**Acknowledgements**

This thesis would not have been possible without the help, support and patience of all my PhD supervisors. I am lucky to have had four supervisors over the course of my PhD, each of them supporting me in different ways, even if I had to bride them with the occasional home baked cake. First and foremost I wish to thank Dr Paula Meth who has managed to stick with me throughout my PhD journey. Paula, I have always appreciated your ability to deal with my tears and frustrations as well as the ups, and consider myself to be truly lucky to have had you as my supervisor. I am also incredibly grateful to my second supervisor Dr Glyn Williams. Your keen eye for detail has been invaluable over the past last three years. I also wish to thank Dr Tanya Winkler. Although you only supervised me for a year, your enthusiasm for my research was infectious. Without your encouragement I would never have tried so many different research methods which ultimately rescued me from the panic I found myself in during my fieldwork. Finally, I wish to thank Dr Margo Huxley. Not only did you initially accept me as a PhD student in the Department but your support and encouragement over the first year of my PhD was limitless. Thanks also go to both of my PhD examiners; Professor Ian Cole and Dr Alasdair Rae. Your comments have made this a better thesis.

I would also like to thank everyone who participated in my research, both young and old. Whether they volunteered to be interviewed, allowed me to interrupt their youth group or classroom or attended the one day street event that I held, I will always be grateful for your time, energy and your honesty.

I also wish to acknowledge two incredibly good friends, Emma and Joe Fenn. You gave up the weekend after your first week working as newly qualified teachers in order to help me run my research event. Without your willingness and enthusiasm that event would not have been possible and I will be forever grateful.

Last but my no means least I would like to thank my partner Paul and my long suffering parents. You have all supported me in so many ways and without the 3 of you this thesis simply would not have happened. Mum and Dad I will never forget the financial support you have given me, especially when I was forced to go part-time, I know that this will have meant sacrifices for you both. You also drove me to Ipswich for interviews when I did not have the energy, and helped me complete a mammoth leaflet drop on a hot summer day in Suffolk. Mum, thank you for also being my chief proofreader. Paul, your support and patience has been incredible. You have been a constant sounding board at every turn, and I have learnt so much from your wise advice. Your ability to make me laugh at even the most frustrating situations is a testament to you.

There are of course many more people, and organisations who have helped me along the way, whether it was helping me gain access to data, suggesting some useful authors, commenting on conference papers or simply friendly words of encouragement, to all of you I am truly grateful.