trans boys – therefore the reader may hold this in mind when considering the applicability of findings to trans girls and the wider gender diverse population</p> <p>All parents were mothers who were accepting and supportive of the child’s transition – although not detrimental to the study, it is a key fact to hold in mind as those parents/mothers who oppose their child’s transition may hold very different views/experiences</p>	<p>Hearing transgender terminology supports TGDY in discovering how they could explore and adapt their gender marker to better suit how they felt about their own identity – language is a powerful tool through which understanding of one’s own identity can be formed and supported</p> <p>Discovering – TGDY discuss gender as an exploration and fluid concept therefore not static</p> <p>Externalisation of feelings of confusion and anger can impact TGDY’s behaviours. However, these can be antagonised by lack of understanding within the school system</p> <p>Framing of TGDY is extremely important – advocate or troublemaker?</p> <p>Inclusion and use of pronouns/name can sometimes lead to being singled out</p> <p>Uniform – antagonises dysphoria</p> <p>Relationships with staff are a key aspect of support</p> <p>Balance is needed between aspirational academic support and effective pastoral support – parents note some focus too heavily one or the other leading to ineffective and inequitable school experiences</p> <p>Counsellors and key staff that parents and TGDY can access quickly help greatly – this was characterised by normalisation of being trans*, proactive support and zero tolerance to anti bullying by these staff</p>
<p>Gavin (2021)</p> <p>Building a Better Understanding of How Educational Professionals Engage with Systems to Support Trans* Young People</p>	<p>Small-scale study to explore the experiences of professionals supporting TGDY in secondary schools</p>	<p>Qualitative study underpinned by principles of positive psychology,</p> <p>Semi structured interviews conducted with all participants</p> <p>Transcripts analysed use Thematic Analysis</p>	<p>32 educational professionals</p> <p>22 secondary school staff, 8 Educational Psychologists and 2 key personnel working at a national level</p>	<p>Four themes were identified which related to system readiness to change, ensuring a sense of safety and belonging throughout school communities, education and prioritising the voices of trans* young people.</p> <p>Affirmative practices that provide non-judgemental spaces, pro-</p>	<p>Possibility of bias sampling due to the nature through which recruitment was conducted</p> <p>In being a thesis project, lots of information regarding the process and procedure was detailed</p> <p>Researcher was affiliated to the local authority within which the</p>	<p>The ability for a system to be inclusive is underpinned by their readiness to change – leads to disparity</p> <p>Inclusion is a collective commitment that is affected by all stakeholders – leads to individual efforts being curtailed</p>

<p>ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global</p>			<p>The study was based within one LA in South-East England.</p>	<p>LGBTQIA+ ethos and normalisation of trans* personhood are experienced very positively</p> <p>Clear communication with all stakeholders is imperative for collaborative and effective inclusion – include Local authority and parents (when appropriate)</p> <p>Inclusion is an ethos</p> <p>TGDY experience relationships with key adults as containing as they increase feelings of safety – this is also true for how parents experience relationships with staff</p> <p>Staff feelings towards inclusion are littered with worries, fear, and concerns (for example evolving gendered language)</p> <p>Staff are framed as brave by other schools when embarking on trans*-inclusive changes</p> <p>Education is more than adults teaching children and is considered bi-directional with everyone learning from each other – this includes staff learning from TGDY, from each other and from outside sources. This is necessary as there is no training for staff so 1 member gets information and disseminates</p> <p>Awareness and understanding should be embedded in the curriculum – many touch on the subject in PSHE but some looking to ‘synthesise’ into wider curriculum</p> <p>Schools make citizens</p> <p>Some schools are aiming to listen and act upon voices through enabling TGDY voices in policy making</p>	<p>study took place – the role of insider/outsider was briefly discussed</p> <p>Online data gathering support accessibility to increased number of participants due to the reduction in need to travel</p> <p>Online and telephone calls impact on the nuanced physical cues researchers may pick up on that enhances understanding of what is being said</p>	<p>Concepts of containment as well as container contained are deeply important when providing emotional support such as that noted</p> <p>Role of the EP in this process?</p> <p>Leadership is key</p>
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<p>Horton and Carlile (2022)</p> <p>“We Just Think of Her as One of the Girls”: Applying a Trans Inclusion Staged Model to the Experiences of Trans Children and Youth in UK Primary and Secondary Schools.</p> <p>Teachers College Record, 124(8), 168-191</p>	<p>Exploration of TGDY experiences of education in UK with focus on trans*-inclusive approaches to school culture</p>	<p>Amalgamation of 2 qualitative projects using semi structured interviews</p> <p>One part of data set conducted a sense-checking exercise by the trans* researcher</p> <p>Reflexive thematic analysis conducted using Braun and Clark guidance and then analysed against the trans inclusion staged model</p>	<p>Two data sets</p> <p>12 dyadic TGDY – parent pairs</p> <p>30 mothers and 10 TGDY</p>	<p>Model depicted and explored through the use of global literature before then being applied to UK context.</p> <p>Four stages of trans-inclusion (1) trans-oppressive, (2) trans-assimilation, (3) trans accommodation and (4) trans emancipatory</p> <p>Fail to ensure safety of TGDY occurs across secondary settings</p> <p>Reaction of TGDY to pervasive bullying can be framed as over sensitive or troublemaker when nuanced transphobia is not understood</p> <p>Practices experienced as positive by TGDY included proactive education and effort of peers to be inclusive</p> <p>Strategies are effective but reactive to presence of 1 TGDY as catalyst for change</p> <p>Trans*-emancipatory schools were experienced as having expectations and aspirations of what trans*-inclusion could/should be</p> <p>Binary-orientated TGDY are accommodated within sport</p> <p>Reactive assimilation of TGDY into gendered toilet spaces or bespoke toileting options were evidenced</p>	<p>Helpful exploration of current context in the UK to support reader in placing the research within the wider societal frame</p> <p>Details of both procedures were noted to provide clarity in the synthesis of 2 data sets. These were originally not designed to be amalgamated</p> <p>Part of the data set used in numerous other papers</p> <p>Sense-checking conducted without detail of strides made to avoid confirmation biases</p>	<p>Approaches to trans* inclusion are directly dependent on their underpinning epistemology – this leads to lack of consistency of approach and huge diversity in the way TGDY are included in UK secondary schools</p> <p>Inclusion is a spectrum of practice upon which schools may be at very varying places depending on their ethos, history, adaptability, and leadership</p> <p>There are some very affirmative practices being noted around the UK however these seem to be a minority with others developing across the stages</p> <p>Culture of cisnormativity creates a bias in staff in being able to ‘see’ transphobia and nuances of trans* culture</p> <p>Culture changes that foster proactive acceptance of trans* personhood are experienced as positive by TGDY</p> <p>Binary conceptualisation is hegemonic in sport and toilet spaces. These are not accommodative of non-binary pupils</p> <p>Important distinction between collaborative exploration of ideas to meet a bespoke need and a forced-upon adaptation</p> <p>Openness and availability to all may be more sustainable</p>
<p>Horton (2023a)</p> <p>Gender minority stress in education: Protecting trans children’s mental health in UK schools.</p>	<p>Application of Gender Minority Stress Framework to critically examine lived experience in schools</p>	<p>Aims clearly noted: to uncover opportunities for protective action to safeguard TGDY</p> <p>Data collected using semi-structured interviews and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis</p>	<p>10 TGDY pupils and 30 parents (all mothers)</p>	<p>Model helps to acknowledge the range of potential stressors applicable to TGDY in school settings</p> <p>Power imbalances that are evident in the discriminatory practices</p>	<p>Same data set as 2 other papers in the review</p> <p>Lots of information regarding the research paradigm and the influence on decision making - Critical realist epistemology</p>	<p>The amount and type of support offered depends on social status of parents due to increased confidence and knowledge of rights and means of advocacy</p>

<p>International Journal of Transgender Health, 1-17</p>				<p>experienced by TDGY are ameliorated by professionals and charities who advocate for TGDY</p> <p>TGDY become aware of staff who feel uncomfortable in trying to meet their needs</p> <p>Staff do not 'see' transphobia and are unaware of the impact</p> <p>Pro-active trans* positivity ameliorates feelings of rejection</p> <p>Some schools provide zero tolerance to victimisation, but this is inconsistent</p> <p>Transphobia is normalised and endured with some pupils noting leaving schools as they do not feel safe</p> <p>Non-affirmation through misuse of language can have powerful detrimental effects and internalisation may lead to low self-worth / self – image</p> <p>Proactive approach to malicious bullying through punishment. Those who lack understanding are excused and not addressed</p> <p>Some chose not to disclose their gender identity to maintain feelings of safety</p> <p>High school provides opportunity for connectedness – community and peer group with whom to talk and develop confidence</p>	<p>determines there to be a truth, but the way this is experienced is subjective</p> <p>Clear inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation and how these were recruited</p> <p>Additional details regarding demographics were included as a collective. This provided information and clarity for the reader regarding transferability without compromising anonymity or confidentiality within the article and avoiding patchwork identification</p>	<p>Do other papers suggest reasons why staff are experiencing discomfort?</p> <p>Cisnormative values and privilege are apparent in staff actions – implicating the systemic nature of change needed – bioecological impact of context - need for exploration of biases, values and beliefs within context to be facilitated under the wider umbrella of education</p> <p>** commented on only briefly – Consideration that minority stress framework limits the acknowledgement of positive practices occurring in the UK?</p> <p>Do parental reflections on TGDY losing belief in their trans*-personhood reflect the school practices as suggested or the fluid nature of gender?</p> <p>Schools are more equipped currently to tackle incidences than systemic change</p>
<p>Horton (2023b)</p> <p>Institutional cisnormativity and educational injustice: Trans children's experiences in primary</p>	<p>Exploration of at-school experiences of socially transitioned TGDY</p>	<p>Qualitative study utilising semi structured interviews exploring a broad range of areas and employing open ended, active listening approaches</p> <p>Interviews conducted remotely online due to covid restrictions</p>	<p>40 participants</p> <p>10 TGDY that had socially transitioned (inc. secondary school age)</p>	<p>Primary and secondary school experiences have both similarities and differences</p> <p>Poor understanding of trans* rights in schools</p>	<p>Much detail is provided in the methodology; supporting the readers understanding of procedure and decision making. This includes a detailed recruitment and sampling method allowing for clarity in transferability</p>	<p>Differentiation of spaces based on cisnormative values is hegemonic in secondary schools.</p> <p>Policies written within cisnormative framing lead to adaptations being made that are experienced as transphobic and</p>

<p>and early secondary education in the UK</p> <p>British Journal of Educational Psychology, 93(1), 73-90</p>		<p>Analysis conducted using thematic analysis</p>	<p>30 parents of TGDY that had socially transitioned</p>	<p>Some schools ask TGDY to give presentations to peers about what trans* is. Experienced as a burden to all TGDY in sample</p> <p>Persistent abuse is tolerated leaving schools to be characterised as unsafe with pervasive transphobia manifesting as verbal and physical abuse</p> <p>Safety focuses on physical and not necessarily psychological safety.</p> <p>Lack of understanding can directly influence the response to nuanced transphobia leading to this not being addressed</p> <p>Persistent misgendering</p> <p>One secondary school suggested a change in placement for TGDY</p> <p>Experiences of being trans* in a cisnormative school are characterised by parents as traumatic for TGDY and families</p> <p>Interesting quote from early secondary school ‘I don’t have an issue with authority – authority seems to have an issue with me’</p>	<p>Research was informed by best practices in Trans* research and ethical implications considered deeply in order to inform decision making</p> <p>Unique contribution to the literature in detailing when TGDY have transitioned and their subsequent experiences</p> <p>Philosophical stance of the researcher is not clearly discussed. However, the piece is written from a clear point of view. This provides interesting reflection on the juxtaposition in discussing fluidity of gender as a concept whilst also considering ‘accuracy’ of parental insight due to them being cis.</p> <p>Clarity was provided as to what conclusions were drawn/apparent to secondary schools settings</p>	<p>delegitimising. These do not encourage transphobia but foster climate of difference</p> <p>Reflections acknowledge a privilege of cisgendered peers in decision making</p> <p>Responsibility of education can be sat within the trans* community</p> <p>Education is reactive</p> <p>Teacher education considered as a barrier to implementation of trans*-inclusivity in both proactive and reactive manner – unaware of nuances of how cisnormative practices may negatively impact – important to acknowledge as this does not make systems actively transphobic but complicit in its reinforcement</p> <p>Disparity in what safety means for cis/trans young people may reinforce disparities</p> <p>TGDY not accessing education due to mixture of feeling unsafe, lack of trust between systems and teacher feeling they cannot meet need</p>
<p>Leonard (2020)</p> <p>Growing Up Trans: Exploring the Positive School Experiences of Transgender Children and Young People</p> <p>Unpublished thesis</p>	<p>Small scale research project to explore positive experiences TGDY have in schools and how these can inform practices</p>	<p>Purposive sampling utilised through a youth group</p> <p>Semi structured interviews conducted lasting 40 – 70 minutes</p> <p>2 different locations used for in person interviews</p> <p>Transcriptions written verbatim from voice recordings – included laughs, sighs and pauses</p>	<p>3 TGDY aged 16 – 18</p> <p>Chose superhero pseudonyms</p> <p>1 trans-girl and 2 trans - boys</p>	<p>Names are extremely important to TGDY with new names supporting a marked removal from their birth identity</p> <p>Affirmative use of pronouns in a person-centred manner (e.g., when a TGDY is ready to change them) is experienced positively</p> <p>Individual teachers are key – provide safe space, are respectful and look after them readily and reliably</p>	<p>Novel lens of positive psychology providing unique contribution to the literature</p> <p>‘Brief’ pen portrait of each participant provided – this is quite detailed, and researcher questions the possibility of patchwork identification</p> <p>Lots of information regarding procedure and ethical considerations</p>	<p>Adaptation is extremely important however this must be at the pace of the TGDY</p> <p>Offers of support continue to be within binary / cisnormative categories</p> <p>Adaptations are reactive to each pupil with changes made through 1:1 conversation and self-advocacy, not proactive whole system change</p>

		<p>Analysis conducted using IPA by one researcher</p>		<p>TGDY appreciate staff advocating for them when they feel unable to – this can be based on using legalities and laws as rationale for adaptations</p> <p>Clubs – spaces for support, socialising, advocacy, and teaching others. Can be experienced as pressure to support other TGDY but similarly empowering</p> <p>Flexibility in use of gendered spaces and lessons / expectations and pedagogies</p> <p>Toilets – differing experiences. Some just value the privacy of using disabled/staff but some experience it as demeaning</p> <p>Community – across and outside of trans* community to provide support during social transition</p> <p>Not needing parental consent to change name</p> <p>TGDY experienced being considered an ad hoc thought or a safeguarding issue to others – met with humour to ameliorate feelings of disappointment and resign to this</p> <p>Self-advocacy was born out of necessity</p>	<p>Yardley's principles utilised to assure quality assessment</p> <p>In recruiting from a youth group that aimed to teach TGDY about rights etc., participants may be more aware than others regarding self-advocacy</p> <p>Lots of information regarding reflexivity provided</p>	<p>Framing of TGDY within the dichotomy of helpless and empowered – power is a key consideration</p> <p>Are teachers stuck between a rock and a hard place – relying on legalities to support their decision e.g., must not discriminate under Equality Act 2010 but lacking guidance on what they legally should provide</p> <p>Opportunities to build connection and sense of belonging across and between communities</p>
<p>Markland et al. (2023)</p> <p>Teachers' beliefs: How they shape the support offered to trans-spectrum young people.</p> <p>Teaching and Teacher Education</p>	<p>Small scale study exploring teachers' beliefs regarding gender identity and how this influences the support offered to trans-spectrum young people</p>	<p>Three semi-structured focus groups and 1 interview were conducted – underpinned by social constructionist principles acknowledging the role of social interactions in knowledge formation</p> <p>Online and audio only (via speakerphone) formats were used</p> <p>Focus groups utilised to explore 3 RQs regarding teacher beliefs held around trans* identities and schools abilities to meet these needs</p>	<p>15 secondary school teachers from 4 schools in Southeast England</p> <p>Schools differed in size and age range (some 11-16 and some 11-18)</p>	<p>Trans*-inclusion causes teachers to be concerned and worried about their practice. This is associated with;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental and wider community reaction • Getting it wrong and exasperating a negative situation • The vulnerability of cisgender peers <p>There is a discrepancy between teachers' inclusive attitudes and</p>	<p>Teachers were recruited via school leadership teams as gatekeepers – therefore may limit reflection to those schools already involved in developing trans*-inclusive practices OR limit the openness with which participants discuss their school experiences</p> <p>Context may hold implication – all schools predominantly white British and thus intersectionality missed</p>	<p>'Support' needs to be conceptualised as more than just actions but wider attitudinal beliefs</p> <p>Support is reliant on a TGDY being catalyst for change</p> <p>Practice is characterised by fear (of numerous things) which prevents teachers engaging in trans*-inclusive practices</p>

		<p>Schedule was informed by 4 articles and a detailed topic guide</p> <p>Additional data was collected using the Adapted Transgender Inclusive Behaviour Scale (1 per school)</p> <p>Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data</p> <p>Member checking occurred after initial themes were generated</p>		<p>their actions. Participants reflected this was in some part due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of policy and clear guidance • No CPD – but would appreciate this • Sensitivity in parents being unknowing or unsupportive <p>Support is currently very reactive and dependent on the YP requesting support</p> <p>Support is wider than the trans* YP and indirect support is hypothesised as useful – it needs to extend to the community e.g., engaging YP in conversation</p> <p>Much of the language used was characterised by could/would/might</p> <p>Some teachers were unknowing as to why some TGDY felt victimised as their school was not transphobic</p>	<p>Detail provided to support reader in clarifying transferability</p> <p>Reflexivity and reflection aided clarity for the reader in understanding decision making and the influence of the researcher on the data gathering process</p>	<p>Biases and values of staff may need to be explored in order for schools to be able to include TGDY effectively</p> <p>Teachers are proactively asking for training however UK infrastructure currently does not offer this in a cohesive or consistent manner</p> <p>Reflection on practice is powerful and supports teachers in gaining a deeper understanding of trans* inclusion and ways forward through developing critical curiosity</p> <p>Transphobia is nuanced and sometimes biases can cloak the less overt actions that are experienced as discriminatory by the minority group</p> <p>Feelings of safety expand further than TGDY – they are important in staff too. Lack of policy feeds into feelings being unsafe in changing practice therefore effective leadership and climate of learning to develop policy may be needed</p> <p>Teachers hold conceptualisation of inclusion as being right or wrong</p>
<p><i>McBride and Schubotz (2017)</i></p> <p>Living a fairy tale: the educational experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming youth in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Childcare in Practice, 23(3), 292-304</p>	<p>Mixed methods study to investigate the lives of TGDY in Northern Ireland using a lens of heteronormativity</p>	<p>Quantitative survey data collected by large scale project – 10 respondents identified as TGDY and their responses compared to those who identified as cis</p> <p>Supplemented by semi structured interviews with TGDY and 1 parent recruited through a youth group</p> <p>Data coded thematically and emergent themes discussed</p>	<p>16-year-old TGDY</p> <p>10 survey responses and 5 interviewees</p> <p>3 identified as male and two identified as female</p>	<p>TGDY respondents were also more likely to be victims of homophobic name-calling than non-heterosexual respondents</p> <p>TGDY perceive transphobic slurs in colloquial language in the classroom, but few have been directed at TGDY themselves - however many are reluctant to report bullying therefore this may not be representative</p>	<p>Much information provided regarding method of research project</p> <p>No rationale in including 1 parent only</p> <p>Little depth of discussion regarding integration of new knowledge with research findings</p>	<p>Legislation and policy do not necessarily lead to inclusive practices – due to underlying attitudes, values, and beliefs</p> <p>Intersectionality has impact on how TGDY may/should be included</p> <p>Religion influenced the way in which support was approached as well as the way in which non-normative identities are framed</p>

			<p>Access to knowledge supported TGDY in developing their gender identity and supported them in living authentically – using information from popular culture to supplant the information a binary gender given at school. Lack of information – confusing</p> <p>Forced to negotiate gendered practices such as uniforms leading some to suppress their identity for fear of reprisal</p> <p>Bullying and transphobia was persistent – low level but constant</p> <p>For these three interviewees, conservative Christian values negatively impacted their educational experiences by erasing TGDY identities and stigmatising non-heterosexuality</p> <p>Experiences of transphobia are connected to the underpinning structures, ethos, curriculum in some schools</p> <p>Some very positive adaptations made – toilets, uniform and names as well as reactivity to bullying.</p> <p>These are supported by ongoing communication with parents and multi-agency teams. However, this was experienced most effectively when parents obtained court orders and school acknowledged this as driving force behind changes</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedagogical intervention to create communities and increase resilience • Signpost TGDY to appropriate support • Devise inclusive curricula • Model effective support in the hope others follow • Educate staff in best practice 		<p>Underpinning societal structures impact on expectations and was in which TGDY can enact their gender in schools</p> <p>Language is an important tool through which identity can form</p> <p>Fear is a barrier to being authentic</p> <p>The issue of inclusion is systemic and goes beyond what teachers do, to really considering what schools are</p>
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply guidelines in idiosyncratic nature that is sensitive to different aspects of their identity and how these interact 		
<p>McGowan et al. (2022)</p> <p>Living your truth: views and experiences of transgender young people in secondary education.</p> <p>Educational and Child Psychology, 39(1)</p>	<p>Analysis of facilitators and barriers to trans*-inclusion through the exploration of TGDY lived experience in secondary schools</p>	<p>Semi structured interviews were utilised with all TGDY</p> <p>Interview schedule devised with a trans* adult with lived experience of UK secondary education</p> <p>Parental consent and Participant assent were sought</p> <p>Audio recordings transcribed and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis</p>	<p>10 TGDY aged 11 – 16</p> <p>8 male and 2 female</p>	<p>Participants characterised identity formation as an iterative process. Exposure to trans* inclusive language supported identity understanding and development</p> <p>Tension between disclosing their trans* identity or endure dysphoria. This was worsened by expectation to conform to gendered practices in schools</p> <p>Trans*-inclusive education is currently fleeting and TGDY believe proactive inclusive curricula would make schools more accepting due to increased understanding of peers and staff.</p> <p>Personalised, reactive response to identity disclosure. Tailored responses experienced as affirmative because of differing needs and increased autonomy. However, decision making governed by binary understanding of gender.</p> <p>Gender is used within pedagogical practices to categorise groups thus endorsing cisnormative and heteronormative structures</p> <p>TGDY place importance on staff-pupil relationships: characterised as respectful allies</p> <p>Participants report that their UK schools host active transphobia through victimisation</p> <p>Schools can be well-meaning but apathetic with inaction being experienced as active rejection</p> <p>Lack of inclusive provision impacts attendance and mental health</p>	<p>Interview schedule included to support clarity and transparency for reader</p> <p>Low representation of trans females</p> <p>All participants were within a cohort receiving support from a UK trans* charity – I wonder what the implication for anonymity and confidentiality? There was no comment on how this was approached</p> <p>Audio recordings may have supported more open and honest conversation through eliminating need for video recording</p> <p>Monetary compensation offered to TGDY to participate – does this impact the willingness to take part?</p> <p>Reflexive element of analysis supported acknowledge of influence of researchers on the decision making and analytic process</p>	<p>Exposure to curricula and language that is inclusive of trans* identities support identity development and wider acceptance of these in school community</p> <p>Inclusion goes beyond actions and is underpinned by values, beliefs, and biases held by all involved</p> <p>Underlying cisnormativity is very influential on the creativity of response to adaptations – with cisnormative structures being ubiquitous with normality</p> <p>Staff are an important cornerstone in this process</p> <p>An effective approach may consider a balance of proactive and reactive strategies ensure actions can be taken in a system that can sustain trans*-inclusivity</p>
<p>Paechter et al. (2021)</p> <p>Non-binary young people and schools: pedagogical</p>	<p>Small scale qualitative study exploring the lived school experience of non-binary teenagers</p>	<p>Semi structured interviews with all participants</p> <p>Parental consent sought for those under 16</p>	<p>8 participants aged 13 – 18</p>	<p>Identity and terminology meant different things to different participants</p> <p>No participants experienced use of non-binary terminology in school and utilised</p>	<p>Detailed information about participants to capture intersectionality</p> <p>No strengths or limitations are detailed by the author</p>	<p>Language is incredibly important in supporting TGDY to express their identity meaningfully</p>

<p>insights from a small-scale interview study.</p> <p>Pedagogy, Culture and Society, 29(5), 695-713.</p>		<p>6 interviews conducted via instant messenger during initial 2020 lockdown. Conducted using same interview schedule</p> <p>Schedule devised in collaboration with an LGBTQ+ support group</p> <p>2 interviews conducted via online via skype</p> <p>Deductive thematic analysis conducted utilising NVivo</p>		<p>self-education via the internet in lieu of this</p> <p>Lack of language to adequately name participants' identities halted and impacted their identity disclosure process</p> <p>Some TGDY delay sharing their gender identity until college/ sixth form</p> <p>Supportive staff are available in settings – characterised by being helpful, signposting and wanting to help (but lack of policy impacting the effectiveness of this)</p> <p>Failure of staff to intervene in discussions that challenge non-binary and trans* existence is experienced as rejection</p> <p>Intersectionality impacts the non-binary experience in nuanced ways</p> <p>Friends and allies are important in challenging misgendering and transphobia</p> <p>All participants noted bullying and feeling unsafe in school – with patchy responses to transphobia based on the involvement of individual staff in lieu of effective policies</p> <p>Pervasive overt transphobia tackled sometimes but very little response when assumed that a gender diverse person was not present (felt invisible) – however non-binary YP do not feel safe to challenge this</p> <p>Stereotypical expectations led to, and exasperated, dysphoria and stifled expression</p> <p>Lack of non-gendered provision and policies to underpin their usage is experienced as problematic</p> <p>Belief that embedded education is the key in creating understanding and tackle prejudices – in a way that does not conflate gender and sexuality</p>	<p>1 participant was interviewed using a different schedule</p> <p>Some additional information provided for the reader regarding UK school context</p> <p>Ethical considerations were noted and explained during methodological decision making</p> <p>No information regarding the underpinning philosophical paradigm utilised</p>	<p>Education has impact on multiple levels to address enactment of discrimination</p> <p>The transgender and non-binary experience is highly differentiated in some areas – conflation needs to be considered</p> <p>Support most notably from people not provision</p> <p>Bullying and delegitimising is pervasive with underpinning structures and assumptions as well as lack of policy effecting how this is tackled</p> <p>Non-binary YP do not feel safe implicating this as an area of prioritisation</p>
<p><i>Phipps and Blackall (2021)</i></p> <p>'I wasn't allowed to join the boys': The ideology of</p>	<p>Small case study analysis of the experience of trans*-inclusivity in PE</p>	<p>Case study approach utilising semi-structured interviews and document analysis of policies. Policy analysis added to provided extra depth in understanding due to limited participant numbers</p> <p>Specific focus on PE</p>	<p>1 TGDY and 1 PE teacher</p>	<p>Forced to disclose identity to receive support and be afforded additional understanding</p> <p>TGDY was not allowed access to gender affirming or disabled toilet due to</p>	<p>Rich information regarding context of TGDY and school were provided to enhance transferability of findings</p> <p>Ethical considerations are documented with clarity</p>	<p>What is the impact of covid on the way in which TGDY reflect experience school?</p> <p>Schools led with physical safety in lieu of psychological</p>

<p>cultural cisgenderism in a UK school.</p> <p>Pedagogy, Culture and Society, 1-18.</p>		<p>Different interview schedules were used for TGDY and teacher</p> <p>Interviews were conducted online via MS Teams due to covid restrictions</p> <p>Thematic analysis chosen as analytic strategy for interviews</p> <p>Document analysis chosen as analytic strategy for policies</p>		<p>concerns regarding safety of cisgender peers and TGDY themselves</p> <p>Policies reliant on dualistic conceptualisation of gender are difficult to apply in the accommodation of TGDY</p> <p>Bullying is conceptualised and experienced by TGDY as both physical and purposeful delegitimising of their trans* identity – for example the participant experienced verbal slurs from peers and purposeful misgendering from staff</p> <p>The use of gender is hegemonic on secondary school pedagogy with a dominant gender binary more evident in PE – the safety of girls held in mind when considering which sports TGDY are allowed to access - 'not allowed to join the boys' - but PE teachers are supportive of TGDY swapping groups when they can</p> <p>Person centred practices are employed when a TGDY discloses their identity</p> <p>Decisions made on the comfort of cisgendered pupils</p> <p>Trans* policy was evidenced – insinuating that trans*-inclusion is the responsibility of all staff. Staff must – challenge negative language, promote inclusivity and challenge prejudice. However, the language used within this was limited solely to transphobia and reactive in nature</p> <p>Policies do not provide clarity in what constitutes transphobia, leaving staff unknowing and in-search of clarity</p>	<p>Participants known to researcher, but this was acknowledged</p> <p>Clear definitions of jargonistic terminology provided</p>	<p>Reactive and ad hoc support is offered within the bounds of gender binary options. Any adaptations are considered within the existing gender binary and do not expand, dismantle or challenge the cisnormative underpinnings upon which they are built</p> <p>A privilege is evident in the decision-making processes suggesting an intrusion of TGDY in the cis space</p> <p>Restriction of implementation of trans* policies to within the boundaries of an anti-bullying rhetoric only restricts the applicability and effectiveness of the policy – reactive to overt bullying only and does not actively question assumptions, structures, or biases – little impact on climate</p> <p>Effective policies may be a key part in the development of inclusion from a top-down perspective to provide clarity and guidance to staff in how to effectively support TGDY in a wider scope than the victim narrative affords them</p>
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Appendix D - Ethical Approval

RE: Ethics Feedback - EC.23.03.07.6758RA2

From: psychethics <psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk>
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 11:21 AM
To: Sally Morris <MorrisSL4@cardiff.ac.uk>
Cc: Hayley Jeans <JeansH@cardiff.ac.uk>
Subject: Ethics Feedback - EC.23.03.07.6758RA2

Dear Sally,

The Ethics Committee has considered the amendment your PG project proposal: What should the Cis-tem look like? – A Critical Thematic Analysis Investigating the Views of Young People and their Ideal Trans-Inclusive School (AKA Young People's Ideal Trans-Inclusive School) (EC.23.03.07.6758RA2).

Your amended project proposal has received a **Favourable Opinion** based on the information described in the proforma and supporting documentation.

Additional approvals

This letter provides an ethical opinion only. You must not start your research project until all appropriate approvals are in place.

Conditions of the favourable opinion

The favourable opinion is subject to the following conditions being met:

- You must retain a copy of this decision letter with your Research records.
- Please note that if any changes are made to the above project then you must notify the Ethics Committee.
- Please use the EC reference number on all future correspondence.
- The Committee must be informed of any unexpected ethical issues or unexpected adverse events that arise during the research project.
- The Committee must be informed when your research project has ended. This notification should be made to psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk within three months of research project completion.
- All data will be retained/processed/destroyed in line with University policy.

Appendix E – Gatekeeper Letter



The Views of Trans Young People and their Ideal Trans-Inclusive School

Dear

I am a Doctorate student in the School of Psychology, Cardiff University. As part of my thesis, I am carrying out a research project to submit in partial fulfilment of my qualification. I am writing to enquire whether you would be interested and willing to give permission to my recruiting participants for this research project through your charity.

Information about the research project

Over recent years there has been an increase in the visibility of trans youth within the education system across the UK and globally. This has led to an increasing research base exploring the lived experience of trans youth in schools.

The literature suggests that school is a hostile environment for trans youth which manifests in experiences of increased discrimination and pervasive bullying. This has been found to have lasting effects on both academic outcomes and emotional health and wellbeing. Studies suggest that structures such as gendered toilets and classes, curriculum and attitudes underpinned by gendered views can impact trans youth negatively. Therefore, research is now looking to develop ways in which schools can become more trans-inclusive.

Understanding key stakeholders' views and perspectives is important when developing inclusive practice to make sure decision making is not only based on evidence but considered beneficial by those being affected. The current study therefore aims to gain insight into what a trans-inclusive school would look like from the perspective of trans young people themselves.

What will participants have to do?

Participants will be asked to take part in a focus group with 3-8 people to discuss their perceptions and views about the ideal trans-inclusive school.

What is the charity being asked to do?

The charity is being asked to support the study by helping with the recruitment process. You are asked to distribute a recruitment poster/advert. This can be via notice boards, giving hard copies to your patrons and sharing it on your social media.

If you are interested in helping to facilitate the recruitment of participants or would like to find out more information about the research study, please contact me on the email below. Many thanks for your consideration of this project.

Regards,

Sally Morris

Appendix F - Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet for Trans* Young Person

EC.23.03.07.6758RA2

Version 3 – 19.10.2023

Young People's Ideal Trans-Inclusive School

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Thank you for reading this.

1. What is the purpose of this research project?

The purpose of the research project is to explore what would trans young people (transgender, non-binary, gender diverse) perceive as being important features of a trans-inclusive school setting. When developing new ways of working to improve trans-inclusive schools, it is important to ensure the voice of trans young people is central. By capturing the voice and thoughts of trans young people, the research aims to add to the growing research base that is used to inform school leaders' and policy makers' decision-making process when developing trans-inclusive policies and practices.

2. Why have I been invited to take part?

The research project is aiming to recruit trans young people to share the perspectives on what a trans-inclusive school may look like. You have been invited to take part in this project as you identify as a trans young person aged between 16 and 25.

3. Do I have to take part?

No, your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, we will discuss the research project with you and ask you to sign a consent form. If you decide not to take part, you do not have to explain your reasons and it will not affect your legal rights.

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in the research project at any time, without giving a reason, even after signing the consent form.

4. What will taking part involve?

If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to participate in a way that you feel comfortable. You can choose from a 1:1 interview with the researcher. Alternatively, you can take part in a focus group (a small group discussion) where you can invite a small number of young people aged 16-25 years (for example friends/allies) to join you in discussing the research topic. The interview or focus group should last between 40-90 minutes and will be offered online via Teams. The interview/focus group discussion will be recorded via a Dictaphone for data analysis purposes – this means that your voice will be recorded.

5. Will I be paid for taking part?

No. You should understand that any data you give will be as a gift and you will not benefit financially now or in the future.

6. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There will be no direct advantages or benefits to you from taking part, but your contribution will help guide future practice in supporting schools to be more trans-inclusive.

7. What are the possible risks of taking part?

No foreseeable discomforts, risks or disadvantages should be experienced. However, if at any time you feel uncomfortable, please let a researcher know.

8. What will happen to my research data?

The consent form is the only form that will have your name on it. The consent form and interview/focus group recording will be stored securely in university end-to-end encrypted, electronic files. All computer files will be password protected and only accessible by the researchers listed below. Your interview/focus group will be transcribed (typed) within 2 weeks and then the recording will be deleted. All of the information such as names within the interview/focus group will be anonymised. This transcribed information will only be shared with university examiners. However, anonymous word-for-word quotes may be used in a research report. Anonymising the data will take away any identifying information such as names. You will therefore not be identifiable from these quotes as no names will be used however you will be able to share what pronouns you would like the researcher uses with your anonymised quotes.

You can ask to be withdrawn from the research up until the recording has been deleted, as the transcribed (typed) focus group data will not contain your name (if you wish). Once typed, the anonymous data will be analysed and included in a research report as part of the researcher's doctoral course requirements from Cardiff University.

As per the Research Records and Retention Schedule, the transcript data will be retained for a **minimum period** of 5 years after the end of the project or after publication of any findings based upon the data (whichever is later).

If you chose to take part in a focus group - Although the researcher will keep and store the data securely, there are limits to confidentiality that can be assured. Due to the public nature of focus groups involving conversations other people, there is a limit to the privacy the researcher can guarantee. Should you wish to take part, all participants are asked to respect the privacy of other group members by not talking about anything that participants share during the focus group, outside of the study. This is to safeguard your own and others' privacy. The researcher has limited control over how/what participants communicate outside of the focus group. This means that the researcher ultimately cannot control the confidentiality of information outside of the group as this is the responsibility of participants. However, the researcher will work with the group to create ground rules and request that information shared in the group is not discussed outside.

9. What will happen to my Personal Data?

All Personal data will be stored and processed according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Initialled and signed consent forms will be saved in a university provided end-to-end encrypted system (One Drive) which only the researcher can access. Contact information such as email addresses can only be accessed by Sally Morris and once contact is no longer required, contact information and all correspondence will be deleted.

Your initialled and signed Consent form will be stored securely. As per the Research Records and Retention Schedule, consent forms will be retained for 5 years (or after publication should this occur). Data is securely stored on the University's OneDrive facility (Confidentiality classification: C1 (Highly confidential)) during the researcher's time with Cardiff University. If the researcher leaves the University before the 5 year retention policy is up, all data is transferred to the University's secure research store (Confidentiality classification: C1 (Highly confidential)) for the remainder of the retention period.

Cardiff University is the Data Controller and is committed to respecting and protecting your personal data in accordance with your expectations and Data Protection legislation. Further information about Data Protection, including:

- your rights
- the legal basis under which Cardiff University processes your personal data for research
- Cardiff University's Data Protection Policy
- how to contact the Cardiff University Data Protection Officer
- how to contact the Information Commissioner's Office

may be found at <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/policies-and-procedures/data-protection> however, printed copies of the above-mentioned documentation and privacy notices are readily available should you wish.

10. What happens to the data at the end of the research project?

Once the data collected during the project is transcribed (typed) and anonymised (see point 8), it will be analysed by the researcher. At this point, the transcript may be shared with academic/research supervisor Hayley Jeans for academic supervision. No data sharing will occur via email prior to anonymisation.

11. What will happen to the results of the research project?

Analysis of the data will help answer the research question that aims to explore trans young peoples' perspectives on the ideal trans-inclusive school. As part of their university requirements, the researcher will write a research report discussing these themes and selected, fully anonymised (not using names), word-for-word quotes will be used in support of their findings/conclusions. You will therefore not be identifiable from these quotes as no names will be used however you will be able to share what pronouns the researcher uses with your anonymised quotes. This report will be presented and shared with university tutors, examiners, select students and it will then be uploaded to ORCA; a digital space for research reports that is available for public access.

Participants will not be identified in any report, publication, or presentation. Should you wish to obtain a copy of the report, please let the researcher know.

12. What if there is a problem?

If there is a problem during the interview/focus group, or at any time you feel uncomfortable, please let the researcher know immediately and they will strive to help you.

If you wish to complain or have grounds for concerns about any aspect of the manner in which you have been approached or treated during the course of this research, please contact Sally Morris (Student Researcher) or Hayley Jeans (Research Supervisor). If your complaint is not managed to your satisfaction, please contact the Secretary of the School Research Ethics Committee as they are independent from the research team.

13. Who is organising and funding this research project?

The research is organised by student Sally Morris and academic research supervisor Hayley Jeans.

14. Who has reviewed this research project?

This research project has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by The School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (SREC), Cardiff University.

15. Further information and contact details

Should you have any questions relating to this research project, you may contact us during normal working hours:

Sally Morris
Trainee Educational Psychologist
School of Psychology
Cardiff University
Tower Building
Park Place
Cardiff
CF10 3EU
Tel: 029 2087 4007
Morrissl4@cardiff.ac.uk jeansh@cardiff.ac.uk

Hayley Jeans
Research Supervisor
School of Psychology
Cardiff University
Tower Building
Park Place
Cardiff
CF10 3EU
029 2087 0366

Any complaints may be made to:

Secretary of the Ethics Committee
School of Psychology
Cardiff University
Tower Building
Park Place
Cardiff
CF10 3AT

Tel: **029 2087 0707**

Email: psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Thank you for considering taking part in this research project.

Should you wish to take part, please contact Sally Morris on the above details

If you decide to participate, you will be given a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and a signed consent form to keep for your records.

Appendix G - Consent Form

Consent Form

Version 3 – 19/10/2023



Title of research project: **Young People’s Ideal Trans-Inclusive School**

SREC reference and committee: EC.23.03.07.6758RA2

Name of Chief/Principal Investigator: Sally Morris

**Please initial
box**

I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 19.10.2023, Version 3, for the above research project.	
I confirm that I have understood the information sheet dated 19.10.2023, Version 3, for the above research project and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and that these have been answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary. This means I will only take part if I would like to.	
I am free to withdraw (stop taking part) at any time without giving a reason and without any undesirable consequences. I can withdraw until the point of data anonymisation (2 weeks after the interview/focus group has ended).	
I understand that a written report summarising the research findings along with copies of anonymised (no names) transcripts will need to be shared with university examiners as this report will be submitted as part of Sally Morris’ doctoral degree.	
I consent to the processing of my personal information (this consent form) for the purposes explained to me. I understand that my information will be held in accordance with all applicable data protection legislation and in strict confidence. I understand that the researcher is required to break this confidence and share information I give if myself or someone else is in danger/risk of harm.	
I understand who will have access to personal information provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the research project.	
I consent to having my voice recorded for the purposes of the research project and I understand how it will be used in the research.	
I understand that quotes from my interview/focus group may be used as part of the research report. These will be written word-for-word from the transcript and will be anonymised to not include mine or anyone else’s names.	
I understand how the findings and results of the research project will be written up and made into a report.	
Focus Group Only	

<p>I understand that although the researcher will keep and store my data securely, there are limits to my privacy as the researcher has limited control over how/what participants communicate outside of the focus group. This means that the researcher ultimately cannot control the confidentiality of information outside of the group as this is the responsibility of participants. However, the researcher will work with the group to create ground rules and request that information shared in the group is not discussed outside.</p>	
<p>Focus Group Only I understand that I have a duty to respect the privacy of other group members by not talking about anything that participants share during the focus group, outside of the study. This is to safeguard my own and others' privacy.</p>	
<p>I confirm that I currently identify as trans (transgender, non-binary, gender diverse) and have socially transitioned (changed my pronouns) in one setting.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>I confirm that I am an identified ally of a trans young person</p>	
<p>I confirm that I aged 16 years old or above.</p>	
<p>I agree to take part in this research project.</p>	

Name of participant (print) Date Date of Birth Signature

Preferred Pronouns

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN OUR RESEARCH

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP

Appendix H – Debrief Sheet



Young People's Ideal Trans-Inclusive School Participant Debrief Sheet - EC.23.03.07.6758RA2

Many thanks for taking part in the study. Your contribution has been greatly appreciated.

What was the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the research project is to explore what trans young people (transgender, non-binary, gender fluid) perceive as being important features of a trans-inclusive school setting. When developing new ways of working to improve trans-inclusive schools, it is important to ensure the voice of trans young people is central. By capturing the voice and thoughts of trans young people, the research aims to add to the growing research base that is used to inform school leaders' and policy makers' decision-making process when developing trans-inclusive policies and practices.

What will happen to my research data?

Research data collected via the interview or focus group recording will be stored confidentially in an online, encrypted and password protected storage (University provided OneDrive) to which only the researcher will have access. After a 2-week period, the recording will be transcribed (typed) using the University provided Word dictation software. The recordings of the interview or focus group will be deleted. This transcribed information will only be shared with university examiners. However, anonymous word-for-word quotes may be used in a research report. Anonymising the data will take away any identifying information such as names. You will therefore not be identifiable from these quotes as no names will be used however you will be able to share what pronouns you would like the researcher uses with your anonymised quotes. Once anonymised, you will no longer be able to withdraw from the research project as it will not be possible to trace the anonymised information back to individual participants. The research data will be stored on the online, encrypted and password protected storage. As per the Research Records and Retention Schedule, the transcript data will be retained for a minimum period of 5 years after the end of the project or after publication of any findings based upon the data (whichever is later).

If you took part in a focus group - Although the researcher will keep and store the data securely, there are limits to confidentiality that can be assured. Due to the public nature of focus groups involving conversations other people, there is a limit to the privacy the researcher can guarantee. Should you wish to take part, all participants are asked to respect the privacy of other group members by not talking about anything that participants share during the focus group, outside of the study. This is to safeguard your own and others' privacy. The researcher has limited control over how/what participants communicate outside of the focus group. This means that the researcher ultimately cannot control the confidentiality of information outside of the group as this is the responsibility of participants. However, the researcher will work with the group to create ground rules and request that information shared in the group is not discussed outside.

What will happen to my Personal Data?

All Personal data will be stored and processed according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Initialled and signed consent forms will be saved in a university provided end-to-end

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Any complaints may be made to:
Secretary of the Ethics Committee
School of Psychology
Cardiff University
Tower Building
Park Place
Cardiff
CF10 3AT
Tel: 029 2087 0707
Email: psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk

Cardiff University is the Data Controller and is committed to respecting and protecting your personal data in accordance with your expectations and Data Protection legislation. The University has a Data Protection Officer who can be contacted at inforequest@cardiff.ac.uk. Further information about Data

*Protection, including your rights and details about how to contact the Information Commissioner's Office should you wish to complain, can be found at the following:
<https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/staff/supporting-your-work/manage-use-and-protect-data/data-protection>*

Appendix I – Interview Schedule and Rationale

Introduction

Preamble to help develop rapport

Thank you for expressing an interest in taking part in the research study today

Thank you as well for signing the consent form before arranging this interview – can I just check that you have read the participant information sheet please?

I will just start by sharing some key information about the study. Although researchers can think about what might be helpful to young people in schools, it is important that in order to consider what changes might be valuable, that we gather the views and voices of the young people within the community. So, the aim of the research is to gain the views of trans* young people to explore what may be considered the ideal trans*-inclusive school from your perspective.

You participation is voluntary, so you don't have to take part if you do not want to and there is no payment for you taking part in the study

It is important that you know, although you have signed the consent form and joined this call, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, please let me know as we can take a break, pause the interview, or stop the interview all together.

Throughout the interview, I will have my camera on. You can choose to have yours on or off – however you feel most comfortable. Regardless of if your camera is on or off, I will only be recording voice using this Dictaphone. This means that your voice and what you say will be recorded but not your picture/video. Are you happy for me to record our conversation in this way?

**I will listen to the recording and write down everything we said today and then I will delete the recording. When I write my thesis, I may use quotes – word for word from the interview – but these will be anonymised. In the report they will say for example Participant A “X” (she/they)
Can I please check what pronouns you would like me to use throughout the study and in the report please?**

Once the conversation has ended, you will have up to 2 weeks to let me know if there are any bits of the interview that you would like me to delete, or if you would like to withdraw (remove) your whole interview from the research project. After the 2 weeks, I will have replayed the conversation, written out everything we have said and given you a participant code. This means I won't be able to find the information that was specifically provided by you as it will no longer have your name attached to it, only a participant code and pronouns.

Throughout the interview you'll be asked to discuss some questions and ideas. These won't be specifically asking you to re-tell your lived experience – they are more about your thoughts about school having had that lived experience. If I ask you anything that you don't understand or that doesn't make sense, please ask me to repeat or explain it in a different way. I will do my best to be as clear as possible.

The reason we are conducting this research is because I think it important that in order to develop trans-inclusive schools and practices, we provide a space for the voices of young people to be heard. That means that when I ask questions there isn't a right or wrong answer. I am interested in your views, perceptions, and opinions. So, in that sense, whatever you think and say in this interview, is the right answer as it is right for you. Take your time to answer the questions, and I can repeat them if you would like me to.

Taking part in the study is confidential and after transcription, will be anonymous. That means no one will know that you have taken part unless you tell them.

Just to let you know, if the Wi-Fi drop out; I will restart the meeting and invite the participant back in.

Are there any final questions? Are you happy to go ahead and for me to start to record our discussion?

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Main Question	Prompt	Rationale
<p>The research project is about how we can develop the ideal trans-inclusive school. I wonder if we can start with what does the word trans-inclusive or trans*-inclusion mean to you?</p>	<p>Can you tell me more about that? Could you explain a bit more about what you mean by X?</p>	<p>Research suggests that the term and practice of inclusion, not specific to trans* but also wider, is not universal and differs greatly across the literature. It was felt important to have this initial discussion to ensure that the researcher and participant were discussing the same concept when referring to the development of the ideal 'trans*-inclusive' school.</p>
<p>In this project we are using the current definition. "" Do you think this summarises what we should aiming for?</p>	<p>Is there anything you would add or take out?</p>	<p>As terminology within the literature is diverse, it is considered important to discuss Ensure the researcher has not made any assumptions in their adoption of a definition.</p>
<p>This is quite a big question so feel free to take your time to answer and answer in parts if you need to. If you could design your ideal Trans*inclusive school for future pupils, what would it look like? (What would you include? What would be important for us to include?)</p>	<p>Ideal school School Adults Children Why would that aspect be important to trans* young people? What would that bring the trans* community in schools? Silence</p>	<p>Informed by the solution-focused/orientated thinking and Ideal School (Harker et al., 2017; Kelly, 1955; Williams & Hanke, 2007). Aim to explore participants' constructions of what would make an ideal school for those who identify as trans. The question was generated (along with the underlying RQs of the study) to enable collaboration with trans* young people and explore the ambition of what trans* inclusivity within the UK education system could and should look like from their perspective (Horton, 2023b).</p>

	It sounds like X would be really important to you – could you tell me more about that?	
How far on the journey do you think we are to achieving your ideal trans*inclusive school?	On a scale of 0-10 where 10 is the perfect ideal trans*inclusive school, where are we at? Why are we not lower?	
Given your current knowledge and understanding of schools in the UK, what do you feel needs to change in order to get closer towards the ideal trans*-inclusive school	Use particular aspects of what the TGDY discussed Do you have any ideas as to how that could be achieved?	In order to conceptualise the notion of trans*inclusivity it is considered important to explore co-constructed solutions with those who have lived experience of the system, to support the development of truly inclusive practices and not mere accommodation
Is there anything I haven't asked that you think is really important to the project?		

Harker, M. E., Dean, S., & Monsen, J. J. (2017). Solution-oriented educational psychology practice. In B. Kelly, L. Marks-Woolfson, & J. Boyle (Eds.), *Frameworks for Practice in Educational Psychology: A Textbook for Trainees and Practitioners* (2 ed., pp. 167-193). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Horton, C. (2023b). Institutional cisnormativity and educational injustice: Trans children's experiences in primary and early secondary education in the UK. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93(1), 73-90.

Kelly, G. (1955). *Personal construct psychology*.

Williams, J., & Hanke, D. (2007). 'Do you know what sort of school I want?': optimum features of school provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. *Good Autism Practice*, 8(2), 51-63.

Conclusions

Thank you so much for taking part in the study. Your answers and thoughts are really valuable.

After our call has ended, I will send over a Participant Debrief form that is just says thank you for taking part but also gives a reminder of key information about the study and what happens with your information. You can keep that for your records.

I have included some information on there about where you can reach out to for additional support should you need to after we have finished our call. Mine and my supervisors details are also on the debrief form if you need to get in contact with us.

Please remember that you will have up to 2 weeks to let me know if there are any bits of the interview that you would like to me to delete, or if you would like to withdraw (remove) your whole interview from the research project. After the 2 weeks, I will have replayed the conversation, written out everything we have said and given you a participant code. This means I won't be able to find the information that was specifically provided by you as it will no longer have your name attached to it, only a participant code and pronouns.

Is there anything that

Once I have analysed the interviews that you and other participants have provided, I will be writing it into a thesis report which will be marked by examiners. If you would like a copy of my conclusions, please email me to let me know and I will arrange for this to be sent to you.

Have you got any questions for me?

Okay, thank you again for taking part. It was a really great discussion. I will now turn off the recording.

Appendix J – Exert of Transcript

That's really interesting. Thank you. I wonder, so you said a particular area of support for this community. So, if we're thinking of a school, who would you envisage to be within the school that had knowledge of this area?

P2

Yeah, knowledge of this area, but also like... I find it's very particularly effective that we have say like sort of almost not student representatives, but for example, I'm a member of the safeguarding team here who's like student who are students who assist with referring to safeguarding and that's actually helped. I've, in my experience has helped a lot of people get the access they need to support and has helped quite a lot of people. So, it's almost like if you can sort of build a base of... sounds kind of like militant... build a base of, of people of known, not known, but... Of trans people who... like... it. It almost cos' like I think sometimes the community for transgender people is quite hidden because of the nature of getting people who are closeted or people who are just generally not so open about it. I think yeah, it only comes down to having that building that community and making it more pronounced, you know, with, with, with, with students and then staff.

Researcher

That's brilliant.

P2

To help to you know, to, to nurture that, because I think, obviously, more aware of it people become, it helps so many, many more people, you know?

Researcher

Yeah.

P2

And as well, it then justifies to the government to give more support into this sort of research and also but into this sort of support, and thus then... that that deals with mental health. That deals with, with young people who are struggling. It, it, it builds up a really big part of a of the social structure.

Researcher

That's brilliant. Thank you so much, P. Lots of the questions I had, you answered as you

Appendix K – Exert of Transcript (Initial Familiarisation)

I also I also. Do like the address as a sort of factor in in the beginning of the definition where it says it meets the trans* persons... what was it to be taught? Sorry, can you...

Researcher

Included and have their needs.

P2

Inclusion=
meet needs

Express

live well

Which is good because it yeah, because that's good because like... It's like the story which I've just shared the view which is, that person's need was met, that they needed something to, well, express themselves to, to, to be living, well as a trans person, so. And I do believe what is really good as well because professional, getting professional help to sort of help understand yourself or to help even if you do know... If you do know what you want then you have professionals who can refer you forward and bring you forward. So, that that is good, unless I'm taking a bit too liberally in the sense of well, it's much more of a... cause because I understand the very sensitive nature of people who progress forward to go into actually transitioning.

Professional help

Researcher

Yeah

P2

Some stages, and that's a very sensitive nature and that doesn't involve then to the point of educational academic it requires health and social care then from there so...

support moving forward [to live well]

↳ sensitive topic

Researcher

Yeah.

P2

Probably taken it a bit too liberally there... And it's probably that's where it gets to the referral stage. So, but aside from that, I have, I have no problems with that definition.

↳ limits of education system

Researcher

Yeah. Thank you very much.

Silence

OK. So, the next question is quite big, it's kind of. The question of the whole thesis, really, the whole point of the project, so feel free to take your time to answer and answer like in parts if you need. Then we can discuss, if you'd like to. P2

OK. Sounds great.

Appendix L – Initial Codes

Advocacy	Club	Ethics	Laws
Age	Collective	Excluded	Hope
Alone	Commonplace	Expectation of Staff	How it looks - media
Annoyance	Community	Exploration	Hybrid
Application	Complex processes	Exploration as Development	Identify formation
Aspiration	Compromise	Expression	Identity crisis
Aspiration - lots	Confidentiality	Facilitate	Impact of knowledge
Assimilation	Conflation	Feeling Comfortable	Impact of Parents
Assumptions	Confrontation	Feeling Excluded	Impact on MH
Attitudes	Consent	Feeling Safe	Impact on Society
Authentic	Consideration of All	Feeling Unsafe	Improvement
Awareness	Consideration of cis	Fit in	Improving
Awkwardness	Consistent	Flag	Inaccurate Education
Barriers to authenticity	Curiosity	Flexibility	Inaction
Battle	Decisions	Fluidity of gender	Inclusion - Size
Being done to	Depth of change - not visible	Freedom	Inclusion as a process
Bigger than Schools	Difficult topics	Functionality	Inclusivity everywhere
Building	Diversity	Gender neutral	Increased Support
Bullying	Ease	Gender roles	Infrastructure
Burden	Education	Gentle	Inspirational
careful	Effectiveness (Not)	Genuineness	Institutional Level
Change	Enabled	Government Support	Invisibility
Changing rooms	Encouragement to be self	Help	Knowing yourself
Closeted	Equality	Hidden population	Knowledge for Inclusion
Language	Ethics	Honesty	Knowledge for understanding self

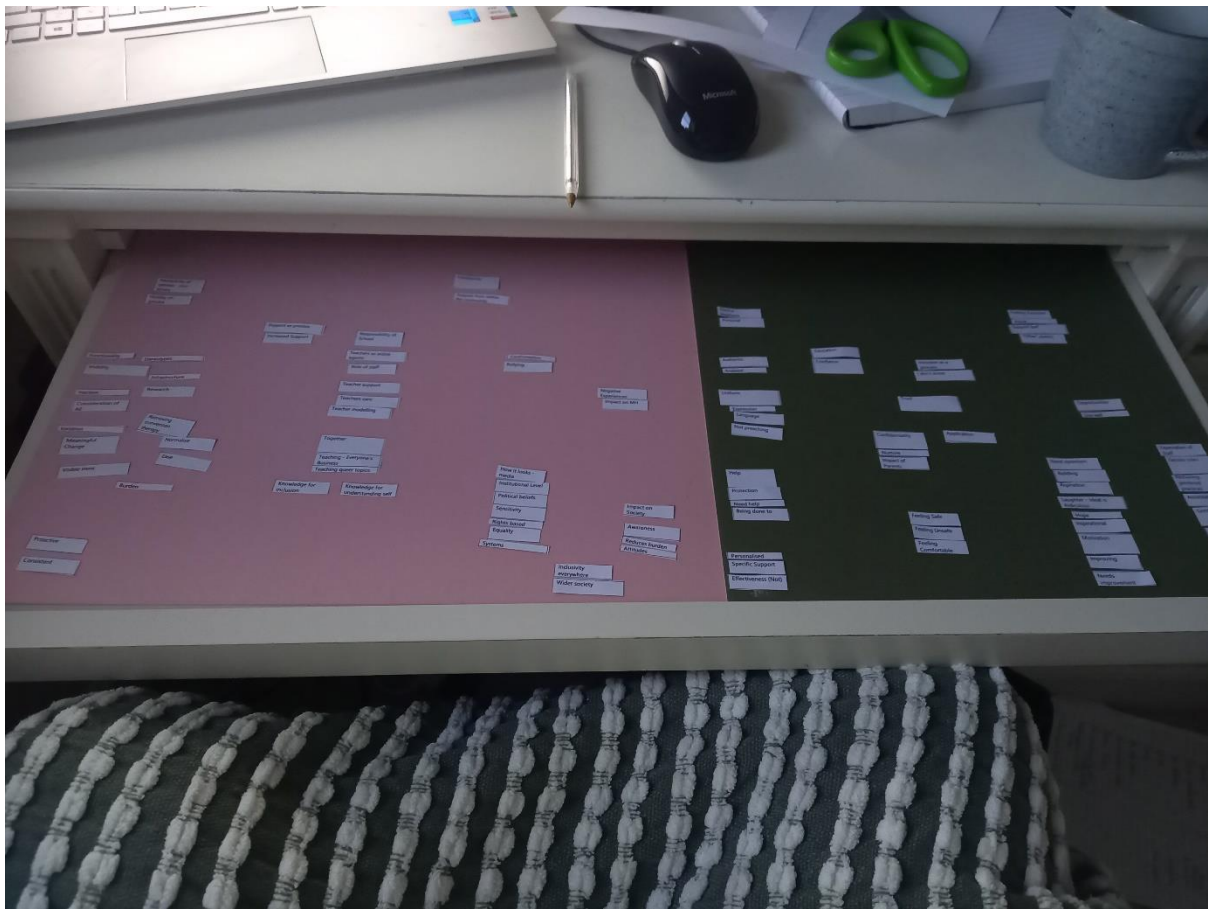
Less gender pressure	Not threatening	Pronoun pins	Stability
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Lessen the threat	Nurture	Pronouns	Stereotypes
Lessons	Opportunities	Protection	Strategic
Limitations - not perfection	Options	Quite good - ambition	Stress significance
Limitations of school inclusion	Other	Reduces burden	Strife
Live well	'Other' outlets	Relationships	Support as process
Meaningful Change	Outing	Reliable	Support from within the community
Measured	Outside the norm	Remove burden	Support individuality
Meeting needs	Own space	Removing conversion therapy	Support Self
Money	People are Important	Removing gendered practices	Systems
Motivation	People to enact policy	Respect	Taking Action
Multiplicity of gender - non-binary	Personal	Responsibility of School	Talking
Name	Personalised	Responsibility of trans	Teacher modelling
Need help	Policy	Restriction	Teacher support
Need optimism	Political beliefs	Right People	Teachers as active agents
Needs improvement	Positive	Rights based	Teachers care
Negative Experiences	Positive Impact on All	Role of staff	Teaching - Everyone's Business
Negative impact on school	Practical solutions	Research	Teaching queer topics
No differences	Practice impacts self	Safe space	Together
Non-gendered alternatives	Pressure	Scared	Toilets
Normalise	Privacy	Sense of Pride	Trans and disability
Not a positive place	Proactive	Sensitivity	Trans as positive
Not perfect	Procedure	Silence - emphasis	Transition
Not preaching	Process of Discovery	Simple things help	Transphobia
Not short term	Professional	Specific Support	Trust

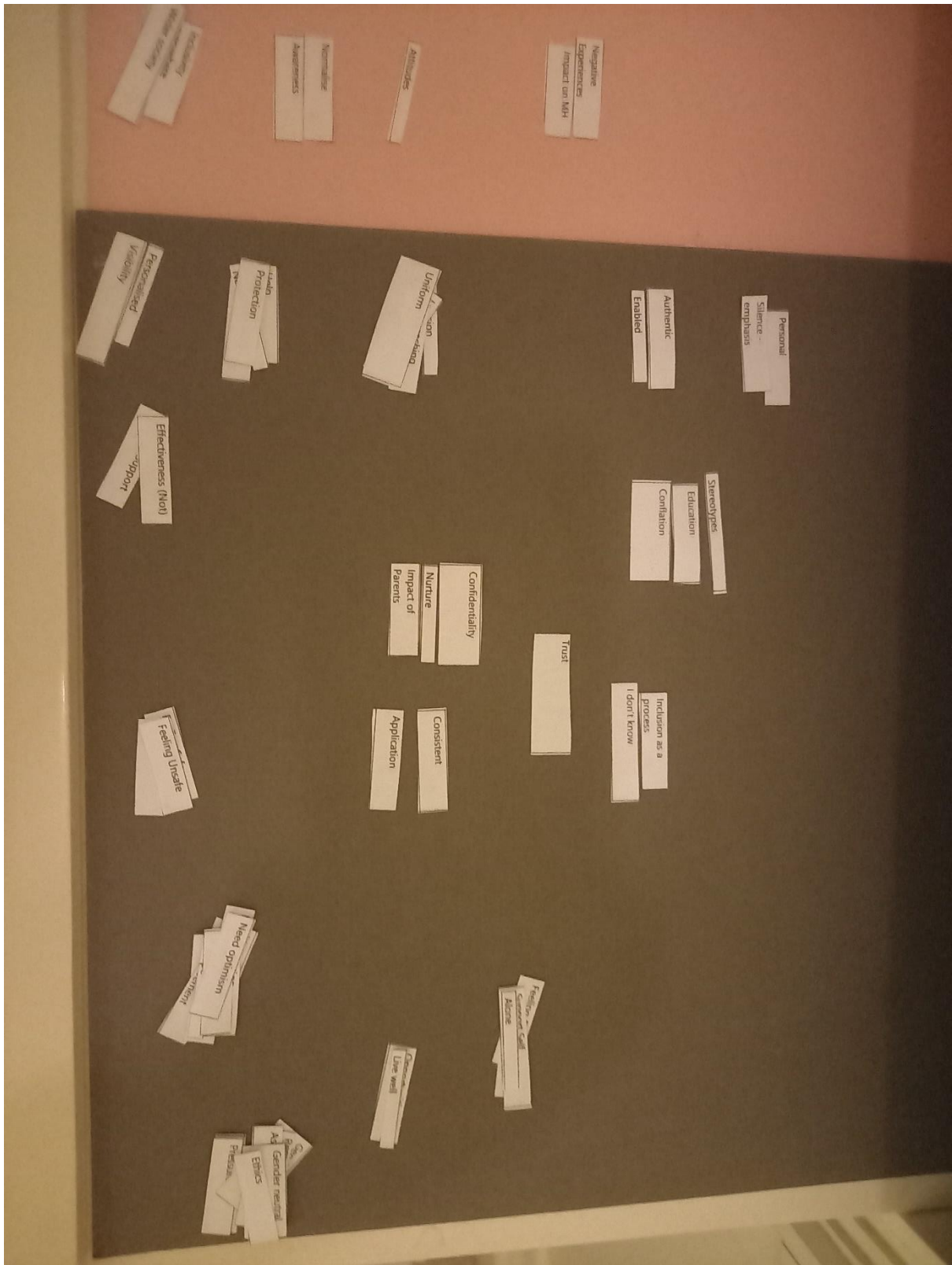
Unawareness	Victim	Wellbeing support	Variation
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Undercurrent	Visibility	Wider society	Welcoming
Uniform	Visible trans	Willing to teach	Us-Them
Unknowing - how to be	Vulnerable	Within self	Worried
Unsafe	Weird-Different		

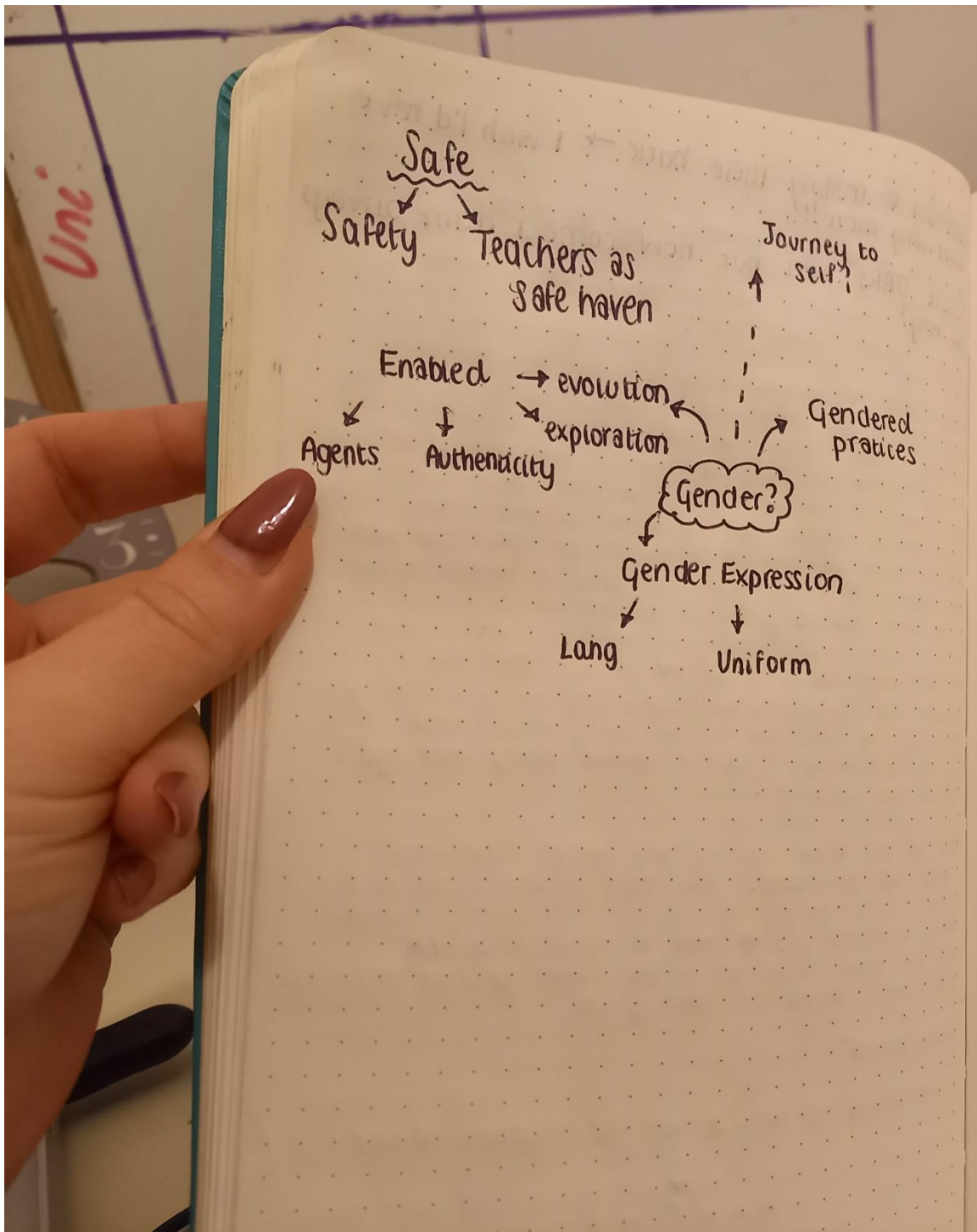
Appendix M – Open Coding Process



Appendix N – Closed Coding Process



Appendix O – Extract from Research Diary (First Thoughts)



Appendix P – Initial Draft of SVSC

