



Everyone Is Invited But Does Everyone Understand? An interpretative phenomenological analysis study exploring the experiences of adults working with children and young people who have displayed peer-on-peer harmful sexual behaviours in education settings.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Educational and Child Psychology

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May 2023

Abstract

Research has suggested almost one-third to one-half of all sexual offences against children and young people (CYP) may have been committed by CYP (Children's Commissioner, 2015; Vizard, Hickey, French & McCrory, 2007;). A Girlguiding survey (2021) found by the time they are 18 83% of girls will have experienced some form of peer-on-peer harmful sexualised behaviours (HSB) with school premises being cited as the setting for alleged sexual offences that range from everyday sexism to more serious offences such as rape (House of Commons, 2016; Lloyd, 2019). Ofsted's (2021) rapid review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges found peer-on-peer sexual abuse in schools in England is widespread, likely to be happening in every setting and often unrecognised by adults within those education systems. The aim of this research is to explore the thoughts, feelings and experiences of staff who work in a secondary school setting regarding their experiences of supporting CYP who display HSB.

Six members of staff who are currently employed in a mainstream school environment and have first-hand knowledge of interacting with CYP who have displayed HSB participated in semi-structured interviews. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) the transcripts were analysed and six Group Experiential Themes emerged from the interpretative analysis; *responding to HSB is complex; cultural influences, societal changes, complex situations; training and awareness; relational approaches; external support; staff well-being*. Discussion with participants illustrated a complicated picture with intersections between Group Experiential Themes (GETs) demonstrating that responding to, identifying and challenging HSB can be complicated, confusing and emotionally difficult for school staff. This research found there is a role for the Educational Psychologist (EP) in addressing the issue of peer-on-peer HSB which could include promotion of staff wellbeing, training, contributing to policy, development of evidence-based interventions, research, direct work, advocating for CYP and via community psychology.

Key Words: Peer-on-peer Harmful Sexualised Behaviours; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; School staff; Culture; Gender Justice

Acknowledgments

My participants have my greatest thanks as they were incredibly generous in giving me their time and placed their trust in me to share their experiences, I am incredibly appreciative of both and privileged to have heard your stories.

I have been held up by an army of family, friends and colleagues who have supported me as I have completed this research. I am grateful to you all for your support, words of wisdom and encouragement.

I would like to thank my research supervisor, Dr Anthony Williams, who has patiently provided guidance, reassurance and encouraged me to be braver. Thank you to my Education Psychology Service (EPS) whose unwavering belief in me, encouragement, practical support and guidance have helped anchor me. I am particularly grateful to my placement supervisor for the help and advice she has given me in encouraging me to research this important area. To my fellow Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEP) course mates, I am so glad I got to go through this with you.

A big thanks to my family and friends who have been with me every step of the way. There are so many of you who have helped but I particularly want to thank Steven Moran, Mike Berry, Claire Price, Allison Butterworth and Esther Chandler.

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Glossary of terms

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
BPS	British Psychological Society
CSC	Children's Social Care
CAMHS	Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services
CYP	Children and Young People
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CR	Critical Realism
DfE	Department for Education
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
GET	Group Experiential Themes
GLST	Group Level Sub Themes
HSB	Harmful Sexual Behaviours
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
LA	Local Authority
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
PEP	Principal Educational Psychologist
PET	Personal Experiential Themes
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
UK	United Kingdom

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This chapter gives an overview and introduction to my research. It will outline the experiences and interests influencing my position as a researcher and emphasises the value of assuming a reflective perspective when undertaking qualitative research.

Ofsted (2021) described HSB as endemic and often unrecognised by adults within education systems. CYP displaying HSB are considered to be a heterogeneous population who have significant variations in age, risk factors, gender and motivation (Hackett, Phillips, Masson & Balfe, 2013; Lloyd, 2019). This produces complex scenarios where CYP can be both victims and perpetrators of HSB and have additional intersecting needs requiring a multifaceted response (Lloyd, 2019). Schools are essential in addressing and preventing HSB yet the normalisation of hegemonic gender regimes in schools has been shown to foster and perpetuate harmful sexist attitudes rather than challenge them (Lloyd, 2019). Much of HSB research and practise advancements have concentrated on CYP through individualised interventions rather than the elements inside schools that may perpetuate harm (Lloyd, 2019). The task of identifying and addressing HSB in schools is complex and challenging for staff (Ofsted, 2021; Waters, Anstey, Clouston & Sydor, 2021). Adults who occupy the systems surrounding CYP are well positioned to help disrupt dominant cultural narratives, support CYP and influence change (Draugedalen, 2020). The experiences of adults who work with CYP who have displayed HSB has been under-explored in the literature (Hawkes, 2011; Lloyd, 2019; Waters et al., 2021). The aim of this research is to explore the thoughts and feelings of staff working in a secondary school setting regarding their experiences of supporting CYP who display HSB. To support transparency my relationship to the subject matter and my positionality are explored at the beginning of the thesis, as I am conscious of my contribution to the research process.

1.2 Research interest

My interest in this research is multi-layered and rooted in my professional and personal experiences. I have worked in the education system in a variety of roles in mainstream schools, special schools and Local Authorities (LAs). Peer-on-peer HSB has been something I have encountered in every role. However, it felt there was a sense of discomfort from adults, both professionals and family members, in the idea of CYP and sexuality let alone that they might engage in HSB. When programs were suggested to address factors perpetuating peer-on-peer HSB I have observed resistance from multiple directions, even witnessing schools being picketed in protest. Additionally, I have attended meetings where professionals have struggled with resources and training to know how to meet the needs of CYP who have either displayed or experienced peer-on-peer HSB. There was a prevailing sense of frustration and confusion about what can be done to best support those affected by peer-on-peer HSB.

As a professional who has attended, and delivered, a considerable amount of safeguarding training I have been struck by how little, if at all, peer-on-peer HSB is referenced. My experience as a TEP has not changed this. While the research (Ofsted, 2021) suggests peer-on-peer HSB is happening in every high-school and college in the United Kingdom (UK) as a TEP I found the training, resources and support obtainable on this subject absent both on placement and in university. Alongside my experience in education, I have some experience working in Forensic Psychology following the completion of a Forensic Psychology master's degree. Working with adult and youth perpetrators of criminal offences I observed a disconnect within the systems; while my skills and understanding about offending behaviours, suitable treatments, risk etc were being developed it was my knowledge of child development and education systems that was particularly beneficial. EPs have a distinctive knowledge of school systems, LAs and government policies and alongside their theoretical understanding of child development they are well placed to support both CYP and adults in the systems surrounding them (Beaver, 2011). However, they are not routinely involved when there has been an allegation of peer-on-peer HSB or in researching this field.

From a personal perspective social justice is an important core value. Research shows by making small changes for women, those ripples of change measurably impacted the lives of children and communities (Kristof & WuDunn, 2010). Kristof and WuDunn (2010) write that this included access to safe education; when girls have access to education their life chances improved through access to more job opportunities, better healthcare, they are at reduced risk of child marriage, the age they first conceive increases, they can provide for themselves and are at a reduced risk of exploitation. This then ripples through the generations and impacts on their children and communities. While it is recognised that boys too can experience HSB in education settings the research indicates it is predominantly girls who are experiencing it (Bentley, 2020). This area of research appealed to me from the perspective of being a change agent (Roffey, 2015) and developing more of an understanding of why HSB might be happening to support safer access to education.

1.2.1 Reflection Boxes

Reflecting and acting reflexively is an essential component in qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). My personal reasons for research in this area have meant engaging in a reflexive and reflective approach has been critical to this research process. This has been aided by formal supervision with my research supervisor, supervision on placement and with peers. I kept a regular reflective journal in which I have explored my thinking, feelings, interactions, experiences and values so I am positioned to uncover motivations for decision-making from the point of view of the researcher and the researched (Shaw, 2010). Excerpts of my reflective journal can be seen in reflective boxes and in Appendix M.

The structure of this thesis is as follows:

- A critical literature review.
- Rationale for chosen methodology including descriptions of the process concerning data collection.
- Analysis; presentation and interpretation of findings.

- A discussion of the results considering the research questions, literature and psychological theory.
- Limitations/strengths, recommendations for practice, future research and conclusions.



Reflective Box

When first approaching this research I was unsure which direction I wanted to take. My professional background tells me HSB are an issue, but I was surprised to see that there was limited/no work being done by EPs on HSB. Much of the research comes from other disciplines such as forensic psychology and social work. This left me questioning why, when EPs are positioned to work with CYP and with families and LAs/organisations, is there limited research by EPs in this area? When discussing my research interest with EPs/TEPs there is a strong interest level and they frequently commented on how 'brave' I am to want to research this issue. I wondered if this represented a general discomfort and unease about the subject of peer-on-peer HSB?

1.3 Terminology

The UK government, and others, have made the following definitions of key terms when considering CYP and HSB and it is helpful to consider them here. Sexual abuse has been defined as (Department for Education (DfE), 2022:11):

“Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.”

The definition for sexual harassment concerning CYP is defined as (DfE, 2021:11):

“Sexual harassment we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names; sexual “jokes” or taunting”

The definition for sexual violence concerning CYP is defined as (DfE, 2021:10):

“When referring to sexual violence in this advice, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual violence. For the purpose of this advice, when referring to sexual violence

we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

- *Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.*
- *Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.*
- *Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)*
- *Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)"*

Gender-based violence can be defined as (Anitha & Lewis, 2018:1)

"We understand gender-based violence as behaviour or attitudes underpinned by inequitable power relations that hurt, threaten or undermine people because of their (perceived) gender or sexuality. This definition recognises that gender-based violence is influenced by and influences gender relations and problematises violence premised on hierarchical constructions of gender and sexuality. Women and girls constitute the vast majority of victims of gender-based violence."

These definition and terminology related to peer-on-peer HSB can be helpful in highlighting the serious nature of the issue and in supporting staff. They acknowledge that CYP can harm each other and outline how staff should be vigilant and responsive (Ofsted, 2021). However, terminology has been a much-debated topic surrounding HSB and CYP and it has been highlighted that there is a lack of agreed terminology about CYP who engage in HSB (Pelech, Tickle & Wilde, 2021; Vosmer, Hackett & Callanan, 2009). Terms such as ‘sexually inappropriate behaviours’, ‘sexual harassment’, ‘problematic sexual behaviours’, ‘children who display sexually inappropriate behaviour’ and ‘sexual offending’ have been used, often interchangeable and with no consistency to describe the issue (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019; Pelech et al., 2021; Vosmer et al., 2009; Waters et al., 2021). Many of these terms are considered to be stigmatising, judgemental and risk alienating CYP as they fail to consider the developmental stage of the CYP of the specific circumstances surrounding them (Vosmer et al., 2009). Vosmer et al., (2009) go on to highlight the importance of terminology as CYP who are inappropriately labelled can face social exclusion, separation from peers/siblings and reduced access to services/placements that can offer support. Adults supporting CYP are aware of the discomfort and debate surrounding terminology and the use of language with one Delphi study (Hackett, Masson & Phillips, 2006:149) gaining consensus on two statements that contained the arguments labels, HSB and CYP:

“It is difficult to settle on any terminology that really feels appropriate for all children and young people.” and,

“The most important thing about terminology is that accurate descriptions of the physical acts committed are used, rather than any euphemistic or jargon-ridden phrase.”

This demonstrates that there is a desire for clarity and a greater level of understanding surrounding terminology and meaning for those adults who are working with CYP who are engaging in HSB but also recognises one-term that encompasses all the behaviours that may be seen is difficult to find (Hackett et al., 2009). Yet it is hoped that the ability to enter more confidently into discourse will aid the ability to understand, challenge and address HSB (Waters et al., 2021). Hackett (2014) seeks to aid clarity

by adding a definition between those behaviours that can be 'abusive' and behaviours which are considered to be 'problematic'. Hackett (2014) proposes the phrase 'sexually abusive' is typically used to describe sexual practises that are instigated by a CYP and involve some components of coercion, pressure, threats or involve a subject who is not able to offer informed consent. Contrastingly 'sexually problematic' is a phrase used more frequently to describe sexual activities that might not involve victimisation but could still affect a CYP's development or that could elicit rejection, distress, or raise the possibility that the CYP will be victimised. The key distinction here is that while abusive behaviours are always problematic, problematic behaviour does not always include abusive behaviour (Hackett, 2004). The term 'harmful sexual behaviours' serves as a helpful 'umbrella-term' because both 'abusive' and 'problematic' developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviours, may cause harm and hinder development (Hackett, 2016).

The term peer-on-peer is used widely in the literature, in UK government policy and in this thesis. While it is acknowledged that it does not just address HSB and can encompass other forms of peer-on-peer abuse such as bullying (Ofsted, 2021) it is a helpful term to use to highlight to others the possibility of CYP abusing/harming other CYP. It has been argued that the use of this term in the context of HSB may lead to minimising or dismissal by professionals who may overlook the power dynamics, age inequalities, and other factors which require additional examination thus dismissing potentially HSB as simply 'developmental' or 'banter' (Ofsted, 2021; Waters et al., 2021). Peer-on-peer is the term that is adopted for this research while acknowledging its limitations.



Reflective Box

Choosing terminology for this research was one of the hardest parts of the research process I found. I was also struck by my participants thoughtful consideration that in the situations they were dealing with in that there were two CYP to safeguard and protect. Cassidy in particular struggled with the terminology used to categorise/label HSB and following my interview with them I reflected heavily on the reasonings behind my choices. There were multiple definitions from many places with many differing reasons for using them and many ways to describe those who are alleged to have carried out any form of abuse. I decided to use the terms and phrases that are most widely used, understood and recognised in the UK literature. It was also important to me to consider how I wrote about those who are alleged to have carried out any form of abuse. Research tells us that CYP who engage in HSB do not necessarily go on to become sex offenders in adulthood and that a CYP who engages in HSB may need a safeguarding response, intervention or further levels of support. Because of this I have used phrases such as 'engaged in HSB' or 'displayed HSB' which is in line with research, government policy and sits in more alignment with my stance of wanting to remove barriers and enable discourse. Additionally, as is importantly noted in the Ofsted rapid review (2021) not all those who have experienced HSB would consider themselves a victim, nor would they want to be labelled as such. It has felt like a tightrope to walk in finding a way that describes experience but does not minimise or collude. I feel that it is in some ways reflective of the tightrope that my participants are walking as they seek to protect, support and safeguard all the CYP in their care.

1.4 Background

At the beginning of 2021, the prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse in schools was brought into the public domain when the website ‘*Everyone’s Invited*’ went viral. Thousands of young people shared their experiences, past and present, and currently over 50,000 anonymous testimonies (Everyone’s Invited, 2023) have been shared. Many of these allegations of abuse refer to abuse that is linked in some way to a school or education setting, with a particular emphasis on peer-on-peer sexual abuse. This tsunami of testimonies triggered a response both in the media and from government. Following instruction from the government in June 2021 Ofsted published their findings from a rapid review of sexual abuse, including peer-on-peer harassment, sexual violence and online abuse in schools and colleges in England. Ofsted (2021) found CYP are growing up in an environment where sexual harassment and abuse was so commonplace it feels “*normalised*” (Lloyd, Walker & Bradbury, 2020:3). They expressed concerns that often cases of sexual harassment or abuse were not recognised or challenged by school staff (Ofsted, 2021). The review also highlighted that although some of the adult participants felt peer-on-peer HSB were unlikely to be an issue in their setting, HSB were probably occurring in every high-school and college UK wide, but may not be being seen or noticed (Ofsted, 2021). Other research has had similar findings suggesting some CYP are experiencing HSB daily and there was a culture of normalising HSB within schools (Firmin, Lloyd & Walker, 2019). Conroy (2013) suggests HSB in education settings are an international concern with research from America, Australia and the UK all consistently highlighting HSB in educational settings as an issue (Conroy, 2013; House of Commons, 2016; RCIRCSA, 2017).

1.5 What are HSB?

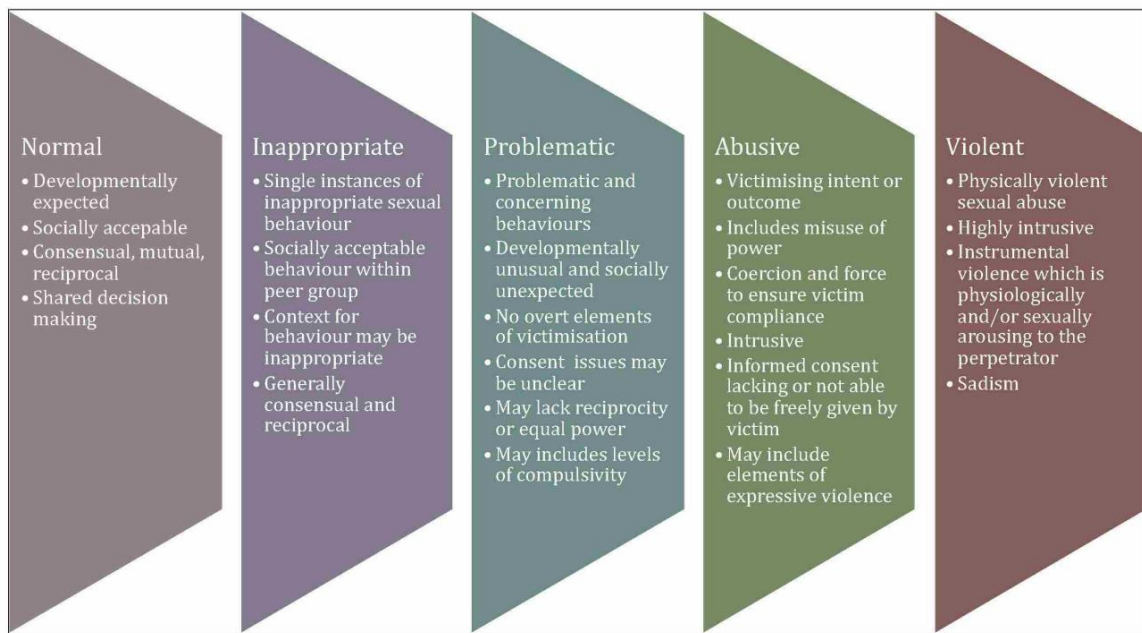
Much of the UK literature and government documentation defines peer-on-peer HSB according to the definition given by Hackett, Holmes and Branigan (2016:12) which states: “*Sexual behaviours of children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, young person or adult*”. Additionally, HSB can feature coercion, manipulation, threats, or violence (Hackett, 2010). The literature reflects this broad definition and the term HSB incorporates a wide range of behaviours

including gender-based violence, sexual-harassment, sexual behavioural problems, online sexual behaviours and sexual violence and there is an inconsistent use of the definition (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019). Allnock and Atkinson (2019) recognise this broad spectrum of behaviours, and the inconsistency with which the term can be applied, has led to confusion and difficulties in the understanding and prevalence of HSB in schools.

Although it is not often discussed (Waters et al., 2021) CYP do display sexual behaviours as a part of a normal, healthy developmental process. Hackett (2010:122) suggests that these behaviours can be understood on a continuum which ranges from “*normal*” (age, stage and in-line with development), and can move through to “*inappropriate*”, “*problematic*”, “*abusive*” and “*violent*” (Figure A). However, caution should be advised when trying to understand what is deemed to be ‘normal’ behaviours at different ages and stages of development. It can be hard to ascertain what exactly ‘normal’ behaviour is as one must take into account the social, emotional and cognitive developmental stage of each unique CYP (McNeish & Scott, 2018). McNeish and Scott (2018) write that some behaviours displayed by very young children, which are considered normal, would be of concern if they then continued when that child became a teenager and conversely behaviours that could be deemed ‘normal’ in teenagers would be a cause for concern if younger children were engaging in them. It is the behaviours that are outside of this ‘normal’ range that would be considered to be HSB because they may cause harm to the CYP themselves or those around them (Hackett, 2014). It should be considered when taking this developmental approach to HSB it can be suggestive that HSB are just an exploration of sexual interest by CYP who have not yet learned when it is socially acceptable to engage in them or by CYP who may not be socially equipped yet to manage as cross-gender mixing becomes more prevalent (McMaster, Connolly, Pepler & Craig, 2002). McMaster et al. (2002) add a developmental approach views HSB as juvenile misbehaviour corresponding with changes that are related to puberty and the onset of cross-gender mixing, while still attributing same-gendered harassment as verbal aggression. This disingenuously overlooks the phenomenon of same-gendered harassment that can be used by the dominant culture to ensure heteronormative behaviours and gender-conformity (Conroy, 2013).

While this developmental approach recognises sexual development, and expressions such as handholding, kissing or cuddles, begin in childhood the fundamental ideas of what is acceptable sexual activities for CYP to engage in is more subjective and depends on the social and cultural values of the society and ecological system they occupy (McInnes & Ey, 2020). McInnes and Ey (2020) highlight these social, cultural and legal values change over time which can lead to a variable response from educators. While Hackett's model does seek to rectify this by adding some guidance on what constitutes HSB in CYP it should not be a tool that is used in isolation. CYP who display HSB are a diverse, complex set who have varied requirements that cannot be understood with a standardised approach (McNeish & Scott, 2018). And while the continuum of sexual behaviours clearly differentiates between types of behaviours the varied needs of the CYP must be considered too. This would include setting, age, stage, learning needs, psychosocial risk factors and any underlying social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs (NSPCC, 2019). Additionally, the ability to differentiate between appropriate, non-abusive behaviours and HSB can be a complicated and complex undertaking which requires a practitioner to have a robust understanding of a range of issues which include consent, healthy relationships and what might be coercive or abusive (Scottish Government, 2020). And given that the paradigm of victim/perpetrator that is presented in safeguarding training typically frames adults as the perpetrator and CYP as a victim (Ofsted, 2021) those who work with CYP have not typically been equipped to respond appropriately when faced with peer-on-peer HSB (McInnes & Ey, 2020). The definition of HSB provided by Hackett et al. (2016) is adopted for the purposes of this UK-based research.

Figure A: Continuum of CYP's sexual behaviours (Hackett, 2010:122)



Brook have expanded on this continuum of CYP's sexual behaviours (Hackett, 2010) through their Traffic Light Tool (Brook, 2023). This tool classifies sexual behaviours as green, amber and red. Brook (2023) have described the classifications as follows:

Green behaviours

- When CYP of a similar age or developmental level engage in green behaviour, it indicates that their sexual development is safe and healthy.
- Reflective of innate curiosity, experimentation, mutually agreeable actions, and decisions; it is consensual.
- It's normal, healthy, and a part of growing up to express one's sexuality through sexual action.
- Green behaviours offer a chance to constructively reinforce appropriate behaviours as well as to educate, offer more information and support.

Amber behaviours

- Amber behaviours may not be consistent with healthy and safe development.
- Unusual for the CYP in question
- Potentially concerning given age or developmental differences.
- Potentially concerning given activity kind, frequency, duration, or context.

- Behaviours in the amber range indicate to professionals that it is time to pay attention, acquire data, and decide what course of action to take.

Red Behaviours

- Red behaviours fall outside of what is appropriate and healthy behaviours.
- They can be overbearing, secretive, compulsion-based, coercive, demeaning, or threatening.
- They might involve considerable variations in age, development, or power.
- They can be of concern because of the nature, frequency, duration, or context of the activity.
- Red habits call for prompt action, yet it is crucial to think carefully before taking any steps.

As well as classifying behaviours Brook have taken into account the developmental age and stage of a CYP and have offered some examples of what this might look like. This has been outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Brook Sexual Behaviour Traffic Light Tool (Brook, 2023).

Age	Green Behaviours	Amber Behaviours	Red Behaviours
0-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding or playing with own genitals • Attempting to touch or curiosity about other children’s genitals. • Attempting to touch or curiosity about breasts, bottoms or genitals of adults. • Games e.g., mummies and daddies, doctors and nurses. • Enjoying nakedness. • Interested in body parts and what they do. • Curiosity about the differences between boys and girls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preoccupied with adult sexual behaviour. • Pulling other children’s pants down/skirts up/trousers down against their will • Talking about sex using adult slang • Preoccupation with touching the genitals of other people. • Following others into toilets or changing rooms to look at them or touch them. • Talking about sexual activities seen on TV/online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistently touching the genitals of other children • Persistent attempts to touch the genitals of adults. • Simulation of sexual activity in play • Sexual behaviour between young children involving penetration with objects. • Forcing other children to engage in sexual play.
5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling and touching own genitals • Curiosity about other children’s genitals • Curiosity about sex and relationships, e.g., differences between boys and girls, how sex happens, where babies come from, same sex relationships. • Sense of privacy about bodies • Telling stories or asking questions using swear and slang words for parts of the body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about sexual activity which persist or are repeated frequently, despite an answer having been given. • Sexual bullying face to face or through text or online messaging • Engaging in mutual masturbation • Persistent sexual images and idea in talk, play and art. • Use of adult slang language to discuss sex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent masturbation in front of others • Sexual behaviour engaging significantly younger or less able children. • Forcing other children to take part in sexual activities. • Simulation of oral or penetrative sex. • Sourcing pornographic material online.
9-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solitary masturbation • Use of sexual language including swear and slang words. • Having girl/ boyfriend who are of the sane or opposite gender. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncharacteristic and risk related behaviour, e.g., sudden and/ or provocative changes in dress, withdrawal from friends, mixing with new or older people, having more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposing genitals or masturbating in public. • Distributing naked or sexually provocation images of self or others. • Sexually explicit talk with younger children. • Sexual harassment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in popular culture, e.g. fashion, music, media, online games, chatting online. • Need of privacy. • Consensual kissing, hugging, holding hands with peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • or less money than usual, going missing. • Verbal, physical or cyber/virtual sexual bullying involving sexual aggression. • LGBTQ targeted bullying • Exhibitionism e.g., flashing or mooning. • Giving out contact details online • Viewing pornographic material • Worrying about being pregnant or having STI's. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging to meet with an online acquaintance in secret. • Genital injury to self or others • Forcing other children of same age, younger or less able to take part in sexual activities. • Sexual activity e.g., oral sex or intercourse • Presence of sexually transmitted infection (STI) • Evidence of pregnancy.
13-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solitary masturbation. • Sexually explicit conversations with peers. • Obscenities and jokes within the current cultural norm. • Interested in erotica/ pornography. • Use of internet/e-media to chat online. • Having sexual activity including hugging, kissing, holding hands. • Consenting oral and/or penetrative sex with others of the same or opposite gender who are of similar age and developmental ability. • Choosing not to be sexually active. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncharacteristic and risk-related behaviour, e.g., sudden and /or provocative changes in dress, withdrawal from friends, mixing with new or older people. Having more or less money than usual, going missing. • Concern about body image. • Taking and sending naked or sexually provocative images of self or others. • Single occurrence of peeping, exposing, mooning or obscene gestures. • Giving out contact details online. • Joining adult only social networking sites and giving false personal information. • Arranging a face-to-face meeting with an online contact alone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposing genitals or masturbating in public • Preoccupation with sex, which interferes with daily function. • Sexual degradation/humiliation of self or others. • Attempting/forcing others to expose genitals. • Sexually aggressive/exploitative behaviour. • Sexually explicit talk with younger children. • Sexual harassment. • Non-consensual sexual activity. • Use of/acceptance of power and control in sexual relationships. • Genital injury to self or others. • Sexual contact with others where there is a big difference in age or ability. • Sexually activity with someone in authority and in a position of trust. • Sexual activity with family members. • Involvement in sexual exploitation and/or trafficking. • Sexual contact with animals. • Receipt of gifts or money in exchange of sex.

1.6 Prevalence

Researchers have expressed difficulty in accurately gauging the prevalence of CYP engaging in HSB due to under-reporting and because there is “*a general level of fear and intolerance about the existence of young perpetrators of sexual abuse in UK society*” (Hackett & Taylor, 2008:86). Vizard, Hickey, French and McCrory (2007) wrote that approximately one-third to one-half of all sexual offences against children may have been committed by CYP, with boys predominantly being the perpetrators. More recent data from the Children’s Commissioner (2015) suggests that 25% of all cases of child sexual abuse are perpetrated by persons under-18. While this statistic may seem alarmingly high other research indicates that it may be much lower with convictions rates of juveniles for sexual offences in England and Wales being 8.2% (Hackett, 2014). However, Hackett (2014) recognised that official detection and reporting rates would only detail a minority of cases involving sexual offences. He went on to suggest that little is known about the CYP who are displaying HSB that are not considered to have yet reached a level that would instigate legal action. Home Office statistics (2021) show that there were approximately 83000 allegations reported to the police of child sexual abuse by the end of March 2020. Ofsted (2021) highlighted it is difficult to ascertain the age of alleged offenders in this data as the focus of the data is general and not specifically about peer-on-peer HSB. They also suggest (Ofsted, 2021) there is an issue of under reporting and a lack of consistency from professionals in how they recognise and define peer-on-peer HSB, making it hard to precisely capture the true extent (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019). Further data supplied to the House of Commons (2016) from English police forces shows between 2012 and 2015 5500 allegations of sexual offences were made and 600 allegations of rape, which all allegedly happened on school grounds by CYP.

While it is recognised that anyone can experience sexual abuse or harassment research suggests (Bentley, 2020) it is girls who are predominantly affected. Bentley (2020) highlights in 2018/19 in 90% of recorded rapes of 13-to-15-year-olds the victim was female. A Girlguiding (2021) survey of 400 girls aged 13-18 found that 67% had experienced peer-on-peer HSB in school. The likelihood of girls encountering HSB

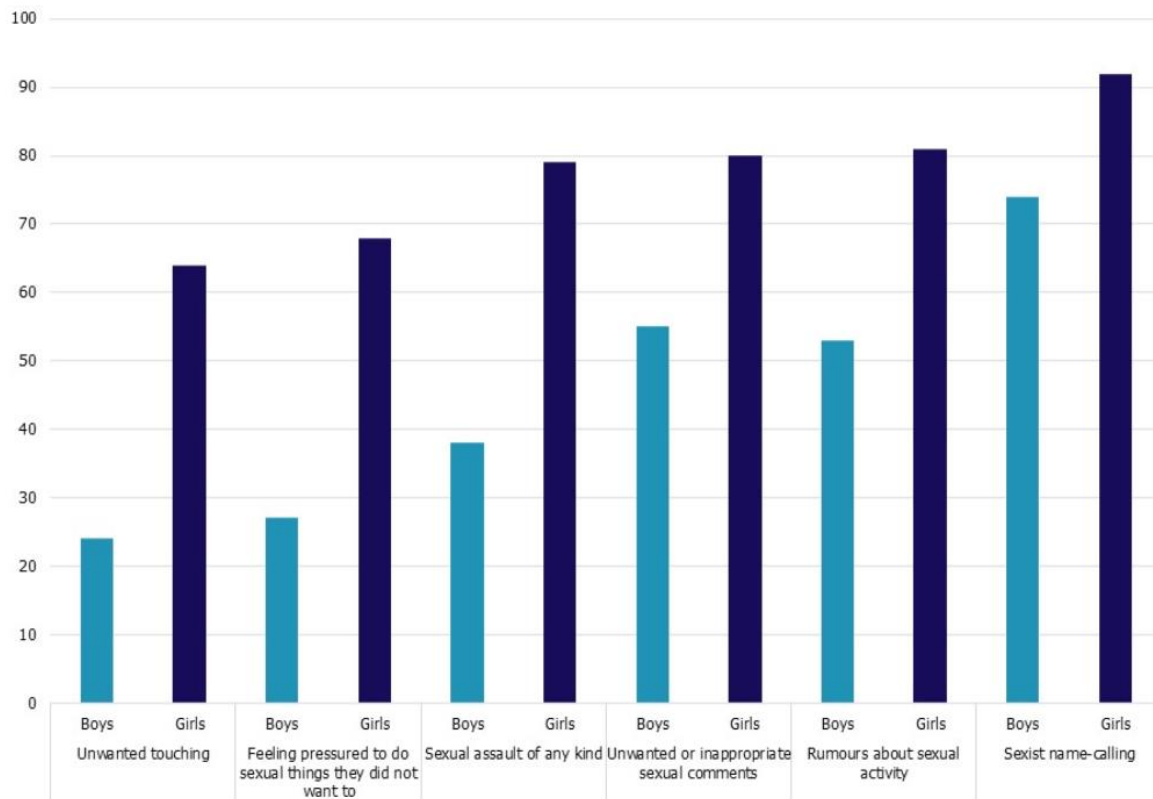
increased as they aged with 83% of 17-18 year olds having experienced some kind of HSB (Girlguiding, 2021).

Table 2: Percentage of girls who have experienced peer-on-peer HSB in an educational setting by age and type (Girlguiding, 2021:4).

	All ages	13-14	15-16	17-18
'Jokes' or taunts of a sexual nature	48%	41%	40%	63%
Sexist or derogatory comments on social media	41%	34%	30%	58%
Seeing rude or obscene graffiti about girls/women	33%	25%	27%	48%
Unwanted attention or stalking	27%	17%	15%	47%
Seeing pictures or videos of girls/women that made you uncomfortable	26%	19%	18%	39%
Seeing sexually explicit pictures or videos e.g., been shown pornography	24%	11%	13%	48%
Been asked to share an intimate photo	23%	13%	14%	42%
Unwanted touching e.g., being pinned down, skirt or bra strap pulled	18%	8%	10%	36%
Any of these	67%	58%	61%	83%

Ofsted (2021) noted over a five-year period until 2018/19 on average 1.3% of all permanent exclusions were for sexual misconduct. This equated to 2% of secondary schools making a permanent exclusion for sexual misconduct in any of the given years. Additionally, on average sexual misconduct was stated as the primary reason for suspension in 0.6% of cases which equates to 55% of secondary schools issuing suspensions for this reason. This data appears to be in sharp contrast to the responses being given by the CYP themselves as the data in Figure B suggests there is an absence of awareness about the prevalence and nature of the issue by adults working in education.

Figure B: These things happen a lot or sometimes between people my age % (Ofsted, 2021:12)



For many schools are seen as a place of safety, empowerment and learning however some CYP report that school is also a place they are likely to encounter peer-on-peer HSB. HSB can include an array of behaviours that may be exhibited towards younger or older peers or adults. It can happen online, in the real world in or a combination of both (Ofsted, 2021). Lloyd et al. (2020) published findings from a UK study which included 160 students, 64 educators, two multi-agency professionals and 83 parents. They found HSB were more likely to take place in schools with CYP reporting unsupervised areas with areas such as toilets being the most likely places for these incidents to occur. Lloyd et al. (2020) noted that HSB were reported to happen when CYP were walking home or transition times when it was busy on the corridors with one participant commenting “*you’re more unaware of who’s doing it because it’s so packed*” (Lloyd et al., 2020:6).

Despite the data indicating there is a significant issue concerning peer-on-peer HSB in education settings, when provided with the right support, understanding and interventions CYP who engage in HSB are not likely to go on to become sex offenders in adulthood (Gorden, Stanton-Jones, Harrison & Parry, 2021). Gorden et al. (2021) wrote that CYP who engage in HSB are more likely to have had adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and may present with complex SEMH difficulties. Although CYP displaying HSB are not the focus of this research it highlights the importance of those who work in education systems to be able to recognise and react to HSB (Waters et al., 2021).

Research shows that CYP with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are at greater risk of abuse and in displaying HSB (McNeish & Scott, 2018). In a UK based study Hackett et al. (2013) found that 38% of CYP referred to a specialist service for HSB were found to have SEND and were described by the study as having been assessed as having a learning disability. This is significant when it is compared to data from the UK government which shows that only 4.3% of CYP in schools in England have an Education, Health and Care Plan and 13% are in receipt of support at Special Educational Needs Support level (DfE, 2023). McNeish and Scott (2018) have suggested several reasons that why this statistical disparity might exist proposing that CYP with SEND are less likely to have had appropriate sex and relationship education than other CYP, they may have increased difficulties with social skills/interaction, have a reduced awareness of what constitutes appropriate sexual behaviour, be given fewer opportunities to make and maintain appropriate sexual relationships and they may find it easier to connect with children who are younger.

However, while Hackett et al. (2013) conclude that their findings are suggestive that CYP with SEND should not be overlooked when addressing peer-on-peer HSB, considering the distinctive needs of this cohort of CYP via policy and specific intervention. There should also be caution against presuming that those with SEND are more likely to display HSB than their peers. It should be considered that this cohort of CYP have likely to have more contact with professionals and as a result are more visible to adults in the systems supporting them and as a result have their behaviours,

sexual or otherwise, much more heavily scrutinised (O'Callaghan, 1998). Fortune and Lambie (2004) compared the demographics of those under the age-18 who had committed a sexual offence with SEND to those under the age-18 who had committed a sexual offence without SEND. They found that those with SEND had high rates of all types of abuse in their pasts, but particularly noticeably higher rates of sexual and physical abuse compared to those without SEND (Fortune & Lambie, 2004). This highlights the vulnerability of those CYP with SEND. Research (Kelly, Farrelly, Batool, Kurdi & Stanley, 2023) has identified that CYP with SEND are at much higher risk than their peers of all forms of abuse, including sexual abuse. Their vulnerability may come from lack of opportunity to disclose or an inadequate response when doing so, difficulties in communicating, lack of staff training, lack of education/preventive programs on abuse and/or relationships for CYP with SEND and misunderstandings about understanding or behaviours (Kelly et al., 2023). These findings are suggestive of specific interventions for CYP with SEND for sex and relationships and HSB to educate, empower, protect and inform (Hackett, 2014; Kelly et al., 2023).

1.7 Effect of peer-on-peer HSB

While Hackett (2018) emphasised in his report to the *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse* that not all sexualised behaviours between CYP are harmful or have a victimising effect it is important to acknowledge the far-reaching effects peer-on-peer HSB can have. McInnes and Ey (2020) wrote peer-on-peer HSB are recognised as having a long-term, harmful effect on all CYP involved. Given the nature of peer-on-peer HSB it has been difficult to ascertain the impact of these behaviours on CYP and research predominantly focuses on the offenders (Gorden et al., 2021) rather than on the impact of the offence. One study which does focus on the impact of HSB in childhood is by the Australian Royal Commission (RCIRCSA, 2017). It took evidence from over 1000 people who had been abused by other CYP in an institutionalised context. They found the impact of HSB on victims were similar to those who reported abuse from adult perpetrators e.g., feelings of shame, thoughts and attempts of suicide, post-traumatic stress, depression, eating disorders, self-harm. Experiencing HSB can impact confidence and concentration in lessons, can reduce school engagement and can have a continuing adverse effect on physical and emotional

health (Bendixen, Daveronis & Kennair, 2018). CYP displaying HSB can experience feelings of distress and rejection, their development can be disrupted and they themselves have an amplified risk of future victimisation (Hackett, 2014). There is also an effect on secondary victims e.g., family, staff or friends who needed to talk about their own trauma, sorrow and grief. The families of the alleged perpetrators were impacted as they struggled to cope with feelings of shame, stigma and disbelief that their child could have engaged in HSB (House of Commons, 2016; RCIRCSA, 2017).

1.8 Schools' legal responsibilities

Awareness of HSB in educational settings has increased considerably in recent years and is now recognised as comprising a statistically significant percentage of sexual assault cases both in the UK and abroad (Hackett, 2018). Waters et al. (2021) highlights there have been attempts to encourage successive governments to develop a comprehensive policy on HSB since 1995 yet only non-mandatory guidance has been published which only proffered generalist approaches for those working with CYP and did not give an educationalist perspective omitting basic information such as normally expected sexual development in children. Waters et al. (2021) reported that when seeking advice until recently schools have been directed to documents published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and while these documents were developmentally appropriate they did not refer to peer-on-peer HSB in an educational setting, how to recognise them or how to respond. This suggests that school staff were not provided with the specific information they needed to address their concern. NICE (2016) published guidance concerning HSB in CYP but again this focused on a range of settings and was not education specific.

Many Local Safeguarding Children's Boards now recognise that HSB are occurring in educational settings (Hackett, 2018). The explosion of interest surrounding *Everyone's Invited* and the subsequent publication of the Ofsted (2021) rapid review has provoked further interest and in September 2021 the Department for Education published advice on *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges* (DfE, 2021). This advice charts schools' statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of CYP in their setting. This guidance (DfE, 2021) explains how having sexual

activity with a person who is younger than 16 is against the law. There is additional safeguarding for children who are under-13 and are unable to provide consent to any type of sexual activity legally (DfE, 2021). When schools become aware of sexual activity concerning children under-13 the guidance says this should always be referred to police and Children's Social Care (CSC) (DfE, 2021). For CYP age 13-17 it recommends settings use their professional curiosity to seek out if there are any risk factors before involving other external agencies (DfE, 2021). In line with this safeguarding duty all schools must comply with the statutory guidance outlined in *Keeping children safe in education* (DfE, 2022) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE, 2020) and must work in partnership with designated safeguarding agencies (DfE, 2021).

Keeping children safe in education (DfE, 2022) outlines the statutory duties all school staff have when addressing peer-on-peer HSB stating “schools and colleges should respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school or college” (DfE, 2022:104). And staff should all remain vigilant to the notion that peer-on-peer HSB could happen in their setting. It is interesting to consider this statutory duty in contrast to research findings that have revealed how staff in schools and colleges in the UK are unaware that HSB are occurring or not recognising them when they do see them (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019; Ofsted, 2021; Waters et al. 2021). It is recommended that the designated safeguarding lead have a robust understanding of HSB, including the potential safeguarding implications for those who have engaged in HSB and so HSB should be included in their training (DfE, 2022). Taking a preventative, whole-school approach to sexual violence and harassment is also recommended (DfE, 2021). This involves including people at every level of the interconnected systems in a school from staff, governing body, support staff, parents/carers and CYP. The DfE (2022) are clear that the response to sexual violence and sexual harassment should be explicit with staff and CYP knowing what to do to report concerns. LAs should support designated safeguarding leads through the provision of specialist services and clear communication on pathways of referral when sexual violence or sexual harassment has occurred. This is likely to need a multiagency approach with designated safeguarding leads being able to liaise with their colleagues in CSC and

the police to develop/access polices, plan responses and know where to seek support should it be required (DfE, 2022). Peer-on-peer HSB should be included in staff safeguarding training and polices and the response to sexual violence and harassment should be well promoted, clear and easy to access (DfE, 2022; Ofsted, 2021).

By law schools are required to have behaviour policies to counter all forms of bullying and prejudice. Primary age children have mandatory relationship education and secondary age students attending a state funded secondary school have mandatory relationship and sex education (DfE, 2021). Continuing professional development is an important part of any profession and in education the agenda for whole-school development and training is at the discretion of senior leadership team (SLT), taking into consideration local priorities and individual needs (DfE, 2021). In line with their statutory duty to keep children safe in education (DfE, 2022) school staff should be made aware of the types of abuse a CYP may experience and how to report/respond. The DfE (2021) recognises those professionals working with CYP may have to make complex and difficult decisions when there has been an allegation of peer-on-peer HSB and recommends staff are trained effectively and policies are clear to enable them to make appropriate decisions and responses. However, there is a lack of consistency of inclusion of peer-on-peer HSB in safeguarding training as the emphasis tends to be on the narrative of adult perpetrators (Hackett, 2018). McInnes and Ey (2020) write this is a direct reflection of the socio-cultural norms regarding child sexual abuse and those subscribing to a paradigm of external/adult perpetrators are less equipped to respond appropriately when faced with HSB and may be more likely to take a behaviourist approach when dealing with HSB (Sun-Hong & Espelage, 2012). This lack of clear and consistent responses to HSB in school has an impact not just on those who have been harmed but also on those who display HSB (Firmin et al., 2019). Waters et al. (2021) research highlights although there has been an increase in recognition of the issue and in guidance surrounding peer-on-peer HSB there is much still to be learned, and heard, from those working in the front lines of education and their voices are consistently missing from the research.

1.9 Barriers to disclosure

Research into why CYP do not disclose abuse is well documented and can include shame, embarrassment, fear of social exclusion or concern about how an adult may react (Children's Commissioner, 2015). Radford (2011) found that CYP were even less likely to disclose abuse if the perpetrator is a peer. Allnock and Miller (2013) elicited that disclosures of peer-on-peer HSB were either not recognised or understood or went minimised or unnoticed. This often led to no action being taken to protect or help the CYP. Allnock and Miller (2013) go on to say disclosure is rarely as simple as a CYP directly stating they had been abused yet professionals still rely on this rather than being able to identify the indicators of abuse (Ofsted, 2021).

Lloyd et al. (2020) found there were many reasons CYP did not report peer-on-peer HSB with only 22% of CYP in their study saying they would speak to staff if they were worried about HSB in school and 49% said they would tell a peer. These findings are similar to a Finish study (Lahtinen, Laitila, Korkman & Ellonen, 2018) where 78% of 11–19 year-olds reported they were more inclined to disclose to a peer than an adult. These findings imply many of the HSB that are happening in schools remain hidden from adults. Lloyd et al. (2020) outlined several barriers CYP faced to disclosing peer-on-peer HSB. These included:

- Concerns that staff would not be discrete.
- Worries that staff would overreact.
- Fears of being seen as different by a teacher or ruining the relationship they had with them.
- Worried that they will be branded a 'snitch' by peers.
- Thoughts that staff would not act.
- Concerns over parental response/involvement.
- Assuming staff do not know what is going on between CYP in school.
- Concern that their peers might find out.

- Concerns that they will get in trouble especially if they perceive they have taken part in an illegal activity e.g., underage sex, taking a nude image.
- Not wanting to have to think or discuss about what has happened.
- Concerns about police interventions.
- Homophobia.

1.10 School Culture

Feeling safe in school enables CYP to learn and develop in a healthy way. The school climate and culture should promote feelings of emotional, intellectual and physical safety as principal needs (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). However, research intimates many CYP do not feel secure, physically or emotionally, in their setting as the prevailing culture is one where sexual harm has become normalised (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019; Girlguiding, 2021; Lloyd et al., 2020; Ofsted, 2021;). School staff and CYP have confirmed HSB are a part of everyday life for CYP, so much so many CYP feel there is little point in reporting (Ofsted, 2021). Allnock and Atkinson (2019) found when CYP reached secondary age they were more likely to report or seek help from a teacher if they experienced HSB if they were younger. As the CYP became more accustomed to life at secondary school they were less likely to report HSB as they appear to have become desensitised to it. Staff in secondary schools felt this was because there was a 'normalising' affect which they placed on several influences such as music culture and a complacent approach to HSB in schools (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019).

Evidence submitted to the House of Commons (2016) suggests those aged 13-18 often minimise and try to justify gender-based violence against women and girls, viewing many kinds of sexual harassment as routine and even expected. In her submission to the House of Commons (2016) Sundaram wrote of how teenagers would excuse and accept HSB, including rape, in some situations which included when it was felt that a female had behaved in an 'inappropriate' way to a male. Sundaram's (2013) study suggested CYP have traditional views of gender roles highlighting that

20% of boys and 10% of girls felt violence against females was acceptable in some circumstances. These traditional gender expectation scaffold CYP's understanding of what behaviours are considered acceptable (Sundaram, 2014). For example, when girls do not conform to the expected gendered behaviours of a female in a heterosexual relationship this engenders a discourse surrounding them that may result in them being perceived as 'deserving' of any aggressive behaviours directed to them e.g., being called a 'slut' if they have engaged in sexual activity or being blamed if intimate images of them are shared (Sundaram & Sauntson, 2015).

Allnock and Atkinson (2019:11) study echoes this finding that there was a perceived "*hierarchy of harm*" when it came to reporting HSB in schools. They found CYP in their study believed HSB were "*less serious*" than homophobic or racial abuse. With one CYP saying racism was worse than sexual harassment because you are not able to control being born a particular skin colour. Interestingly they were unable to apply this same logic to gender. The CYP in the study said while you cannot choose the colour of your skin you can choose how you behave sexually, implying that you lose any right to protection from harassment if you have been judged to behave in a way that does not fit gendered expectations. Allnock and Atkinson (2019) also found schools' responses to racism were perceived by CYP to be more robust thus reinforcing the message it was a more serious misdemeanour than HSB.

Ofsted (2021:14) reported how some girls felt boys had a "*sense of entitlement*" because they had never been denied anything and there was a feeling of males being superior in school. Ofsted (2021) found victims of HSB did not want to disclose what had happened to them due to the culture and power dynamic of the school expressing that "*victims do not want to commit social or career suicide*" (Ofsted, 2021:6). Allnock and Atkinson (2019:12) found in addition there is powerful pressure from peers not to report suggesting "*snitches get stiches*" with this fear of being seen as a 'snitch' stopping CYP from seeking help. It also prevented CYP from stepping in to stop, intervene or report when they witnessed HSB as they would rather get into trouble themselves than be seen as a 'grass'.

As outlined in the research above there is recognition that peer-on-peer HSB is happening and does have a harmful impact on CYP. Conroy (2013) writes the literature fails to acknowledge that peer-on-peer HSB is a markedly gendered type of abuse that is used to regulate and emphasise traditional heteronormative gender expectations. This places those who conform to, and perform well at, socially acceptable, heteronormative demonstrations of masculinity in positions of privilege and power (Conroy, 2013). Conroy (2013) proposes viewing HSB through the lens of feminist theories helps to understand the similarities in the wider societal context that marginalises women and where men are placed in positions of dominance. Rahimi and Liston (2009) go further with their findings suggesting HSB are firmly entrenched in a culture of heteronormative sexism and misogyny. They propose HSB aid the propagation, and reinforcement, of hegemonic masculinities and femininities and seeks to remind females of the dominant gender narrative. The imposing of hegemonic masculinity and femininity can be confusing for girls who are told by the dominant culture that they are concurrently meant to be sexually attractive but also maintain 'purity' (Rahimi & Liston, 2009). Females are socialised to place value on how they look and to seek out the male gaze which then adds to the sense of conflict and confusion when they experience threat or distress when experiencing peer-on-peer HSB (Keddie, 2009). At the same time males can dismiss the impact of HSB, as they are socialised to see it as 'banter' that girls enjoy and with any challenger of their behaviours risking social ostracization (Conroy, 2013). If peer-on-peer HSB are not recognised as having the performative purpose of perpetuating hegemonic masculinities and femininities this will hinder the development of suitable interventions and prevent the dominant heteronormative, masculine narrative from changing (Conroy, 2013).

1.11 Staff understanding and response to the issue

Firmin et al. (2019) writes that although there are a few examples of good practice internationally the response to HSB in schools in England is inconsistent. Yet it is professionals working in schools, and the systems surrounding them, that are best placed to recognise, respond and prevent peer-on-peer HSB (Firmin et al., 2019). While CYP have spoken of the frequency of HSB in schools, it is not always reflected

in behaviour and safeguarding reports (Lloyd et al., 2020; Ofsted, 2021). CYP feel staff are unaware of the magnitude of HSB and staff agree they do not have a true understanding of HSB (Lloyd et al., 2020). Research (Firmin, 2017; House of Commons, 2016; Ofsted, 2021) suggested some school personnel minimise the effect of peer-on-peer HSB seeing HSB as 'banter' or part of the cultural norm. Firmin et al. (2019) go onto say HSB were viewed as an individual issue, only affecting those CYP directly involved rather than being viewed as a symptom of a whole-school culture/issue. Firmin (2017) highlights the inconsistencies in addressing HSB in schools citing examples where CYP have been expected to attend the same setting as the person who abused them while in other cases this has led to an exclusion.

Although there has been an increased recognition by those working in education that peer-on-peer HSB is becoming more prevalent (McInnes & Ey; 2020; Ofsted, 2021) those working directly with CYP, and families, have expressed the requirement for more training and support to enable them to develop their own understanding of the issue and so they can appropriately support CYP and families (Ey, McInnes & Rigney 2017). Waters et al. (2021) found adults could be 'blindsided' by the idea that a child could display HSB towards another child and lack of training hindered ability to talk openly about the issue. Training is needed as research suggests (Hackett & Taylor, 2008) school staff have difficulties differentiating between what is considered typical sexual development and HSB. For example, Sun-Hong and Espelage (2012) found if primary age children displayed HSB it was often construed as a bullying or social matter. Because of this HSB were then dealt with outside a child safeguarding paradigm of harm and were not likely to be recognised as behaviours that could cause significant harm (McInnes & Ey, 2020). Yet in schools where the topic of HSB is openly discussed, and challenged, on an ongoing basis, and where records are accurately kept and analysed, school staff were more aware and responsive to the extent and nature of HSB (Ofsted, 2021).

Interventions tend to be reactive rather than preventive and are aimed at the CYP involved rather than taking a whole-school approach (Lloyd, 2019). Firmin et al. (2019) suggest this response is more of a behaviour management approach rather than a

welfare intervention. They propose this is indicative of the lack of clarity that both professionals and policy makers have on what kinds of behaviours are harmful, it implies professionals only need worry about HSB that are unlawful rather than some of what may be considered 'less serious' harassment and fails take a whole-school approach by only focusing on the individuals involved (Firmin et al., 2019). Interestingly Lloyd et al. (2020) found schools taking a well-intentioned zero-tolerance approach to recognising and responding to HSB was a barrier to reporting. This appeared to be because any form of sexual harassment would be met with a sanction that was linked to the school's behaviour policy. While the binary nature of a zero-tolerance policy system can appear to deliver clarity in the decision-making process for school staff it neglects to incorporate that HSB are on a continuum (Hackett, 2010) and it therefore treats all HSB the same not enabling staff to use contextual information and professional judgement. It also allows for the de-contextualising of HSB and lays 'blame' on individuals rather than trying to understand what is going on in the culture around them, which may include harmful gendered-belief systems (Lloyd et al., 2020). While the attraction to zero-tolerance behaviour policies is high internationally research shows (Byer, 2016; Skiba, 2006) they do little to deter, and disproportionately, negatively affect those from minority backgrounds and CYP with SEND. Lloyd et al. (2020) found when a zero-tolerance approach was deployed it placed the burden of reporting on the CYP, which in turn led to reduced disclosures. If the issues of HSB in schools is addressed solely from a behavioural perspective it can miss the opportunity to protect CYP from further harm by failing to recognise need or understand the culture and context of a setting and by failing to be preventative in its approach. Allnock and Atkinson (2019) write when there are more positive pupil-teacher relationships in schools there tends to be fewer behavioural issues in that setting while not having a positive relationship with adults in school was a barrier to disclosure. Where teachers have restricted function for engaging positively with CYP e.g., a zero-tolerance behaviour policy their capacity for relationship building is reduced, which in turn can allow for HSB to remain hidden (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019).

McInnes and Ey (2020) found frontline workers want to know how to best support CYP and families but have expressed they felt under-informed and ill-prepared to respond appropriately, citing a complex range of difficulties such as use of appropriate

language, navigating the high levels of emotions involved and managing the issue in the wider school community. In addition, because of the confidential nature of child protection procedures staff felt they were excluded from any information about action or support for the CYP involved, leaving them unable to ascertain if any preventive action/interventions had been taken and evoking further feelings of disempowerment (McInnes & Ey, 2020; Waters et al., 2021). Ofsted (2021) found some school leaders had more of an understanding of the scale of the issue but suggested this was because they were more likely to deal with confidential safeguarding issues, recognising this knowledge and understanding of what HSB might be did not filter through to the rest of the staff. While this glimmer of recognition is positive it points to the need for staff training and development and a whole-school approach in tackling the culture of HSB in schools. Lloyd et al. (2020) recommends to successfully recognise and tackle a culture of HSB in schools there should be several secure methods for CYP to disclose. They found positive agents for disclosure included good relationships with trusted adults in school, positive experiences of school responding to HSB previously, warm, respectful relationships with staff, anonymous ways to report and a staff member who has a specialist position not connected to managing behaviour (Lloyd et al., 2020).

1.12 Research Rational

As outlined in the research there is an endemic normalising of peer-on-peer HSB (Girlguiding, 2021; Ofsted, 2021) in education settings. Waters et al. (2021) study summarises much of what has been found across the literature. They discovered how culturally peer-on-peer HSB are not commonly seen, heard, or spoken about in schools (Waters et al., 2021). Their initial theme of “*not seeing*” echoes a sense of disbelief and a lack of acceptance that CYP can display HSB while at the same time normalising anything they did see as ‘banter’ or ‘testosterone’. This highlights how an absence of knowledge, understanding and training can cause staff to tolerate HSB as part of a ‘normal’ childhood experience and suggests they themselves subscribe to harmful, gendered stereotypes. Their study attributes “*not hearing*” to a sense of personal vulnerability staff felt when faced with CYP displaying HSB. This may have been based in fears around their own physical safety, potential career damage or possible reputational loss to the school. This was compounded by a perceived lack of

support from external senior leadership. Their final theme of “*not speaking*” reflected the frustration staff felt at the lack of information that was shared from external agencies leading to feelings of disempowerment and confusion about how to best support CYP (Waters et al, 2021:222). Although Waters et al.’s (2022) IPA research offers a significant contribution to the limited literature regarding teachers’ experiences of peer-on-peer HSB there are some limitations to the study. While their small sample size is consistent with a robust IPA study it is open to questions regarding the homogeneous nature of the sample (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2022) as participants worked across three settings that provided provision from primary through to secondary aged-CYP as well as mainstream and special schools. Additionally, while participants from the special schools could reflect on multiple incidents of HSB the participant from the mainstream primary could recall only one. This reduces the theoretical generalisability of this research (Smith et al, 2022).

Peer-on-peer HSB is an under-researched area with the literature predominantly focusing on CYP (Ey & McInnes, 2018). Yet others have an impact on the ecological systems that CYP occupy (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979) ecological systems theory places an educational establishment within a network of interlinked systems; the CYP in the classroom is impacted by a whole-school policies, which is itself moulded by government agenda. CYP are not the only participants in the perpetuation of HSB in education settings, the adults that share and govern the systems they occupy may, inadvertently, be imposing of hegemonic masculinity and femininity of the dominant culture (Conroy, 2013). While not seeking to impose blame research (Firmin et al, 2019; Lloyd et al., 2020; Ofsted, 2021) highlights there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of recognising and responding to HSB. When school staff respond to HSB they report feeling ill-equipped and unsupported to deal with the multifaceted and complex nature of the issue (Waters et al., 2021). Whilst CYP are reporting HSB as a daily occurrence this does not tally with reports from teachers (Ofsted, 2021) who report there are multiple external factors influencing the ecological system over which they have no control and hinders intervention. These include institutional administrative structures and responsiveness, teacher workload, training and existing policies (Meyer, 2008). There is still much to be explored when

considering the perspectives, views and experiences of the adults who co-exist within systems alongside CYP.

1.13 Questions

This research aims to answer the following:

1. What are the lived experiences of adults, who work in the education system, of peer-on-peer HSB?
2. What do these adults feel are the challenges to recognising and intervening appropriately to peer-on-peer HSB?
3. How might the Educational Psychologist contribute to this area?

Chapter Two: Methodology

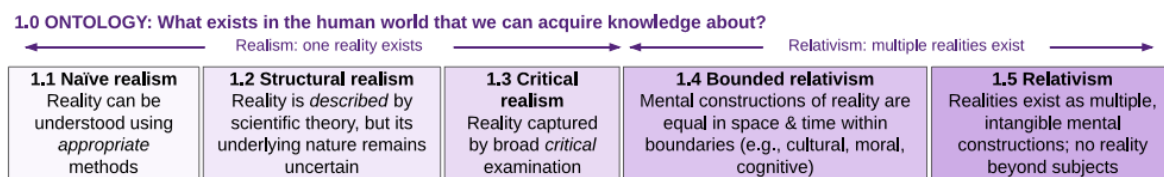
2.1 Introduction

The rationale for the chosen research method is presented in this chapter. It includes a description of the research design, how participants were recruited, data collection and analysis. Methodology is a description of the strategy used to explore a specific research issue and is influenced by the epistemological perspective. Therefore, this chapter will also include the ontological and epistemological positions that underlie the research design. In addition, the notion of quality control, ethical issues, an assessment of the veracity of my findings and the concept of reflexivity will be addressed.

2.2 Ontology and Epistemology

It has been suggested the “*rules of the qualitative research game are laid down by the epistemological and ontological assumptions of different paradigms*” (Mantzoukas, 2004:1004). This proposes the researcher’s epistemological perspective is inextricably linked to their ontological viewpoint so both should be made clear from the beginning of the research as researchers’ methodological choices reveal their dedication to a certain world perspective and how they may learn about it. (Mantzoukas, 2004; Moon & Blackman, 2014). Central to ontology is the study of being (Birks, 2014) and the nature of the world (Moon & Blackman, 2014). Willig (2022:13) suggests the driving question behind ontology is “*What is there to know?*” with Moon and Black (2014) explaining several ontological positions exist and the ontological position of the research could be viewed as being on a continuum between relativism and realism (Figure C).

Figure C: (Moon & Blackman, 2014:1169)



Realist ontology proposes there is a single reality which can be considered, understood and experienced as 'truth'; beyond our experience, the real world exists (Moses & Knutsen, 2019; Willig, 2022). Willig (2022) explains realist ontology upholds the position that the world is composed of structures and objects which cause an interacting relationship with each other. Realist ontology affirms the presence of an observable, objective 'reality; (Moses & Knutsen, 2019; Willig, 2022). Conversely relativism suggests reality is fashioned by the mind, this means there cannot be a single unaffected reality; rather, reality is relative to our perception of it in a particular place and moment (Moon & Blackman, 2014). A relativist ontology casts doubt on the world's "out-there-ness" and emphasises the variety of perspectives that can be used to understand it (Willig, 2022:14).

Critical realism (CR) has been described as an "*all-inclusive philosophy of science*" (Lawani, 2021:320) as it gives a comprehensive account of ontology and epistemology by combining constructivism and positivism therefore declaring an ontological realism and epistemological relativism (Lawani, 2021). To gain a better understanding this approach aims to quantify the underlying causal links between social interactions, events and relationships; knowledge is acquired through observation and interpretation (Fletcher, 2017). Lawani (2021) explains CR was developed by Bhaskar as another possible paradigm other than positivism and interpretivism. Bhaskar (2008) suggests the world's nature cannot be reduced to what we know of reality, making it not viable to render inferences via experimentation, as is seen in natural sciences. He maintained that reality exists unhindered by our concept and knowledge of it and is not visible through directly observing (Lawani, 2021). CR proposes our knowing of the outside world can never be understood perfectly as it is grounded on subjective interpretations that are deficient and moulded by the conceptual frameworks the researcher employs (Moon & Blackman, 2014).

Easton (2010) writes while its use is said to be methodologically underdeveloped CR offers researchers unique options to explore complex organisational occurrences holistically. Schools, and the systems surrounding them, are complex organisations that are impacted by multiple issues such as culture, revenue, policy, statute and

multidisciplinary working (Morgan, 2016). This research aims to explore the experiences of adults working in these complex organisations which are influenced by these unseen factors, seeking to amplify their voice and elicit elements of their understanding. While research in this area has been increasing in recent years the focus has predominantly been on the experiences of CYP or on data collection which is often underpinned by positivist or pragmatism perspectives, where knowledge comes from experiencing the world and the researcher is separate from the process (Lawani, 2021). Contrastingly CR is thought of as a philosophy concerning social structures and human agency, and this interface is utilised as a foundation for the investigation of multifaceted phenomena to theorise the relative interaction of culture, agency and structures (Easton, 2010). A CR approach suggests interpreting the data is necessary to increase understanding of the fundamental structures that produce the phenomena of interest, rather than assuming the data represents a clear illustration of what is occurring while also acknowledging these are subjective and individual (Willig, 2022). Additionally, a research question proposes to explore how EP's might contribute to this area. EPs are agents of change in the education system (Roffey, 2015) and CR can be employed to inform strategic and social change/challenge (Flecher, 2017).

There are concerns raised with the CR approach. For example, the openness of the social world can be problematic for CR researchers who, it is argued, could adopt a realism methodology but still producing divergent causal explanations for the same social phenomenon (Kemp & Holmwood, 2003). So, it should be considered why other approaches such as a phenomenological epistemological position were not taken for this research. Phenomenology is tasked with exploring experience on its own terms with the researcher seeking to understand the meaning of lived experiences directly from participants (Smith et al., 2022). Willig (2022) notes there are similarities to CR e.g., there is an objective reality, but this is individual and subjective however *“phenomenology research is concerned with the quality and texture of experience”* (Willig, 2022:18). However, CR sees the phenomena that have been researched are not entirely constructions, but rather relate to factors or processes that exist apart from us (Sullivan, 2019) and considers the mechanisms that may underpin the phenomenon (Willig, 2022). Sayer (2010) writes according to CR, social phenomena

have internal meaning that is both externally descriptive of them and internally defining of them; because meaning cannot be counted or measured but rather must be understood, it has an interpretive or hermeneutic component. It was felt for the reasons outlined above that CR positioning aligned more closely with the aims and values of this research.

2.3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Thematic analysis, grounded theory, and discourse analysis were among the qualitative methods that were taken into consideration for this research. However, it was judged that IPA (Smith, et al., 2022) would be the most suitable method. IPA is not subject specific and can be used in a variety of research topics (Smith, 2011). IPA aims to take a comprehensive exploration of how people assign meaning to their own experiences while simultaneously endeavouring to give a coherent account of the researcher's own interpretation and understanding (Smith et al., 2022). This hypothesis is rooted on the principle that individuals actively engage with the world, reflecting on their experiences continually to comprehend them (Giorgi, Giorgi & Morley 2017). When considering how IPA aligns with my positionality as a critical realist it should be noted while it is suggested (Oxley, 2016) that IPA's philosophical position should normally be located somewhere between constructionism and CR, IPA is receptive to a variety of epistemological stances. IPA's position is each person will have individual experiences of the same phenomena of interest which suggests there is likely to be many realities related to it (Smith et al., 2022). This aligns with the CR philosophy, is congruent with the aims of this research and using IPA as a method. IPA is rooted in philosophy and three core concepts should be explored to understand IPA and how it fits with this research; phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith, 2011).

2.3.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology has been developed by several key individuals beginning with Husserl (1859–1938) and progressed by Heidegger (1889–1976) and his followers (Langdridge, 2007). Smith et al., (2022:7) stated "*phenomenology is a philosophical*

approach to the study of experience". This is important from a psychological perspective as phenomenology can offer a rich stream of ideas on exploring and understanding personal experiences (Smith et al., 2022).

In the early 1900's popular positivist perspective highly valued scientific and quantifiable knowledge (Smith et al., 2022). Husserl (2012) offered phenomenology as an alternative advocating for the phenomenological attitude whereby, using reflexivity and intentionality, the researcher studies the meaning of human experience (Langdrige, 2007). Husserl (2012) proposed 'bracketing' as a means of doing this. Bracketing involves deferring judgement regarding the natural world to concentrate on analysing the phenomena of interest (Langdrige, 2007; Smith et al., 2022). By doing this Husserl (2012) considered it was feasible to understand the 'essence' of the phenomena of interest, thus determining its fundamental characteristics, structural elements and underlying meaning. Husserl argued these 'essences' could speak to the universal meaning of a phenomena of interest as they transcended the individual/context (Husserl, 2012; Larkin, Eatough & Osborn, 2011). It has been suggested that to 'bracket' in phenomenology is a type of 'closure' but bracketing is the suspension of preconceived ideas, and allowing them to be examined, rather than eliminated so assumptions can be exposed and engaged with (Larkin et al., 2011).

Phenomenology continued to be advanced by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre (Smith et al., 2022). Heidegger departed from Husserl's notion of bracketing believing instead that individuals cannot be meaningfully removed from their context (Langdrige, 2007). Contextual factors can include cultural, personal, local history, local and governmental policy (Willig, 2022); all of which are influencing contextual factors in this research. Heidegger proposed the notion of 'dasein' to aid our understanding of how our relationship with the world is constantly impacted by context, situation, people and perspectives (Larkin et al., 2011). Heidegger suggested (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006) we cannot temporarily step outside our inner-world to partake in relationships with those around us because 'relatedness-to-the-world' is a core aspect of our nature.

This has implications for the researcher who is also in relationship with the world around them. My research aims to explore personal experiences and perceptions of individuals in response to the phenomena of interest and like Heidegger I consider that it is not fully possible suspend our judgement completely and only active attempts can be made to do this (Smith et al., 2022). While researching experience can be complex, the aim of this research is to elicit an account that is as close to the experience as possible (Smith, 2011) and Heidegger argued while it was not completely possible to defer judgement of the natural world this can be sought via reflective and reflexive practices (Smith et al., 2022). These can be seen in extracts of my reflective journal and through the practice of regular supervision. It has been suggested (Smith et al., 2022) due to its exploratory approach and attention to how people attach meaning to their experiences, IPA's phenomenological approach has been demonstrated to be beneficial with understudied populations and phenomena. Due to the paucity of literature in this field, this was thought to be especially relevant for this study.

2.3.2 Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is concerned with interpretation and has its geneses in the analysis of biblical transcripts (Langdrige, 2007). The development of hermeneutics has been associated predominantly with four theorists: Schleiermacher, Heidegger, Gadmer and Ricouer (Smith et al., 2022). When Heidegger presented his concept of dasein he made the interpretation of sense making core to phenomenological inquiry in psychology thus bridging-the-gap between hermeneutics and phenomenology (Smith et al., 2022). Heidegger proposed to understand a phenomena an investigation must be undertaken but with the awareness that researchers brought with them their own bias (Smith et al., 2022). Unlike the purpose of science, understanding is not rooted in the production of truths, instead it is dependent on culture and context with Gadamer and Heidegger arguing the foundation of human existence is understanding (Langdrige, 2007).

From a phenomenological perspective it is through conversations that a shared understanding can reveal something that was previously concealed (Langdrige,

2007). A semi-structured interview was used as a device for allowing a conversation to be held as part of a genuine attempt to elicit an understanding of the participants experiences whilst recognising my own position as researcher. Gadamer explained (Langdridge, 2007) understanding oneself is an essential part of this process since we always produce discourse from a stance that is influenced by our history and culture. As a result, understanding is always influenced by our preconceptions and past which can be a barrier to the interpretive process (Smith et al, 2022). IPA is dynamic in its nature as there is an interaction between the researcher, participant and data (Shaw, 2019). The researcher encourages participants to explore and reflect on experiences and what they mean (interpreting) whilst at the same time attempting to an act of interpretation as researchers via sense making of what has been shared (Shaw, 2019). This dual interpretive role is known as the 'double hermeneutic' and is a core component of IPA (Smith et al., 2022). It is non-linear meaning that the process of interpretation in IPA shifts between the part and the whole at several layers. This is because IPA proposes it is not possible to understand the whole without understanding the part, and vice-versa (Smith et al., 2022). The double hermeneutic (Shaw, 2019) is demonstrated in this research. This can be seen in the analysis chapter, systemic approaches (audit trail), reflective journal and appendices.



Reflective Box

In considering the method chosen for this research the 'double hermeneutic' of IPA feels like a good fit. As a researcher, I recognise that I am interacting with the participant and data, encouraging participants to explore and reflect on their experiences and what they mean (interpreting). In tandem I am attempting an act of interpretation via sense making of what has been shared (Shaw, 2019).

2.3.3 Idiography

Smith et al., (2022) state the third influencing factor on IPA is idiography. In contrast to the more popular 'nomothetic' approaches taken in psychology, where there is an appetite to establish conventional laws of behaviour at either a population or group level, idiography seeks the particular (Smith et al., 2022). IPA is interested in delving deeply into specific situations to comprehend how certain individuals have interacted with specific circumstances. While it does not completely avoid generalisations, it carefully moves from specific instances with extreme caution to broader assertions and demands a systematic and thorough analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2015).

Central to IPA is the commitment to understanding how the phenomena of interest have been understood by those experiencing it in a particular set of circumstances. This is in line with this research, which aimed to help each participant make sense of what they found to be the facilitators and challenges to recognising and intervening appropriately when working with CYP who displayed peer-on-peer HSB. To do this IPA uses purposefully selected, small samples that can be as small as one person (Smith et al., 2022). An idiographic approach can be seen in this research via the recruitment of a homogeneous, small-scale group of adults who have all experienced the phenomena of interest, deployment of semi-structured interviews and the individual analysis of each interview (Appendix H-L)

2.3.4 Limitations of IPA

IPA is a flexible method of working that seeks to gain an understanding of an individual's perspective on the phenomena of interest through facilitating a medium by which the participant can speak and analysing their descriptive language (Smith et al., 2022). However, it is this very flexibility and lack of prescriptiveness that has led to criticism and suggestions that IPA is not scientific and lacks replicability (Larkin et al., 2006). Giorgi (2010) writes to be scientific rules are needed so an experiment can be measurable, quantifiable and repeatable. Giorgi (2010) suggests this perceived deficit in IPA casts doubt on its methodological foundations. Larkin et al., (2006) counter this by highlighting that IPA places high value on rigour, which should not be confused with

flexibility. It is the ability to be rigorous alongside a flexible method of working that allows for the emergence of the unanticipated and uncovering of the previously unknown (Schiff, 2019).

Willig (2022) writes a challenge of IPA is it is difficult to communicate the nuances of experience easily and language itself may limit the sharing and create barriers for many reasons such as nervousness about speaking, language barriers, researcher skill or cognitive difficulties. Yet others have argued (Eatough & Smith, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2015) that language and experience are interwoven with meaning-making being supported by narrative. There is correlation in how individuals discourse about their feelings and thoughts about an experience and through IPA it is hoped the researcher can elicit an understanding of participant's sense-making (Smith, 2011; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Willig's (2022) concerns about accessibility have been challenged by the range of research undertaken using IPA. This has included social anxiety, SEMH, arthritis, pain, heart disease, neurology, cancer, Alzheimer's and psychotherapy research (Smith, 2011; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Willig (2022) also highlights IPA does not attend to why an individual might experience the phenomena of interest suggesting that to be a valid research method there should be attempts made to understand the socio-cultural context which may have contributed to the phenomena. However, it is argued the phenomenological foundations of IPA do address this (Eatough & Smith, 2017).

2.4 Procedure and Data collection

Data collection took place in June and July 2022. For IPA to be effective, a rich source of data is required where participants may freely express themselves, talk about their experiences, and have opportunities to reflect (Smith et al., 2022). As part of its methodology IPA does not demand the use of interviews, it is possible to collect data by using other methods such as personal journals (Smith et al., 2009). However, IPA frequently favours using interviews as a tool for data collection as it gives the researcher flexibility through its in-the-moment connection with the interviewee, enabling them to examine their lived experience in more detail (Eatough & Smith, 2017). Instead of utilising a creative medium, structured interview or journal, a semi-

structured, one-on-one interview was thought to be a more suitable form of data collecting for this research. Where structured interviews might inadvertently limit participants and potentially prevent the exploration of important subjects, semi-structured interviews give the researcher flexibility to explore participant experiences while retaining some level of focus (Smith et al., 2022).

Smith et al. (2022:54) suggested the semi-structured interview is a “*conversation with a purpose*” where its strength lies in the freedom it gives participants to speak. However, the two-way nature of conversation should be considered, how questions are framed, non-verbal-cues and personal views can all impact on the quality of an interview so must be attended to by the researcher (King & Horrocks, 2010). This was something I was aware of and did not share my views or opinions during the interviews. The questions designed for the interview were based on relevant research and for use during interviews an interview schedule was created (Appendix F). The interview schedule was a tool intended to be used malleably e.g., some questions were not asked and the order was flexible. This was because the lead for discussion came from participants which influenced how conversations unfolded.

At the start of each interview participants were given a verbal and written briefing and given time to ask questions. They were requested to give written consent, this included consent for recording (Appendix C). Using a Dictaphone and laptop the interviews were recorded. The recording was stopped at the end of the interview. Participants were debriefed, thanked and retold of their right to withdraw. A transcription service was used to transcribe all interviews and produce written transcripts of the interviews. Protocol for this can be found in Appendix D-E. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, redacting any identifying information. As IPA is predominantly concerned with content particulars such as pauses, laughing or sighing were additionally transcribed (Smith et al., 2022). To aid transparency and auditing (Flick, 2018) each line of the transcripts were numbered. I reflected on the process after each interview, the interactions and relationship between myself and the participant, recording this in my reflective journal (Appendix M). This has been a helpful process in developing my interview skills and facilitating placing the analysis in context.



Reflective Box

The interview schedule was something I felt took a long-time. I relied heavily on the literature/research to guide my thinking but also had several discussions with my supervisor and peers. This enabled me to refine and redraft my questions, which happened several times. I was keen to ensure my questions were open and prompted discussion, enabling participants to speak freely and explore their experiences. In essence my desire was for the interview schedule to be an invitation to speak without closing-down conversation or inferring judgement.

2.4.1 Sample

As they are idiographic in nature small sample sizes are used in IPA research as the research aims to elicit the detailed perceptions and understandings of a specific group instead of making hasty generalisations (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Smith et al., (2022) state there is no formula for how many participants are required for an IPA study. There have been meaningful studies with as few as one participant and others have double-digits (Smith & Osborn, 2011). Clarke (2010) recommends for a professional doctorate study a sample size of 4-10 is appropriate. While there was balance to be found between generating enough data there was also concern that data overload could have distracted away from the detail needed to be given to each individual case (Noon, 2018). Following discussions with my supervisor it was decided six (5+1 pilot) participants would be recruited. While a considerable amount of data was produced this small sample size permitted me to dedicate myself to a rigorous, in-depth and detailed investigation of each interview which is a fundamental IPA principle (Noon, 2018; Smith et al., 2022).

2.4.2 Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Smith et al., (2022) underline the importance of using a homogeneous sample to improve the significance of the research through this purposeful, rather than random, sampling. To meet this requirement, a homogeneous sample was sought. The criteria were:

- 1) Is currently working in a mainstream secondary school within the UK.
- 2) Have direct experience of working with CYP who have displayed peer-on-peer HSB and the systems that support them.
- 3) Have worked within these systems for a minimum of two years. This was to ensure they had the experiences, and relationships with CYP, to reflect on.

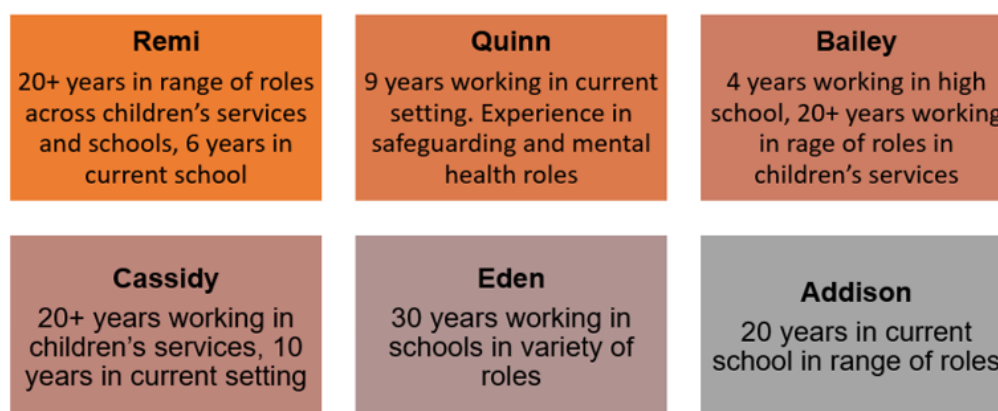
2.4.3 Recruitment

Approaches were made to potential participants via LA email systems. Potential participants were sent an information sheet detailing the aims and intent of this research, inquiring if they had the experience of working directly with CYP who have displayed peer-on-peer HSB and if they would be willing to be interviewed. Nine responded. Out of the nine one withdrew prior to the interview and two were with staff members I would now be working with closely in another capacity which in discussions with the EPS and my supervisor it was felt was ethically unwise to interview. The six remaining participants were recruited for interview and an overview of their demographics are outlined in Appendix G and Figure D. Some details have been omitted/changed to maintain anonymity. A time and place that was convenient to the participant was arranged for the interview and a copy of the consent form and information sheet (Appendix B and C) emailed so they had time to read and ask any questions before interview.

2.4.3 Participant Profiles

All participants were employed in a mainstream UK secondary school at the time of interview.

Figure D: Summary of participant demographics



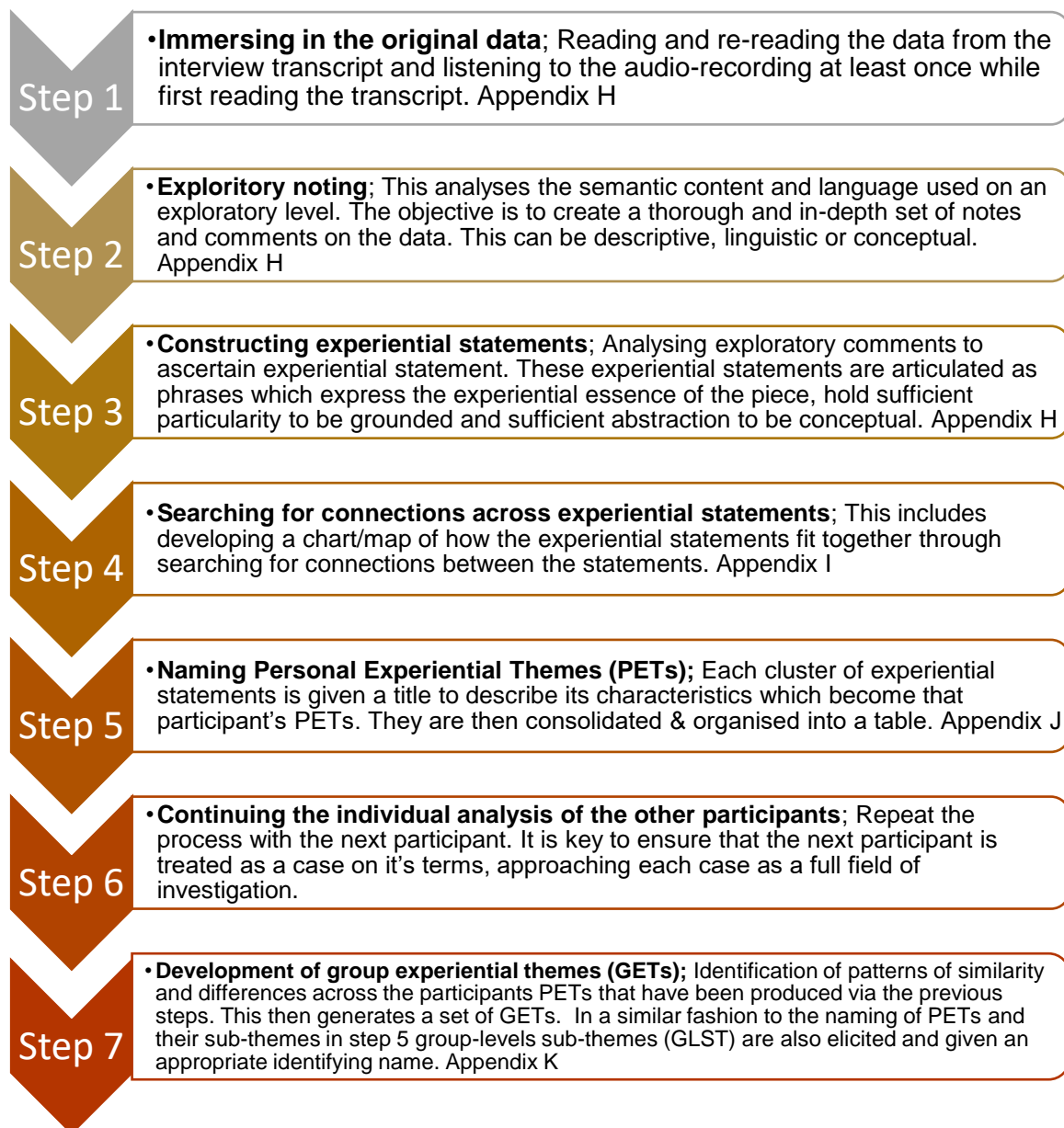
2.4.4 Pilot

Following ethical approval, a pilot study was undertaken. A vital element of research design is a pilot study since it can raise the standard of the study and increase its reliability and validity (Gudmundsdottir & Brock-Utne, 2010). A pilot study aims to ensure the research's questions and methods are designed to elicit the necessary data (Willig, 2022). Pilot studies provide the potential to identify possible interview-related difficulties that could otherwise be missed e.g., bias management, interview length, pace. This allows for any potential changes to be made prior to research commencing in full (Gudmundsdottir & Brock-Utne, 2010). Pilot studies allow for the researcher to practice interview skills, which is crucial as researcher skill is a significant aspect of the data collection process (Malmqvist, Hellberg, Möllås, Rose & Shevlin, 2019). The pilot study participant gave consent to participate in the main study. As there were no material changes following the pilot study the decision was taken to retain their data as part of the main study.

2.4.5 Data Analysis

I began by relistening to the interviews to familiarise myself with the data and check for errors in transcription before starting the analytical process (Shaw, 2019). Smith et al.'s (2022) steps for analysis were then followed for each of the interviews (Figure E). While the steps appear to be linear it was felt that at times to be more of a 'funnelling spiral' which to also understand part-whole relationships kept the hermeneutic circle in mind (Smith et al., 2022; Willig, 2022).

Figure E: IPA Steps Summary (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2022:78-100)



The final GETs and GLST are written up in the analysis section of this thesis with corresponding quotes (Smith et al., 2022; Shaw, 2019).

2.5 Ethics

To ensure validity, researchers must clearly address ethical issues in their research (Flick, 2018). Ethical considerations are of particular importance when conducting research within a complex area such as peer-on-peer HSB so additional care must be

taken when approaching sensitive subjects. Ethical considerations were central to the formation of this study from its inception and continued throughout. As qualitative research is exploratory in nature, inviting itself into the lives of its participants, this calls for a dynamic, reflexive and robust response to the ethical concerns that may be known but also allow for the unexpected (Flick, 2018; Wiles, 2013). It is fundamental that participants and researcher are both safeguarded from harm, psychological and physical, for a research project to be ethically sound in its design. The British Psychological Society's (British Psychological Society, 2021) recommendations are unambiguous in this regard, emphasising the significance of consent, avoiding deceit, debriefing, maintaining confidentiality and having the option to withdraw from the study at any stage without reason. The University of Sheffield's School of Education Ethics Review Panel gave ethical approval (Appendix A) for this research, which was also conducted with a strong adherence to the Code of Human Research Ethics (British Psychological Society, 2021).

Interviews are conversations with a reason where predominantly the researcher benefits rather than the participant, therefore it is especially crucial that participants do not feel used or disempowered and are not harmed by a researcher who wants to use their stories for their own purposes (King & Horrocks, 2010; Smith et al., 2022). There were no concerns around competency, so each participant was able to give competent consent to participate. Participants were completely informed regarding all facets of the research via the research information sheet (Appendix B) which was emailed as part of the recruitment phase, so they had time to read and reflect on its contents before deciding about participation. Before each interview time was given for participants to ask any questions about this and written consent was obtained. This written consent (Appendix C) indicated several points including that they understood the voluntary nature of participation, their right to withdraw and confidentiality.

Safeguarding procedures were followed in-line with LA and University of Sheffield policies, this was outlined to participants at the beginning of interview. The management of personal data was paramount to safeguard anonymity and confidentiality and how this was achieved is outlined in the Data Management Plan

(Appendix D). As the topic is of a sensitive nature there was a possibility that the interview may cause participants or researcher to feel distressed or uncomfortable. Ethics approval (Appendix A) demonstrates steps were taken to mitigate the risk of harm to all parties. Interestingly several of the participants noted they felt they enjoyed the interview process, reflecting they valued the time to think and discuss their thoughts, feelings and experiences.

Even when consent is freely given, and the factors outlined above accounted for, the qualitative researcher must also consider potential power imbalances between themselves and participants (Willig, 2022). Wiles (2013) highlights schools are examples of where gaining meaningful consent can be difficult due to a culture of compliance, where someone in a position of power may have championed the project giving little realistic room to refuse. To ensure this research was not hindered by gatekeepers in this way, approaches to participants were not made through a hierarchically avenue and instead were made directly. The aim of this research is for the unheard voices of participants to remain central. By keeping focus of the process on participants and remembering the privilege it is to be invited to hear their stories, is one-way to address power imbalances and place value on their voice (King & Horrocks, 2010; Sullivan & Forrester, 2019). King and Horrocks (2010:48) see rapport building as a “*key ingredient*” in successful interviewing and Smith et al. (2022) suggest rapport building can help redress any power imbalances. Time was taken to build rapport with participants. This included before the interview but was also considered in interactions beforehand and with flexibility of arrangements.

2.6 Reflexivity

Bruner wrote “*we live in a sea of stories*” (Bruner, 1996:147). Knowledge and meaning are generated as we navigate cultural reality. By telling stories, humans construct reality and give it meaning, utilising narrative to understand the world. Through our experience and interactions, we gather knowledge that aids in our comprehension of both human nature and the world (Gergen, 2015). As a researcher it is important to acknowledge that findings stem from our own views and assumptions; it is not possible to conduct this research in a vacuum as a researcher is unable to exclude themselves

from the research process. Tracy (2010) suggests self-reflexivity is a key component to qualitative research. Tracy (2010) goes on to explain that reflexivity can be characterised as both a crucial component of comprehending one's own bias and the influence of emotions on these as well as the capacity to question in a way that allows a stepping-back to consider the data. In IPA, where the researcher actively strives to utilise interpretation within the method, reflexivity is a crucial element of qualitative research (Finlay, 2008). Finlay (2008) explains the purpose of reflexivity is not to abandon personal opinions, but to make a conscious effort to employ pre-existing personal and theoretical concepts in a way that gives participants' experiences significance and might also add to current theory. Using self-reflexivity to become aware of our biases it is possible to try to separate these from the phenomenon of interest (Willig, 2022).

Quality in research is aided through personal reflexivity. As a reflective practitioner, a researcher must examine how their actions have affected the study and how their privileged position, unique circumstances, or past experiences may have had an impact on the research they are currently conducting (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). Treharne and Riggs (2015) write personal reflexivity is the ongoing inquiry into how the researcher's identity affects the research process and advise keeping a reflective journal/diary during the research process. A reflective journal has been kept, excerpts of which can be seen throughout this report, to aid transparency. This has been of particular importance as I have experience working in systems where CYP have displayed peer-on-peer HSB, supported adults who work with CYP who display HSB and have worked in the discipline of Forensic Psychology.

2.7 Quality

Like any other research, high-quality qualitative research should have a distinct research area that demonstrates the research is timely, original, rigorous and relevant (Birks, 2014; Lingard, 2015). The concepts of validity and reliability have been problematic for qualitative researchers due to its interpretive positioning so elicits questions when considering quality especially when held in contrast to quantitative research (Willig, 2022). Willig (2022) goes on to suggest using a framework to evaluate

reliability, validity, generalisability and objectivity. Several frameworks have been developed and can be used flexibly with differing methodologies (Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Yardley, 2000). However, it should be considered that all measures of reliability and validity have their limitations and ought to be viewed as means of enhancing rather than demonstrating the reliability and validity of measurements: there are no assurances and no measurement is perfect (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013). To facilitate the evaluation of quality in qualitative research, Yardley (2000 & 2015) suggests four principal concepts: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence and impact and importance. How these have been demonstrated will be explored below.

Sensitivity to context can be demonstrated in several different ways (Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2015). This was initially explored through familiarising myself with existing literature on peer-on-peer HSB to ensure I was familiar with the wider context in which this issue sat and engaging thoroughly with literature that explored IPA's theoretical foundations. Indeed, the selection of IPA itself corresponds to the need for sensitivity because it is founded on the necessity for contextual awareness and dedication to the idiographic and specific (Smith et al., 2022). At the same time a good qualitative study must demonstrate that it is sensitive to the viewpoint and sociocultural setting of its subjects with potential power dynamics considered (Yardley, 2015). This was addressed through rigorous research of schools and LA context/demographics and by not working within settings I am placed in. Sensitivity in terms of data starts with data collection where rapport building, attunement and distress protocols were all attended to (King & Horrocks, 2010). Researchers should show sensitivity to the data during analysis and reporting by giving clear links to the source material (Smith et al., 2022). This allows consumers of the data to consider the interpretations and conceive of alternatives and is why there is a high number of verbatim extracts within this text.

Commitment has been described (Yardley, 2000) as prolonged involvement with the subject alongside the acquisition of skills needed to competently deploy the method employed and comprehensive data immersion over a significant period. This was achieved through the reading outlined above, regular supervision, using a research

journal and, as Smith (2011) emphasises the importance of eliciting good data, a pilot study to help refine technique. It has been suggested (King & Horrocks, 2010; Smith et al., 2022; Yardley, 2015) rigour can be attained by carefully choosing participants who meet specific inclusion criteria, using an interview protocol that is based on the study's objectives, consistency in questioning/probes used during interview and carefully analysing the data to produce an adequate interpretive product. This was adhered to as participants were recruited from a homogenous group, by using an interview schedule/prompts designed to 'dig-deeper' (Smith et al., 2022) and by using verbatim quotes in the analysis section.

Validity is an important construct of IPA with Smith et al. (2022:153) promoting the use of an independent audit as "*a really powerful process to help enhance confidence in the validity in qualitative research*". This audit should be a paper trail that can trace the evolution of the research clearly from proposal to final report as such this research provides a paper trail of supporting material. This paper trail also aids transparency (Flick, 2018). Yardley (2015) suggests credibility safeguards enhance transparency, so this paper trail has been available for my supervisor to check materials and where appropriate peers have also checked/discussed materials.

Finally, Yardley (2015:268) states impact and importance should be considered as "*a key indicator of worthwhile research*". This impact can be to the community, profession, or individuals. This research has sought to attend to this aspect of quality criteria since its inception with the research questions designed to consider what the role of the EP could bring to this issue to individuals, professionals and the wider societal context and through shining a spotlight on a worthy topic (Tracy, 2010). This can be seen in the analysis and conclusions section.

Chapter Three: Analysis

This chapter will present a phenomenological and interpretative narrative of research findings using IPA guidelines (Smith et al., 2022) following a progressive method (Figure E) which began with a detailed individual analysis of individual participant's interview before engaging in group-level analysis. This allows focus to shift from the individual to the shared experience and to move from the phenomenological to interpretive with the aim of identifying common themes across participants (Smith et al., 2022).



Reflective Box

As I start the analysis phase of the research I have mixed emotions; relieved that I have data but also overwhelmed. I enjoyed the interview process and finding out about participants and their experiences. This is not often something we have time for with staff so am mindful of what a privilege it has been to do this piece of work. Smith et al. (2022) say it is normal for novice users of IPA to feel overwhelmed at the prospect of analysis which is reassuring. There is a lot of data, and it feels like a lot to get through. I wonder if some of my feelings are rooted in wanting to make sure that I ensure the participants' voices are heard in a respectful and thoughtful way. That can feel strangely like a burden and exciting at the same time; a burden because I want to 'do-right' by my participants and exciting because I feel they have lots of valuable insights.

3.1 Results

Six GETs were elicited from this process. Each contained several GLST each (Table 2). Each GET and GLST will be presented in-turn and explored narratively. It is acknowledged that GET's are a personal interpretation and other researchers may have drawn different conclusions from participants' stories. Although the analysis process divided the GET's there are many commonalities between them, and this is clear throughout the narrative account. Therefore, the holistic experience and the hermeneutic circle is a crucial factor when evaluating GETs. Summary tables are provided for each GET to show the convergence and divergence across the GLST's as while IPA analysis established shared GET's, it should also demonstrate what this looks like for individuals (Smith, 2011). These patterns of convergence and divergence between participants within each GET will be discussed in each section. Verbatim examples from participants are included and were chosen as the best illustration the PET/GLST. Care has been taken to proportionally sample quotes from all participants so their voices can equitably be heard. Pseudonyms were used to protect anonymity and sensitive data which was redacted in the transcripts represented as XXX. Quotes from interviews may occasionally be edited for clarity while maintaining the integrity of the original text. The use of "... " will be used to denote omitted data. Full quotes can be seen in Appendix L.

Table 3: Summary of GET's and GLSTs

GET	Group-Level-Sub-Theme
3.2: RESPONDING TO HSB	3.2.1: Responding to HSB is complex, multifaceted and variable 3.2.2: School systems, policies and procedures 3.2.3: Competing demands, systemic challenges 3.2.4: Pride in the response to HSB 3.2.5: Concerns that responses could have a harmful, stigmatising affect
3.3: CULTURAL INFLUENCES, SOCIETAL CHANGES, COMPLEX SITUATIONS	3.3.1: HSB are perpetuated through societal/cultural expectations 3.3.2: Online challenges 3.3.3: A collective cultural shift is needed 3.3.4: Gendered interventions 3.3.5: The tide is starting to turn
3.4: TRAINING AND AWARENESS	3.4.1: A whole school approach is needed 3.4.2: Training needs are dynamic 3.4.3: Training/awareness has elicited discomfort/challenge 3.4.4: Training and awareness need to extend beyond school and into the community
3.5: RELATIONAL APPROACHES	3.5.1: Schools are negotiators of multiple complex relationships 3.5.2: A holistic approach is needed 3.5.3: Existing relationships can be valuable tools to elicit change
3.6: EXTERNAL SUPPORT	3.6.1: Clearer guidance, more support 3.6.2: External support and resources are highly valued 3.6.3: Unrealistic expectations 3.6.4: Engagement with external/specialist provision can feel confusing/frustrating 3.6.5: Overburdened services
3.7: STAFF WELLBEING	3.7.1: Supervision and protective factors 3.7.2 There is a personal, physical and psychological impact 3.7.3 Personal reflections



Reflective Box

As I did not transcribe the data I felt that it was important for me to listen and re-listen to the interviews to emerge myself in them. I had been concerned that by using a transcriber I would miss an important stage of the process however I do feel that I have been able to mitigate for that through this process and from going through the transcripts line-by-line to ensure there were no mistakes. The process of IPA is quite helpful for breaking it down as the aim is to view transcripts individually as a stand-alone piece of work. I found this to be a helpful approach as it allowed for me to solely focus on the transcripts I was working on without having to link it to the others. I tried to be open in my interpretation of the data rather than imposing external thoughts/opinions. To do this I refrained from referring to the literature review or from engaging in further research during this process.

3.2: RESPONDING TO HSB IS COMPLEX

Table 4: Pattern of Convergence and Divergence GET 3.2

GET 3.2: RESPONDING TO HSB IS COMPLEX					
Group-Level-Sub-Theme	3.2.1: Responding to HSB is complex, multifaceted and variable	3.2.2: School systems, policies and procedures	3.2.3: Competing demands, systemic challenges	3.2.4: Pride in the response to HSB	3.2.5: Concerns that responses could have a harmful, stigmatising affect
Quinn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cassidy	✓	✓	✓		✓
Remi	✓	✓	✓		
Bailey	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Addison	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eden	✓	✓	✓		

This GET was interpreted across participants. I recognised there were many interacting layers, factors and influences when considering the response to HSB. This seemed to stem from the relative 'newness' of the issue combined with its sensitive nature that appeared to me to be impacted by an innumerate number of variables such as staffs' attitudes, families' response/attitudes, interpretation by CYP and systems that scaffolded responses. It felt as if there was a sense threaded through this GET that schools were being reactive and responding to an issue that has been highlighted through culture changes. That schools are evolving in line with a constantly changing landscape, adapting systems, policies and approaches in tandem with that cultural shift to develop understanding. There was recognition that there have been positive changes in the way schools responded to incidents of HSB.

3.2.1: Responding to HSB is complex, multifaceted and variable

This GLST was found across all participants and suggests there are many influencing factors to how a staff member, or school, might respond to peer-on-peer HSB, probably because there is no standardised guidance. As such their responses were subjective and dependent on personal experience, understanding and perspective. Indeed, a response relied on recognising something that was completely out of alignment with the experience of some staff. Remi:

“you forget how sheltered some staff might be...have never dealt with anything of a serious nature have never come across it in their own personal lives so some of it was really difficult for them” (R:196-199)

Quinn echoes this:

“I think the understanding of thresholds are different, if you hear something going on between two young people it can sound really shocking” (Q:203-206)

While I noted Quinn and Remi thought that the variable responses seen were due to a lack of understanding or lack of awareness of need. I considered there might be differing perceived purposes of staff roles and responsibilities when responding to HSB. This was something Cassidy thought could be a barrier too:

“when we do certain training I do think some people are more enthusiastic than others. Some people see it as more as their responsibility than the others do. Some people just feel the need to keep the teaching going because in their mind is what they are there for” (C:535-540)

Responses to peer-on-peer HSB came from other sources such as CYP and families whose responses seemed to be as variable and complex as staff. I noticed this had an almost symbiotic relationship impacting the school's own response as they navigated complex situations to safeguard CYP and find resolution. Remi, Bailey and Quinn noticed this with Addison commenting:

“what one parent’s tolerance for what they think is okay compared to another parent’s is very very different so actually the landscape that we’re dealing with is more about the parents sometimes, one parent thinks this is absolutely not acceptable whereas another will think that is totally normal teenage behaviour so when we’re dealing with those parents, you can have one who’s baying for blood and ‘this is a police matter this is a crime’ where the other parent just says ‘it’s okay it’s banter you’re victimising my child’ so the school finds themselves in a position now where we’re almost the negotiator of a of a path forward we’re assessing a risk, managing the parents, managing the two students in school, three students, four students, and trying to keep everybody happy and find a reasonable resolution.” (A:98-116)

What appeared to me to be a challenge to responding to peer-on-peer HSB was CYP reporting it. It was universally acknowledged by participants that many of the behaviours of concerns would be unlikely to be directly witnessed by staff and therefore relied on CYP reporting. I noted while Bailey, Addison and Remi stated reporting rates have increased, reporting is still a concern and staff are aware they are responding to what has been disclosed but believe this underrepresents prevalence. Eden reported:

“I’m sure there’s a lot of girls who would say ‘oh yeah, I get commented on a daily basis’ but won’t report it so, we can only deal with those that have been reported on...but I imagine that’s the tip of the iceberg.”

(E:380-386)

The use of imagery here seems to signify the minutiae of the known in comparison to the magnitude of the unknown. Remi also questioned why more CYP were not making HSB known, but there was a desire to want to know with Addison welcoming the notion of increased reporting. These perspectives resonated with me and adding to an overarching feeling of HSB being unseen and complex, therefore making responding to HSB complicated for participants. Responding to HSB appears to be a complex picture that requires a nuanced approach and is influenced by many factors such as understanding and recognition which suggests responding to HSB needs to be robust and multifaceted.

3.2.2: School systems, policies and procedures

This GLST was found across all participants who spoke of the systems in place in schools that were mobilised to respond to peer-on-peer HSB. It was interesting to observe each of the establishments had procedures in place and the approaches were slightly different. I feel this to be representative of where they are on their own journey with responding to HSB and their approach. School systems have adapted to be able to recognise and record peer-on-peer HSB and systems have been put in place to record and categorise such behaviours. These changes have occurred recently but

feel like tangible evidence that there is a shift in understanding and perception of HSB and move towards uncovering the unknown. Quinn and Bailey explain what happens in their schools:

“we have four kind of categories within our peer-on-peer sexualised behaviour kind of categorisation on our online system”. (Q:25-28)

“gender-abuse is now reported as a safeguarding concern from the staff so if they are in a classroom a young person using terms that are inappropriate and sort of gendered...they will report that not only as a behaviour issue it will show up as a safeguarding concern and that data’s then reported to the Headteacher” (B:208-215)

I wondered if the understanding, involvement and response of the Headteacher gives ‘status’ to the seriousness of the issue and if the involvement/support of SLT helped move the conversation/changes surrounding HSB forward? The role of SLT is something Eden, Cassidy and Addison also appeared to view as a supportive factor when responding to HSB. Addison:

“as a leadership team we have to be prepared to put in a robust response there, if something’s not acceptable, whether it be a language or it is a behaviour or whatever, we have to know what our response is” (A:255-259)

Adapting school systems feels like it has been helpful in terms of eliciting prevalence of the issue. Remi noted this change has enabled staff to have more specific data:

“we weren’t even recording as peer-on-peer or sexual so we changed the recording system so we could have that as a specific concern being reported” (R:173-176)

This gave the impression that as the understanding of need is developing this appears to give schools the information needed to respond. It was interesting to note while all participants discussed school systems responses/adaptations to HSB, Eden spoke of how nothing had changed, how HSB were integrated within their existing behaviour policy and treated as any other behaviour incident:

“we have the same protocol for any I wouldn’t say it’s specific to sexualised behaviour it’s specific to any behaviour that is inappropriate or peer-on-peer in any capacity, I wouldn’t say it was treated differently” (E:129-133)

On reflecting why this might be I wondered if it was indicative of where Eden’s school was in their understanding of HSB? Or if a more behaviourist approach was being deployed? Policies and procedures appear to have been a helpful guide to participants when responding to HSB. However, I would argue a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach cannot tackle HSB and systems must be adapted alongside understanding.

3.2.3: Competing demands, systemic challenges

All participants commented on the many demands and systemic challenges placed on them. This GLST represents the pressures faced and the varied ‘hats’ staff wear as they support CYP, families and community. While the school’s remit is education the feeling intimated from this GLST was one of having to be ‘all-things-to-all-men’ while delivering educational gold-standards. Time and staffing were seen as big factors in being able to respond to HSB. I would argue there was an appetite from participants to want to do more but there was a feeling they were being overwhelmed by the demands of the job and needs of CYP. Cassidy explains:

“within the school things don’t get easier either, things only ever get hard and we always start the year off with a plan but then the needs of

the kids increase increase increase and things only ever get harder.”
(C:791-795)

Cassidy seems to feel competing demands make the role harder and repeating the word ‘increase’ gave rise to a feeling of ever-building pressure. I wondered if this increase in pressure means there is less time for proactive/preventative work and only room for a reactive response. This is something Quinn articulates:

“We’re always firefighting here.” (Q:396)

This use of language felt to me like it represented the unpredictable nature of school life, where there is the heat and pressure of putting out one fire before another pops-up. Having to be in this ‘firefighting’ mode feels like there is little room for being proactive only responsive. Eden felt EPs could get involved and offer support to help at a systemic level as Eden felt EPs would have systemic oversight and help equip schools:

“I don’t know what’s out there...And that’s probably where the EPs are involved.” (E:571-582)

Cassidy and Addison alluded to some staff seeing the main purpose of schools being learning. This appeared to me, and them, to be a barrier to addressing HSB because of the pressure the demands the curriculum induced. Addison:

“being wrapped up in curriculum is a barrier when you’re teaching a lesson so say you’re doing Macbeth and a bit of something’s going on in the corner, the level of professional curiosity to never miss anything that is required it’s a lot and when you’re really really busy I think for some staff, not just here, everywhere do they always want to get into that? Maybe, maybe not. I’d like to think that everybody here

absolutely wants to get into it and they're totally and professionally curious and they always ask questions but when you're really really busy and you're under a million other pressures, I'm not sure.” (A:454-466)

Addison’s reference to ‘pressure’ suggests an insurmountable force. Reflecting on the language and imagery used here it is worthwhile considering how pressure is also transformative; some of our most precious materials and most valuable resources result from pressure. I wonder if when we step into the places of discomfort discussed by Quinn, Addison, Cassidy and Eden we uncover new ways of working and transformation can occur.

3.2.4: Pride in the response to HSB

This GLST is representative of how schools/staff are trying to make changes and their pride in their achievements. There was a collective sense from participants that peer-on-peer HSB may not have previously been recognised as anything but banter/bullying and my observations are schools/staff are making changes alongside developing their own understanding. It feels important to recognise and celebrate successes. Quinn, Bailey and Addison proudly spoke of their achievements in responding to HSB. Addison:

“I feel really proud of our staff actually we’ve certainly come a long way this year. Our understanding of what is acceptable this year has changed dramatically.” (A:519-522)

Quinn and Bailey expressed undertones of pride received from external validation about their work/approaches. Quinn:

“it was going to the sexual harmful behaviour panel but again by that time...we’d already done everything they wanted us to do.” (Q:296-298)

I got the sense this was important to Quinn, Bailey and Remi, that even though they felt confident in their responses to HSB there was reassurance that came from the ‘experts’ validating their responses. I wondered if this was because the issue of HSB is new with little support/guidance for schools? Bailey reflected this might be because how schools respond are different:

“I think we’re doing really well and that we’re really really lucky to have and reflecting on does everybody else have access to that same support, is everybody else working in the same way and what would that look like if they did?...I do think we’re lucky in the school that we work in, the team that we work with and the support that we have.” (B:420-431)

3.2.5: Concerns that responses could have a harmful, stigmatising affect

Only Quinn and Cassidy raised this GLST as a concern, but it resonated with me. It centred around the idea that the discourse and language used when discussing peer-on-peer HSB could be a barrier. They discussed how feelings of discomfort are elicited in others from the idea that CYP can engage in HSB and addressing them potentially has long-term harmful effects for CYP. I wondered if this then leads to a reluctance to want to notice and address HSB because of those fears. Quinn expressed some of those fears:

“his dad was just really disappointed in him worried about his future and things because we have to tell them, we’re going to refer them to sexual harmful behaviour team, the police will be informed that kind of thing and they’re thinking oh gosh is there a criminal record” (Q:579-583)

Cassidy had concerns too:

“we forget that they're really young children that we're working with...so when picked the label 'sexually harmful behaviour' that was going to go on SIMs I remember being part of the meeting I was really shocked and upset by that” (C:658-664)

It is worthwhile considering how the use of language itself can feel challenging and almost abrasive. This is something I feel conflicted about when considering HSB; there is discomfort in the rawness of the terms but also a feeling of not wanting to collude with a narrative that minimises. Both Quinn and Cassidy raise points that helps to keep in focus all CYP affected by HSB without pathologizing them.

3.3: CULTURAL INFLUENCES, SOCIETAL CHANGES, COMPLEX SITUATIONS

Table 5: Pattern of Convergence and Divergence GET 3.3

GET					
3.3 CULTURAL INFLUENCES, SOCIETAL CHANGES, COMPLEX SITUATIONS					
Group-Level-Sub-Theme	3.3.1: HSB are perpetuated through societal/cultural expectations	3.3.2: Online challenges	3.3.3: A collective cultural shift is needed	3.3.4: Gendered interventions	3.3.5: The tide is starting to turn
Quinn	✓	✓		✓	
Cassidy	✓		✓	✓	✓
Remi	✓	✓	✓		
Bailey	✓	✓		✓	✓
Addison	✓	✓	✓		✓
Eden	✓		✓	✓	

This GET examines the influence of culture on peer-on-peer HSB. It considers how that influence comes from a myriad of directions and how there are challenges in adapting to the shifts in culture which I perceived to be both rapid and slow

simultaneously. And while the prevailing culture has a dominate effect on how HSB are perceived, challenged and responded to this GET considers how shifts in prevailing culture are a force for good.

3.3.1: HSB are perpetuated through societal/cultural expectations

This GLST, expressed by all participants, explores the notion that HSB are maintained, and therefore perpetuated, through the dominant cultural expectations of gendered behaviours. There was a sense that many of what were 'low-level' HSB were so expected and normalised they went almost unseen/unrecognised by those demonstrating and experiencing them, meaning HSB are going unrecognised, so behaviours are unchallenged and therefore perpetuated. Quinn recognised this:

“I think that can sometimes be why people don't take it very seriously because they're thinking well they're just kids, you know, they're just trying it on or whatever they're just experimenting.” (Q:371-375)

Quinn's implication was this was a barrier to HSB being addressed. Remi observed a similar phenomenon of HSB being attributed to 'kids being kids' during an experimental phase. My perception was Remi addressing an outdated 'a rite of passage', that was being endured by CYP and societally ignored or normalised. I could feel my own frustrations match Remi's as they discussed their experience:

“that low-level peer-on-peer stuff is there it just doesn't get reported, we'd had a couple of friends who reported breasts being grabbed by a boy but the girl hadn't reported it, like why hasn't she reported it? The friend had mentioned it in passing rather than reporting it as a safeguarding issue the girls didn't want to do anything about it they weren't bothered 'oh it's my friend I'm not bothered' parents were like 'ah it's just kids being kids'.” (R:312-320)

Quinn, Remi, Addison and Eden explored how this societal normalisation of HSB has, and continues to be, a barrier to addressing HSB allowing them to be minimised or go unrecognised. Remi observed:

“I think a lot of schools kind of went ‘oh we don’t have this’ until you start to unpick it and you realise...it wasn’t recognised it wasn’t reported it was massively underreported it was massively normalised”
(R:27-31)

Eden felt there was a gendered aspect to the normalisation of HSB, suggesting there are behaviours that are socially acceptable and tolerated in boys that would not be considered acceptable for girls. Eden:

“it’s predominantly the boys sexualising the girls.... wolf whistle at girls, you make comments of how big their boobs are, how short the skirt is or do they fancy a quickie or get your tits out...you wouldn’t have a girl walking down the road going ‘yeah get your penis out’ it just doesn’t happen” (E:315-331)

Remi, Quinn and Eden’s comments spoke of the expected gendered roles and behaviours that still exist in society and appear to me to be perpetuating HSB through a societal acceptance that ‘boys will be boys’ and the societal expectation that Remi alluded to for girls to accept it uncomplainingly. This may present difficulties for educators as they challenge deeply ingrained language, attitudes and behaviours.

3.3.2: Online challenges

All but Cassidy raised this GLST as a difficulty when addressing HSB and it reflects on the online impact of issues such as sharing images and social media. Participants expressed their own digital difficulties with Quinn and Remi suggesting staff may struggle to keep-up in a fast-paced digital age. Quinn:

“I imagine that you’ll find a lot of other staff like me who are really struggling with the online world” (Q:734-735)

While exploring this issue with Remi there was a sense that the scale of this was beyond their own realm of comprehension with the level of explicit material being accessed by CYP described as “scary”. Remi:

“we’ve had an increase of been aware of students accessing not just porn not just hardcore porn some very explicit what do they call it, Class-A or something like that? I’ve had children who have watched small children being raped by children who have taken part in supplying images within these networking groups...how they found their way onto this where do they know where...how have they accessed that? You know.....Scary” (R:495-505)

I considered if Quinn and Remi’s concerns came not just from the types of material being accessed but a feeling there were difficulties in understanding *how* they access materials. I wondered if this reflected a sense that CYP are digital natives and can navigate an online world that feels alien to adults who may not have the skill-set to keep-up. This could invoke feelings of being overwhelmed and a sense of hopelessness and Remi and Quinn seemed to be expressing feelings of powerlessness when faced with the magnitude of the issue. Quinn:

“that’s a huge challenge for us to overcome ‘cos how do we stop that from happening? We have to educate them but how can you ever spend enough time educating them to combat the amount of time they’re spending online?” (Q:507-511)

Online challenges seemed to speak to how HSB seeped in from outside school and affects the school and wider community. This appeared to me to be multi-levelled impacting CYP, families, communities, services and staff. Bailey expresses how hard they find this:

“that’s one of the worst because (sighs) we only find out when lots of people have found out...we’ve got to tell the parents potentially report to the police and it’s just all the children hate it and it’s awful to deal with so that’s something that makes my heart sink and I just hate it”
(B:267-274)

There is a feeling of ‘weight’ as Bailey speaks of it “*making my heart sink*” and hating having to deal with online HSB. I wondered if the public nature of online HSB made this particularly difficult for Bailey to manage as they sought to protect CYP; in safeguarding confidentiality is paramount but when online it makes it difficult to contain and protect. Not all participants felt online influences were negative. There was a sense from Addison that the ability to share stories and information has had a mobilising affect enabling CYP to start conversations and educate:

“#metoo was definitely a real liminal moment I think for particularly young people. Social media as well that I think that’s been a force for harm but on this definitely for good” (A:162-169)

Addison acknowledges there are online challenges but seems to position them alongside the enabling factors. I recognise the real prospects for education that Addison raises but do recognise the dangers highlighted by Remi and Quinn as I acknowledge how challenging it can be for adults to keep-up with social media and how CYP utilise them.

3.3.3: A collective cultural shift is needed

Cassidy, Remi, Eden and Addison alluded to the need for a collective cultural shift to occur for the conversation and attitudes towards HSB to change. This GLST speaks to a sense that there is work to be done at a societal level and cultural changes need to be made so schools can be impacted alongside a feeling from participants that without these changes to the progress occurring in schools is limited. Eden:

“the cultural shift needs to be that the boys the parents...need to be told that’s wrong. It’s wrong to make a comment about a girl. It’s wrong to sexualise a girl in any way.” (E:307-311)

Eden seems to be expressing a feeling that there is an entrenchment of heteronormative views in CYP’s behaviour that needs explicit challenge. Remi suggests a shared acceptance that have culturally perpetuated HSB over time:

“I think it’s a long-term cultural thing, even I was kind of like, ‘oh it didn’t happen here’ when it first came out ‘oh it’s not that bad we don’t have that many issues’ but actually we do everybody does, so I think it’s that acceptance that we’ve everybody parents, family everybody out there everybody has been accepting more than should of at some point.” (R:300-306)

The sense from Remi is this has been an ‘awakening’; a collective cultural challenge about an issue that has gone unnoticed. Eden and Remi’s comments highlighted to me a need for a cultural shift from staff too who were also likely to be impacted by the dominant cultural narrative. Addison seemed to recognise this and felt it was an important area to challenge and provoke discussion:

“I think a modern example compared to twenty, thirty years ago, somebody pulling a moonie....now in school that is a really serious thing, that is a suspension worthy thing because it used to be that if you did that...oh it’s banter. But what I encourage my team to do now is go right well let’s change the context so if somebody did that in a classroom when you were teaching English...and it was a girl doing it...you would feel very differently. Just because it’s a boy, or just because it’s a bum and not a pair of breasts...I encourage my team to look at to take an incident and remove it from perhaps location or subject or gender and think about it in a different way.” (A:194-211)

There was also a sense that the cultural challenge Addison is hoping to bring is being felt elsewhere with Cassidy recognising changes:

“That’s really interesting because in the ten years I’ve been at the school it has really evolved from in the past” (C:25-27)

Cassidy’s use of the word ‘evolved’ here was interesting as it speaks to a feeling that there has been a shift that has responded to the environmental challenges rather than an intentional, active effort to change the culture. I wondered if it reflected some of the earlier feeling from a previous GLST of having to be reactive rather than proactive and schools/staff having to adapt to any cultural shift as the changes occurred which is a potentially uncomfortable position.

3.3.4: Gendered interventions

Two-thirds of participants touched on this issue. This GLST highlighted to me that although there is work being done there feels like there is a bias towards aiming interventions at girls rather than working with boys in tandem. Cassidy and Bailey:

“we do a lot on empowerment for young ladies so that they understand what is acceptable and not acceptable.” (C:68-71)

“we've identified some of our older girls who appeared to be in unhealthy relationships with boys of a similar age so we did a small group of a couple of sessions specifically around healthy relationships identifying them unhealthy behaviours” (B:405-409)

Cassidy and Bailey appear to be demonstrating a sense that girls are being placed in the unwanted, and untenable, position of gatekeeping male sexuality, focusing on what they should be doing to contain male behaviours rather than educating boys on what they should not be doing. Quinn noted similarities:

“I think my frustration is the real love rocks programme we deliver it to so many girls and it's just like wow, what are we missing, where are the boys in this? Why are we not delivering it to more lads?” (Q:543-548)

Quinn highlights a gender bias of intervention focusing on girls with a lack of mirroring interventions for boys. While this work is in no doubt vital there was for me an underlying feeling of frustration that an opportunity was being missed and the burden of change is being placed within women and girls. It also implies that girls have some control over the way that males are behaving towards them when the reality is they are not responsible for the actions of others and being forced to change their behaviours, actions and elements of their identity can lead to shame and blame through the internalising of those actions which can inadvertently perpetuate the stigma attached to gender-based violence.

3.3.5: The tide is starting to turn

Cassidy, Bailey and Addison made responses to this GLST which represents a feeling of hopefulness, that ripples of change are happening. It felt important to acknowledge HSB were being seen, explored and responded to. This seems to come from recognition that HSB are happening in their settings and as Bailey points out the increased awareness/understanding:

“I think our concerns have increased threefold something like that. Harmful sexual behaviour is becoming more prevalent, and I think because all schools are identifying it better I don’t think as an issue it’s a bigger issue” (B:366-369)

There was a sense that the cultural shift previously discussed has already begun, that we are mid-pendulum swing. Cassidy noticed this shift is impacting staff and CYP who are having different responses to HSB compared to the past:

“in the past pupils might have laughed it off, pupils might not have taken it seriously, staff might, let’s be honest, might may have seen it in the past and not actually acted on it ‘cos all pupils might have been laughing about but now I think that staff will directly challenge behaviour.” (C:50-55)

Cassidy spoke of staff “directly” challenging behaviours which felt like there were no longer ‘unseen’ and were openly addressed. I wondered how much this was a shift from the past practices which would have previously been laughed off and seen as banter. And how attitudes towards HSB have changed is highlighted by Addison:

“our tolerance for this has completely changed from when I was at school...thirty years ago what was acceptable then is now absolutely

not seen as banter so up-skirting anything like that then was quite a normal thing whereas in schools now it's absolutely not tolerated and we work super super hard to try and make sure that all staff who have perhaps gone through the same system that I did see it not as banter"
(A:46-55)

Addison's repeated use of the word "tolerance" felt as if they were speaking of limits. There was emphasis on how hard they work to ensure that others in the school system are aware of these limits and that tolerance is not breached. Addison and Cassidy spoke of 'decades' which can feel like there is little hope for change, but the tide is turning, and change may be founded on these ripples of hope.

3.4: TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Table 6: Pattern of Convergence and Divergence GET 3.4

GET				
3.4. TRAINING AND AWARENESS				
Group-Level-Sub-Theme	3.4.1: A whole school approach is needed	3.4.2: Training needs are dynamic	3.4.3: Training/awareness has elicited discomfort	3.4.4: Training and awareness need to extend beyond school and into the community
Quinn	✓	✓	✓	
Cassidy	✓	✓		✓
Remi	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bailey	✓	✓	✓	
Addison	✓	✓	✓	
Eden	✓	✓	✓	✓

This GET addresses the impact training and awareness raising has had on the school community, incorporating a whole-school approach to raising awareness and educating CYP. It considers that this education needs to extend beyond the school gates and into the community while recognising discourse has elicited discomfort.

3.4.1: A whole school approach is needed

There was alignment from all participants regarding a whole-school approach to addressing HSB. This GLST discusses how a consistent, clear message needs to be given and the training that needs to be done to remove some of the challenges in addressing HSB is systemic. Remi spoke of how large this systemic work was:

“we’ve done a massive piece of work in school, we’ve done a student survey similar to the Everyone’s Invited...and we’ve got a lot of feedback from students about where does it feel safe and what their experiences are, and we have done an action plan from that and we’ve done a lot of staff training” (R:60-67)

Remi had highlighted the importance of training as a factor to help staff identify and respond to HSB as part of a whole-school approach. Quinn echoed Remi’s acknowledgement that staff need to be part of a whole-school approach. However, I sensed a hesitance in Quinn about how far this should go:

“we’ve not shared the scale with them (staff) but you’d have to be careful how you’d do that...you don’t want them accusing everybody of harmful sexual behaviour if it’s not, but equally needs to be taken seriously if it is so you’ve got to strike that balance” (Q:452-458)

Quinn’s hesitance seemed to come from a position of wanting to react but not over-react and ensure CYP were protected. Placing the CYP centrally in responding to HSB seemed important to participants. Crucial to the work in Remi’s setting was the voice of the CYP. It appeared to me this is where they started and then built their response from this. A key response seemed to be empowering and educating CYP to know what HSB are and giving them a voice to speak out when they saw or experiences HSB. This was something Addison, Cassidy and Bailey seemed to recognise as facilitators for positive change:

“we've done lots of work on sexism, misogyny and informing children about sexually harmful behaviour and to the point where they know certain things are not right” (C:36-39)

“We've done work with young people assemblies and small group work to help them to identify what's inappropriate behaviour so that they can speak out.” (B:250-254)

A whole-school approach appeared to be important to Cassidy and Bailey as CYP developed an awareness of boundaries and were given a voice through targeted education. The participants comments made me consider the EP's role when taking a whole-school, systemic approach to HSB? As EPs have a thorough understanding of child development, systems, the interactions between the individuals who make-up these systems, and how to facilitate integrated practise, they are well-suited to working directly with CYP/families and whole-school/organisations to aid systemic changes.

3.4.2: Training needs are dynamic

This GLST produced alignment across participants and identifies a need for ongoing and responsive approach to training. There was a feeling from participants that there can never be too much HSB training. Addison:

“we've done lots of scripting work with staff, but we need to do more next year...but if I did one a week we'd still need more. Until we get to a point where nothing is missed.” (A:469-475)

It is interesting to consider Addison's HSB training includes a heavily scaffolded response such as scripting. I wondered if this represented an uncertainty or lack of confidence in how to respond by staff in what is an emerging and uncomfortable area

to address. Whilst there was a sense from Addison that they wanted to equip staff to respond in the best way possible there was also a determination that this was an area they wanted to keep working at until “nothing is missed”. Quinn picks-up on this feeling of need for continuous development:

“there still needs to be some work done because we’re still always seeing it on kind of what is acceptable behaviour in the news”. (Q:300-303)

Quinn’s point highlighted to me why training needs for HSB are constantly evolving as there is a heightened awareness due to the broader societal issues unfolding in the media surrounding HSB. There is also a feeling that learning is occurring alongside a constantly evolving cultural awakening so demands ongoing input. I wondered if this felt unsettling or uncomfortable for staff as there would potentially be lack of security in what was known. Cassidy highlights an area this could be an issue in when talking about language:

“these lads going around shouting ‘chicken nugget’ at the girls and I didn’t realise that that meant cheap white meat...so if you’re not up to date with the language you don’t know what the connotations are” (C:487-490)

Cassidy seems to be alluding to a shadow culture that can be hidden in plain sight when there is a lack of understanding of what is meant. This can add a layer of complexity when challenging HSB when connotations are not understood. This seemed to add value to training for Cassidy:

“I’ve worked with children for eighteen years now and I’m happy to say I still have no idea at times and I really embrace the training that we get, obviously we’ve done some with the EPs and I’ve really enjoyed

that because it makes you think...but I think you've constantly constantly need training in this job I think. Constantly" (C:613-622)

Cassidy's repeated use of the word "constantly" here felt like they were emphasizing that there was no room for complacency and a constant need for input and self-reflection. There was a sense of comfortableness Cassidy expressed with the unknown that contrasted with the other participants. The understanding I got was not one of complacency but an understanding that it is ok not to have all the answers and an enthusiasm to explore and learn. I wondered if this position/perspective came from the training/input Cassidy had already had from the EPs.

3.4.3: Training/awareness has elicited discomfort

Five participants commented on how HSB training has increased awareness and seems to have elicited feelings of discomfort professionally and personally. Quinn and Remi highlighted how there can be what seems to be feelings of personal embarrassment at having to address a subject that is sexual in nature:

"it does make people feel awkward and it does make people feel uncomfortable." (Q:479-480)

"that language was shocking for them I think it was eye-opening for them and for me...one member of staff, for example, couldn't say the word 'masturbation' without dying of embarrassment and fits of giggles...People have different levels of tolerance of what they can deal with" (R:200-206)

Quinn and Remi imply training has elicited personal revelation for staff who appear to have felt discomfort/embarrassment. Remi felt this was "eye-opening" which engenders feelings of exposing what was previously unseen. I wondered if this

discomfort also came from unfamiliarity and an uncertainty about how to engage with HSB. This appears to be something Bailey considered:

“it’s like anything new it’s getting into the habit of picking up on things and addressing it, it’s developing that confidence and addressing it, I mean culturally it’s a big change...for staff who’ve been in the job for a long time that can be a big change for them” (B:225-233)

Bailey appears sympathetic to the fact HSB are an evolving area of concern, that staff are building confidence in responding alongside a cultural shift that is challenging previously normalised behaviours. Participants all implied training has a key role to play in raising awareness, but Remi, Quinn and Addison acknowledge that it is a difficult message. Addison seemed to feel it is important not to avoid these difficult messages:

“part of my responsibility safeguarding culture wise is to hit them with some quite hard messages sometimes so this year we looked at the Panorama documentary...they were almost stupidified into silence afterwards” (A:424-431)

Addison’s description here felt physically jarring to me; “hit them with”, “hard hitting” and “stupidified” all added to the feeling of the power behind the message. It echoes what Remi, Quinn and Cassidy suggest that training leads to revelation for staff, but revelation brings discomfort. Eden adds a different dimension fearing that in addressing HSB staff may place themselves at risk professionally:

“teachers will always stamp out inappropriate sexualised comments but I think there may be a sort of a wariness as well that they’re not kind of seen to be sexualised themselves” (E:425-429)

Eden's concerns seem to allude to a hesitancy that could be present when dealing with HSB due to the sexual nature of the issue possibly being misconstrued and negatively impacting a career. I considered this could be a barrier in responding to HSB on its own, in addition to other reasons for feeling discomfort such as confidence or embarrassment and possibly leading to inertia.

3.4.4: Training and awareness need to extend beyond school and into the community

Cassidy, Remi and Eden highlighted the need for work to be carried out into the community for change to be meaningful and sustained. This GLST indicted a feeling from them there was only so much could be done from a school perspective and the message needed to be extended into the community or the work schools do would be limited. Eden and Remi felt working with parents/families was important:

“there probably is a piece of work that needs doing with parents as well...so everybody's getting the same message” (R:138-140)

As someone who has worked in education this resonated with me; when a CYP struggles with something academic programs are put in place and involve parents/families. I frequently wondered why there is a reluctance to offer similar support when a CYP is struggling in non-academic areas. To address HSB it felt to me a broader view needs to be taken with work being done with families/communities too, which is something Eden expresses:

“we all know that behaviours are a form of communication...it's probably about digging deeper and looking at underlying problems...if they hear it at home they bring it to school...we can educate staff, we can educate children but if they're hearing the same thing over and over at home then what we're saying is falling on deaf ears that's

where it becomes problematic. What could EPs do? Work with the parents” (E:519-533)

Eden appears to be conveying a sense of hopelessness in that if attitudes do not shift in homes/communities then the work that is being done in schools feels futile. The use of the expression “falling on deaf ears” delivers a sense that the message is unheard and so eliciting no change. Reflecting on Remi and Eden’s thoughts I was left considering if there is to be meaningful change around HSB then the conversation needs to be extended into communities but acknowledge this is likely to involve collaboration from other services.

3.5: RELATIONAL APPROACHES

Table 7: Pattern of Convergence and Divergence GET 3.5

GET			
3.5: RELATIONAL APPROACHES			
Group-Level-Sub-Theme	3.5.1: Schools are negotiators of multiple complex relationships	3.5.2: A holistic approach is needed	3.5.3: Existing relationships can be valuable tools to elicit change
Quinn	✓	✓	✓
Cassidy	✓	✓	✓
Remi	✓		
Bailey	✓		
Addison	✓	✓	✓
Eden		✓	✓

This GET considers the impact of relational approaches alongside the interplay of interactions that schools navigate daily. This GET represents some of the tensions schools must negotiate while at the same time recognising strong relationships can be mobilised to be powerful vehicles for change.

3.5.1: Schools are negotiators of multiple complex relationships

All but Eden indicated this GLST which seemed to me to be a sense that participants were negotiators at the centre of many complicated and interacting relationships. Quinn, Remi and Addison comment on a feeling that schools are constantly walking a tightrope to keep all CYP involved safe while managing complex external factors. This felt to me like a multifaceted and unpredictable area that was difficult for participants whose main concern was keeping CYP safe. Quinn highlights how all parties are vulnerable:

“sometimes parents can get very very angry at that and you’ve got to be mindful to safeguard the young people as well”. (Q:292-294)

I wondered how this might feel to manage in the moment as I considered all the intersecting responsibilities at play. Remi:

“it can be hard because it’s a lot of responsibility...you’ve got to balance a lot of safeguarding both parties, you’ve got to get your facts straight you’ve got to know that your information is accurate you’ve got to know that you’re dealing with everybody fairly you’ve got angry parents from both sides, it is quite stressful it is quite difficult to deal with.” (R:234-241)

My interpretation was there is a burden in having to deal with HSB. Remi’s repetition of “you’ve got to” had an almost mantra feeling to me, as if they were mentally ticking off a well-prepared list of actions that aided them in getting through stressful situations. Remi appears to be expressing the difficulties balancing meeting everyone’s needs. Bailey noted this can place school in an untenable position:

“you’ve got two families of usually two young people so, the victim who’s family are very shocked upset...and the perpetrator’s family who may be saying this didn’t happen the way they said, so there’s a difficult balance there in school, if a young person discloses something significant and we have to inform parents and that’s the worst thing that they can think could ever happen, so you’re the bad guy to the young person and quite often the bad guy to the parents usually so that can be difficult to manage.” (B:180-194)

Bailey seems to be echoing what the other participants say about the difficulty of managing the situation but also feels this places school in the position of being the “bad guy”. Addison also made me wonder if this feels jarring in a situation where there are countless hours of work being done to meet what is often conflicting needs:

“we’re trying to find a level...where we can deal with things reasonably and show we’re a safeguarding culture where everybody feels safe, manage things that are coming in from outside of school as well and also manage parents’ expectations. It’s a lot on a school, it really is.” (A:127-135)

There is a sense from Addison that schools are trying to respond to need and navigate a way forward that meets multiple complex demands which seems burdensome. When there is legal action this added further complexity as Bailey points out:

“when...police are involved...that’s difficult because, it can get a bit sort of stuck then about what you’re allowed to do” (B:175-177)

Bailey’s point on fulfilling legal requirements suggests they are having to navigate complex situations with what seems to be reduced autonomy. Bailey uses the word “stuck” which infers feelings of being immobilised and unable to move in any direction.

This emphasised to me the intricacy of the issues schools are addressing when dealing with HSB and how they are centrally placed as negotiators in multiple relationships.

3.5.2: A holistic approach is needed

This GLST considers developing an understanding of CYP in all the systems they occupy and the impact of multiagency working together to better understand family/community systems. Quinn, Addison, Eden and Cassidy each indicated there might be benefits in taking a more holistic approach to addressing/understanding HSB. Cassidy:

“there’s a boy who’s been accused of exposing himself on a couple of occasions and touching another boy... There is a history with the family and when you know the history you can understand why there may be some of this behaviour” (C:118-124)

What Cassidy seems to be alluding to here is having a holistic and relational approach to understanding the CYP in their context can enhance understanding. Quinn appears to agree:

“it just needs that overview to make sure that everything’s explored because most of the time it just needs that explanation to understand.” (Q:387-391)

Quinn and Cassidy seem to be recognising that while there needs to be a response to HSB nuanced, complicated decisions need to be made by curious, thoughtful staff who have a wider, holistic understanding. Eden agreed that a broader approach was needed:

“Family approach...I think the problem is actually understanding why it’s wrong rather than knowing that it’s wrong” (E:539-543)

Eden seems to be suggesting that working with families would be beneficial so there can be a wider, collective understanding of why HSB are harmful. Cassidy takes this a step further and appears to be calling for a multiagency approach from a relational, holistic system that knows CYP/families well:

“could you imagine if instead of having one centre called CAMHS, the NHS and educational system linked up together and started placing psychologists within school, and giving those to somebody who knew the school, knew the systems was here all the time could build relationships with families and children and were able to do that direct work, that would be phenomenal” (C:408-416)

There is a sense here that Cassidy is almost dreaming of what could be and how this could be a powerful force for change. The ability to know families, build relationships and work directly seemed to be important to Cassidy whose description of this ‘dream’ as “phenomenal” had a fantastical resonance and echoed what Addison and Quinn expressed. I considered if this call for a more joined up approach was representative of a disjointed system that was currently in action and spoke to gaps in services. This is something Addison implies:

“I think there needs to be some kind of rapid response agency...it’s often in the immediate aftermath of something quite serious happening, I’m not talking about things that can be held at school level...When you’re moving into the more serious harmful behaviours there needs to be a rapid response team that that can signpost or work with a school to get some immediate support for the family for the interim period.” (A:763-772)

Addison seems to be suggesting that a holistic, rapid intervention is needed in the immediate response to an incident to help support all those involved. This feels like it feeds into Cassidy's 'dream'. I wondered if this approach could reduce some of the burden schools seem to feel where they are unintentionally positioned as negotiators in complex relationships but recognise the systemic changes that would need to occur for this to happen would have to be at a governmental level.

3.5.3: Existing relationships can be valuable tools to elicit change

This GLST relates how good relationships can be a gateway to interventions working well as opposed to an external agent coming in to 'do' something to CYP. With Quinn, Cassidy, Addison and Eden commenting on the value of relationships being a positive influence for change. Quinn:

"I say those conversations alone can be educational it can be all a young person needs to hear." (Q:344-346)

Quinn's observation struck me as important because it is those who are in school day-to-day who are positioned to have incidental conversations as-and-when incidents occur which may not happen if the work is solely left to external agents. Quinn expanded on this:

"knife crime work and they came in and they delivered the session with the TAs and were like 'okay these are the resources these are what you could deliver this is what you can do' ...that's hit multiple students in one go...it's an effective way of using your resources and I do think we're missing that in sexual harmful behaviour" (Q:679-687)

Quinn appears to be reflecting on an existing model of working highlighting how powerful it can be to train staff with existing strong relationships. Quinn has seen successes from this and feels that can be replicated when addressing HSB. The sense that not all interventions have to be external is agreed by Cassidy who valued that interaction:

“I’ve got the opportunity to do whatever I want in the classroom provision...we’ve got a set curriculum but I can break that at any point with it because I’m able to do that on a needs led basis” (C:225-230)

Cassidy can respond to the needs of CYP in their provision, but this highlighted to me the importance of really knowing the CYP and as Quinn noted being positioned/trained to confidently respond. Not all participants agreed interventions should be internal, Remi felt that there was value from CYP working with external agents:

“it’s a specific piece of work I feel that needs doing out of school because I think it sometimes school staff, bit like your mum telling you off for something isn’t it?” (R:107-110)

Reflecting on this I did consider if some of the barriers to doing this type of work internally could come from issues discussed in other GLST such as confidence or discomfort. Or if Remi’s point that a sense of overfamiliarity could impede open discourse? However, it appears this familiarity could be an enabling factor in helping understand HSB through giving CYP a voice as both Remi and Addison suggest the voice CYP is central to responding to HSB:

“the biggest thing that we do much better than we used to do is really listen to kids. If the kids are telling us it’s not okay and they feel it’s not okay then it’s not okay...I think we’re just much better at listening to

the kids now....Kids know that it's not okay now and they come forward and tell us in spades." (A:271-286)

This feels like it is something that is important to Addison who emphasises how much value they place on what CYP are saying and how core this is to their response. The imagery "tell us in spades" speak to me of a shift in relationship between CYP and staff suggesting this has been a facilitator in enabling voices to be heard, understanding of HSB to develop and action to be taken. While Addison and Remi alluded to a collective shift in relationships Eden illuminates how relationships can support individuals:

"one I'm dealing with at the moment is a young girl in year-X who has autism...and has been sexually-assaulted by another student...because of her autism she's struggling to verbalise what's happened to her so it's about building trust and it's about trying to build up that communication pathway to enable her to feel safe with us to actually share what's happened...I'm about the only person in school that she built a relationship with to come in" (E:73-85)

Eden's example illustrates how relational approaches can be fundamental in helping support CYP when they have experienced HSB. In different ways Eden and Addison are giving voice to CYP and placing them at the centre of this issue. In considering how underrepresented CYP can be and how the voice of those who experience sexual violence can be silenced this resonated with me when considering the EPs role as advocates for CYP.

3.6: EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Table 8: Pattern of Convergence and Divergence GET 3.6

GET 3.6: EXTERNAL SUPPORT					
Group-level-Sub-Theme	3.6.1: Clear guidance more support	3.6.2: External support and resources are highly valued	3.6.3: Unrealistic expectations	3.6.4: Engagement with external/specialist provision can feel confusing/frustrating	3.6.5: Overburdened services
Quinn	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cassidy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Remi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bailey	✓	✓			✓
Addison	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eden	✓	✓	✓		

This GET captures contrasting feelings of participants that external services are valued, wanted and needed yet at the same time there can be pressures exerted from these services that feels unmanageable. There was a desire from participants for clearer guidance while recognising the system was overburdened and at times support/advice offered could feel confusing.

3.6.1: Clearer guidance, more support

Participants seemed to be calling for guidance that was clearer and more structured. This GLST came from their sense of frustration that there is not the clarity, guidance or support that schools/staff feel they need when responding to HSB. All participants appeared to want clearer guidance/support around how to respond to HSB with Quinn commenting:

“there needs to be clarity and clarity on what it is they want from us as a school what they can offer us as a school because quite often we get told ‘oh youth justice service are coming’ and then they don’t or

they get we get told to refer to xxxx and then nobody comes you don't hear from them...I don't think we have the backup unless it's been something really really significant...I think we could have more support there" (Q:660-673)

There is a sense that Quinn is conveying of confusion and being let down. The repeated referral to having no "backup" implies isolation when dealing with serious situations when there is a need for support. This is something that Addison, Cassidy and Eden seem to also want with Remi commenting:

"If I had a wish list I'd have more availability from agencies so whether that's social worker, youth offending team, XXXXX where I could just literally just ring up and go 'please come and do a piece of work with this child' and they came in and did that." (R:473-478)

Lack of available resources seems to impact on intervention work that can be done with CYP. Cassidy, Quinn and Bailey appeared to feel slow responses and unclear guidance from external agencies were a barrier to knowing how to respond and well-defined guidance would be a welcomed prospect. Bailey:

"we didn't get the report back from the police that quickly but everything was kind of put into place...there isn't great advice through the DfE, can be a bit woolly so it would always be nice to have clearer guidance about 'do this, that and the other'." (B:123-128)

There appears to be again a sense that schools are having to respond to 'live' issues while waiting on other agencies for advice/response. While this is not always timely there is a call for clearer guidance from the government that Bailey describes as "woolly". This feels like there is nothing concrete about the guidance and something more structured would be welcome. Interestingly not all participants felt the response

from government was lacking. Addison implies government policy has been an influencing factor in keeping HSB high on the agenda and eliciting change:

“the government, Ofsted, all of the different things that are incoming from the DfE, all are good...the rigour that is in place is phenomenal...twenty years ago that was not in place.” (A:170-181)

3.6.2: External support and resources are highly valued

All participants referred to external support/resources they used regularly in schools to help them understand and respond to HSB. This GLST explores the use of some of these resources. Having these external support systems seemed to be highly valued, was sought out and helped staff feel more with Quinn and Remi appearing more confident about their responses as a result:

“I like the new triage because that just takes a bit of pressure off you making that decision on your own.” (R:369-371)

Remi seems to be inferring that the HSB panel has reduced the pressure of making complex decisions in isolation and supported their decision making. Bailey also seemed to value external support:

“we’re really fortunate in this school is that we have support from IRO...she is always available to us to offer advice and support and that’s been really invaluable” (B:128-135)

Bailey’s use of language had undercurrents of feeling privileged to be positioned to have this help available and I wondered if this came from the knowledge that this was not universally available. Bailey appears to place high value on this resource describing the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) as “really invaluable”. I

considered if this value was in part rooted in comparison of how things were before the support was in place and in the knowledge/skills the IRO has been able to share to empower staff and, as Remi commented, help reduce pressure and offer reassurance. Similar reassurance for Quinn seemed to come from using external tools:

“That Hackett Scale thing has been pretty revolutionary to be honest....that has been really really helpful...when I knew something was harmful I wanted to be able to say so. I wanted to be able to back it up, especially because sexualised behaviour panel’s so contentious.” (Q:604-616)

Interestingly the reassurance Remi finds from the HSB panel contrasts with Quinn’s experience of it. Quinn appears to find the panel “contentious” and is seeking similar support and reassurance elsewhere. Quinn’s description of a resource as “revolutionary” has a transformational impact. It appears they are using this external tool to help identify HSB and inform response which has had similar reassuring effects to Remi and Bailey’s support. There is sense here of reassurance from external support that echoes through this GLST that helps build staff skills/knowledge and empowers them to respond. It is interesting to consider if this fits with an earlier GLST on training/confidence and I wondered if the external support added a layer of confidence/scaffolding to responses.

3.6.3: Unrealistic expectations

All bar Bailey spoke of the pressures that come from external sources and have expectations that schools feel are unmanageable. Addison:

“we’re a signposting agency but the work that we’re expected to undertake and the level of provision that we are often asked for is not

representative of a mainstream school at all...that's really difficult where they think we can do everything. We can't." (A:713-725)

What Addison seems to be alluding to is an expectation from external agencies that school can offer more services which is increasing their burden. It's interesting to consider how highly schools seemed to value external support systems so I wondered if in these situations could tensions arise and if this would affect what appeared to me to be interdependent working relationships. Remi highlighted how tensions can arise:

"I felt like we were perhaps a little bit criticised. Afterwards they completely agree with us now that it was the right thing to do but at the start they were like no you can't jeopardise his education, I can't jeopardise 1200 children in the school either, that's got to come first. There was a little bit of conflict there." (R:457-463)

Remi seems to be expressing the multiagency strain that can occur when balancing the education and safeguarding needs of all CYP in a setting. They feel they were "criticised" for the approach they took and openly spoke of conflict as they defended their position. This feels like an uncomfortable place to be in but illustrates the multifaceted responsibilities schools have. Cassidy illustrates how staff are putting in place decisions made by external agencies:

"I come home quite stressed over it, might be because of things that have been said or just general behaviour or trying to manage the risk assessments of my internal battle of is it right that he has to be so segregated is it right that he can't interact with those kids, is it right that I have to watch and question everything he does, and then I'll go home...I just need to go lay on me bed...not move for half an hour not interact" (C:703-711)

The theme of conflict carries on and here the hierarchical decisions being made seem to be causing Cassidy distress. Through the repeated use of “is it right” Cassidy seems to be constantly questioning the actions they are expected to take and speaks of their own “internal battle”. The toll on Cassidy personally cannot be overlooked; these are feelings that Cassidy takes home, needing time and space to recover/process. This feeling elicited from this GLST is one of unrealistic expectations having a range of complicated consequences for staff.

3.6.4: Engagement with external/specialist provision can feel confusing/frustrating

This GLST refers to a feeling from Quinn, Casidy, Remi and Addison that while external support is welcome engagement with that support can feel confusing, unclear and frustrating. Quinn commented:

“we’ve got the ones that we will take to the harmful sexual behaviour panel as well but that’s all a bit up-in-the-air”. (Q:73-75)

Quinn speaks of the HSB panel being “up-in-the-air” which implies there is an undecided nature about it. Quinn seems to be expressing frustration at a service that is there but not there yet, and not clear in its purpose. I wondered if this impacted how external services operated and how this affected schools which was something Remi spoke of:

“we had a young man displaying quite serious very serious harmful behaviours, towards a family member, that we weren’t aware of we were invited to a strategy meeting...so obviously something had gone on with the police they’d been and arrested him but we weren’t informed in the morning the boy was in school walking around we had the strategy meeting where the police said ‘he’s not allowed any unsupervised access with children, but he’s alright in school’” (R:420-431)

There is a feeling from Remi and Quinn that confusing/conflicting advice from external agencies have made responding to incidents challenging potentially putting schools in untenable positions. The timeliness of information sharing is touched on by Remi and something that Cassidy notes:

“I ended up at an AIMS assessment meeting I didn’t even know what an AIMS assessment was...and I didn’t know what I was going for I was just told you need to be at this meeting and it was quite quite difficult because actually I might have prepared a little bit more for that I might have able to understand what you’re going” (C:274-284)

There is a feeling here that Cassidy was almost blindsided by the information disclosed in the meeting which echoes some of what Remi was expressing. Remi, Quinn and Cassidy seem to be suggesting that a lack of information sharing alongside conflicting messages from external agents impedes effective working. While I understand confidentiality is important a basic sharing of procedures and policy decisions could aid more effective working.

3.6.5: Overburdened services

This GLST considers that while there were frustrations from Cassidy, Bailey, Remi and Addison about external services there was a recognition that all services were overburdened. Addison:

“I have to say all the people that we work with are all very good, all the services in LA are all good they’re just all overstretched” (A:732-735)

Addison is suggesting external services are providing high quality provision, but accessibility is impeded by demand. This is something that Cassidy agrees with:

“I suppose we talk about professional help for them if we ever get stuck...and we’re referring to CAMHS for psychological support for the pupils, and you're 18 months, that’s a massive issue....he’ll have left the system or being possibly permanently excluded before he ever gets any of the support that could stop him doing that and for me that’s where we’re failing” (C:393-406)

Cassidy seems to be expressing a desire for help from other services when needing support but frustration that this is not dynamic, responsive and readily available. Cassidy speaks of “failing” here and I wondered how this must feel when you can see a need and not be able to help. It felt to me to loop-back to an earlier GLST that spoke of “firefighting” with Remi also noting implications of missed opportunity through lack of preventative work:

“it’s the preventative work isn’t being done straight away, we’re waiting for a referral and being knocked back and then waiting for somebody else on somebody else’s waiting list and it’s not been addressed” (R:102-106)

Overburdened services appear to be impacting on interventions that can be offered CYP and, as Remi and Cassidy infer, no preventative work is being done. The implication here for me is that the dilemma is pushed further downstream, further perpetuating HSB through missed opportunity.

3.7: STAFF WELLBEING

Table 9: Pattern of Convergence and Divergence GET 3.7

GET 3.7: STAFF WELLBEING			
Group-Level-Sub-Theme	3.7.1: Supervision and protective factors	3.7.2: There is a personal, physical and psychological impact	3.7.3: Personal reflections
Quinn	✓		
Cassidy	✓	✓	✓
Remi	✓	✓	✓
Bailey	✓	✓	✓
Addison	✓	✓	✓
Eden	✓	✓	✓

This GET captures the impact on staff of working with CYP who demonstrate HSB. It considers the role supervision could play in a school environment and other protective factors. This GET explores the personal impact of emotionally demanding work and gives room for personal reflections on HSB. There was a high-level of congruence across the GLSTs which indicated there is an emotional toll when addressing HSB.

3.7.1: Supervision and protective factors

There were indicators about this GLST from all participants. It considers the use of supervision in schools, how this might support staff and what it might look like. This GLST also considers factors that may help protect staff wellbeing. The story of supervision feels like it has been a journey for participants who may have initially had little understanding of what supervision is. Cassidy:

“I hated at first was school put in place clinical psychologist for us and then ‘cos I did wonder if...they were just reporting everything back but then I seem to realise I just loved it and I remember I sat in one of them sessions once and I just swore for about thirty minutes, ‘I’m okay I feel today’ or ‘I feel sick of this I feel sick of that the structures’ and but that

but that was a real eye opener for me because that really supported me” (C:797-807)

Cassidy is very open here about how uncomfortable they felt about the idea of supervision at first. Their reflection included the word “paranoia” which implies a sense of distrust in the process. I wonder if this was rooted in the unknown of what supervision can be. When considering my own experiences in education supervision was linked to performance management which had an impact on pay. I saw some of my own uncertainties and questions that I had addressed as I transitioned from teacher to TEP and considered it may have been the supervisory process was initially not explained. It is interesting to see how Cassidy has moved from paranoia to love when reflecting on supervision and alongside Bailey considers it supportive:

“there was an incident I was dealing with and I actually found very distressing personally distressing she was available for me to contact and talk through and offer practical but also that emotional support.”
(B:146-150)

Bailey highlights how supervision has been supportive for them through offering emotional support but also practical support. Interestingly Bailey is clear about the need for the right person who is the right fit:

“the Head brought in supervision from a clinical psychologist...which was it was good but for me and my colleague that was more the emotional support and for us that needed balance with the practical so somebody who knows safeguarding and can see what we’re missing and give some advice” (B:320-329)

The implication from Bailey is although supervision is welcome, and needed, it had to be from the right person who can offer the emotional support and could offer specialist

knowledge about HSB, school-systems and procedures. Not all participants were convinced by the usefulness of supervision. Eden and Addison were open to the idea of supervision Addison had some concerns:

“there’s no guidance for this...there should be better guidance on how to supervise in school, what the acceptable levels are, frequency, for particular job roles and then and also, the people in the wider ripples, they need support too” (A:669-674)

It is inferred there is an appetite to know more and have more structured input about supervision as it is unexplored in schools. This may explain why Cassidy initially had some confusion about what supervision was. It gives rise to the consideration that if there is guidance then does this place additional pressure on schools? Another protective factor indicated in this GLST was peer supervision. Remi highlights the importance of healthy working relationships:

“We got two girls in the team here who are we’re a really close team are absolutely brilliant we just sit and rant and offload...my line manager I know I can go to her and go ‘right I’m actually going to need to do something about this ‘cos it’s on my mind and I can’t get rid of it” (R:255-260)

In speaking about the need to “offload” Remi seems to be implying there is a removal of a burden that helped them to continue to function in their role. Peer supervision seemed to rely on strong working relationships but also a recognition that came from experience. Cassidy also seemed to experience a similar sense of “offloading” from supervision:

“they don’t they don’t tell me how to do anything, they don’t tell me how to manage anything but there’s a self-realisation that comes with being

able to offload. So yes it is stressful but if I could think of one thing that every school should do for every member of staff it would be that.”
(C:822-828)

Cassidy appeared to hold supervision in high regard and felt that the benefits of supervision were so great that they should be offered to all school staff in every school, viewing it as a tool that enabled them to have a safe space and time to reflect and “offload”. It is interesting to consider how supervision was being viewed as a tool to not only to help contain the individual participant but also to help with manage the practicalities of issues such as safeguarding responsibilities and ensuring that the right action was taken. Bailey commented:

“Yeah I think supervision is vital to deal with some of the issues not just the harmful sexual behaviour but the safeguarding issues that I deal with but particularly around harmful sexual behaviour because it wasn’t in the instance for me that it was particularly personally triggering it was just very upsetting but, you know, for other for other professionals it could be personally triggering as well.” (B:302-309)

Remi also noted how internal support systems and reporting pathways protect staff:

“they’re trained to speak French and may have been brought up in an affluent home where they’ve been sheltered and nothing never come across anything like this never dealt with it so I think part of our role as safeguarding is protecting staff as well, because it’s distressing for them so our staff like to know that they’ve got something that they’re worried about they can pass it on and then staff who are trained to deal with it will then deal with it” (R:214-222)

Participants comments on supervision led me to consider what EPs are positioned to offer via supervision as we work with CYP/families, schools and LAs alongside our theoretical understanding of child development and therapeutic skills. I wonder if there is a role here for the EP in providing support as part of a drive to address HSB. While concerns have been raised by Addison and Eden and there is a need to consider capacity in terms EP profession it should be considered that there are many models of supervision that can be implemented and facilitated within a system.

3.7.2: There is a personal, physical and psychological impact

Five participants intimated there were personal, psychological and physical ramifications of working in this area. This GLST considers how participants could be affected and what this might look like for them. Cassidy and Eden seemed to notice shifts in character/personality when dealing with challenging cases:

“I’m aware, I’ve been working with my colleagues long enough to say ‘what’s bothering you Eden?’” (E:205-207)

Bailey recognised the impact that dealing with distressing situations had contrasting with a situation where they were dealing with HSB alone:

“sexual assault really I found very distressing I was working on my own on that day and I ended up just crying for hours and even the next day at home that’s been very very difficult. It was very very difficult at the time” (B:275-279)

There was a rawness to Bailey’s response that felt very visceral. Bailey spoke of carrying these feelings home and how difficult this was. Taking the emotional burden of work home is something Cassidy also noticed:

“I used to say I never take work home with me but I in the last few years it has” (C:653-655)

“the other thing I’ll do is I’ll wake up in the night and I’ll email myself something I’ll wake up and I’ll be like oh I need to address this, oh my God I didn’t log that, that needs logging and my phone will be next to my bed and I’ll email myself in the middle of the night. That happens quite a lot actually, but again I know that’s stress” (C:779-786)

It almost feels like this is something unexpected to Cassidy, like it has crept up on them, seeped into their homelife unintentionally and gripped them. There is an implication that there is a physical impact when dealing with work that involves emotional labour. Both Remi and Addison seem to be aligned with this interpretation:

“it’s sleep, I know when I’m stressed because I can’t sleep because I’m thinking about children or families.” (R:247-249)

“it’s really important to acknowledge that you are human too. I have had moments where a feeling of panic has risen through me when I think we’ve missed something or oh God did that email not go and then you realise it did go and everything’s fine again but those brief moments where the panic rises and the palpitations (laughs) in your chest and the dry mouth and all of those things and then you think oh my God we did we did do it right alright it’s okay, the feeling that you might get it wrong and it has a disastrous consequence can absolutely be overwhelming” (A:593-605)

Reflecting on an earlier GLST of how HSB extend beyond the school gates it has been interesting to consider how this then permeates into the lives of staff too. Cassidy

noticed how there is a physical and emotional toll to the emotional labour of the work which impacts family life:

“then I think I'm neglecting their time so it affects me because if I'm with them I can be snappy but then if I'm not I'm conscious that I give all, I mean I go home exhausted a lot but obviously you seen it at work before you know I'm full on and I give so much into what I do. If I'm doing it I want to do it right and I've tried and I do give everything I've got and that can be draining but and that makes me feel guilty for me own family when I'm with them” (C:717-726)

Cassidy is describing a situation that feels almost inescapable, where demands are being placed on them both at home and in school and they feel like they are not giving their 'best' to either leaving feelings of guilt or could engender feelings of inadequacy. Addison seems to cope with the personal toll of keeping CYP by compartmentalising:

“I just think when you think you've got a grip of it along comes the next thing that you need to work on so I try not to think about the personal toll too much because I think it will probably overwhelm you it's quite a dark place to live so you've got to kind of compartmentalise it but it does take a toll on you definitely” (A:582-589)

Addison's coping strategy to evade being overwhelmed speaks of a “dark place” that they seem to be circling. While there is acknowledgement of the personal toll there is little offered in terms of realistic alternatives with high workloads being highlighted by Cassidy, Addison and Bailey as an additional factor in being able to manage stress and wellbeing:

“I was on my own for a long time in this role before we took her on and it was much tougher I was spending more hours working and I think it

took more of a toll on me and I feel much more balanced now.” (B:296-300)

Hearing Addison, Eden, Cassidy, Remi and Bailey stories of the personal toll dealing with high emotional labour brought and how this was amplified with additional pressures such as curriculum, workload and home life has highlighted to me how the burden of keeping CYP safe feels heavy and this emotional labour does appear to be having a multi-system toll. The question I am left asking is how long can this continue and at what cost?

The experiences of the participants where in contrast to Quinn who felt that they were not distressed by dealing with HSB:

“very rarely do I get upset and then it will just be over something really small usually something really little will happen like, I don’t know, trying to think of an example, like I had a little girl trying to sew her own prom dress and that really really upset me because I was just like she’s just got nothing so it would be like the little things that upset me and then overall I deal with things emotionally quite well have a lot of home life balance all that self-care and that kind of thing and that comes with experience I think so I don’t think it really impacts on me emotionally I don’t like obviously I don’t like hearing about like historic sexual abuse and things like that ‘cos you just so frustrating to think that nothing’s going to happen and that can that can burn you emotionally but the peer on peer stuff generally I’m alright.” (Q:523-540)

Interestingly there were protective factors for Quinn that helped them manage their emotions such as good work-life balance, self-care, personality and access to training. Quinn did recognise there were risks of “burn out” in other areas but appeared to have boundaries in place to manage these and it would be interesting to be able to consider these protective factors when offering support to school staff. Quinn did appear to be

getting distressed with some issues but was aware of this and the issues they seemed to have an emotional response to did involve factors over which they had no control and I wondered if some of Quinn's ability to manage their emotions around HSB stemmed from feelings of competence and being able to do something to support CYP?

3.7.1: Personal reflections

The conversation with participants appeared to generate self-reflection on personal experiences in this area. Many of the participants commented at the end of the interview they felt the process of discussing HSB was in some way "therapeutic" and they had enjoyed having the opportunity to express their thoughts. This GLST explores these more personal reflections. Addison reflected on the change in culture:

"if I think about myself outside of the context of school...things that happen to me in my teens and twenties, I would never tolerate now in a million years, I think about things that happened to me in nightclubs...I would be horrified if I ever had a student in my care that thought I would push them to accept what happened to them but I remember teachers at school dismissing things as 'oh it's just, you know, he's having a laugh' or whatever...it was actually really quite outrageous looking back...I can't imagine now a time where anybody in my team would tolerate that kind of behaviour" (A:145-160)

While there is a celebratory tone to Addison's comments this pendulum swing feels like it may be causing anxiety for Cassidy about what the future might look like and what this might mean for the next generation:

"I'm a parent of two boys and it always comes back to my boys and I worry about my boys in the future. Now I know I'm bringing them up to respect women and to behave in the right way but (sighs) I just worry about the future for young men because I think some of the ways that

young men behave is not acceptable it's a really political minefield this"
(C:668-675)

The use of imagery in the term "minefield" implies a sense of not knowing where to stand as the 'problem' and a fear of explosive results if you take a misstep. I really empathised with Cassidy's concerns here as there is a real fear, both personal and professional, attached to the cultural shift that is occurring concerning relationships and a sense of uncertainty about what/how to react. This felt to me like it was coming from a place of wanting to do the best by everyone but not knowing which way to turn. Eden reflects on HSB from the contrasting perspective of parenting daughters:

"I often wondered if it would be any different if I had boys...I don't want them to be objectified and I want them to be able to feel comfortable in whatever they want and I want the girls at school to be actually to feel safe...we're fighting a battle." (E:332-340)

Again, there is language used relating to war as Eden says "we're fighting a battle" which implies there is unexpected danger which seems to stem from a desire that their daughters can traverse the world safely. My sense is Cassidy and Eden are aligned; there is a desire for societal/cultural change so all CYP can navigate the world without experiencing abuse and harassment but recognition that this is not a reality due to current cultural norms which is confusing, distressing and unjust.

3.8: Summary

The findings of this research have described the lived experience of adults working in mainstream secondary settings who work directly with CYP who display HSB. Using IPA analysis six GETs were identified from participant interviews and have been discussed in this chapter, along with descriptions of their interpretations and any convergence or divergence amongst participants. The next chapter will further explore

the GETs considering research findings in relation to prior, pertinent literature and any theoretical psychological frameworks (Smith et al., 2022).



Reflective Box

I was surprised by how difficult I found writing the analysis. I found it an exposing process. My experience as a researcher and writing previously has allowed for more 'distance' between myself and the data/write-up. In other forms of analysis, the formality also feels like an added layer of protection. With IPA process of interpretation/sense-making happens alongside the participant. I was surprised at how intrusive it felt to be making interpretations of other people's experiences and to write them down felt very exposing of my own internal thought processes. While I think this dual-interpretation and sense-making is a strength of IPA it felt uncomfortable. I wondered if some of that discomfort came from writing in a different style. Writing academically or reports professionally there is an active intention not to place the 'I' in my writing, yet this analysis requires that of me. Again, placing me in the text when I am much more used to standing at the side of it.

Chapter Four: Discussion

4.1: Overview

The results of this research will be explored in this chapter in connection with the research questions and with references to pertinent literature. The research outlined in the literature review will be drawn on. New ways of thinking evolved during the analysis process, so some new literature may be introduced. The aim of this research was to investigate the experiences of adults working within systems supporting secondary school aged CYP and who have directly experienced working with CYP who have displayed peer-on-peer HSB. This chapter will address the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of adults, who work in the education system, of peer-on-peer HSB?
2. What do these adults feel are the challenges to recognising and intervening appropriately to peer-on-peer HSB?
3. How might the Educational Psychologist contribute to this area?

4.2: What are the lived experiences of adults, who work in the education system, of peer-on-peer HSB?

Participants shared the common experience of noting an increase in prevalence of HSB in their settings. This is reflected in UK data showing a 78% increase in CYP displaying HSB which is indicative of a significant issue (Hackett et al., 2016). Remi, Bailey, Cassidy and Addison felt that increased reporting did not necessarily represent an increase in HSB but an increased awareness which reflects how in recent years awareness of CYP displaying HSB has gradually broadened (Hackett, 2016). This increased awareness has elicited a response which participants indicated was complex, nuanced and multifaceted. Quinn and Eden suggested responding to HSB depended on the experiences and understanding of the staff member involved, which can lead to inconsistency. This tallies with Firmin et al.'s (2019) suggestion that schools vary widely in their levels of professional competency and confidence when responding to HSB. When dealing with peer-on-peer HSB, teachers report an

uncertainty in responsibilities and procedures (Ey et al., 2017; Ey & McInnes, 2018; Firmin, 2019; McInnes & Ey, 2019). Recent studies (Draugedalen, 2020; McInnes & Ey, 2020) show a greater awareness of the knowledge gaps in schools and the need for support and training to help educators recognise and respond to HSB appropriately.

Clements, Holmes, Ryder and Mortimer (2017) found it is more probable that CYP who engage in HSB have a range of complex needs such as SEND, SEMH, ACEs, social difficulties, school exclusions and socio-economic deprivation. Hackett (2016) added that this frequently occurs against a background where a CYP may themselves have experienced abuse and/or neglect. NICE (2016) identified this and made multiagency working a key factor when responding to HSB. All participants spoke of their experiences with external support systems. External support was highly valued and sought by participants who expressed a desire for more support and clearer guidance. Although multiagency working received positive feedback, with Remi and Bailey valuing the accessibility of the newly established HSB panel, there were frustrations expressed. Cassidy, Addison and Remi spoke of the unrealistic expectations placed upon schools with lack of information-sharing leaving staff feeling ill-informed, disempowered and vulnerable. Research suggests (Clements et al., 2017; Waters et al., 2021) this is a common experience as there is a lack of consensus over what HSB is, the type of help that should be offered, and by whom. Participants called for a more joined-up, preventative approach as their experience spoke to a system that was reactive rather than proactive with external support being provided by an overburdened system only once something serious had occurred.

Although Eden and others expressed a desire for external interventions, agreeing with Ibrahim's (2021) point that it is important to consider any intervention from a multi-agency viewpoint, Quinn's experience was that in some situations a conversation with a CYP could be an intervention. Firmin et al. (2019) agree that school staff are well-positioned, relationally and physically, to respond to and help prevent HSB. However, this research uncovered some disquiet surrounding the notion of CYP being capable of HSB, the discomfort and confidence when addressing HSB, and the fear Cassidy

verbalised about potentially stigmatising or damaging a CYP's future. This is congruent with research suggesting even when practitioners felt they could identify HSB they were unconfident about their skills for working directly with CYP who display HSB and their families (Ibrahim, 2021).

Remi and Quinn spoke of how awkward the sexual nature of HSB can be for staff to address. Those working with CYP who display HSB can be surprised by the idea that a CYP could engage in HSB and can lack the skills to discuss the issue openly (Waters et al., 2021). Cassidy and Quinn had significant concerns about the stigmatising impact of labelling HSB. Labelling CYP can lead to pathologizing discourses that place the 'problem' within the CYP because environmental elements are disregarded (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007) yet research suggests by receiving the appropriate support, education and interventions CYP who participate in HSB are unlikely to grow-up to commit sexual offences (Gorden et al., 2021). It may be this well-intended concern is rooted in HSB being viewed as an individual issue, only affecting those CYP directly involved rather than being considered as a symptom of a whole-school culture/social issue (Firmin et al., 2019). Additionally, HSB is often misconstrued as CYP having underdeveloped social skills or bullying which results in behaviourist interventions that Cassidy and Eden described, such as physical separation or actioning of school behaviour policies (McInnes & Ey, 2020).

Bailey, Remi, Eden and Quinn's experience of not being able to find robust guidance and support from policy makers is indicative of the national picture; there is currently no national strategy for HSB (Clements et al., 2017). This is reflected in this research where schools have been left to navigate their own path with this issue, responding reactively with limited resources for preventative work. While there is limited governmental policy regarding CYP who display HSB, government policy (DfE, 2022) for *Keeping Children Safe in Education* was recently updated to include online safety. Online HSB covers a range of issues such as viewing child abuse, sharing private images, grooming or coercive sexting. While it is not easy to apportion how much HSB is facilitated online it has been recognised as an area of increasing growth (Palmer, 2015). This increase was an experience recognised by Quinn, Remi, Bailey and

Addison and found to be of concern. It can be difficult for staff to remain current on issues related to online safety as research shows this is a known area of skills deficit for school staff (Sánchez-Cruzado, Santiago-Campión & Sánchez-Compañía, 2021). Although many organisations have created training on online safety, technology is constantly evolving. Knowing how to use the internet safely requires keeping-up with current developments, which is something that can be difficult for adults, with research suggesting that the most common way staff develop ICT skills is self or peer taught (Sánchez-Cruzado et al., 2021). This research echoed this when participants discussed the impact of exposure of CYP to harmful online content, with Remi and Quinn commenting how they were facing difficulties in navigating an online culture populated by digital natives who spent vast amounts of time unprotected online. This fits with research implying being exposed to harmful content online is a risk factor for CYP engaging in HSB (Knight, Ronis & Zakireh, 2009).

4.3: What do these adults feel are the challenges to recognising and intervening appropriately to peer-on-peer HSB?

Participants seemed to adopt an ecological stance when considering the challenges to responding to HSB as they explored the interacting relationships of CYP in school, home and cultural context. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) considers a CYP's development as a multifaceted system of relationships that are affected by many environmental influences that include the CYP's home and school but also cultural values, policy, etc. Relationships concerning the CYP and their direct environment as well as their broader environment should be examined to understand their development. Conversations with the participants elicited the interactions between these systems affected their ability to respond. Participants reported that there were systemic challenges to recognising and intervening appropriately to HSB. These findings agree with research by Pelech et al., (2021) who propose there are organisational factors that can impact staff experiences of addressing HSB. This included high workloads, time pressures, constant demands and target-based working (Pelech et al., 2021) which was noted by Addison, Cassidy, Quinn and Bailey. Maas et al. (2021) suggest that high-strain environments can impact functioning, impeding areas such as communication and relational working. An absence of positive

relationships with staff has been recognised as a barrier to disclosure of HSB (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019; Lloyd et al., 2020).

Allnock and Atkinson (2019) write that school staff acknowledged how systemic challenges meant they could not give the time they needed to CYP to foster relationships that would enable them to be aware of issues and offer a secure environment to disclose or report concerns. Relationships were a prominent theme for all participants and the significance of relationships was deeply embedded throughout their conversations, with participants particularly valuing the relationships they had with CYP. They appeared to be in alignment with studies that recognise the importance of relationships and belonging as fundamental human requirements (Allen, Kern, McInerney, Rozec & Slavich, 2021; Greenwood & Kelly, 2020). Knowing the CYP in their setting and being able to respond in a needs-led way with understanding, empathy and warmth appeared to be particularly important to Cassidy and Eden as they supported CYP who had displayed or experienced HSB. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory stated interactions at the 'microsystem' between the CYP and those in their immediate world are the most important on development and I believe my participants were indicating that it is the formation of these relationships that allows for HSB to be identified and challenged.

According to research (Firmin, 2018a; Firmin, 2018b) there are aspects of schools themselves that allow harm, including HSB, thus hindering preventative action. Lloyd (2019) writes this may be due to a range of factors such as the layout of buildings, ethos, policy, cultural/societal norms or training. Eden, Cassidy, Remi and Quinn were aware they were only responding to what CYP were reporting as HSB were likely to go unseen by staff as it is in areas without adult supervision such as corridors, playgrounds, toilets, walking home and online that CYP are most likely to experience HSB (Lloyd et al., 2020; Ofsted, 2021). Addison was open to the idea that any increasing reporting rates would not represent a 'failure' on their part but a culture where CYP felt safe to disclose; if a CYP feels they may be unheard or feels unsafe when/if they disclose HSB to staff this too is likely to be a barrier to disclosure and reduces the probability they will report (Lloyd et al., 2020) Remi and Quinn recognised

that the CYP themselves may not understand that behaviours they were tolerating were HSB or that they were serious in nature and so may hinder intervention. Allnock and Atkinson (2019:11) wrote of a “*hierarchy of harm*” explaining that CYP were perceiving HSB to be inferior to other types of harassment in severity and so would not warrant reporting. CYP are attempting to resolve the issue without the support of adults in school meaning, HSB remains hidden from staff which can make responding and intervening harder (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019).

This research found HSB are perpetuated and maintained through dominant cultural influences and emphasised traditional heteronormative gender expectations. Quinn, Remi and Cassidy raised a normalising of HSB by staff and CYP who either fail to recognise it or minimised it when they do see it. Research (Firmin, 2017; Ofsted, 2021; Waters et al., 2021) has implied some education professionals have diminished the impact of HSB on CYP, perceiving HSB as a ‘normal’ part of development and reducing it to ‘banter’ without considering it as a symptom of a broader school and societal-cultural issue. Considering HSB through the lens of feminist theories, Rahimi and Liston (2009) suggests HSB underpin and perpetuate hegemonic masculinities and femininities through serving as reminders to females of dominant gender ideologies. Conroy (2013) proposes that viewing school responses to HSB through feminist theories helps to understand how it has been normalised, meaning it is hard for staff to act. While Addison explored how they are working hard to challenge some of the heteronormative, gendered-biased ways of thinking in their setting, it has been implied that not only do some school staff fail to recognise, or ignore, HSB they may unintentionally perpetuate the dominant culture’s heteronormative ideology that places males in a privileged position over females (Keddie, 2009; Rahimi & Liston, 2009).

Adhering to hegemonic positions of masculinities and femininities places females in the unwanted position of gatekeepers of male sexuality (Rahimi & Liston, 2009). Rahimi and Liston (2009) found that females are placed in this unwanted and contradictory “*sexual gatekeeping*” (Rahimi & Liston, 2009:518) role where they are expected to limit their own sexual expression and simultaneously be responsible for male sexuality too. Their study acknowledged that women and girls have no power in

how they are being positioned and that it is the dominant cultural beliefs that sustain and maintain these patriarchal, heteronormative roles (Conroy, 2013; Rahimi & Liston, 2009). As demonstrated by the responses of Quinn, Cassidy, Bailey and Eden, girls are held accountable by society not just for their own sexual behaviours but are looked to to contain male sexuality. Participants were advocates of a whole-school approach, so CYP received a consistent message. Yet it was notable that many of the interventions aimed at preventing HSB were delivered to females, with Quinn expressing frustrations that boys were routinely left out of interventions. This burden of expectation placed on females is reflected in wider research which highlights the dichotomy of females being socialised to place their value on how they look (Keddie, 2009), yet shamed, vilified and excluded if they break social norms and embrace their sexuality (Dobson & Ringrose, 2016). Conversely males are socialised to see HSB as 'banter' (Conroy, 2013; Waters et al., 2021) with their behaviours frequently "*side-lined*" (Dobson & Ringrose, 2016:13) as focus remains on girls. Conroy (2013) suggests understanding HSB as behaviours that are strongly ingrained in a dominant narrative of gender norms and expectations can help to inform effective interventions. Feminist theories enable researchers to use HSB to understand the social construction of gender and sexuality because HSB are not founded in pathology and do not happen in isolated events (Conroy, 2013). There was a general opinion from participants that CYP were heavily influenced by the dominant culture, and they have found this difficult to challenge. Schools need to properly address and problematise the damaging constructs of masculinity that encourage such behaviours to move towards equity for all if they are concerned with gender justice (Keddie, 2009). The disruption of antifeminist, male-friendly narratives that normalise HSB, minimise impact and burdens girls with the double standard of being responsible for the containing male sexuality while denying their own is needed if there is to be a lasting cultural legacy (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019; Conroy 2013; Keddie, 2009).

4.4: How might the EP contribute to this area?

While this research found HSB are perpetuated and sustained through dominant cultural influences and traditional heteronormative gender expectations it cannot be ignored that HSB are recognised as having long-term, negative outcomes for all the CYP involved (McInnes & Ey, 2020). Outcomes for CYP who experience HSB include

post-traumatic stress, depression, eating disorders, suicidal ideation, self-harm, reduced school engagement and affected confidence (Bendixen et al., 2018; RCIRCSA, 2017). Those CYP who display HSB are likely to have complex needs (Hackett, 2016) with research suggesting they are vulnerable, experiencing feelings of distress, rejection and a disrupted development (Hackett, 2014). When data is suggesting that approximately 25% of all sexual offences carried out on CYP are by under-18's (Children's Commissioner, 2015) and 6100 allegations of sexual offences, including rape, were alleged on school premises over a four-year period by CYP (House of Commons, 2016), this is no longer a subject that EPs can be complicit in through their silence.

There needs to be an awakening for EPs to the notion that sexual violence is happening in schools (Ofsted, 2021). The profession must seek a way to change how it addresses HSB; without language there is a gaping silence that is in danger of perpetuating harm to the CYP to whom EPs have dedicated their careers. A cultural shift is occurring, and it falls on EPs to decide if the profession want to use its privileged position (Farrell et al., 2006) to help shape discourses, understanding and direction through active participation or if it wants to remain a silent observer, passively allowing cultural change to go unnoticed. I would argue that now is the time to turn silence into action for change. EPs are well-placed at the centre of interconnected systems of school, LAs and families and can make an important difference on a personal, social and political level (Farrell et al., 2006). This research has found that the role of the EP has much to contribute across these levels when considering HSB. This could include promotion of staff wellbeing, training, contributing to policy, development of evidence-based interventions, research, direct work, advocating for CYP and via community psychology (Fallon et al., 2010; Roffey, 2015; Vostanis et al., 2013). It is through pursuing the voice of the marginalised and seeking participation of wider communities that ripples of change in an ocean of challenge can begin (Kelly, 2007).

The role of the EP has evolved gradually over time, partly so that the profession can respond to changes in legislation (Woods, Bond, Tyldesley, Farrell, & Humphrey, 2011). Child protection and safeguarding are fundamental parts of training and work

for all professionals who work with CYP (Woods et al., 2011). In line with their colleagues in other professions EPs have a duty to safeguard the CYP they work with and protect their welfare (DfE, 2020; DfE, 2022). Traditionally the EP has been viewed as being on the periphery of the systems in place with their contribution being via building capacity, specialised knowledge, advocating, bringing awareness to issues and fostering relationships (Allen & Bond, 2020). This research has shown that the EP is not routinely involved where an allegation of HSB has been made with Bailey, Cassidy and Addison seeking support from an IRO and clinical psychologist rather than considering also involving their school EP. While schools followed statutory guidance to report, and should continue to do so, it should be considered that *Working together to safeguard children* (DfE, 2020) promotes the wellbeing of all CYP not just those who are at risk. The role of the EP can be used to support safeguarding via the knowing of systems, multiagency working, supporting of professional expertise and contributing to research (Allen & Bond, 2020). Additionally, Woods et al. (2011) suggests that the EP has skills and knowledge to offer in safeguarding that is complimentary and distinct to that of the social worker. While historically there has been a greater emphasis on the position of the EP in safeguarding and child protection (Woods et al., 2011) this research, and others, is suggestive that the role of the EP in child protection and safeguarding should be more strategic (Allen & Bond, 2020). This is where the EP could offer a unique contribution and perspective when considering HSB in a safeguarding context (Allen & Bond, 2020, Fallon et al., 2010).

This research highlighted the impact of working in environments of high emotional labour and stress had on participants. Cassidy, Remi, Addison and Bailey all disclosed feelings of distress and stress at having to manage complex cases while managing high workloads. As Quinn and Remi noted when working with CYP who have displayed HSB, both parties are vulnerable and need safeguarding which requires an individualised response (Pelech et al., 2021). Hackett et al. (2006) support this finding when suggesting the task of lowering HSB in CYP, alongside navigating other complexities, should be deemed emotionally taxing labour. Pelech et al. (2021) found the impact of working with CYP who have displayed HSB is not as readily acknowledged in research compared to those who work with adult offenders. There are confusing and powerful feelings that can be evoked when working with CYP who

display HSB with feelings of helplessness, sadness, anger or incompetence being described (Hawkes, 2011; Waters et al., 2021). Bailey spoke powerfully of their distress about a case and Cassidy and Addison referred to the physical symptoms they experienced and associated with stress, with all three mentally taking the emotional burden of work home. Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is essential not only to ensure they are well supported but also to make sure they are equipped to support CYP. Teachers who experience 'burnout' are less able to contain CYP's emotional needs, build trusting relationships with them or support CYP's emotional difficulties (Kidger, Gunnell, Biddle, Campbell & Donovan, 2010). HSB are difficult and uncomfortable conversations to engage with but the challenge for the EP profession is to be willing to step into these conversations, inviting discourse about what feels impossible. Roffey (2015) writes that to assist teachers to retain a positive sense of self, EPs can play a crucial role in recognising, validating and supporting them. EPs can encourage collective approaches that promote social capital, changes culture and offer staff individual support (Roffey, 2015).

Supervision could be one vehicle for support. All participants spoke about supervision, which was varied and derived from a variety of sources such as an IRO, a clinical psychologist or more informal peer supervision. Supervision quality appeared to vary according to the setting with Remi, Quinn and Eden not having any formal supervision available to them and Addison expressing concerns about how there are no guidelines on how/who/where supervision could be implemented in school. This is in alignment with studies (Almond, 2014; Pelech et al., 2021) that found supervision varied in quality and availability depending on the organisation but recommended that to promote effective coping and manage the emotional labour of the work readily available, reflective clinical supervision is a necessity. Bailey and Cassidy placed high value on the availability of supervision helping them manage not only their caseload but their emotional wellbeing too. Bailey found it particularly helpful to have access to a supervisor who could help with the emotional labour of the role but also had sound knowledge of process/services so could offer practical support. Bailey's experience is similar to research (Almond, 2014) that found the professional experience and personal qualities of those offering supervision were an essential component to its success. Participants appeared to be expressing the need for opportunities to discuss

and explore responses that were reflective of the situations they experienced. When considering participants' responses to working with CYP who display HSB it evokes the psychoanalytic concept of containment (Bion, 1984). I feel participants were expressing a need for emotional containment while they explored their requirements for support to manage and process their individual complex feelings. EPs, with their theoretical understanding of child development, therapeutic/psychological skills, and their unique positioning in the education system would be well placed to offer this containment and other support via supervision and through being prepared to have conversations about what seems unmanageable (Beaver, 2011; Bion, 1984; Fallon et al., 2010; Roffey, 2015).

Instead of concentrating on individual behaviours, preventive interventions facilitated in schools can provide opportunities to prevent HSB from forming by addressing the social/cultural contexts CYP occupy (Lloyd, 2019; Wunsch & Moran, 2018). EPs typically see behaviour as a form of communication and view the interaction of the CYP with their environment, taking an ecological perspective (Fallon et al., 2010). When taking an ecological perspective, a school is not just a location that hosts an intervention, it is a system to be enhanced by that intervention, with the intention being to prevent unwanted behaviours, elicit broader change and alter existing processes (Trickett & Rowe, 2012). Roffey (2015) asserts that EPs are equipped with the skills needed to help develop school capacity, foster whole-school approaches and address culture. There was value placed on training by participants who felt that they needed ongoing input as they navigated the fast-paced cultural changes. As Addison suggested, ongoing, dynamic training is a way to aid understanding and position staff to appropriately support CYP and families (Ey et al., 2017). By providing training, EPs can work with schools at an organisational level to promote inclusive practices, challenge culture, develop staff skills/confidence and make changes that support the needs of CYP (Farrell et al., 2006; Roffey, 2015). Participants all spoke of taking a whole-school approach to addressing HSB with Cassidy and Eden expressing how this approach can be hindered by external barriers and Remi, Addison and Quinn expressing concerns about issues surrounding HSB being brought into schools. EPs supporting and valuing this work involves addressing culture, recruiting all to be involved. This has led me to propose that the role of the EP should extend beyond the

school gates, become concerned with broader community issues and not be afraid to be involved with difficult or uncomfortable discourses.



Reflective Box

When considering the GLST gendered interventions I was conflicted as to whether to include this. But it felt to me like this was an important area to explore. Reflecting on this when reading literature, I wondered why and considered if my need to include this was based on some of my own experiences. There is a sense that as females we should be moderating our behaviours to be safe rather than educating males on how they should moderate their behaviours to ensure others feel safe. This fascinated/frustrated me, especially when I worked in forensic psychology; when other types of offence are committed the expectation is not on those who experienced the offence to need an intervention. Yes they may well need support to process their experience, but they were not expected to behave in a way that was designed to contain the behaviours of those who may cause harm. And there was an understanding that it was those who had committed an offence that would be held to account and expected to moderate their behaviours and/or attend interventions. Because of this I was concerned some of my frustrations would echo through. This has been where supervision, both peer and formal, have been helpful to process thoughts and feelings and acknowledge that it is okay to experience these feelings. Supervision is a useful vehicle that helps ensure that I am not led by them.

Chapter Five: Conclusions, recommendations, limitations and further research

5.1: Overview

This chapter offers the main conclusions from this research, discusses possible limitations and considers how findings can be applied by making recommendations for practice. Future research will also be addressed.

5.2: Recommendations for practice

This research is a call for EPs to actively participate in a cultural shift that is already occurring in the institutions and systems that support CYP. This is our opportunity to support and shape policies, decisions, discourses and outcomes that impact those our profession seeks to serve. Whilst it is recognised each participant has a unique experience key themes emerged which when considered alongside the literature allows for the following suggestions for recommendations for practice:

- **Relational approaches (RA);** Adopting RA were a notable component of my research and an essential part of supporting both CYP in disclosing and in staff wellbeing. School staff need to be given time to explore communication around behaviours, consider relational-based responses/care, support repair and be able to work proactively rather than reactively. This is likely to require specific training to help staff understand the importance of nurture, belonging and connection in schools (Greenwood & Kelly, 2020). EPs are well positioned to deliver and support schools develop a whole-school RA (Roffey, 2015) alongside support from SLT and LAs who should offer support through development of guidance/policy.
- **Whole-school approach, policy and guidance:** There was a call from participants for more and clearer guidance when addressing HSB. Understanding is evolving (Hackett, 2016) and there is a desire to know more from those who work directly with CYP who display HSB. EPs could 'bridge-the-gap' across the interconnected systems through mobilising their specialist skill-sets to form policy, create guidance, foster whole-school approach and address culture whilst keeping the voice of CYP central and promoting solutions-focused narratives. (Roffey, 2015; Beaver, 2011; Farrel et al, 2006).

- **Community approaches:** We do not exist in isolation, unaffected by what is going on around us (Gergen, 2015). CYP are impacted by many things including family circumstances, school climate and culture (Billington, Gibson, Fogg, Lahmar & Cameron, 2022). This research illustrated these complex connections, how they are brought into school and the disconnection/frustration in addressing issues. We must step outside the school gates and acknowledge cultural, environmental and economic aspects that influence community interactions, seek to support where needed and amplify strengths through the inclusion of the voices of the silenced, unheard and marginalised (Billington et al., 2022). EPs could adopt a community psychology approach through the allocation of a specialist HSB practitioners within an EPS team who could work alongside other services such as Youth Justice, CSC and Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services (CAMHS). EPs are well-placed to collaboratively work with others within communities offering this support (Farrel et al., 2006; Roffey, 2015).
- **Training:** School training should be pertinent, dynamic and applicable to enhance and support practice. It is vital to understand the unique needs of the setting and offer bespoke training instead of a 'one size fits all' approach. Through training, EPs can collaborate with schools at the organisational level to promote inclusive practises, build staff knowledge and skills, and make changes that will help them better meet needs of staff and CYP (Farrell et al., 2006). Training should include an understanding of key areas of EP theoretical knowledge such as child development, attachment and trauma. TEPs/EPs must also become familiar with the research surrounding HSB, evidence-based interventions and support pathways so the training/support EPs offer is applicable. Inter-agency training and skills sharing is likely to be beneficial.
- **Staff wellbeing:** Those working in areas of high emotional labour need to be given time for support. This research highlights the impact of working in a profession where feelings of stress, burnout and the need to balance multiple conflicting responsibilities are taking their toll. Access to reflective supervision is not commonplace in schools. Yet other professionals supporting CYP with complex needs are routinely offered supervision to help them engage in critical reflection, discuss problems/concerns and develop different ways of working

(Hawkins & McMahon, 2020; O'Donoghue, 2015). Small-group peer supervision or group consultation may also be a vehicle for allowing open discourse, the exchange of skills and emotional containment. Time for supervision should be protected and promoted by SLT/LAs. EPs are well-placed to facilitate with the structure and support of this and with the promotion of a whole-school approach to wellbeing (Fallon et al., 2010; Roffey, 2015).

5.3: Strengths and Limitations

The methodology chapter considered the limitations of IPA as an approach so this section will discuss the strengths and limitations relevant to this research. A key strength of this research is it is the first to explore the lived experience of those adults supporting CYP who have displayed peer-on-peer HSB while considering the role of the EP. Hence, it offers a unique and significant addition to the body of scientific evidence on an emerging subject.

The use of a semi-structured interview allowed for focused but flexible collection of data. Whilst being conscious of the benefits of an interview schedule helping to avoid asking leading/closed questions there is acknowledgement its use will have impacted on GETs. Therefore, participants were offered the opportunity to give any further thoughts at the close of interview. Transparency was aimed for throughout this research to aid rigor and ensure clarity (Yardley, 2015). I have done this through outlining my positionality, exploring rational and decision making and providing a clear explanation of my findings. My thinking and challenges can be explored through my reflections.

The homogeneity of the sample was a further limitation of the study and a focus on mainstream secondary-school staff in one LA. This research may have benefited from a wider sample that included special schools, alternative provisions and other geographical locations to elicit broader experiences. Although it should be considered that the homogeneity of the sample is foundational to IPA methodology (Smith et al., 2022). The results cannot be readily generalised due to the limited sample size (Smith

et al., 2022). Whilst this makes these findings context specific the intent was to understand how findings could be transferable. Contextual information about the participants and LA has been included to help facilitate theoretical generalisability (Smith et al., 2022). Additionally, a small sample size could be viewed as a limitation, but this allowed for depth necessary to understand each participant's experience (Smith et al., 2022). Participants were self-selecting which may have increased motivation to share their experiences. It should also be considered that all participants came from the same ethnic background. Given the diverse demographic in which the research took place it is considered that this lack of diversity reflected in participants is a limitation.

5.4: Further Research

After considering my research, I offer the following ideas for potential future research:

- Further IPA study to consider the experiences of EPs who have worked in systems where peer-on-peer HSB are occurring. It would be interesting to explore what the EP profession feel they need to be able to confidently support others when faced with HSB.
- Using purposeful sampling to broaden the demographics of participants to consider the experiences of those from different geographical locations, ethnic minority backgrounds and other settings such as special schools or alternative provisions.
- Research considering the experiences of external agencies who are working with educational settings and what they consider the barriers are to recognising and challenging HSB in schools.
- Action research examining the emergence of relational school communities, how it supports identification of HSB and how EPs may be best positioned to provide support. This should involve parents/carers and the community.
- Further research into the wellbeing of staff in school and how this can be supported. Conducting a study to elicit what the barrier and enablers were to wellbeing in schools, especially for staff who work in emotionally taxing roles would be interesting. This could be facilitated through focus groups considering

the use of tools such of group consultation or supervision as ways to support wellbeing.

- A study to elicit the role the EP could play in community teams to offer community support e.g., considering if there is a role for the EP within Youth Justice Teams, HSB Panels, parenting groups etc.

5.5: Conclusions

This research aimed to explore the lived experiences of secondary school staff who worked with CYP who displayed HSB to elicit what the barriers were to identifying and challenging HSB in their settings. Despite an increasing awareness of peer-on-peer HSB (Hackett, 2016; Ofsted, 2021) the experience and voice of school staff was an important missing component (Waters et al., 2021) with much still to be learned from this gap in the research. Through IPA analysis six GETs emerged: responding to HSB is complex; cultural influences, societal changes, complex situations; training and awareness; relational approaches; external support; staff well-being.

Discussion with participants illustrated a complicated picture with intersections between GETs. Responding to HSB can be complicated, confusing and emotionally difficult for school staff. Shifts in societal norms stemming from movements such as *#MeToo* and *Everyone's Invited* have precipitated the beginnings of cultural change and recognition that behaviours previously tolerated and normalised can no longer go unchallenged due to the harm it causes (Bendixen et al., 2018; RCIRCSA, 2017). This shift in understanding is occurring alongside the development of policy and procedure and challenged school staffs' own perceptions, beliefs and experiences. They reflected on their own experiences, both personal and professional, recognising there had been positive moves towards challenging entrenched heteronormative, damaging beliefs, expressing how important it was to address this issue. They felt responding to HSB was complicated and nuanced but having a whole-school approach where honest, open dialogue develops the skills and knowledge of CYP, normalises difficult conversations, creates safer schools and develops staff skills/understanding. However, there was some discomfort expressed at the prospect of wider discourse

due to concerns surrounding labelling of behaviours which some participants felt could have negative long-term consequences and create a deficit narrative.

While relational approaches was a stand-alone GET participants saw the formation of positive relationships as a fundamental factor in supporting CYP who displayed HSB and the theme of relationships threaded throughout all the GETs. Participants viewed HSB through an ecological lens and were aware of the effects of interdependent interactions within and between ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This included interactions at the 'microsystem' highlighting the positive impact connection and belonging in school (Greenwood & Kelly, 2020) can have on a CYP thus impacting school ethos, reporting, discourses and interventions. Participants discussions also illuminated how factors and relationships outside of school had an impact on how they could respond to HSB citing family/community relationships as both protective and risk factors. The interaction between these systems, development of relationships and community outreach was a fundamental aspect of supporting CYP and challenging HSB. Relationships and support from external agencies were important to participants who valued input from those with specialised skills and training when dealing with HSB. It was recognised by participants that these relationships could be difficult to manage as school staff sought to meet what could be conflicting needs of CYP involved and cope with the demands placed on them by external agencies whose expectations were not always congruent with what school could offer.

The need to support CYP who display or experience HSB is contributing to staff workload and negatively impacting wellbeing. The demands of the role were at times described as overwhelming, stressful and emotionally taxing. This has a negative effect on interactions and may have an impact on participants' perceptions of their own efficacy and competency as practitioners. Participants were emotionally taking the burden of work home described how this had physical implications such as sleep disturbances or feelings of panic. There was evidence of some good practice through supervision, but this was dependent on support of SLT and not consistently available. Participants who had supervision valued the emotional containment it offered, those who did not have formal supervision sought out informal peer supervision. There was

a feeling from participants there were not obvious avenues for emotional containment, access to bespoke training or sufficient policy/guidance on HSB. This perpetuated feelings of uncertainty in terms of action and affected confidence in ability to recognise and address HSB. There were ripples of hope too. There has been an increase in recognition of peer-on-peer HSB and there is affirmative action taking place to challenge gender-based violence. School staff want to develop their skills, further their understanding, challenge inequality and there is an increasing desire for gender justice.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval Letter

Approved: 13/05/2022

Annmarie Moran

Registration number: XXXXXXXX School of Education

Programme: Doctorate of Child and Education Psychology

Dear Annmarie

PROJECT TITLE: Everyone is Invited But does Everyone Understand? Exploring the experiences of adults working with children and young people (CYP) who have displayed peer-on-peer harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) in education settings. **APPLICATION:** Reference Number 046013

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 13/05/2022 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 046013 (form submission date: 03/05/2022); (expected project end date: 31/08/2023).
- Participant information sheet 1104170 version 2 (03/05/2022).
- Participant consent form 1104420 version 1 (05/04/2022).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

ED6ETH

Edu Ethics Administrator

School of Education

Please note the following responsibilities of the researcher in delivering the research project:

- [The project must abide by the University's Research Ethics Policy:](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/research-services/ethics-integrity/policy) <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/research-services/ethics-integrity/policy>
- The project must abide by the University's Good Research & Innovation Practices Policy: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.671066!/file/GRIPPpolicy.pdf
- The researcher must inform their supervisor (in the case of a student) or Ethics Administrator (in the case of a member of staff) of any significant changes to the project or the approved documentation.
- The researcher must comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.

Appendix B: Research information sheet for participants

Everyone is Invited But does Everyone Understand? Exploring the experiences of adults working with CYP who have displayed peer-on-peer harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) in education settings.

Research information sheet for participants

You have been invited to take part in a research study that will be written up and assessed as part of the researcher's Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Sheffield Thesis. Before you decide to give consent to take part, it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear, or you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

The research will be conducted by Annmarie Moran who is currently a Trainee Educational Psychologists at the University of Sheffield.

What is the aim of the research?

The aim of the research is to understand the experiences of adults who work in the systems that support CYP of a secondary school age and who have direct experience of working with CYP who have displayed peer-on-peer HSB.

Why have you been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part as you have been identified as an adult who has experience of supporting CYP of a secondary school age who may have displayed peer-on-peer HSB.

Do I have to take part?

It's up to you to decide whether or not you would like to take part. If you do decide that you would like to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. You will still be free to withdraw at any time without needing to give a reason. Should you decide to withdraw from the study all data pertaining to you will also be destroyed or delated. If you wish to withdraw from the study please contact the lead researcher (contact details are below). However, it should be noted that once any research has been published you would not be able to withdraw from the research. The date for this would be 31/01/2023.

Please note that that by choosing to participate in this research, this will not create a legally binding agreement, nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between you and the University of Sheffield.

What will I be asked to do?

If you decide to take part you will be asked to take part in one interview that will last approximately one hour. The purpose of this interview will be to discuss your experiences of working with CYP who may have displayed peer-on-peer HBS and to consider what the are the challenges to recognising and intervening appropriately to peer-on-peer HSB.

What are the possible risks or disadvantages of taking part?

It has been recognised that there can be risks associated with well-being when conducting research into sensitive subjects and in the subsequent publication of the research. If at any point during the research process you feel uncomfortable, or what further clarification, please bring this to the attention of the researcher. It is also recognised that you are giving up your time to take part in this study and the researcher will arrange the interview at a time that is suitable for you.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help to further develop an understanding of the challenges to recognising and intervening appropriately to peer-on-peer HSB.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications unless you have given your explicit consent for this. You will be allocated a pseudonym that only you and the researcher will know. If you agree to us sharing the information you provide with other researchers (e.g. by making it available in a data archive) then your personal details will not be included unless you explicitly request this. It should be noted that if any information pertaining to a safeguarding issue is disclosed then the appropriate safeguarding responses will be followed in line with legal duties.

What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>

As we will be collecting some data that is defined in the legislation as more sensitive (information about alleged criminal activity), we also need to let you know that we are applying the following condition in law: that the use of your data is necessary 'for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific research purposes or statistical purposes' (9(2)(j)).

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Yes. The audio and/or video recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project, other than the transcription service, will be allowed access to the original recordings.

What happens to the data collected?

All data will be stored securely and destroyed when no longer needed. All signed consent forms will be kept in a secure location separate from the interview data. All recorded data will be confidential, and names will not be recorded. Instead, your identifying information will be removed and assigned a pseudonym as soon as possible. This pseudonym will only be known by you and the researcher. The interview will be recorded using software on a laptop and/or a mobile phone. The anonymised recordings will be stored temporarily on password protected and encrypted computer/mobile device before being uploaded to the University of Sheffield's server (which satisfies the University's requirements for secure data retention). Using a transcription service (data processor) provided by the University of Sheffield the audio on the files will be transcribed. The files will be saved using the pseudonyms allocated and shared with the transcription service via an encrypted platform. The data will then be analysed and written up as part of the researcher's Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology thesis submission. The anonymised findings of the research will be shared with the participants and XXXX Educational Psychology Service. If accepted for publication the data may also be used to publish findings in a peer reviewed journal. Any quotations will be anonymised in any report or publication. No organisation, person, or location will be named in any report/publication and any identifiable information concerning it will be omitted. The researcher will notify you of any publications and supply you with copies of any publications should you require them.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The University of Sheffield.

Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the School of Education.

What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research or report a concern or incident?

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, please contact Dr Anthony Williams (xxxx@sheffield.ac.uk) in the first instance. If you

feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way you can contact the Head of the Department of School of Education, Professor Rebecca Lawthom (xxx@sheffield.ac.uk). If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can find information about how to raise a complaint in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>

If you wish to make a report of a concern or incident relating to potential exploitation, abuse or harm resulting from your involvement in this project, please contact the project's Designated Safeguarding Contact Dr Anthony Williams (xxx@sheffield.ac.uk). If the concern or incident relates to the Designated Safeguarding Contact, or if you feel a report you have made to this Contact has not been handled in a satisfactory way, please contact the Head of the Department of School of Education, Professor Rebecca Lawthom (xxx@sheffield.ac.uk) and/or the University's Research Ethics & Integrity Manager (Lindsay Unwin; xxx@sheffield.ac.uk).

Contact for further information

Lead Researcher: Anmarie Moran, Trainee Educational Psychologist, xxxxx@sheffield.ac.uk

School of Education, The University of Sheffield, Floor 3 Edgar Allan House, 241 Glossop Road. Sheffield, S10 2GW, Tel: XXXXXXX

Supervisor: Dr Anthony Williams, Programme Director, Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology xxx@sheffield.ac.uk Tel: XXXXXXX

School of Education, The University of Sheffield, Floor 3 Edgar Allan House, 241 Glossop Road. Sheffield, S10 2GW

Appendix C: Consent Form

Everyone is Invited But does Everyone Understand? Exploring the experiences of adults working with CYP who have displayed peer-on-peer harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) in education settings.

Consent Form

<i>Please tick the appropriate boxes</i>	Yes	No
Taking Part in the Project		
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 31/03/2022 or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include I understand that taking part in the project will include being interviewed and that interview being recorded (audio and / or video). I agree to being audio/video recorded and for anonymised transcripts of these recordings to be used in the research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time before 30/11/2022; I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw. I understand that should I wish to withdraw from the research/study this will not be possible following the publication/submission of the research/study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How my information will be used during and after the project		
I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of participant: _____ (please print)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name of researcher: _____ (please print)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Project contact details for further information:

Lead Researcher: Annmarie Moran, Trainee Educational Psychologist, xxx@sheffield.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Anthony Williams, Programme Director, Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology xxx@sheffield.ac.uk

Head of Department: Professor Rebecca Lawthom, xxx@sheffield.ac.uk

School of Education, The University of Sheffield, Floor 3 Edgar Allan House, 241 Glossop Road. Sheffield, S10 2GW

When completed: 1 copy for the participant; 1 original for study file.

Appendix D: Data Management Plan

Everyone is Invited But does Everyone Understand? Exploring the experiences of adults working with children and young people (CYP) who have displayed peer-on-peer harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) in education settings.

Defining your data

- **What digital data (and physical data if applicable) will you collect or create during the project?**
- **How will the data be collected or created, and over what time period?**
- **What formats will your digital data be in? (E.g. .doc, .txt, .jpeg)**
- **Approximately how much digital data (in GB, MB, etc) will be generated during the project?**
- **Are you using pre-existing datasets? Give details if possible, including conditions of use.**

The data of this research will include but not be limited to informed consent, audio/video records, anonymised transcripts, analysed data, results, reports, interview notes and a research journal.

The researcher will introduce the research and interview process to the participants through discussion and the use of the information sheet. If the participants agree to take part in the research, they will sign two copies of the informed consent form and keep one and one will be retained by the researcher. The signed consent forms will be kept securely and separately from the digital data and destroyed using confidential waste services within three months of the thesis hand-in date. Each participant will be allocated a pseudonym known only to themselves and the researcher. The interviews will be recorded by audio recording devices on an encrypted laptop and/or mobile device. During the interview, the researcher may take notes if needed, no personal details will be recorded any reference made will be in accordance with the participant's pseudonym. The audio files will be saved in the name of the participants' pseudonym. Due to the unpredictable nature of Covid-19 it maybe necessary for the interviews to take place over a digital platform. This has been considered and consent sought should this be required. If this is necessary the University provided platform of Google Meet will be used.

The audio recordings will be transcribed into text. Due to the researcher's multiple disabilities a transcription service will be used. This service is provided by the University of Sheffield's Disability and Dyslexia Support Service. Any transcriber used will be asked to agree to and sign a confidentiality agreement (see supporting document for copy of confidentiality agreement) and be expected to delete any data pertaining to this study following the completion of the transcription. The audio recordings of the interviews will be shared with this service using a secure and encrypted platform. This will include but is not limited to:

- Google drive

Following transcription, the transcripts will be returned in word document format via the same secure platform. The interviews will be separately analysed in full, with notes made of emerging themes. When familiar with the data phenomenological and interpretive coding can begin to help identify initial themes. To cluster the initial themes relationships between the data will be sought to create a narrative account of what the experience is saying. The final superordinate themes originate from these clusters. These final themes will be written up in the results section of the thesis alongside extracts that represent each theme. The researcher will conduct a research journal along with this research.

The file formats will include audio records and text transcriptions. If there are any interviews via an online platform this will necessitate the recording in video. The audio records will be collected and saved in MPEG Audio Layer 3 (.MP3). Any video recordings will be saved as MPEG-4 Video (.mp4).

The total volume of the data is estimated below 1 TB (1,000 GB). The formats of the files in the research will include but are not limited to:

- MPEG Audio Layer 3 (.MP3)
- MPEG-4 Video (.mp4)
- Word 97-2003 Document (.doc)
- Word Document (.docx)
- Word 2003 XML Document (.xml)
- PowerPoint 97-2003 Presentation (.ppt)
- PowerPoint Presentation (.pptx)
- PDF (.pdf)
- JPEG File Interchange Format (.jpg)

The qualitative data will be collected through in-depth interviews. Each participant will be given a pseudonym. The participants will be recorded by audio recording devices. In case of device crashing, the interviews will be recorded by two devices simultaneously using Sonocent Audio, software provided by the University of Sheffield Disability and Dyslexia Support Service and can be used on an encrypted laptop and mobile phone. Participants will be reminded not to share any identifying details of any third parties. During the interview, the researcher may take notes of the interviewees' interactions, emotions, and behaviour if needed. The notes maybe taken by a digital device, such as a laptop or a tablet or on paper but will be anonymous. The audio records will be transcribed into text as outlined above before analysing. During the research process, the researcher will keep research journals by using a laptop. No identifying details will be recorded in this journal.

Looking after data during your research

- **Where will you store digital data during the project to ensure it is secure and backed up regularly? (E.g. [University research data storage](#), or University Google drive)**
- **How will you name and organise your data files? (An example filename can help to illustrate this)**
- **If you collect or create physical data, where will you store these securely?**
- **How will you make data easier to understand and use? (E.g. include file structure and methodology in a README file)**
- **Will you use extra security precautions for any of your digital or physical data? (E.g. for sensitive and/or personal data)**

All the research documents, including the data, will be stored in the university UniDrive (U: drive) provided by the University of Sheffield IT Services. This is backed up and offers access off campus via the University VPN. The audio records will be deleted from the two recording devices once the recording data is transported to the UniDrive (U: drive) and checked for quality and completeness. The audio recordings will be preserved in the UniDrive (U: drive) until the transcription and checking process is complete and all audio recordings will then be deleted. Because the audio records and the transcriptions will be anonymised, there will be a codebook to manage the pseudonymised personal details. The pseudonymisation codebook will be stored in the university provide Google Drive separately instead of in the UniDrive (U:drive). In addition, the direct and indirect identifiers will be removed from transcripts to avoid the risk of identification.

Initial interview data, transcriptions, analysis data, results, reports and research notes will be stored in different folders. The files will be named with the pseudonym and date e.g. JANE20220301.MP3, JANE20220301.docx. This is not a large-scale research or complicated-designed research and as such the data of this research will not include complex relationships of data, there will be only 5 participants. This research will not apply a disciplinary metadata standard for generating the metadata. Instead, the metadata will be simply and clearly saved in the document file. The document file (.docx) will be used to document the general information of all stored data, such as collected time, collected method, file created time, file format etc.

The consent forms will be the only physical data that will be generated. These will be kept securely and separately from the digital data until they can be destroyed in confidential waste management systems within three months of completion of this thesis in order to keep the data separate from other data that may lead to identification of participants. The University of Sheffield provided Google Drive will also be a way to share resources and fully anonymised data with supervisors during the process of this research.

Storing data after your research

- Which parts of your data will be stored on a long-term basis after the end of the project?
- Where will the data be stored after the project? (E.g. University of Sheffield repository [ORDA](#), or a subject-specific repository)
- How long will the data be stored for? (E.g. standard TUoS retention period of 10 years after the project)
- Who will place the data in a repository or other long-term storage? (E.g. you, or your supervisor)
- If you plan to use long-term data storage other than a repository, who will be responsible for the data?

All data that has identifying details on will be securely destroyed within three months of the completion of the thesis. The audio recordings will be deleted following the transcription and checking process. The remaining data of this research will be preserved for at least ten years following the completion of this doctoral study to comply with the university research data policy. They will be preserved in the University filestore (X: drive) after requesting the long-term research data storage from the University of Sheffield IT Services via my supervisor as the University of Sheffield's ORDA may not be appropriate for long term storage due to the potentially sensitive nature of the interview data.

Sharing data after your research

- How will you make data available outside of the research group after the project? (E.g. openly available through a repository, or on request through your department)
- Will you make all of your data available, or are there reasons you can't do this? (E.g. personal data, commercial or legal restrictions, very large datasets)
- If there are reasons you can't share all of your data, how might you make as much of it available as possible? (E.g. anonymisation, participant consent, sharing analysed data only)
- How will you make your data as widely accessible as possible? (E.g. include a data availability statement in publications, ensure published data has a DOI)
- What licence will you apply to your data to say how it can be reused and shared? (E.g. one of the [Creative Commons](#) licenses)

At the end of the research, the anonymised findings are expected to be shared through the publication of the final thesis write up and other publications. Any quotes that are used from the transcripts will not contain any identifying information and any recognisable incidents will be disguised appropriately. It is a requirement on completion of the doctoral study that the thesis will be uploaded to White Rose eTheses Online (WREO). No identifying information about participants will be included. Consent will be sought from participants for their data to be used in publications. It will be made clear in any

publication that no identifying information is included in the write up. The data will be preserved via the University of Sheffield's filestore (X: drive) following a request for long term Standard Research Storage via my supervisor. The anonymised data and the metadata of this research will be preserved for at least ten years following the completion of this research to comply with the university research data policy. Participants will be notified via the consent form that the copyright of any materials generated as part of this project are assigned to The University of Sheffield. The primary investigator and their supervisors have the rights to see data. Participants will have the right to see their own data at any point. They can also withdraw from this study up to 30/11/2022, at which point analysis will have begun and this will no longer be possible. This is made clear at consenting.

Putting your plan into practice

- **Who is responsible for making sure your data management plan is followed? (E.g. you with the support of your supervisor)**
- **How often will your data management plan be reviewed and updated? (E.g. yearly and if the project changes)**
- **Are there any actions you need to take in order to put your data management plan into practice? (E.g. requesting University research data storage)**

The responsibility of the data management will primary managed by the lead researcher (Annmarie Moran), though it is assumed that some of this will also likely be managed by the project supervisor (Dr. Antony Williams). The University of Sheffield policies on data security will be adhered to strictly. This plan will be reviewed yearly and if any further changes are made to the overall project plan.

Appendix E: Confidentiality Agreement for Use With Transcription Service



Confidentiality Agreement for use with Transcription Services

Research Study Title: Everyone is Invited But does Everyone Understand? Exploring the experiences of adults working with children and young people (CYP) who have displayed peer-on-peer harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) in education settings.

1. I, _____ transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality of all research data received from the research team related to this research study.
2. I will hold in strictest confidence the identity of any individual that may be revealed during the transcription of interviews or in any associated documents.
3. I will not make copies of any audio-recordings, video-recordings, or other research data, unless specifically requested to do so by the researcher.
4. I will not provide the research data to any third parties without the client's consent.
5. I will store all study-related data, including video and audio recordings and transcriptions in a safe, secure location in a restricted access folder on the university network (x drive) (preferred¹)/using encrypted storage devices/google drive (delete as appropriate) as long as they are in my possession.
6. All data provided or created for purposes of this agreement, including any back-up records, will be returned to the research team or permanently deleted. When I have received confirmation that the transcription work I performed has been satisfactorily completed, any of the research data that remains with me will be returned to the research team or destroyed, pursuant to the instructions of the research team.
7. I understand that University of Sheffield has the right to take legal action against any breach of confidentiality that occurs in my handling of the research data.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____

¹ The university recommends that all confidential data be stored securely on the university network. Transcribers must ensure VPN access when working remotely in accordance with good practice. Information on how to set this up is here <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/cics/vpn/index>.

Appendix F: Interview Schedule

Interview Questions

Part A – Housekeeping prompts

1. Thank you for willing to be a part of this research.
2. The purpose is to hear your experiences and to talk about what you feel are the challenges to recognising and intervening appropriately to peer-on-peer HSB
3. Type; I'm interested in what you have to say, there are no right/wrong answers. I may ask some obvious questions. Or I may not say much as listening to what you have to say, but might ask a few questions too. You can take as long as you need to think or answer. If you want to stop or skip a question please let me know.
4. Support; go through what to do of feeling distressed, contact sheet and support links.
5. Confidentiality – no third party details
6. Safeguarding
7. Data Use e.g. Purpose, audio recorded, transcribed, stored securely, no access other than researcher, unless have permission, confidentiality, pseudonyms
8. Analysis
9. Withdrawing; date they can withdraw by etc.
10. Any questions? Ready to start recording?

Part B – Interview Questions

1. Background information
 - Tell me about your experience working in education.
 - What kind of roles have you had?

2. Experiences and thoughts of peer-on-peer HSB
 - What is peer-on-peer HSB?
 - Tell me what you think about peer-on-peer HSB in general
 - Have you encountered peer-on-peer HSB directly? Tell me about that.

3. Personal barriers and enablers
 - How would you recognise peer-on-peer HSB?
 - How have you dealt with peer-on-peer HSB? What did you do?
 - Looking back on a situation when you have had to deal with peer-on-peer HSB what do you think you needed in that situation?
 - Was there anything that made the situation harder/easier for you?

4. General barriers and enablers

- What are the everyday behaviours that a classroom teacher/staff might recognise under the broad term as peer-on-peer HSB? How might they address it when they saw it?
- Do you think that others recognise peer-on-peer HSB? Why/Why not?
- What do you think the challenges are for others in school when dealing with peer-on-peer HSB?
- What do you think they would need to help them?

5. Impact

- Do you feel that having to deal with peer-on-peer HSB impacts you emotionally? How? When would you notice this?
- Do you think that there is anything that could help with this emotional impact?
- Who else do you feel is impacted by peer-on-peer HSB?

6. Service support/improvements

- Considering your experience of working with CYP who display peer-on-peer HSB is there any support you have received from any service that has been particularly helpful? Why?
- What could be done to help improve support services for those working with CYP who peer-on-peer HSB?
- Is there anything you feel you need?

7. Summary and reflections

- Thinking about what we have talked about today how would you summarise our discussion?
- Is there anything else you've thought of that you want to discuss?

Appendix G: Participant Profiles and Local Authority Context.

All the participants were employed in a mainstream UK secondary school at the time of interview.

Participant Pseudonym	Interview Features	Profile
Quinn (pilot) 40 mins	Face to Face in a room arranged by Quinn in their school	Quinn has worked in the setting for nine years. Starting out as a mentor Quinn progressed through various roles within the school that were of a more pastoral nature. Quinn's duties have included being the Deputy Safeguarding Lead and the Mental Health Lead.
Cassidy 52 mins	Face to Face a room arranged by Cassidy in their school	Cassidy has worked with CYP for 20 years initially working for the LA with care experiences CYP in residential settings. Cassidy moved to their current setting approximately ten years ago to take up the post of head of year. Cassidy is currently lead learning mentor supporting CYP with high level of needs to remain in school via the school's bespoke internal provision.
Remi 29 mins	Face to Face a side office arranged by Remi in their school	Remi has worked with CYP for approximately 20 years in a range of roles within the LA. Remi quickly gravitated towards CYP with emotional and behavioural difficulties and found that was where they were best suited. Remi is currently role in as safeguarding lead in a school. Remi has been in this role for six years.
Bailey 32 mins	Face to Face a room arranged by Bailey in their school	Bailey has worked in the high school branch of the education sector for four years. This is when Bailey took up their current position as safeguarding lead. Prior to working in schools Bailey worked for approximately 20 years in a range of roles in LA Children's Centres working with families who had high levels of need.
Addison 45 mins	Face to Face a room arranged by Addison in their school	Addison started to work at the school approximately 20 years ago in an entry level position and has worked their way through a variety of roles in school. Addison became the assistant head teacher in pastoral care and behaviour for two and a half years ago. For the past four months Addison has been deputy head for behaviour, personal development, safeguarding and pastoral care.

Eden 33 mins	Online via Google Meet. Eden was alone in their office and I was in my home office	Eden qualified as a high school teacher approx. 30 years ago and worked as a main grade teacher for around 20 years. Eden became the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) position in their setting six years ago. In Eden's setting the SENCo is also the designated teacher for looked after children. Currently Eden teaches alongside their responsibilities as SENCo and designated teacher. Eden has worked in a variety of different schools during their career.
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Local Authority Context*

The LA is a small, diverse population of less than 250,000. The 2021 Census shows that those stating their ethnicity as white is 74%, Asian/Asian British 18.5% and Black/African Caribbean/Black British 2.4%. The Census also reported that 2.9% of residents self-reported that they could not speak English well or at all which is higher than the national average for England of 1.9%. Data from the Department for Works and Pensions shows that 21% of CYP under-16 are living in low-income families and the LA ranks highly as an area of social deprivation with 25% of pupils receiving free school meals. 31% of secondary aged children are classified as disadvantaged by the end of secondary school. The national average is 24% and the regional average is 29%. The average GCSE attainment for maths and English nationally is 4.9, regionally it is 4.8 and the LA is 4.6. In the year 2020-2021 the LA has a school exclusion rate of 0.12% (national average 0.05).

*All data is sourced from government databases, but references have not been provided to maintain anonymity.

Appendix H: Examples of IPA Step 1, 2 and Step 3 Transcript, Exploratory Noting and Constructing Experiential Statements from participants.

Sample 1

82 that's happening that we see is harmful and, erm,
 83 problematic then we are our local authority is that we
 84 would refer to the sexual harmful behaviour panel and
 85 we put a referral in and they meet every Thursday and
 86 we attend and we would say 'right this is what's
 87 happened, erm, what do you want us to do?' but we're
 88 quite a good safeguarding team so usually something
 89 has happened and we've already done so we might
 90 have separated the young people, we might have, erm,
 91 sometimes we've even changed classes, you know, to
 92 make sure that the young people, erm, like the victim
 93 and the perpetrator aren't together or we've moved the
 94 classroom around we've spoken to the parents we've
 95 offered the young people some education. Usually
 96 we've done a lot of the actions and then we'll attend
 97 the sexual harmful behaviour panel and they'll be like
 98 'well you've done it all'. And so it it leaves us a bit like
 99 well why are we here then and then we've also had
 100 feedback so we've had incidents where they've said
 101 'why have you not reported that to the police?' but
 102 they've told us not to report it to the police because
 103 there's police attendance at the sexual harmful
 104 behaviour panel. It's all a bit contentious at the minute
 105 and then there's been some incidents where it's really
 106 got out of hand and they've been insisting on doing a
 107 referral to the police and a referral to XXXX which is
 108 children social care and a referral to XXXX health care
 109 over something that that's and then social care have
 110 been on the phone to us saying 'why are you putting
 111 these referrals in?' so it's all a bit up in the air at the
 112 minute which is why I said 'up in the air' because we're
 113 kind of going back to that the lead of the sexual |

Weekly meeting of multiagency professionals so this is seen as a LA wide issue	Not confined to this setting, wider cultural issue
Seeking advice, attempting to follow procedure 'do the right thing'.	Wants guidance
Sence of pride in having systems in place and doing things well before being told.	Pride in established school systems/structures
Is this a feeling of frustration/disappointment at jumping through hoops to seek help only to be told you've done everything the 'help' would have told you to do already and there isn't actually anything else out there? Does this increase feelings of isolation/helplessness when dealing with difficult situations?	Frustration at lack of guidance or clarity Left to navigate difficult situations alone
Loss of control of situations; are external support agencies making things better or worse?	Lack of autonomy/not knowing how/when to act
Challenge from the different agencies, questioning decision-making processes. Disempowerment.	Undermined/disempowered

Sample 2

212 calling siblings, erm, er, sexual derogative language
 213 towards the girls and offering for fights and there's no
 214 there's none of that in between situation and that's
 215 that's a challenging part because I want to help him to
 216 create maintain and support supportive friendships
 217 within the class and even the child who he is good
 218 friends with, that is a massively challenging
 219 relationship as well and they go from being good
 220 friends to great enemies and actually the one who he is
 221 good friends with this one boy who accused him of of,
 222 er, inappropriate touching.
 223 I: So in that kind of situation what is the thing that you
 224 feel that you would need that would help you?
 225 : Yeah it it (sighs) it's difficult because I suppose I've
 226 got the opportunity to do whatever I want in the
 227 classroom provision I've got, you know, we've got a set
 228 curriculum but I can break that at any point with it
 229 because I'm able to do that on a needs led basis and I
 230 think I think social time is really important with with this
 231 young man and so even even like taking his turn on
 232 games he struggles with that so sometimes we'll all
 233 play monopoly because it's something that you have to
 234 do over a period of time but it makes them speak to
 235 each other and sometimes work together because 'I've |
 236 run out of money can you let me go with the rent?' or
 237 or I've found that to be good tool but I think actually,
 238 erm, (sighs) getting him to social socialising with other
 239 children in a in a secure environment would in a safe
 240 environment not a secure, in a safe environment that is
 241 maybe observed in a relaxed manner so I mean every

Interesting that the YP isn't seemingly differentiating between types of behaviours. "That's a challenging part..." helping to make and maintain supportive relationships. How do you do this in a safe and supportive way for all CYP?	Relational approaches
"needs led basis" – needs an individualised approach according to the situation.	Each situation is unique
Focus not just on HSB; holistic and relational approach YP needs time, opportunities and environment to develop the skills needed. Not seeking specific interventions as such, reminds me of what Quinn said about a conversation being an intervention.	Holistic and relational approaches. Interventions don't need to be external
Lack of support structures outside of school for CYP. I wonder does this add pressure to schools or cause feelings of isolation?	Isolation

Sample 3

148 teens and twenties, I would never tolerate now in a
 149 million years, you know, I think about things that
 150 happened to me in nightclubs and all those kind of
 151 things and I would be horrified if I ever had a student
 152 in my care that thought I would, erm, push them to
 153 accept what happened to them but I remember
 154 teachers at school dismissing things as 'oh it's just, you
 155 know, he's having a laugh' or, you know, whatever, you
 156 know, physical touch it was actually really quite
 157 outrageous looking back. 'Oh, you know, it's just what
 158 teenagers do'. I can't imagine now a time where
 159 anybody in my team would tolerate that kind of
 160 behaviour, what's changed? Oh God so many things
 161 have changed haven't they? Erm, I really think sort of
 162 'hashtag me too' that was definitely a real liminal
 163 moment I think for particularly young people, erm,
 164 social media as well that I think that's been a force for
 165 harm but on on this definitely for good a lot, you know,
 166 whilst it generates loads of incidents for us, actually
 167 students' awareness now of what is okay what is not
 168 okay a lot of that comes through social media it
 169 absolutely does and, erm, the curriculum the
 170 government Ofsted, all of the different things that are
 171 incoming from the DfE, all are good. Keeping children
 172 safe, work, erm, working together, all of those things all
 173 that guidance that schools have to enforce has driven
 174 the agenda it absolutely has. When I think about PSE,
 175 yeah PSHE curriculum when I first started here
 176 compared to now, the rigour that is in place in
 177 phenomenal, you know, our RSE policies, the the level
 178 of expectation on a school to deliver personal

<p>Reflective of how the things that they experienced they would not tolerate now and there has been shift personally they can see mirrored societally.</p> <p>Historically considered banter and normalised. Is horrified by that prospect now or even the thought of it being tolerated.</p> <p>There have been movements that have helped changed the cultural conversations such as #metoo and this is reflected in school. Social media has been a force for good here and helped to educate.</p> <p>Government policy and guidance is helping to drive the agenda and is a positive force for change.</p> <p>Curriculum changes have meant there is an expectation to cover and consider this area.</p>	<p>There has been a big change in culture that has caused personal reflection on how previous experiences were normalised and how this is not the culture they see reflected in school now. (145-160)</p> <p>Social media has been a force for good in helping to educate CYP and to change the culture through starting conversations. (162-169)</p> <p>Government policy and changes to the curriculum have been key in keeping HSB high on the agenda. (170-181)</p>
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Sample 4

365 I: Right.
 366 : Does that make sense?
 367 I: Yeah.
 368 : Erm, because we're finding the same children coming
 369 back and not actually understanding what they've said
 370 is is is inappropriate.
 371 I: And does any work get done with the young people?
 372 : Yeah so that's where the key workers come in so we
 373 have key workers who will do work around
 374 inappropriate touch, inappropriate talk, inappropriate
 375 language, inappropriate sexualised behaviours
 376 whatever it is, erm, and obviously (pause) there is
 377 there is we do we we can do group work and we can
 378 do individual work, erm, and yeah so it does get done,
 379 erm, but we can only target, you know, we can we
 380 don't know how much of it's being, erm, shared, do you
 381 know what I mean? I'm sure there's a lot of girls who
 382 would say 'oh yeah' you know 'I get commented on on
 383 a daily basis' but won't report it so, you know, we can
 384 only deal with those that have been reported on so we
 385 deal with those that have been reported but I imagine
 386 that's the tip of the iceberg.
 387 I: Is there any whole school work on it?
 388 : Erm, yes so we have a PSE programme and it will be
 389 done within the PSE programme within each year
 390 group.
 391 I: Okay.

<p>The same CYP repeating behaviours and not understanding what they have done even after school have had conversations with them and home.</p> <p>Key workers are doing individualised and group work with CYP on HSB</p> <p>There is recognition that most of the HSB that are happening are not being reported on "that's the tip of the iceberg".</p> <p>There is whole school work on HSB via PSE.</p>	<p>CYP are not always responding to the interventions. (368-370)</p> <p>A relational approach to delivering interventions via key workers is valued. (372-376)</p> <p>There is recognition that only a small amount of HSB are reported to adults. (379-386)</p> <p>There is whole school work covering HSB via the PSE curriculum. (388-389)</p>
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Sample 5

384 can meet with five young people and does some one-
 385 to-one work, direct work usually around sort of healthy
 386 relationships, consent, sexting and tend to be more
 387 stay safe online all those sorts of issues. It's a great
 388 service in that generally people pick them up quite
 389 quickly we have had some of delays recently, erm,
 390 they will see a young person as long as its needed it's
 391 not like six sessions and then you're done, erm, and
 392 the young people engage very well so they don't give
 393 us a lot of feedback because it's important for them
 394 that it's confidential and that anything that they talk
 395 about, erm, they can ask any questions they all know
 396 it's coming back to us or home within obviously realms
 397 of confidentiality, erm, and so they go and they go
 398 engage quite well with the provision and on the whole I
 399 think we see the impact in terms of reduced instances
 400 of the concerning behaviour, erm, so I think that's a
 401 good service and obviously it would be more widely
 402 available, erm, and more accessible to young people
 403 with shorter waiting times that would be better. They
 404 have done, erm, some group work for us as well so
 405 we've, erm, identified some of our older girls who a
 406 number of them appeared to be in unhealthy
 407 relationships with boys of a similar age so we did a
 408 small group, erm, of a couple of sessions specifically
 409 around healthy relationships identifying them, erm,
 410 unhealthy behaviours, erm, trying to to sort of pick
 411 apart is this a healthy behaviour really if he's texting
 412 constantly, is it because he really loves you or because
 413 he really wants to know what you're doing because
 414 he's really jealous or, you know, that sort of behaviour,

Service that is responsive to the needs of the YP.	Responsive to need
Delays recently; is that reflective of the increase in demand?	Delays in response
YP are responsive to this intervention.	YP open to interventions
Intervention is impacting positively	Positive impact
Gender bias of work done with girls in unhealthy relationships but not also the boys in those relationships too. Feminist theory.	Gender bias of intervention focus

Appendix I: Examples of IPA Step 4 Searching for connections across the experiential statements.

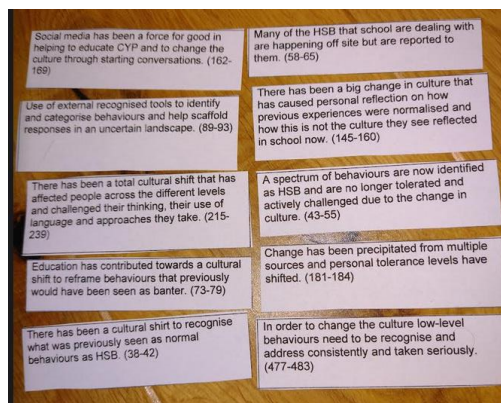
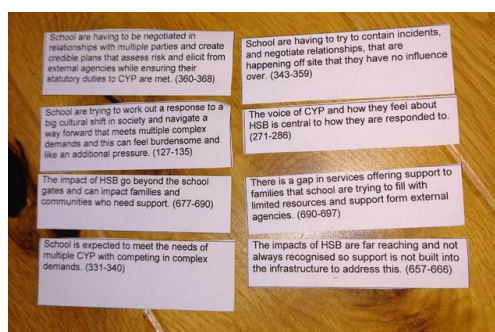
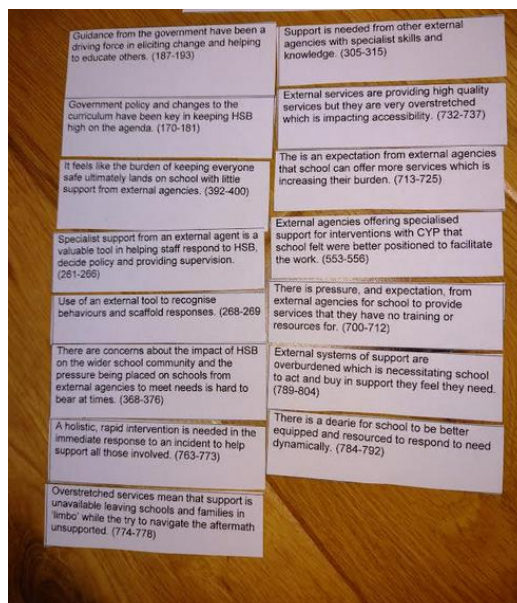
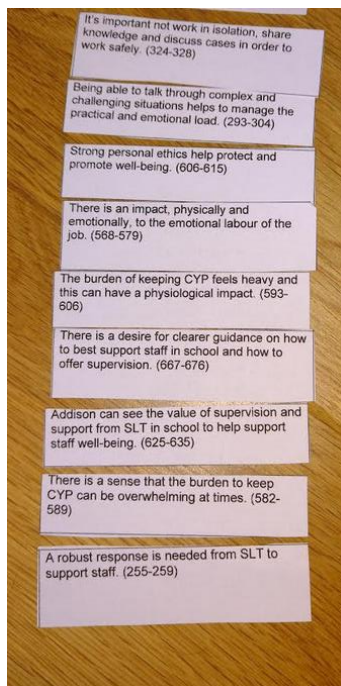
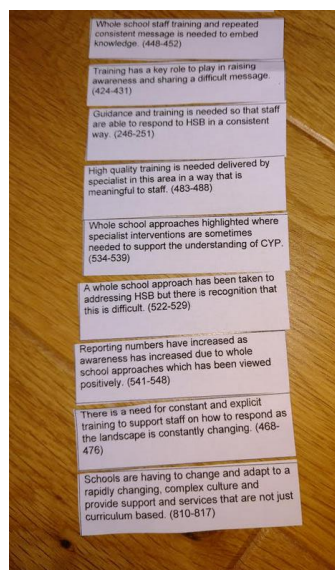
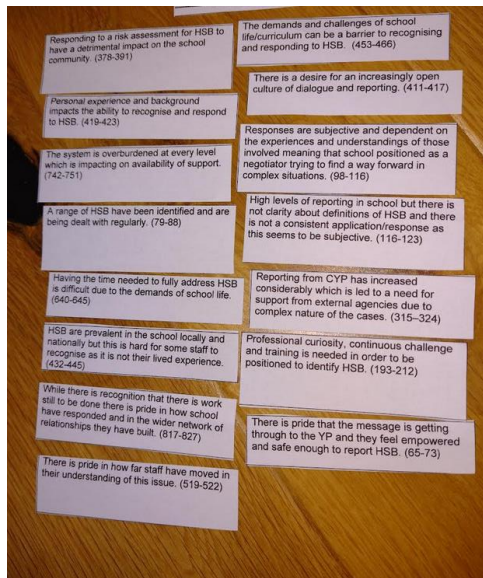
Sample 1

- Specialist support from an external agent is a valuable tool in helping staff respond to HSB, decide policy and providing supervision. (261-266)
 - A holistic, rapid intervention is needed in the immediate response to an incident to help support all those involved. (763-773)
 - Guidance from the government have been a driving force in eliciting change and helping to educate others. (187-193)
 - Government policy and changes to the curriculum have been key in keeping HSB high on the agenda. (170-181)
 - It feels like the burden of keeping everyone safe ultimately lands on school with little support from external agencies. (392-400)
 - There are concerns about the impact of HSB on the wider school community and the pressure being placed on schools from external agencies to meet needs is hard to bear at times. (368-376)
 - Use of an external tool to recognise behaviours and scaffold responses. (268-269)
 - Overstretched services mean that support is unavailable leaving schools and families in 'limbo' while they try to navigate the aftermath unsupported. (774-778)
 - External systems of support are overburdened which is necessitating school to act and buy in support they feel they need. (789-804)
 - External agencies offering specialised support for interventions with CYP that school felt were better positioned to facilitate the work. (553-556)
 - Support is needed from other external agencies with specialist skills and knowledge. (305-315)
 - There is pressure, and expectation, from external agencies for school to provide services that they have no training or resources for. (700-712)
 - External services are providing high quality services but they are very overstretched which is impacting accessibility. (732-737)
 - There is an expectation from external agencies that school can offer more services which is increasing their burden. (713-725)
 - There is a desire for school to be better equipped and resourced to respond to need dynamically. (784-792)
-
- School are having to try to contain incidents, and negotiate relationships, that are happening off site that they have no influence over. (343-359)
 - The voice of CYP and how they feel about HSB is central to how they are responded to. (271-286)
 - The impacts of HSB are far reaching and not always recognised so support is not built into the infrastructure to address this. (657-666)
 - The impact of HSB go beyond the school gates and can impact families and communities who need support. (677-690)
 - There is a gap in services offering support to families that school are trying to fill with limited resources and support from external agencies. (690-697)
 - School is expected to meet the needs of multiple CYP with competing in complex demands. (331-340)
 - School are trying to work out a response to a big cultural shift in society and navigate a way forward that meets multiple complex demands and this can feel burdensome and like an additional pressure. (127-135)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School are having to be negotiated in relationships with multiple parties and create credible plans that assess risk and elicit from external agencies while ensuring their statutory duties to CYP are met. (360-368)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to a risk assessment for HSB to have a detrimental impact on the school community. (378-391) • HSB are prevalent in the school locally and nationally but this is hard for some staff to recognise as it is not their lived experience. (432-445) • A range of HSB have been identified and are being dealt with regularly. (79-88) • The system is overburdened at every level which is impacting on availability of support. (742-751) • Personal experience and background impacts the ability to recognise and respond to HSB. (419-423) • Having the time needed to fully address HSB is difficult due to the demands of school life. (640-645) • While there is recognition that there is work still to be done there is pride in how school have responded and in the wider network of relationships they have built. (817-827) • There is pride in how far staff have moved in their understanding of this issue. (519-522) • Responses are subjective and dependent on the experiences and understandings of those involved meaning that school positioned as a negotiator trying to find a way forward in complex situations. (98-116) • The demands and challenges of school life/curriculum can be a barrier to recognising and responding to HSB. (453-466) • There is a desire for an increasingly open culture of dialogue and reporting. (411-417) • High levels of reporting in school but there is not clarity about definitions of HSB and there is not a consistent application/response as this seems to be subjective. (116-123) • Reporting from CYP has increased considerably which is led to a need for support from external agencies due to complex nature of the cases. (315–324) • Professional curiosity, continuous challenge and training is needed in order to be positioned to identify HSB. (193-212) • There is pride that the message is getting through to the YP and they feel empowered and safe enough to report HSB. (65-73)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media has been a force for good in helping to educate CYP and to change the culture through starting conversations. (162-169) • Use of external recognised tools to identify and categorise behaviours and help scaffold responses in an uncertain landscape. (89-93) • There has been a total cultural shift that has affected people across the different levels and challenged their thinking, their use of language and approaches they take. (215-239) • Many of the HSB that school are dealing with are happening off site but are reported to them. (58-65) • A spectrum of behaviours are now identified as HSB and are no longer tolerated and actively challenged due to the change in culture. (43-55) • There has been a big change in culture that has caused personal reflection on how previous experiences were normalised and how this is not the culture they see reflected in school now. (145-160) • There has been a cultural shift to recognise what was previously seen as normal behaviours as HSB. (38-42) • In order to change the culture low-level behaviours need to be recognise and address consistently and taken seriously. (477-483) • Education has contributed towards a cultural shift to reframe behaviours that previously would have been seen as banter. (73-79)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change has been precipitated from multiple sources and personal tolerance levels have shifted. (181-184)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance and training is needed so that staff are able to respond to HSB in a consistent way. (246-251) • Training has a key role to play in raising awareness and sharing a difficult message. (424-431) • Whole school approaches highlighted where specialist interventions are sometimes needed to support the understanding of CYP. (534-539) • Whole school staff training and repeated consistent message is needed to embed knowledge. (448-452) • High quality training is needed delivered by specialist in this area in a way that is meaningful to staff. (483-488) • A whole school approach has been taken to addressing HSB but there is recognition that this is difficult. (522-529) • Schools are having to change and adapt to a rapidly changing, complex culture and provide support and services that are not just curriculum based. (810-817) • There is a need for constant and explicit training to support staff on how to respond as the landscape is constantly changing. (468-476) • Reporting numbers have increased as awareness has increased due to whole school approaches which has been viewed positively. (541-548)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's important not work in isolation, share knowledge and discuss cases in order to work safely. (324-328) • Being able to talk through complex and challenging situations helps to manage the practical and emotional load. (293-304) • The burden of keeping CYP feels heavy and this can have a physiological impact. (593-606) • There is an impact, physically and emotionally, to the emotional labour of the job. (568-579) • A robust response is needed from SLT to support staff. (255-259) • Strong personal ethics help protect and promote well-being. (606-615) • There is a desire for clearer guidance on how to best support staff in school and how to offer supervision. (667-676) • They can see the value of supervision and support from SLT in school to help support staff well-being. (625-635) • There is a sense that the burden to keep CYP can be overwhelming at times. (582-589)

Photos of how the connections were elicited to make the tables

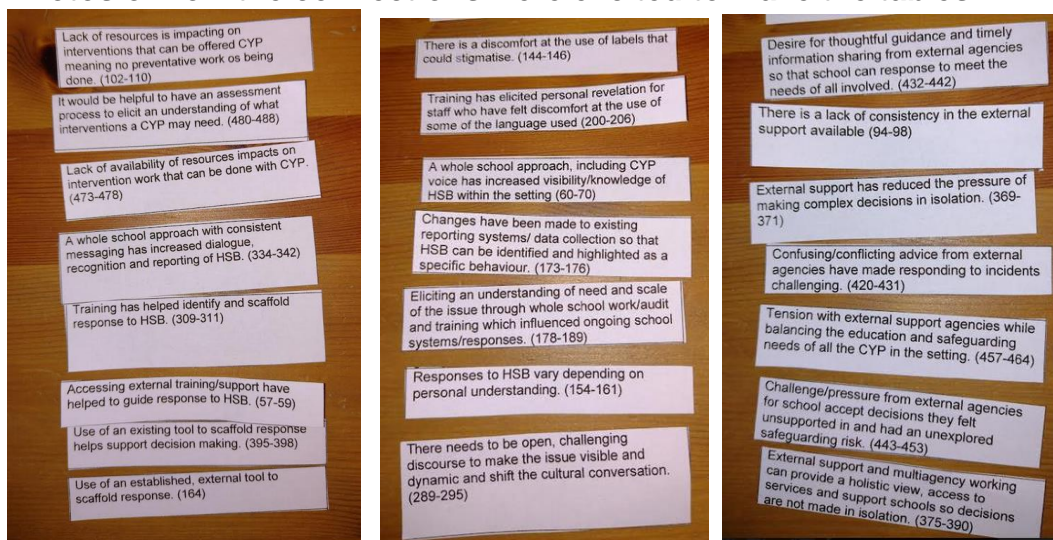


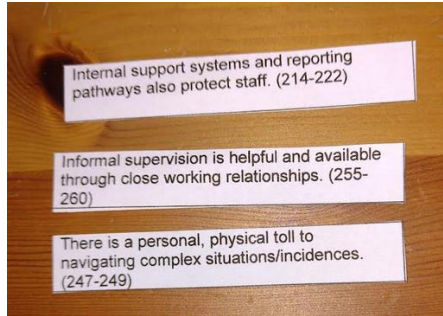
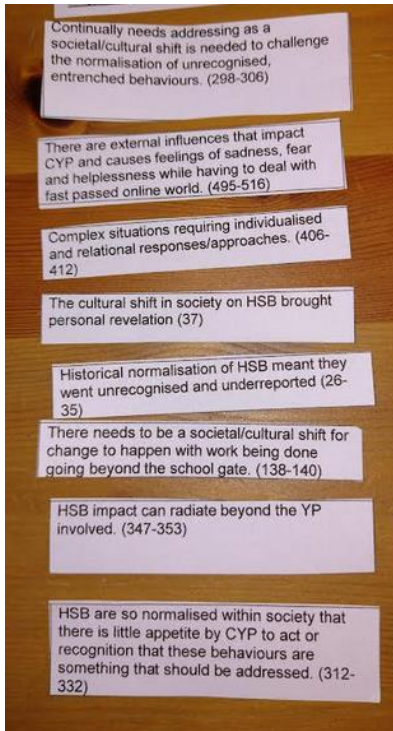
Sample 2

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• External support and multiagency working can provide a holistic view, access to services and support schools so decisions are not made in isolation. (375-390)• There is a lack of consistency in the external support available (94-98)• External support has reduced the pressure of making complex decisions in isolation. (369-371)• Confusing/conflicting advice from external agencies have made responding to incidents challenging. (420-431)• Desire for thoughtful guidance and timely information sharing from external agencies so that school can response to meet the needs of all involved. (432-442)• Tension with external support agencies while balancing the education and safeguarding needs of all the CYP in the setting. (457-464)• Challenge/pressure from external agencies for school accept decisions they felt unsupported in and had an unexplored safeguarding risk. (443-453)• External systems have been established but their frustrations about what can be offered and feel procedural rather than practical. (77-91)• Awareness of current national discussions and legislation regarding HSB (23-25)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responses to HSB vary depending on personal understanding. (154-161)• Responses can be subjective and dependent on the experiences of the member of staff (196-199)• There needs to be open, challenging discourse to make the issue visible and dynamic and shift the cultural conversation. (289-295)• Eliciting an understanding of need and scale of the issue through whole school work/audit and training which influenced ongoing school systems/responses. (178-189)• Training has elicited personal revelation for staff who have felt discomfort at the use of some of the language used (200-206)• There is a discomfort at the use of labels that could stigmatise. (144-146)• A whole school approach, including CYP voice has increased visibility/knowledge of HSB within the setting (60-70)• Changes have been made to existing reporting systems/ data collection so that HSB can be identified and highlighted as a specific behaviour. (173-176)• Whole school message heavily emphasised via training and has brought a measure of collective revelation (165-168)• There is a spectrum of HSB identified in the setting and this challenge has escalated over time. (44-52)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continually needs addressing as a societal/cultural shift is needed to challenge the normalisation of unrecognised, entrenched behaviours. (298-306)• HSB are so normalised within society that there is little appetite by CYP to act or recognition that these behaviours are something that should be addressed. (312-332)• HSB impact can radiate beyond the YP involved. (347-353)• There needs to be a societal/cultural shift for change to happen with work being done going beyond the school gate. (138-140)• There are external influences that impact CYP and causes feelings of sadness, fear and helplessness while having to deal with fast passed online world. (495-516)• The cultural shift in society on HSB brought personal revelation (37)• Historical normalisation of HSB meant they went unrecognised and underreported (26-35)• Complex situations requiring individualised and relational responses/approaches. (406-412)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing and identifying HSB is being made harder by normalising cultural factors both in and out of school. (118-136) • Navigating complex situations that extend beyond the school gate to safeguard all involved. (234-241) • HSB identified as a specific behaviour in schools with procedures to follow. (146-151)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of availability of resources impacts on intervention work that can be done with CYP. (473-478) • Accessing external training/support have helped to guide response to HSB. (57-59) • A whole school approach with consistent messaging has increased dialogue, recognition and reporting of HSB. (334-342) • Use of an established, external tool to scaffold response. (164) • Training has helped identify and scaffold response to HSB. (309-311) • Use of an existing tool to scaffold response helps support decision making. (395-398) • It would be helpful to have an assessment process to elicit an understanding of what interventions a CYP may need. (480-488) • Lack of resources is impacting on interventions that can be offered CYP meaning no preventative work is being done. (102-110)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal supervision is helpful and available through close working relationships. (255-260) • Internal support systems and reporting pathways also protect staff. (214-222) • There is a personal, physical toll to navigating complex situations/incidences. (247-249) • There is a recognition of need for more formal supervision but uncertainty about what that is/might look like. (262-282)

Photos of how the connections were elicited to make the tables





Appendix J: Examples of Step 5 Naming Personal Experiential Themes.

Sample 1

A: EXTERNAL RESOURCES SCAFFOLDING UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONSE TO HSB

The use of a tool to identify and scale continuum of HSB to formulate how to respond

- Use of an established, external tool, to help identify HSB and inform pastoral team triage response. (45-46)
"Where we have a sexualised, erm, incident raised sexualised in nature then we we triage all all the incidents we would triage it and what we do we use Hackett's Scale". (43-46)
- Use of an established, external tool, to help identify HSB, inform response and educate. (369-371)
"that's why I say this, erm, scale is helpful because it is that line between what is what is okay and what isn't" (369-371)
- Use of an established, external materials to deliver regular, termly interventions for new cohorts of CYP; there is a recognised need for this. (226-228)
- Use of an established, external scale, to help identify HSB and inform response has been a powerful tool. (604-605)
"That that Hackett Scale thing has been pretty revolutionary to be honest but that was that was, erm, like a networking that myself and the DSL didn't go on it it was our line manager who's the assistant head and our head teacher went on it and that's why it was passed on from and that has been really really helpful in the way 'cos I will I kept going on about the brook traffic lights saying 'I want to get trained up in it because I want a way to' essentially essentially I when I knew something was harmful I wanted to be able to say so. I wanted to be able to back it up, you know, especially because sexualised behaviour panel's so contentious." (604-616)
- Use of an established, external tool, to help identify HSB and inform response. (176-177)
"we've got to respond to what we deem as sexual harmful behaviours, you know, and I think getting the balance right with that is tricky and I think that's where the Hackett Scale helps as well". (173-177)

Justifying of responses/actions to HSB can be facilitated through external resource materials

- Use of an established, external tool, to help identify HSB and inform response and justify actions to others. (130-137)
"We were using our understanding I suppose of, erm, what what appeared to be harmful and problematic, erm, and this it allows us to so say I left something say I triaged something to deal with a year manager I would only triage that because it's been, you know, it is normal or it is age appropriate, erm, sexualised harmful behaviour team like Brook traffic light tool". (130-137)
- Use of an established, external tool gives powerful backing when explaining response, seeking support or aiding understanding. (143-154)
"I learned about this Hackett Scale because our line manager went on the on the training, erm, and that's when we put this in and it does help 'cos like I say it justifies when you say to a year manager, you know, there's this thing going on between like, I don't know, two year 11s and they're messaging each other and it's getting a bit, erm, you know, maybe needs a bit of a chat or whatever. That's not problematic for year 11s, they're 16, 15, 16, you know, it's not problematic and it justifies the year manager then me passing that onto the year manager then and I've kind of explained that by using the scale to say it's not problematic and it can, it can have that level of intervention" (143-155)

B EXTERNAL SUPPORT STRUCTURES ARE NOT YET FULLY REALISED

Engagement with specialist provision can feel confusing frustrating due to lack of clarity.

- External support from specialist provision yet frustration apparent from lack of guidance/purpose and action. (95-104)
"Usually we've done a lot of the actions and then we'll attend the sexual harmful behaviour panel and they'll be like 'well you've done it all'. And so it it leaves us a bit like well why are we here then and then we've also had feedback so we've had incidents where they've said 'why have you not reported that to the police?' but they've told us not to report it to the police because there's police attendance at the sexual harmful behaviour panel." (95-104)
- External support from specialist provision yet frustration apparent from lack of guidance/purpose. (73-76)
"we've obviously we've got the the ones that we will take to the harmful sexual behaviour panel as well but that's all a bit up in the air I would say at the minute". (73-76)
- External support from specialist provision but a feeling of too many people involved, with no school background, which adds to the sense of lacking cohesion. (168-163)
"does seem a bit overkill because you've got, erm, like the lead and then your minute taker and then the police of something and the police of something else and then CSC and then, erm, youth justice service like four or five different members from youth justice service sometimes and seems a bit overkill for what it is." (167-173)
- No ownership of external support from specialist provision and frustration apparent from lack of guidance/purpose/process. (118-119)
" 'What what what is the process you want us to follow?' because there's cross wires I think." (118-119)

Loss of autonomy when external agencies become involved.

- External processes inducing a loss of autonomy or not knowing how/when to act. (104-108)
"It's all a bit contentious at the minute and then there's been some incidents where it's really got out of hand and they've been insisting on doing a referral to the police and a referral to XXXX which is children social care and a referral to XXXX health care over something" (104-109)
- Challenge from the external support agencies, questioning/undermining school's decision-making processes when responding to seemingly confusing advice. (110-112)
"then social care have been on the phone to us saying 'why are you putting these referrals in?' so it's all a bit up in the air at the minute which is why I said 'up in the air' because we're kind of going back to that the lead of the sexual harmful behaviour panel and saying 'what is the process when are we referring to children social care when are we referring to the police?' you know". (110-116)

C THERE IS AN APPETITE FOR GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT IN RESPONDING TO HSB FROM EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Active engagement with external agencies seeking support for responding to HSB

- A desire for more specific guidance, support and structure in responding to HSB from external agents. (86-87)
"we would refer to the sexual harmful behaviour panel and we put a referral in and they meet every Thursday and we attend and we would say 'right this is what's happened, erm, what do you want us to do?'" (83-87)

Engagement with external agencies when seeking support can lead to feeling frustrated and more unsupported.

- There is disappointment at the lack of clearer guidance/support around how to respond to HSB as external support agencies appear confusing/conflicting which manifests as feeling frustrated and unsupported. (618-622)
“Cos sometimes they (HSB panel) were like ‘oh what are you here for?’ and we were like ‘because you told us to refer it you told us to take it seriously we are doing we’re here’ and they’re like ‘oh right well that’s probably an alright behaviour so off you go’” (618-622)
- There is a desire for clearer guidance/support around how to respond to HSB as external support agencies appear confusing/conflicting which manifests as feeling frustrated and unsupported. (660-665)
“I think there needs to be clarity and clarity on what what it is they want from us as a school what they can offer us as a school because quite often we get told ‘oh youth justice service are coming’ and then they don’t or they get we get told to refer to xxx healthcare and then nobody comes you don’t hear from them, you know, and I don’t know whether that’s a resources thing or what but, erm, I don’t think we have the backup unless it’s been something really really significant I don’t think we have the backup there and I think that would be useful. And I understand, you know, like the services that they’re not, erm, you know, they’ve got limited resources haven’t they but I think we could have more support there” (660-673)
- There is a desire for clearer guidance/support around how to respond to HSB as external support agencies appear confusing/conflicting which manifests as feeling frustrated and unsupported. (611-616)
“I want to get trained up in it because I want a way to’ essentially essentially I when I knew something was harmful I wanted to be able to say so. I wanted to be able to back it up, you know, especially because sexualised behaviour panel’s so contentious.” (611-616)

D PRIDE IN ESTABLISHED SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND PEOPLE

Pride in how robust, established systems have aided the response to the relatively new challenge of HSB

- Pride in established school systems/structures and responses to safeguarding. (88)
“we’re quite a good safeguarding team so usually something has happened and we’ve already done so.” (87-89)
- It is embedded in school culture/ethos to raise all concerns when they present. (42-43)
“for any kind of welfare so we actively encourage to put anything on there that they’re concerned about.” (41-43)
- Pride that they have pre-empted external panel actions via established school systems/structures and responses to HSB. (295-298)
“we knew in that case that it was going to the sexual harmful behaviour panel but by again by that time we’d by that point we’d already done everything they wanted us to do.” (295-298)

Pride in colleagues have adapted to responding to the relatively new challenge of HSB

- Pride in established school systems/structures and responses to concerns. (182-183)
“I think our staff are very good at raising incidents incidents across all all concerns that they might have, erm, I don’t know whether it’s about recognising it because it goes it does get raised”. (182-185)
- Pride that staff do use established school systems/structures to respond to HSB. (475-478)
“people do take it seriously and like I say we we’re a school with a high level of reporting and that’s good because our staff are really observing and they’re good we are good”. (475-478)
- Pride in pastoral team responses and attitudes to HSB. (367-368)

"I don't think we work in a staff team where they dismiss things, you know, erm, say 'oh well it's just just the kids messing about' or whatever. I don't think we work in a staff team who have that attitude so that's really positive" (364-368)

E THERE IS A NEED TO CAPTURE DATA ON HSB WHICH HAS BEEN INCORPORATED INTO ESTABLISHED SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Systems familiar to staff have been mobilised to help facilitate recognition and response to HSB

- HSB has been identified as a specific, separate, type of behaviour in school. (20-22)
"we're actually doing some work on this at school at the minute so, erm, to kind of section it off within our online recording system". (20-22)
- Use of established school recording systems to collect and categorising data on HSB. (25-28)
"so we have those four kind of categories within our peer on peer sexualised behaviour kind of categorisation on our online system". (25-28)
- Use of established school procedures and recording systems to address HSB. (429-435)
- *"like I say our we we actively encourage our staff to report any little thing that makes them, you know, doesn't feel right then report it or talk to us and we'll tell you whether to report it, usually we say report it, erm, so I don't think (pause) I don't think we've missed out on the reporting thing". (429-435)*

F TRAINING NEEDS ARE ONGOING, COMPLICATED AND CORRELATE WITH A NEED TO RESPOND TO SOCIETAL/CULTURAL CHANGES

Training and resources can equip and empower staff when responding to HSB

- Staff training needs are ongoing; training/resources could strengthen staff skills and empower them to feel more confident/comfortable when they encounter HSB. (335-338)
"I suppose being educated enough or having the resources I suppose being, erm, resources would be useful I suppose to have those conversations." (335-338)
- Want to equip/train staff with practical tools they can actively use. (630-639)
"anything practical as opposed to new I think that's what we're missing a little bit maybe here. Something like a practical tool that we can use. Something like, erm, obviously I'm Mental Health Lead as well so, you know, when it comes to self-harm and suicide I've I've been on like a trainer the trainer where I can deliver, you know, I can tell staff 'okay if you if you're worried about this to a child this is what we go through these are your steps these are your questions' and it's a tool and it's something they can actively use." (629-639)

Training needs are continually evolving and responsive to a societal and cultural awareness for all involved

- Training needs for HSB are constantly evolving as there is a heightened awareness due to the broader societal issues unfolding in the media surrounding sexual behaviours. (300-304)
"I think there still needs to be some work done because we're still always seeing it on, erm, kind of what is acceptable, you know, behaviour in the news and everything and I think that's why there is a focus on it". (300-304)
- Training needs for HSB are constantly evolving as there is a heightened awareness due to the broader societal issues/influences surrounding sexual behaviours. (734-736)
"I imagine that you'll find a lot of other staff like me who are really struggling with the online world and I think that's where a lot of it comes down to really." (734-736)

A whole school approach to training is needed to explore what has been the uncovering of relatively a new area of concern

- Whole school approach to training/awareness in response to a shift in cultural awareness impacting on legislative response. (458-460)
"I suppose there is education to be done there and we did do that in September in the inset we talked about it because it is is a big topic at the minute" (458-460)
- A sense that HSB involves navigating the unfamiliar and they are just beginning to step into supporting materials. (52-53)
"we've literally only started using it like within the last couple of months, erm, so it's literally in my desk draw I look at it all the time, erm, but we've been using that (Hackett Scale)." (52-55)
- HSB are a wider societal/cultural issue which staff are developing awareness/understanding of alongside responding in school. This has highlighted a knowledge/training gap. (689-691)
"I do think we're missing that (resources) in sexual harmful behaviour and I think that's a lot down to like the clarity of how they're actually running it themselves it is a new thing it's only probably been going for about two years, erm, and I think that that's probably something that's missing." (686-691)

G NAVIGATING THE UNFAMILIAR CAUSING UNCERTAINTIES IN RESPONSES AND FEARS OF CAUSING HARM

Tackling HSB is a new concern and skills are only beginning to emerge in this area

- A sense that HSB is new, involves navigating the unfamiliar and they are just beginning to step into supporting materials. (190-193)
"no that's stayed within us and I suppose that's while we get used to it 'cos it's not the it's not something that we couldn't share with staff we can share that with staff we just haven't yet." (190-193)

Conflicting feelings of the need for collective knowledge but the fear this could cause harm

- Contradictory/circular feelings of recognition of need for training/education but nervousness/fear that the sharing of knowledge/tools on HSB will cause harm via over-identification/stigmatising labels. (195-200)
"we don't want them we wouldn't want a member of staff deciding whether something was problematic because they don't have the same interactions with like the professionals as we would, you know, something that's problematic to a member of staff might not be to a safeguarding member of staff if that makes sense." (195-201)
- Contradictory/circular feelings of recognition of need for training/education but nervousness/fear that the sharing of knowledge/tools on HSB will cause harm via over-identification/stigmatising labels. (452-458)
"we've not we've not shared the scale with them but you'd have to be careful how you'd do that with them 'cos like say you don't want them like accusing everybody of like harmful sexual behaviour if it's not, erm, but equally needs to be taken seriously if it is so you've got to strike that balance so I suppose there is education to be done there" (452-459)
- Contradictory/circular feelings of recognition of need for training/education but nervousness/fear that the sharing of knowledge/tools on HSB will cause harm. (643-646)
"again 'cos I wouldn't want all staff to be like having open conversations about suicide whatever but something like that that's a bit more of a step by step like 'this is what you do'." (643-636)
- Contradictory/circular feelings of recognition of need for training/education but nervousness/fear that the sharing of knowledge/tools on HSB will cause harm via over-identification/stigmatising labels. (697-707)

"Education for staff who can then have those conversations with our children, both....You know, because you don't want a member of staff saying to someone (sharp intake of breath) that's really harmful' if, you know, if it's not." (702-707)

H RELATIONAL APPROACHES CAN BE A POWERFUL FORCE FOR CHANGE

A conversation can be an intervention

- Strong relationships between staff and CYP are powerful forces for change; a conversation can be an intervention. (345-346)
"I say those conversations alone can be educational it can be all a young person needs to hear." (344-346)
- Strong relationships between staff and CYP are powerful forces for change; a conversation can be an intervention. (327-335)
"sometimes it only needs a conversation like the example I used before with the young girl. She didn't know that that wasn't normal because no one's ever had that conversation with her. If she has that direct frank conversation with a member of staff that conversation doesn't, you know, she doesn't then need to have, you know, necessarily she would have and it's fine but she doesn't then need to have loads of interventions". (327-335)

A holistic view is valued by those who have the relationships and skills to respond to HSB

- Strong relationships between staff and CYP are powerful forces for change; exploration is needed by key adults who have a holistic understanding and who have the skills, knowledge and curiosity to find out more. (439-448)
- *"I don't want to discredit them but, erm, yeah I don't know I think a lot of our understanding of harmful sexualised behaviours comes from the explanation of it which is done at a pastoral level usually, you know, we wouldn't expect a member of staff to say 'oh I'll just take a statement from you' or whatever 'cos we try and contain that because otherwise we have like statements all over the place (laughs) and not really getting to the bottom of what's happening."* (439-448)

Existing relationships between CYP and staff can be mobilised and with support from external agents be supported to facilitate change

- Use of a model/guide for staff to follow; existing relationships between staff and CYP are powerful forces for change and models can be implemented to can help multiple CYP. (712-719)
"I think if we were using a model where we had a a structure to follow I suppose an education option or education options I suppose, a tool kit let's call it that then I would use that tool to model it, you know, to to follow it because I do think that it it's, erm, great value in modelling having a model and following it, you know, and the weapons protocol works really well." (712-719)
- Training staff with existing strong relationships CYP are powerful forces for change and can reach further. (679-685)
"knife crime work and they came in and they delivered the session with the TAs and were like 'okay these are the resources these are what you could deliver this is what you can do' and, you know, it probably only took them about 40 minutes but that's it done now, you know, and that's that's hit multiple students in one go and that's for me it's an effective way of using your resources and I do think we're missing that in sexual harmful behaviour" (679-687)

I VULNERABILITY IS MULTIFACETED

All parties involved are vulnerable and need safeguarding

- All parties involved are vulnerable and have needs; lack of knowledge perpetuates vulnerability for all involved so education on what constitutes a healthy relationship is needed. (259-268)

"I had a couple of, erm, year 9 students more recently and they've all got referrals for sexual harmful behaviour and they were messaging each other and the contents of the message was really highly sexualised really above what you would expect at that age and the young girl was just like 'well I just thought that was normal I thought that was expected' and her education on it made her really vulnerable, you know, and it did make her feel comfortable and the the young lad even you could class that as him being opportunistic maybe, erm, you know, he he just thought that he was going along in this nice relationship and, erm, in the end he'd kind of like taken her under the stairs and put his hands like around her bum and everything and she'd she'd hated it but he didn't know that she didn't tell him so they were both equally vulnerable in that." (252-268)

School is navigating multiple complex relationships to safeguard all the CYP involved

- Navigating multiple complex relationships; all parties are vulnerable and safeguarding concerns include how information is shared with home and what response there might be. (565-578)
"I think it's more of the parents reaction people worry about like so we had a a young year 11 lad and he was, erm, kind of he sent a load of videos out of of a girl he'd been recording on his phone and he was like 'I'm going to fuck her I'm going to make her my wife and I'm going to do this that and the other' and when we told his dad we I mean we were really really worried because he was like clenching his fists he was shaking and so angry with him, so upset and the boy's year manager was in the meeting she was really upset then, you know, erm, so I think that there's that element of it the response of the other the parents essentially 'cos people don't want to put our young people at risk" (565-578)
- Navigating multiple complex relationships; all parties are vulnerable and safeguarding concerns include how information is shared with home and what response there might be. (292-293)
"sometimes parents can get very very angry at that and you've got to be mindful to safeguard the young people as well". (292-294)

Cohort demographics can impact vulnerability

- Cultural sensitivity and understanding of cohort demographic is needed when communicating with families. (288-290)
"In this case both of the young people were practising Muslim children so the parents were not happy at all" (288-290)

J DISCOURSE AROUND HSB CAN BE CHALLENGING

It can feel uncomfortable discussing sex/sexuality and CYP

- Acknowledged that there can be feelings of discomfort around discussing sex/sexuality and CYP. (356-357)
"even if it is about sex it's fine but I don't think people have are necessarily comfortable with that." (356-357)
- Challenge can come from feelings of discomfort around discussing sex/sexuality and CYP. (479-480)
"so but it does make people feel awkward and it does make people feel uncomfortable. It does." (479-480)
- Acknowledged that there can be feelings of discomfort around discussing sex/sexuality/HSB and CYP with involved parties. (400-410)
"it could be (pause) the how comfortable they are in in dealing with it, you know, erm, the the idea that you have to like kind of skirt around it a little bit and things like that, you know, I've sat in meetings like where I've literally had to talk to 16 year old and his dad and say some of the language that he's used and you're squirming inside but it's got to be said you can't tiptoe around it and say 'oh he's used some, you know, used some derogatory sexualised language' that's not good enough I think that I think that's a challenge I think the idea that, you know, you are allowed to talk

about it say the word and stuff, erm, I think that's a challenge I think it makes people feel awkward as well" (400-412)

Some people would prefer not to engage with this issue

- Recognition that there may not be an appetite to discuss this topic. (471-473)
"It's the driest subject in the world to get anybody enthused about apart from the the sad few like myself who are like well into it (laughs)" (471-473)
- The power the use of terminology has to provoke discomfort and fear of stigmatising labels. (411-416)
"I think that's a challenge I think it makes people feel awkward as well, you know, it naturally, you know, you say 'harmful sexualised behaviours' and it does make you feel feel awkward it's not something that people want to deal with all the time." (411-416)

Fear that CYP will be burdened with a highly stigmatising label that will impact their future

- Fear of impact of stigmatising labels and how accessing external support systems could further burden that stigmatising process. (579-583)
"his dad was just really disappointed in him worried about his future and and things because we have to tell them, you know, we're going to refer them to sexual harmful behaviour team the police will will be informed that kind of thing and they're thinking oh gosh is there a criminal record" (579-583)

K RESPONDING TO HSB IS COMPLEX AND INDIVIDUAL

Time, skills and knowledge are key to recognising HSB from typical SB and react proportionately

- Awareness that there are typically developing sexual behaviour in CYP that are normal and healthy. (207-208)
"you know, it could be just two 15 year olds in a relationship it could be that they're just experimenting" (207-208)
- There needs to be thoughtful consideration to be able to recognise HSB but a proportionate response needed so CYP are not stigmatised and given freedom to learn about healthy relationships. (727-733)
"being able to differentiate between what's harmful and what's not. We need to be able to label it as harmful if it is and recognise it as harmful as it is but we also need to be not overreacting if it is because our young people then need to be able to they need to have that freedom of expression to grow up and learn about relationships and how to learn" (727-733)
- Recognition that there needs to be a response to HSB but nuanced, complicated decisions need to be made by curious, thoughtful staff who have a more holistic view. (387-391)
"yeah I think it just needs that overview to make sure that everything's explored because much because most of the time just needs that explanation to understand, you know, not always harmful." (387-391)

There needs to be a response to HSB, but each situation is individual, nuanced and complicated

- Recognition that there needs to be a response to HSB but nuanced, complicated decisions need to be made. (175-176)
"and I think getting the balance right with that is tricky" (175-176)
- Recognition that there needs to be a response to HSB but nuanced, complicated decisions need to be made and not let small things go un-noticed. (246-250)

"It is it does happen a lot but I think the the real harmful stuff doesn't happen a lot but we have to we have to record everything we have to monitor everything because, because you can't let it go unnoticed," (246-250)

Responses to HSB are subjective

- Responses can be subjective; each case is unique. (62-63)
"done things that she's not comfortable with" (62-63)
- Perspectives are subjective; more unpicking is needed as each individual case is unique. (203-206)
"I think the understanding of thresholds are different, you know, if you hear something going on between two young people it can sound really shocking but, you know, when you start to unpick it," (203-206)

L THERE ARE SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES TO RESPONDING TO HSB

Reactive rather than proactive

- Firefighting; reactive rather than proactive responses to what happens in school due to the uncontrollable 'heat and pressure' of the environment. (396)
"We're always firefighting here." (396)
- Reactive rather than proactive; no preventive work is being done which is linked to systems being at capacity. (667-670)
"I don't think we have the backup unless it's been something really really significant I don't think we have the backup there and I think that would be useful." (667-670)

An overburdened system flooded by a digital tsunami

- The volume of incidents is challenging to address. (481-482)
"I think other challenges as well is that sheer volume like the sheer volume of what goes on online is a huge challenge for us, you know." (481-483)
- The challenge for adults from the influence of online content is overwhelming; CYP are digital natives who are viewing highly explicit, unpoliced materials which is normalising HSB and increasing vulnerability. (507-511)
"that's a huge challenge for us to overcome 'cos how do we stop that from happening? We can't we have to educate them but how can you ever spend enough time educating them to combat the amount of time they're spending online?" (507-511)
- The challenge for adults from the influence of online content is overwhelming; CYP are digital natives who are viewing highly explicit, unpoliced materials which is normalising HSB and increasing vulnerability. (489-505)
"what are they seeing online they could be seeing they could be seeing pornography they, you know, we had a group of lads who were sending each other like memes god god awful stuff, you know, and it's like they're seeing that and thinking that's normal and like I said to you the education but how do we combat, you know, if we've got six hours in a day and got to teach them everything how do you combat and educate them when they're seeing so much other things like, you know, sexualised language that's normalised, you know, like I said about that young girl she thought it was normal she thought it was the way that people spoke to each other, you know, and like I say they were these messages were highly highly explicit real like, you know, almost fetish style in their messages and this young girl she was like 'I thought this was normal' " (489-505)

M HSB EXTEND BEYOND THE SCHOOL GROUNDS AND ARE A SOCIETAL/CULTURAL ISSUE

Normalisation of HSB perpetuated through societal/cultural expectations

- Cultural shift needed to help staff to strike the right balance to differentiate between what healthy/typically developing YP relationships is without normalising HSB as ‘part of growing up’. (305-312)
“to say ‘oh well that’s just part of growing up’ or ‘that’s just them trying it on they’re experimenting whatever’ is not always, sometimes it is, sometimes that’s exactly what they’re doing they’re teenagers got to find out about relationships and sex and things haven’t they but we have to take everything seriously and I suppose, erm, I suppose a way of delivering that to staff so that they understand why we’re taking it so seriously why it is so, you know, why we’re labelling things as peer on peer sexualised behaviour” (305-312)
- Normalisation of HSB through culturally expected behaviours and lack of understanding of what is actually happening. (372-375)
“I think that that can sometimes be why people don’t take it very seriously because they’re thinking well they’re just kids, you know, they’re just trying it on or whatever they’re just experimenting, you know.” (371-375)
- Normalisation of HSB through culturally expected behaviours. (258-259)
“the young girl was just like ‘well I just thought that was normal I thought that was expected” (257-259)

Girls positioned as the gatekeepers of male sexuality/behaviours in the interventions delivered

- Highlight the stark contrast between the gendering of interventions which positions girls as gatekeepers of male sexuality/behaviour and isn’t supporting/educating boys. (543-548)
- *“I think the there are things that we can do there’s a lot we can offer, erm, I think my frustration is the the real love rocks programme we deliver it to so many girls and it’s just like wow, what are we missing, where are the boys in this? Why are we not delivering it to more lads?”* (543-548)

HSB are an issue within the LA

- HSB are not confined to this setting, they are a wider societal issue that needs a LA response. (84)
“our local authority is that we would refer to the sexual harmful behaviour panel and we put a referral in and they meet every Thursday” (82-85)

N DEALING WITH HSB CAN IMPACT STAFF WELLBEING

Emotional demands of the role can come at unexpected times

- Resilience is important for the role but there is an element of compartmentalising to cope with the emotional demands and the emotional impact appears to seep out in more unguarded moments. (523-540)
“Experience I suppose. Erm, I think I’m just quite methodical in my way, erm, very very rarely do I get upset and then it will just be over something really small usually something really little will happen like, I don’t know, trying to think of an example, like I had a little girl trying to sew her own prom dress and that really really upset me because I was just like she’s just got nothing, erm, so it would be like the little things that upset me and then overall I deal with things emotionally quite well have a lot of home life balance all that self-care and that kind of thing and that comes with experience I think, erm, so I don’t think it really impacts on me emotionally, erm, I don’t like obviously I don’t like hearing about, erm, like historic sexual abuse and things like that ‘cos you just so frustrating to think that nothing’s going to happen and that can that can burn you emotionally but the peer on peer stuff generally I’m alright.” (523-540)

Informal peer supervision is used to help staff process events

- Peer supervision is sought informally to help staff to seek reassurance and process events. (585-587)
“in general our our staff team seem to be okay, erm, but they will come and ask they’ll come and ask what’s happening with that or what’s going on so it must be on their minds.” (585-587)

Appendix K: Developing Group Experiential Themes

Overview and grouping of PET's

Participant	PET
Quinn	<p>Q: EXTERNAL RESOURCES Q: ESTABLISHED SCHOOL SYSTEMS Q: SOCIETAL/CULTURAL CHANGES AND CHALLENGES Q: RELATIONAL APPROACHES Q: RESPONDING TO HSB IS COMPLEX Q: STAFF WELLBEING</p>
Cassidy	<p>C: RELATIONAL APPROACHES C: EXTERNAL INFLUENCES AND SUPPORT C: RESPONDING TO HSB C: CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL CHANGES AND CHALLENGES C: TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION C: STAFF WELLBEING</p>
Remi	<p>R: EXTERNAL SUPPORT R: RESPONDING TO HSB R: CULTURAL/SOCIETAL INFLUENCES R: TRAINING AND RESOURCES R: STAFF WELLBEING</p>
Bailey	<p>B: EXTERNAL AGENCY SUPPORT AND CONNECTIONS B: RESPONDING TO HSB B: CULTURAL INFLUENCES, SOCIETAL CHANGES, COMPLEX SITUATIONS B: STAFF WELLBEING</p>
Addison	<p>A: EXTERNAL AGENCIES AND SUPPORT TOOLS A: SCHOOL ARE NEGOTIATORS IN COMPLEX RELATIONSHIPS A: RESPONDING TO HSB A: CHANGING CULTURE HAS CHANGED THE LANDSCAPE A: TRAINING AND AWARENESS A: STAFF WELLBEING</p>
Eden	<p>E: CULTURAL CHALLENGES AND SOCIETAL NORMS E: TRAINING AND AWARENESS E: RESPONDING TO HSB E: STAFF WELLBEING AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS E: RELATIONAL APPROACHES</p>

Comparing PET's

<p>B: RESPONDING TO HSB Q: RESPONDING TO HSB IS COMPLEX C: RESPONDING TO HSB A: RESPONDING TO HSB R: RESPONDING TO HSB Q: ESTABLISHED SCHOOL SYSTEMS E: RESPONDING TO HSB</p>
<p>B: CULTURAL INFLUENCES, SOCIETAL CHANGES, COMPLEX SITUATIONS Q: SOCIETAL/CULTURAL CHANGES AND CHALLENGES R: CULTURAL/SOCIETAL INFLUENCES E: CULTURAL CHALLENGES AND SOCIETAL NORMS C: CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL CHANGES AND CHALLENGES A: CHANGING CULTURE HAS CHANGED THE LANDSCAPE</p>
<p>C: TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION R: TRAINING AND RESOURCES A: TRAINING AND AWARENESS E: TRAINING AND AWARENESS</p>
<p>Q: RELATIONAL APPROACHES C: RELATIONAL APPROACHES A: SCHOOL ARE NEGOTIATORS IN COMPLEX RELATIONSHIPS E: RELATIONAL APPROACHES</p>
<p>Q: EXTERNAL RESOURCES A: EXTERNAL AGENCIES AND SUPPORT TOOLS C: EXTERNAL INFLUENCES AND SUPPORT B: EXTERNAL AGENCY SUPPORT AND CONNECTIONS R: EXTERNAL SUPPORT</p>
<p>Q: STAFF WELLBEING A: STAFF WELLBEING C: STAFF WELLBEING E: STAFF WELLBEING AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS R: STAFF WELLBEING B: STAFF WELLBEING</p>

Photos of how the PETs were compared to make the tables



Appendix L: Table of Group Experiential Themes, Group-Level-Sub-Theme and Illustrative Quotes.

GET	Group-Level-Sub-Theme
3.2: RESPONDING TO HSB	3.2.1: Responding to HSB is complex, multifaceted and variable 3.2.2: School systems, policies and procedures 3.2.3: Competing demands, systemic challenges 3.2.4: Pride in the response to HSB 3.2.5: Concerns that responses could have a harmful, stigmatising affect
3.3: CULTURAL INFLUENCES, SOCIETAL CHANGES, COMPLEX SITUATIONS	3.3.1: HSB are perpetuated through societal/cultural expectations 3.3.2: Online challenges 3.3.3: A collective cultural shift is needed 3.3.4: Gendered interventions 3.3.5: The tide is starting to turn
3.4: TRAINING AND AWARENESS	3.4.1: A whole school approach is needed 3.4.2: Training needs are dynamic 3.4.3 Training/awareness has elicited discomfort/challenge 3.4.4: Training and awareness need to extend beyond school and into the community
3.5: RELATIONAL APPROACHES	3.5.1: Schools are negotiators of multiple complex relationships 3.5.2: A holistic approach is needed 3.5.3: Existing relationships can be valuable tools to elicit change
3.6: EXTERNAL SUPPORT	3.6.1: Clearer guidance, more support 3.6.2: External support and resources are highly valued 3.6.3: Unrealistic expectations 3.6.4: Engagement with external/specialist provision can feel confusing/frustrating 3.6.5: Overburdened services
3.7: STAFF WELLBEING	3.7.1 Supervision and protective factors 3.7.2 There is a personal, physical and psychological impact 3.7.3 Personal reflections

Key: Quinn; Cassidy; Remi; Bailey; Addison; Eden

GET	Group-Level-Sub-Theme and Illustrative Quotes
3.2: RESPONDING TO HSB	<p>3.2.1 Responding to HSB is complex, multifaceted and variable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspectives are subjective; more unpicking is needed as each individual case is unique. (203-206) • <i>“I think the understanding of thresholds are different, you know, if you hear something going on between two young people it can sound really shocking but, you know, when you start to unpick it,”</i> (203-206) • Approaches and understandings vary so training opportunities are received differently (C:535-540) • <i>“what I do think is when we do certain training I do think some people are more enthusiastic than others. Some people see it as more as their responsibility than than the others do. Some people just feel the need to keep the teaching going, erm, because that in their mind is what they are there for”</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses can be subjective and dependent on the experiences of the member of staff (R:196-199) • <i>“you forget how sheltered some staff might be, you know, have never never dealt with anything of a serious nature have never come across it in their own personal lives, erm, so some of it was really difficult for them”</i> • Responses are subjective and dependent on the experiences and understandings of those involved meaning that school positioned as a negotiator trying to find a way forward in complex situations. (A:98-116) • <i>“I’m used to (laughs) the safeguarding’s such an interesting place in terms of harmful sexual behaviour now because what one parent’s tolerance for what they think is okay compared to another parent’s is very very different so actually the landscape that we’re dealing with is more about the parents sometimes, you know, one parent thinks this is absolutely not acceptable whereas another will think that is totally normal teenage behaviour so when we’re dealing with those parents, you know, you can have one who’s baying for blood and ‘this is a police matter this is a crime’ where the other parent just says ‘it’s okay it’s banter you’re victimising my child’ so the school finds themselves self in a position now where we’re almost the the negotiator of a of a path forward, erm, we’re assessing a risk, managing the parents, managing the two students in school, three students, four students, and trying to keep everybody happy and find a reasonable resolution.”</i> • There is recognition that only a small amount of HSB are reported to adults. (E:379-386) • <i>“but we can only target, you know, we can we don’t know how much of it’s being, erm, shared, do you know what I mean? I’m sure there’s a lot of girls who would say ‘oh yeah’ you know ‘I get commented on on a daily basis’ but won’t report it so, you know, we can only deal with those that have been reported on so we deal with those that have been reported but I imagine that’s the tip of the iceberg.”</i> • Schools are having to change and adapt to a rapidly changing, complex culture and provide support and services that are not just curriculum based. (A:810-817) • <i>“We have to think of ourselves as a sort of mini children’s social care, erm, a governmental department, erm, a therapeutic service, erm, the justice agency and, erm, all of those things all wrapped up into one to try and make sure that we’re doing the right thing at the right time which for schools that is really really difficult to negotiate and I am really grateful I’m very very lucky I have our IRO she’s blooming brilliant.”</i> <p>3.2.2 School systems, policies and procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of established school recording systems to collect and categorising data on HSB. (Q:25-28)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>“so we have those four kind of categories within our peer on peer sexualised behaviour kind of categorisation on our online system”. (:25-28)</i> ● <i>HSB are seen as different to other behaviours and need a particular response. (C:49-50) “we deal with it in very specific ways”</i> ● <i>Changes have been made to existing reporting systems/ data collection so that HSB can be identified and highlighted as a specific behaviour. (R:173-176) “we weren’t even recording as peer on peer or sexual or anything like so we changed the recording system so we could have that as a specific, erm, concern being reported”</i> ● <i>Reporting systems in school have been adapted to recognise and incorporate HSB with data generated shared with SLT. (B:208-220) “so gender abuse is now reported as a safeguarding concern from the staff so if they’ve if in a classroom, erm, a young person using, erm, terms that are inappropriate and and sort of gendered, if you like, erm, they will report that not only as a behaviour issue it will show up as a as a safeguarding concern and that data’s then reported to the the Head Teacher gets all of our safeguarding information anyway but the data on gender abuse is also collated alongside, erm, to collate the specific data around various issues, erm, like in, erm, racism, homophobic behaviour, disablist language, harmful sexual behaviour, sexualised behaviour language, erm, gender abuse and bullying”</i> <p>3.2.3 Competing demands, systemic challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Firefighting; reactive rather than proactive responses to what happens in school due to the uncontrollable ‘heat and pressure’ of the environment. (Q:396) “We’re always firefighting here.” (Q:396)</i> ● <i>Time and pressure of school/national agendas can be a barrier to addressing concerns over HSB. (C:542-544) “they would report something that they see but actually their main concern is right we’ve got this content that we’ve got to get through”</i> ● <i>Competing demands on staff time mean that pressures are increasing continually. (C:791-797) “within the school things don’t get easier either, things only ever get hard and, you know, we always start the year off with a plan but then the needs of the kids increase increase increase and things only ever get harder. Then we have sickness then the staff that are left absorb what else is going on and it gets harder again.”</i> ● <i>High workload impacted ability to manage the emotional toll of the job. (B:296-300) “I was on my own for a long time in this role before we took, erm, her on and it was much tougher, erm, I was spending more</i>
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hours working, erm, and I think it took more of a toll on me and I feel much more balanced now.”

- The demands and challenges of school life/curriculum can be a barrier to recognising and responding to HSB. (A:453-466)
“constantly telling them it’s happening here and I think probably being wrapped up in curriculum is a barrier, you know, when you’re teaching a lesson so say you’re doing Macbeth and, you know, a bit of something’s going on in the corner, the level of professional curiosity to never miss anything that is required it’s a it’s a lot and when you’re really really busy I think for some staff, not just here, everywhere, erm, do they always want to get into that? Maybe, maybe not. I’d like to think that everybody here absolutely wants to get into it and they’re totally and professionally curious and they always ask questions, erm, but when you’re really really busy and you’re under, erm, a million other pressures, I’m not sure.”
- EPs can work systemically to help have an overview of the support available. (E:571-582)
“I don’t know what’s out there so probably if you said to me ‘oh you could do this you could do this’ whereas I think because because I don’t know enough about what’s out there I I can’t answer that question. I: Okay so it’s, erm, maybe it’s the the first step of that would be finding out, you know....knowing what’s out there. E: And that’s probably where the EPs are involved...You know, that’s where (Named school EP) can probably get involved a bit more.”

3.2.4 Pride in the response to HSB

- Pride that they have pre-empted external panel actions via established school systems/structures and responses to HSB. (Q:295-298)
“we knew in that case that it was going to the sexual harmful behaviour panel but by again by that time we’d by that point we’d already done everything they wanted us to do.” (Q:295-298)
- Pride in the approach the school takes and the team that work there. (B:420-431)
“it’s interesting to think about actually how the things that I think we’re doing really well and that we’re really really lucky to have and reflecting on does everybody else have access to that same, erm, support, is everybody else working in the same way and and what would that look like if they did, erm, ‘cos usually just get your head down do your job just think about what you’re doing, erm, so thinking more widely is useful, erm, and yeah appreciate it really I do think, well it is hard, erm, and and I do think we’re lucky in the school that we work in, the team that we work with and the support that we have.”
- There is pride in how far staff have moved in their understanding of this issue. (A:519-522) *“Do you know I feel really proud of our staff actually we we’ve certainly come a long way this year, definitely. Our understanding of what is acceptable this year has changed dramatically.”*

	<p>3.2.5 Concerns that responses could have a harmful, stigmatising affect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of impact of stigmatising labels and how accessing external support systems could further burden that stigmatising process. (Q:579-583) <i>“his dad was just really disappointed in him worried about his future and and things because we have to tell them, you know, we’re going to refer them to sexual harmful behaviour team the police will will be informed that kind of thing and they’re thinking oh gosh is there a criminal record” (Q:579-583)</i> • Concerns that the language used to describe HSB may cause harm though stigmatising labels. (C:658-667) <i>“I know I refer to it earlier but but I think sometimes we forget that they’re really young children that we’re working with and there’s still time to and and so I like when we when we when picked the label to sexually harmful behaviour that was going to go on SIMs I remember being part of the meeting I was really shocked and upset by that, erm, erm, and I and we were on a zoom meeting and my face must have been on the the point because the Head picked up on it straight away”</i>
<p>3.3: CULTURAL INFLUENCES, SOCIETAL CHANGES, COMPLEX SITUATIONS</p>	<p>3.3.1 HSB are perpetuated through societal/cultural expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normalisation of HSB through culturally expected behaviours and lack of understanding of what is actually happening. (Q:372-375) <i>“I think that that can sometimes be why people don’t take it very seriously because they’re thinking well they’re just kids, you know, they’re just trying it on or whatever they’re just experimenting, you know.” (Q:371-375)</i> • External influences of the dominant culture can normalise HSB. (C:161-164) <i>“the behaviours sometimes become escalated when they go to these provisions because the people around them are all behaving in a certain way and is it the same with that sexual harmful behaviour?”</i> • HSB are so normalised within society that there is little appetite by CYP to act or recognition that these behaviours are something that should be addressed. (R:312-332) <i>“that that low level peer on peer stuff is it is there it is there it just doesn’t get reported, erm, we’d had a couple of friends who reported, erm, breasts being grabbed by a boy but the girl hadn’t reported it, we like why hasn’t she reported it? The friend had mentioned it in passing rather than reporting it as a as a safeguarding issue, erm, the girls didn’t want to do anything about it they weren’t bothered ‘oh it’s my friend I’m not bothered’ parents were like ‘ah it’s just kids being kids’. That was quite eye opening when I had first had the first couple I was like why why are you kids not reporting it why is nobody bothered that this has been happening to them? What what do you think the barriers were to reporting? Erm, normalisation not wanting to get their friends in trouble not wanting to to draw attention to themselves, lots of different reasons, that that perhaps not</i>

being believed or it thinking it's not a big issue or they didn't want to get in trouble for something. Loads loads of issues."

- Historical normalisation of HSB meant they went unrecognised and underreported (R:26-35)
"I think we were as as it was suggested I think a lot of schools kind of went 'oh we don't have this' until you start to unpick it and you realise that it is suggested that the doc in the documents that it wasn't recognised it wasn't reported it was massively underreported it was massively, erm, normalised and it's not till you start to unpick it that you think well actually just because the kids are not reporting it it's just because, erm, these things are happening and it is they are normalising it."

3.3.2 Online challenges

- Training needs for HSB are constantly evolving as there is a heightened awareness due to the broader societal issues/influences surrounding sexual behaviours. (Q:734-736)
"I imagine that you'll find a lot of other staff like me who are really struggling with the online world and I think that's where a lot of it comes down to really." (Q:734-736)
- The challenge for adults from the influence of online content is overwhelming; CYP are digital natives who are viewing highly explicit, unpoliced materials which is normalising HSB and increasing vulnerability. (Q:507-511)
"that's a huge challenge for us to overcome 'cos how do we stop that from happening? We can't we have to educate them but how can you ever spend enough time educating them to combat the amount of time they're spending online?" (Q:507-511)
- There are external influences that impact CYP and causes feelings of sadness, fear and helplessness while having to deal with fast passed online world. (R:495-516)
"we've had an increase of been aware of students accessing not just porn not just hardcore porn some very explicit what do they call it, class class A or something like that? I've had children who have watched small children being raped by, children who have taken part in supplying images within these networking groups who've been how they found their way onto this where do they know where, you know, how have they accessed that? You know.....Scary.... Do you feel equipped as a school to kind of dealing with with kind of the online stuff that's come in? Not really 'cos it's a bit more out of our control isn't it? At school they can't access anything we've got barriers and, you know, you can't you can't even google 'sex' in this school (laughs), erm, but at home supervision easy access to anything that's really difficult making it difficult for us to have anything got do with managing other than educating them on staying safe online. They're going to explore aren't they?"
- Social media has been a force for good in helping to educate CYP and to change the culture through starting conversations. (A:162-169)
"hashtag me too' that was definitely a real liminal moment I think for particularly young people, erm, social media as well

that I think that's been a force for harm but on on this definitely for good a lot, you know, whilst it generates loads of incidents for us, actually students' awareness now of what is okay what is not okay a lot of that comes through social media it absolutely does"

3.3.3 A collective cultural shift is needed

- Professional curiosity, continuous challenge and training is needed in order to be positioned to identify HSB. (A:193-212)
"a really good example of this now I think a modern example compared to twenty, thirty years ago, erm, somebody pulling a moonie, pulling a moonie twenty years ago was back of a coach school trip, you know, I I remember seeing people on a motorway doing that and now in a school that is a really serious thing, you know, that is a suspension worthy thing because it used to be that if you did that, for example, on the back of a coach on a on a PE field, oh it's banter. But what I encourage my team to do now is go right well let's let's change the context so if somebody did that in a classroom when you were teaching English at the front of the class and it was a girl doing it to the rest of the class you would feel very differently. Just because it's a boy, or just because it's a bum and not a pair of breasts or, you know, any of the other things, I I encourage my team to look at to take an incident and remove it from, erm, perhaps location or subject or gender and and and think about it in a different way which they've got much better at doing that actually."
- A cultural shift is needed but this needs to extend into society and impact into families too. (E:307-313) *"actually the cultural shift needs to be that the boys the parents, because ultimately it's the parenting (laughs), the parents of the boys need to be told that's wrong. It's wrong to to make a comment about a girl. It's wrong to to sexualise a girl in any way. Now I know girls do sexualise boys as well but it's predominantly the other way round isn't it?"*
- In order to change the culture low-level behaviours need to be recognise and address consistently and taken seriously. (A:477-483)
"a little comment on the corridor, you hear something in the dinner queue, we can't walk past anything because every single time that if a student even thinks that you've heard them and you don't challenge it, that chinks away at our safeguarding culture doesn't it and, erm, I think just more more more really good quality CPD"

3.3.4 Gendered interventions

- Highlight the stark contrast between the gendering of interventions which positions girls as gatekeepers of male sexuality/behaviour and isn't supporting/educating boys. (Q:543-548)
"I think the there are things that we can do there's a lot we can offer, erm, I think my frustration is the the real love rocks programme we deliver it to so many girls and it's just like wow,

what are we missing, where are the boys in this? Why are we not delivering it to more lads?" (Q:543-548)

- Girls as gatekeepers of male sexuality focusing on what they should find acceptable rather than what boys shouldn't be doing. (C:67-71)
"We do a hell of a lot on on on what is acceptable and not through our, erm, tutor times through PSHE and, erm, er, and we do a lot on a on empowerment for young ladies, erm, so that they understand what is acceptable and not acceptable."
- There is a gender bias of intervention focus with girls being the target of the work and a seeming lack of mirroring interventions for boys. (B:405-414)
"we've, erm, identified some of our older girls who a number of them appeared to be in unhealthy relationships with boys of a similar age so we did a small group, erm, of a couple of sessions specifically around healthy relationships identifying them, erm, unhealthy behaviours, erm, trying to to sort of pick apart is this a healthy behaviour really if he's texting constantly, is it because he really loves you or because he really wants to know what you're doing because he's really jealous or, you know, that sort of behaviour"

3.3.5 The tide is starting to turn

- There has been a cultural shift in staff and CYP and HSB are recognised and responded to. (C:50-55)
"whereas in the past pupils might have laughed it off, pupils might not have taken it seriously, staff might, let's be honest, might may have seen it in the past and not actually acted on it 'cos all pupils might have been laughing about but now I think that staff will directly challenge behaviour like that."
- There has been an escalation of need stemming from increased awareness fuelling response. (B:364-370)
"staff in schools have a massive job it's really busy it's getting busier since the pandemic. I think our concerns have increased threefold something like that. Harmful sexual behaviour is becoming more prevalent, and I think because all schools are identifying it better I don't think as an issue it it's a bigger issue but it's something that schools are dealing with more and more"
- A spectrum of behaviours are now identified as HSB and are no longer tolerated and actively challenged due to the change in culture. (A:43-55)
"now peer on peer abuse and sexual harmful behaviours are everything from, erm, a gender related comment to, you know, the absolute what, you know, actual abuse of of an of another of of another student, erm, I think in terms of schools now our tolerance for this has completely changed from from when I was at school, I'm 43 so thirty years ago what was acceptable then is now absolutely not seen as banter so up-skirting anything like that then was quite a normal thing whereas in schools now it's absolutely not tolerated and we work super super hard to try and make sure that all staff who have perhaps gone through the same system that I did see it not as banter"

3.4: TRAINING AND AWARENESS

3.4.1 A whole school approach is needed

- Whole school approach to training/awareness in response to a shift in cultural awareness impacting on legislative response. (Q:458-460)
"I suppose there is education to be done there and we did do that in September in the inset we talked about it because it is a big topic at the minute" (Q:458-460)
- CYP have developed an awareness of boundaries, and a voice, through targeted education. (C:36-39)
"we've done lots of work on sexism, misogyny, erm, and informing children about sexually harmful behaviour and to the point where they know certain things are not right"
- A whole school approach, including CYP voice has increased visibility/knowledge of HSB within the setting (R:60-70)
"we've done a massive piece of work in school, erm, we've done a we've done a student survey similar to the Everyone's Invited but worded better, erm, and we've got a lot of feedback from students about where does it feel safe and what their experiences are, erm, and we have done an action plan from that and then we've done a lot of staff training with some CPD on that, erm, to include staff to identify and recognise it more and not, erm, not tolerate it really so I think they are it's on the forefront now of and staff are recognising it more than they were."
- Increase reports of HSB due to increased awareness and a whole school approach. (B:248-255)
"I can see the increase in reports so I know that staff are identifying more. I don't think it's necessarily happening massively more I think it's being identified. We've done, erm, work with young people, erm, assemblies and small group work to help them to identify what's inappropriate behaviour so that, erm, they can speak out and draw that to staff member's attention as well."

3.4.2 Training needs are dynamic

- Training needs for HSB are constantly evolving as there is a heightened awareness due to the broader societal issues unfolding in the media surrounding sexual behaviours. (Q:300-304)
"I think there still needs to be some work done because we're still always seeing it on, erm, kind of what is acceptable, you know, behaviour in the news and everything and I think that's why there is a focus on it". (Q:300-304)
- The need for training is ongoing training (C:489-492)
"so if you're not up to date with the language you're not you don't know what the connotations are as well I think that's so important that we we keep up to speed with that"
- There is a need for constant and explicit training to support staff on how to respond as the landscape is constantly changing. (A:468-476)
"we worried about, what's our response, erm, we've done lots of scripting work with staff but we need to do more next year"

where, you know, really helpful things to say, erm, how to respond when somebody does start to talk to you about something we we've done lots of briefings we've done CPD sessions but if I did one a week we'd still need more. Erm, until we get to a point where nothing is missed. What I've asked of staff is that they never walk past anything"

3.4.3 Training/awareness has elicited challenge/discomfort

- Challenge can come from feelings of discomfort around discussing sex/sexuality and CYP. (Q:479-480)
"so but it does make people feel awkward and it does make people feel uncomfortable. It does." (Q:479-480)
- Training has elicited personal revelation for staff who have felt discomfort at the use of some of the language used (R:200-206)
"that language was shocking for them, erm, I think it was eye opening for them and for for me to have a rela rela like one member of staff, for example, couldn't say the word 'masturbation' without dying of embarrassment and fits of giggles and we were like this is what we deal with every day. People have different levels of tolerance of what they can deal with I suppose don't they?"
- HSB are an evolving area of concern that staff are building confidence in responding to alongside a cultural shift that is challenging previously normalised behaviours. (B:224-233)
"(pause) I would say it's a new focus for staff so it's, erm, like anything new it's getting into the habit of picking up on things and addressing it, it's developing that confidence and addressing it, erm, and I mean culturally it's a big change. I think about when I was at school things that were just very much normalised would now be reported as concerns, erm, or at least gender abuse, erm, so that can, you know, for staff who've been in the job for a long time that that can be a big change for them"
- Responding to a risk assessment for HSB to have a detrimental impact on the school community. (A:378-391)
"it's incredibly difficult and the only way to really mitigate risk is to have a member of staff with that young person which is incredibly stifling and and there's an assumption of guilt if you put a a member of staff with a child to to manage and mitigate risk. But in the past we we have had to do that for one or two students over the years because when we've assessed the risk we we think there is a credible risk to to our young people so we've had to put in really really difficult measures that are to our detriment, you know, financial detriment and not only that but detriment to other children because if you're pulling a teaching assistant off another student to be with one person to mitigate risk that has an impact"
- Training has a key role to play in raising awareness and sharing a difficult message. (A:424-431)
"so part of my responsibility safeguarding culture wise is to to hit them with some quite hard messages sometimes so, for example, this year we looked at the Panorama documentary. I don't know if you're familiar with that but it was quite hard

	<p><i>hitting documentary and I showed them some clips and they they were almost stupidified into silence afterwards because they don't realise the prevalence"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a fear that in addressing HSB a teacher may place themselves at risk. (425-429) <i>"I think teachers will always stamp out inappropriate sexualised comments, erm, but I think there may be a sort of a wariness as well that they're not kind of seen to be sexualised themselves, I I don't know"</i> <p>3.4.4 Training and awareness need to extend beyond school and into the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be a societal/cultural shift for change to happen with work being done going beyond the school gate. (R:138-140) <i>"I think there probably is a piece of work that needs doing with parents as well across the board so everybody's getting the same message"</i> • To address HSB a broader view needs to be taken and work needs to be done with families and communities too. (E:519-533) <i>"we all know that behaviours are a a form of communication what is the child communicating with the, you know, it's probably about digging deeper and and looking at underlying problems but I would imagine that 90% of your problems, maybe maybe maybe that's a bit harsh but the bulk of the problems are under parenting so, you know, if they hear it at home they bring it to school they don't know any different, erm, and I think if if to me to me the difference is, you know, we can educate staff we can educate children but if they're hearing the same thing over and over at home then what we're saying is is is falling on deaf ears, erm, that's where it becomes problematic. What could EPs do? Work with the parents probably"</i>
<p>3.5: RELATIONAL APPROACHES</p>	<p>3.5.1 Schools are negotiators of multiple complex relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating multiple complex relationships; all parties are vulnerable and safeguarding concerns include how information is shared with home and what response there might be. (Q:292-293) <i>"sometimes parents can get very very angry at that and you've got to be mindful to safeguard the young people as well". (Q:292-294)</i> • Navigating complex situations that extend beyond the school gate to safeguard all involved. (R:234-241) <i>"it can be hard because it's a lot of responsibility and, you know, you've got to you've got to balance a lot of safeguarding both parties, you've got to get your facts straight you've got to know that your information is accurate you've got to know that you're dealing with everybody fairly you've got angry parents from both sides, you know, it is quite stressful it is quite difficult to deal with."</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding the balance in meeting the needs of all involved can position them in a no win situation that is hard to manage. (B:180-194) <i>“you’ve got, erm, two the families of usually two young people so, er, the victim who’s family are, you know, very shocked upset and and don’t want the perpetrator to have any contact at all and think they should, you know, be excluded and obviously that’s not always possible or appropriate and then you’ve got the perpetrator’s family who may be saying this didn’t happen didn’t happen the way they said, erm, so there’s a difficult balance there in school, erm, if a young person discloses something significant and we have to inform parents and that’s the worst thing that they can think could ever happen, erm, so you’re the bad guy to the young person and quite often the bad guy to the parents usually so that can be difficult to manage.”</i> • Fulfilling legal requirements means navigating complex situations that school have no autonomy over. (B:175-179) <i>“when they are more significant and sort of police are involved or need to be involved, erm, that’s difficult because, erm, it can get a bit sort of stuck then about what you’re allowed to do and what you can’t do, er, don’t want to impact on any police investigation.”</i> • School are trying to work out a response to a big cultural shift in society and navigate a way forward that meets multiple complex demands and this can feel burdensome and like an additional pressure. (A:127-135) • <i>“we’re putting in we’re trying we’re trying to find a level now I think with with the new Ofsted thing that came out and, erm, Everyone’s Invited, we’re trying to find a level where we can deal with things reasonably and show we’re a safeguarding culture where everybody feels safe, manage things that are coming in from outside of school as well and also manage parents expectations. It’s a it’s a lot on a school, it really is.”</i> <p>3.5.2 A holistic approach is needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition that there needs to be a response to HSB but nuanced, complicated decisions need to be made by curious, thoughtful staff who have a more holistic view. (Q:387-391) <i>“yeah I think it just needs that overview to make sure that everything’s explored because much because most of the time just needs that explanation to understand, you know, not always harmful.” (Q:387-391)</i> • A multi-agency approach from a relational, holistic system that knows CYP/families well could be a powerful force for change. (C:408-416) <i>“could you imagine if like instead of having one centre called CAMHS the the NHS and educational system linked up together and started placing psychologists within school, you know, and and giving those to somebody who knew the school knew the systems was here all the time could build relationships with families and children and were able to do that direct work, you know, that would be that would be phenomenal”</i>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A holistic and relational approach to understanding the CYP in their context can enhance support provided. (C:118-124) <i>"because there's a boy who's been accused of exposing himself on a couple of occasions and touching another boy on one occasion, erm, and if you meet this boy he's the most polite boy you couldn't imagine. There is a history with the family and when you know the history you can understand why there may be some of this behaviour"</i> • A holistic, rapid intervention is needed in the immediate response to an incident to help support all those involved. (A:763-773) <i>"I think there needs to be some kind of rapid response agency, erm, and I don't know what that looks like but it's often in the immediate aftermath of something quite serious happening, I'm not talking about things that can be held at school level and dealt with at school. When you're moving into the more serious harmful behaviours there needs to be a rapid response team that that can signpost or work with a school to to get some immediate support for the family for the interim period. Just that interim period afterwards and things often calm down"</i> • A holistic approach needs to be taken to help shift the culture and change/challenge thinking. (E:539-543) <i>"Family approach, you know, that that that whole family this is wrong, erm, and this is why it's wrong and I think I think the problem is actually understanding why it's wrong rather than knowing that it's wrong it's actually about why it's wrong."</i> <p>3.5.3 Existing relationships can be valuable tools to elicit change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong relationships between staff and CYP are powerful forces for change; a conversation can be an intervention. (Q:345-346) <i>"I say those conversations alone can be educational it can be all a young person needs to hear."</i> (Q:344-346) • Training staff with existing strong relationships CYP are powerful forces for change and can reach further. (Q:679-685) <i>"knife crime work and they came in and they delivered the session with the TAs and were like 'okay these are the resources these are what you could deliver this is what you can do' and, you know, it probably only took them about 40 minutes but that's it done now, you know, and that's that's hit multiple students in one go and that's for me it's an effective way of using your resources and I do think we're missing that in sexual harmful behaviour"</i> (Q:679-687) • Interventions don't need to be external; they take a holistic and relational approach and are needs led. (C:225-231) <i>"it (sighs) it's difficult because I suppose I've got the opportunity to do whatever I want in the classroom provision I've got, you know, we've got a set curriculum but I can break that at any point with it because I'm able to do that on a needs led basis and I think I think social time is really important with with this young man"</i>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice of CYP and how they feel about HSB is central to how they are responded to. (A:271-286) <i>"I think the biggest thing that we do much better than we used to do is really listen to kids. If the kids are telling us it's not okay and they feel it's not okay then it's not okay. It's very rare that we've had to say to somebody 'actually what you're telling us is not okay is absolutely okay' I'm I'm struggling to think of a time, erm, so I think we're just much better at listening to the kids now and if they feel uncomfortable with something they're usually right. Their first instinct is is normally right, you know, when kids, for example, if a kid says, it's supply teachers usually, you know, somebody they don't feel okay about, a supply teacher makes a comment that's overfriendly, not in, we're not even in the realms of sexualised harmful behaviour, they are not shy of telling us. Kids know that it's not okay now and they come forward and tell us in spades."</i> • Relational approaches with CYP are fundamental in helping support them when they have experienced HSB and report what has happened. (E:73-85) <i>"the one I'm dealing with at the moment is a a young girl in year 9 who, erm, who has autism, erm, she's got a diagnosis of autism and has been sexually assaulted by another student in the year below, erm, so because of her autism she's struggling to verbalise what's what's happened to her, erm, so it's about building trust and it's about trying to build up that communication pathway to enable her to feel safe with us to actually share what's happened, erm, what's actually has happened since the assault is she's basically become a non-attender and, erm, and I'm about the only person in school that she will she built a relationship with to come in"</i>
3.6: EXTERNAL SUPPORT	3.6.1 Clearer guidance, more support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a desire for clearer guidance/support around how to respond to HSB as external support agencies appear confusing/conflicting which manifests as feeling frustrated and unsupported. (Q:660-665) <i>"I think there needs to be clarity and clarity on what what it is they want from us as a school what they can offer us as a school because quite often we get told 'oh youth justice service are coming' and then they don't or they get we get told to refer to xxx healthcare and then nobody comes you don't hear from them, you know, and I don't know whether that's a resources thing or what but, erm, I don't think we have the backup unless it's been something really really significant I don't think we have the backup there and I think that would be useful. And I understand, you know, like the services that they're not, erm, you know, they've got limited resources haven't they but I think we could have more support there"</i> (Q:660-673) • Lack of availability of resources impacts on intervention work that can be done with CYP. (R:473-478) <i>"If I had a wish list I'd have more availability from agencies so whether that's social worker, youth offending team, XXXXX where I could just literally just ring up and go 'please come and do a piece of work with this child' and they came in, erm, and did that piece of work."</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow responses and unclear guidance from external agencies can be a barrier to knowing how to respond and well-defined guidance is a welcomed prospect. (B:123-128) <i>“after we got we didn’t get the report back from the police that quickly, erm, but everything was kind of put into place that one seemed to go quite smoothly, erm, there isn’t great advice through the DfE can be a bit woolly so it would always be nice to have clearer guidance about ‘do this, that and the other’.”</i> • Support is needed from other external agencies with specialist skills and knowledge. (A:305-315) <i>“I’ve needed support from the police, you know, is there a criminal angle here that we need to explore? Whilst we’re not in the habit of criminalising students, sometimes we we do have to involve the police and having having the police onsite really useful we have a school based officer she’s fabulous who who always sees us right, erm, the advice from children and social care more and more now with these cases we’re bringing them in, we’re we’re just putting that initial phone call in because they’re so unusual lots of them.”</i> • Empowering staff to know what to do/act/say would increase confidence when dealing with HSB. (E:455-463) <i>“Well just just a confidence to know they’re they’re doing the right thing they’re challenging inappropriate behaviours and, you know, this is the route to so, you know, everyone knows who to go to if they’re concerned about languages and language and sexualised behaviour so I would say that we’ve got a fairly good, hmm, pathway to to get support, erm, I just think there’s that much of it it’s really hard to to know when to stop or when to start.”</i> <p>3.6.2 External support and resources are highly valued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of an established, external scale, to help identify HSB and inform response has been a powerful tool. (Q:604-605) <i>“That that Hackett Scale thing has been pretty revolutionary to be honest but that was that was, erm, like a networking that myself and the DSL didn’t go on it it was our line manager who’s the assistant head and our head teacher went on it and that’s why it was passed on from and that has been really really helpful in the way ‘cos I will I kept going on about the brook traffic lights saying ‘I want to get trained up in it because I want a way to’ essentially essentially I when I knew something was harmful I wanted to be able to say so. I wanted to be able to back it up, you know, especially because sexualised behaviour panel’s so contentious.” (Q:604-616)</i> • There is a high value on training to develop an understanding of CYP more holistically. (C:341-345) <i>“but actually we all know through the training we’ve done with the EPs about ACEs and traumatic trauma and the impact of that on the brain and the child and actually even if people think that that hasn’t had an impact on that child it clearly will.”</i> • External support has reduced the pressure of making complex decisions in isolation. (R:369-371)
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	<p><i>"I like the new triage because that just takes a bit of pressure off you making that decision on your own."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision from experienced external practitioner is valued. (B:128-135) <i>"What we're really fortunate in this school is that we have, erm, support from IRO so there's a DfE project at IRO supporting key schools, erm, with supervision, erm, we weren't one of the identified schools but we've been able to sort of become part of that and she is always available to us to, erm, to offer advice and support, erm, and that's been really invaluable"</i> Specialist support from an external agent is a valuable tool in helping staff respond to HSB, decide policy and providing supervision. (A:261-267) <i>"I work with an IRO who's really really useful to me so she's very good at kind of benchmarking for us so if we get something that comes in to us and we are unsure how to deal with it because they're all different, erm, I have an IRO that I work with that I can ask for advice, we have safeguarding supervision that we share with each other"</i> Use of an external tool to recognise behaviours and scaffold responses. (A:268-269) <i>"we use the two tools Hacket Continuum, erm, Brooke Traffic Light"</i> <p>3.6.3 Unrealistic expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hierarchical decisions are made that cause conflicting emotions to enact and this impacts on home life as time is needed to process this. (C:703-715) <i>"I come home quite stressed over it, might be because of things that have been said or just general behaviour or trying to manage the risk assessments of of of my internal battle of is it right that it has to be so segregated is it right that he can't interact with those kids, is it right that I have to watch and question everything he does, erm, erm, and then I'll go home and I can be I can be just up there and sometimes I I just need to go and I'll just go and lay on me bed and just literally go just lay flat maybe not move for half an hour not interact but then I feel guilty about that because actually I don't get to see me own kids for much time each day"</i> Tension with external support agencies while balancing the education and safeguarding needs of all the CYP in the setting. (R:457-464) <i>"I felt like we were perhaps a little bit criticised. Afterwards they they completely agree with us now that it was the right thing to do but at the start they were like no no you can't, erm, jeopardise his education, I can't jeopardise one thousand two hundred children in the school either, that's got to come first. There was a little bit of conflict there, erm, but it was the right thing to do ultimately."</i> The is an expectation from external agencies that school can offer more services which is increasing their burden. (A:713-725)
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“we’re a signposting agency but the work that we’re expected to undertake and the level of provision that that we are often asked of, er, asked for is not representative of a mainstream school at all, you know, external agency ‘well do you not have, erm, a one to one classroom suite?’ ‘what kind of thing are you thinking of?’ ‘well you know a classroom where it’s just her and one member of staff and, er, and they’ll teach them’ ‘yeah yeah I’d love that in in my fantasy school where resources are endless of course I’d love that but no we don’t have that’ erm, yeah that’s really difficult where they think we we can do everything. We can’t.”

3.6.4 Engagement with external/specialist provision can feel confusing/frustrating

- External support from specialist provision yet frustration apparent from lack of guidance/purpose. (Q:73-76)
“we’ve obviously we’ve got the the ones that we will take to the harmful sexual behaviour panel as well but that’s all a bit up in the air I would say at the minute”. (Q:73-76)
- Lack of training and information sharing impacts and impedes effective working. (C:274-285)
“I ended up at an AIMS assessment meeting I didn’t even know what an AIMS assessment was, you know, seventies meeting in in, erm, in, erm, what was it, XXXXXXXX and, erm, and oh no it wasn’t it was in YOT actually, erm, er, and I didn’t know what I was going for, erm, I was just told you need to be at this meeting and it was quite quite difficult call because actually I might have preferred a little bit more for that might I might have been might have been able to understand understanding what you’re going for might have been able to make me read up on it everything that I needed to”
- Confusing/conflicting advice from external agencies have made responding to incidents challenging. (R:420-431)
“right from the start, we had a young man displaying quite serious very serious harmful behaviours, erm, towards a family member, that we weren’t aware of we were invited to a strategy meeting, erm, later on in the afternoon where we were informed of this, erm, so obviously something had gone on with the police they’d been, erm, and arrested him but we weren’t informed in the morning the boy was in school walking around we had the strategy meeting where the police said ‘he’s not allowed any supervised any unsupervised access with children, erm, but he’s alright in school”

3.6.5 Overburdened services

- There is a desire for help from other services when needing support but frustration that this is not dynamic, responsive and readably available. (C:393-406)
“I suppose we talk about we talk about professional help for them, you know, if we ever get stuck and I’ve got a child who hasn’t been involved in sexually harmful behaviour but I referred him for we referred him for, erm, an ADHD assessment, not even like say he’s going to be 18 months, you know, and we’re

	<p><i>referring to CAMHS for psychological support for the pupils, and you're 18 months, you know, that's a massive issue, you know, erm, just said about this lad who had this at seven. He's now at twelve he'll have left the system or being possibly permanently excluded before he ever gets any of the support that could stop him doing that, erm, and for me that's where we're failing, you know"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources is impacting on interventions that can be offered CYP meaning no preventative work is being done. (R:102-110) <i>"it's the prevent the preventative work isn't being done straight away we've had we're waiting for a referral and being knocked back and then waiting for somebody else on somebody else's waiting list and just feel like its it's not been it's been addressed by school staff but it's it's a specific piece of work I feel that needs doing, erm, out of school because I think it sometimes think it thinks school staff, bit like your mum telling you off for something isn't it?"</i> • There is pressure, and expectation, from external agencies for school to provide services that they have no training or resources for. (A:700-712) <i>"External agents are very quick to say 'oh you need to do x, y and z for this student' and they often sadly fail to recognise that, erm, we're a mainstream school we're not a therapeutic institution we're we're not, erm, you know, when I look at our resource what they think we can achieve and what we can actually achieve are two very very different things and we're just doing our best with what we have but we do not have we don't have an onsite counsellor, for example, erm, we're very lucky we have three mentors but they are not they're they're not trained therapists in any way and I'm very very careful that they don't sort of fall into those roles"</i> • External services are providing high quality services but they are very overstretched which is impacting accessibility. (A:732-737) <i>"I have to say all the people that we work with are all very good, all the services in LA are all good they're just all overstretched and it's often about timeliness so the quality of the work provided from all of the different teams that you work with is all really really good."</i>
<p>3.7: STAFF WELLBEING</p>	<p>3.7.1 Supervision and protective factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision has provided a safe space and time to reflect and 'off load'. (C:822-828) <i>"they don't they don't tell me how to do anything they don't tell me how to manage anything but but there's a self-realisation that comes with being able to offload. Erm, so so so yes it is stressful but that if I could think of one thing that every school should do for every member of staff it would be that"</i> • Supervision has helped manage the personal toll that dealing with HSB can through offering emotional and practical support. (B:146-150)

	<p><i>“there was an incident I was dealing with and I actually found very distressing personally distressing, erm, she was available for me to contact and talk through and, erm, offer practical but also that emotional support as well.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially supervision was poorly received due to misunderstanding of purpose but this has become a valuable tool to manage the demands of the job. (C:797-807) <i>“The the one thing that I hated at first was school put in place clinical psychologist for us and and then ‘cos I did wonder if it was just there's I suppose an element of paranoia but I did wonder if they were just they were just reporting everything back, erm, but then I seem to realise I just loved it and I remember I sat in one of them sessions once and I just swore for about thirty minutes, erm, ‘I'm okay I feel today’ or ‘I feel sick of this I feel sick of that the structures’ and and but that but that was a real eye opener for me because that really supported me”</i> • Informal supervision is helpful and available through close working relationships. (R:255-260) <i>“We got two girls in the team here who are we’re a really close team are absolutely brilliant we just sit and rant and offload and, you know, they’ll do a lot of that initially, erm, my line manager I know I can go to her and go ‘right I’m actually going to need to do something about this ‘cos it’s on my mind and I can’t get rid of it”</i> • There is recognition for the need for external support/supervision needed for reflection and support but that needs to be from someone who has specialist knowledge about HSB, systems and procedures. (B:320-331) <i>“I went for a while without and then, erm, the Head brought in, erm, supervision from a clinical psychologist and a psychotherapist that was, erm, not just for us that was wider across the whole pastoral team, the SENCO, erm, some SLT, erm, which was it was good but for me and my colleague that that was more the emotional support and for us that need balance with the practical so somebody who knows safeguarding and can see what we’re missing and give some advice so, erm, that’s when we were able to get, erm, this work with this IRO who fits that bill perfectly for us.”</i> • There is a desire for clearer guidance on how to best support staff in school and how to offer supervision. (A:667-676) <i>“You know ‘lets talk about that’ which I think that is about that’s on the school, erm, you know, there's no guidance for this. I think actually, you know, just talking there should be better guidance on how to supervise in school, what the acceptable levels are, erm, frequency, depend, you know, for particular job roles and then and also, you know, the people in the wider ripples, you know, they they need support too absolutely. But parents, it’s really difficult for parents of students who if you think”</i> • Experience and time spent in the role has been a protective factor. (E:170-172)
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"whereas I think if I was probably an inexperienced teacher dealing with some kind of sexual abuse for the first time then yes, you know"

3.7.2 There is a personal, physical and psychological impact

- There is recognition that the high workload is impacting physical and mental health. (C:779-786)

"And the other thing I'll do is I'll wake up in the night and I'll email myself something I'll wake up and I'll be like oh I need to address this, oh my God I didn't log that that needs logging and me phone will be next to me bed and I'll email meself in the middle of the night. Erm, that happens quite a lot actually but again I know that's stress I know"

- There is a personal impact when dealing with work that involves emotional labour. (C:653-655)

"I used to say no, erm, I used to say I never take work home with me but I in the last few years it has"

- There is a personal, physical toll to navigating complex situations/incidences. (R:247-249)

"no no it's sleep it's sleep, I know when I'm stressed because I can't sleep because I'm thinking about children or families."

- There is a personal and emotional toll when dealing with HSB, especially if working alone. (B:275-280)

"sexual assault really I found very distressing I was working on my own on that day, erm, and I ended up just crying for hours, erm, and even the next day at home, erm, that's that's been very very difficult. It was very very difficult at the time it's not continued to, erm, cause a lot of distress"

- The burden of keeping CYP feels heavy and this can have a physiological impact. (A:593-606)

"whatever level you work at because it's really important to acknowledge that you are human too. I have had moments where a feeling of panic has risen through me when I think we've missed something or oh God did that email not go and then you realise it did go and, you know, and everything's fine again but those brief moments where the the panic rises and the pal palpitations (laughs) in your chest and the dry mouth and all of those things and then you think oh my God we did we did do it right alright it's okay, erm, the feeling that you might get it wrong and it has a disastrous consequence can absolutely be overwhelming, erm, but you just have to mitigate that and and know that you are trying your absolute best"

- There are noticeable shifts in character/personality when dealing with challenging cases. Good relationships with colleagues who can identify and respond to this shift enable dialogue. (E:205-208)

"I'm aware, you know, I've I've I've been working with my colleagues long enough to say 'what's bothering you Eden?' and and like I say I'm quite fortunate if something's bothering me I I say it."

3.7.3 Personal reflections

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is fear, both personal and professional, attached the cultural shift that is occurring concerning relationships. (C:668-677) <i>"I'm a parent of two boys and and I it always comes back to my boys and I worry about my boys, erm, erm, in the future. Now I know I'm bringing them up to respect women and to behave in the right way but but but (sighs) I just worry about the future for for young men because I think some of the ways that young men behave is is not acceptable, erm, it's a really political minefield this, erm, but I also worry about, erm, about about how young men are able to express how they feel"</i> • There has been a big change in culture that has caused personal reflection on how previous experiences were normalised and how this is not the culture they see reflected in school now. (A:145-160) <i>"if I think about myself outside of the context of school where I think about myself as a person, things that happen to me in my teens and twenties, I would never tolerate now in a million years, you know, I think about things that happened to me in nightclubs and all those kind of things and I would be horrified if if I ever had a student in my care that thought I would, erm, push them to accept what happened to them but I remember teachers at school dismissing things as 'oh it's just, you know, he's having a laugh' or, you know, whatever, you know, physical touch it was actually really quite outrageous looking back. 'Oh, you know, it's just what teenagers do'. I can't imagine now a time where anybody in my team would tolerate that kind of behaviour"</i> • There is a desire for societal/cultural change so that all can navigate the world without experiencing abuse and harassment but recognition that this is not a current reality due to cultural norms. (E:332-340) <i>"I often wondered if it would be any different if I had boys but I haven't got any boys I've got three girls so, you know, I don't want them to be objectified and I want them to be able to feel comfortable in whatever they want and I want the girls at school to be actually to to feel safe and that's why I say you need to it's something that we need to start with at school but if it's if they're if they're hearing it at home, you know, we're fighting a battle."</i>
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Appendix M: Reflections from Interviews

Interview One

Quinn was the first person to respond when I emailed schools about the research. We engaged in discussion that enabled us to build rapport. I was feeling quite nervous about if the questions I had designed would elicit the kind of information that would be of benefit to the study or if I was asking the 'right' questions. I hadn't quite considered how much the rapport building would help me too in terms of settling my nerves and helping me feel more comfortable. Quinn was very keen to discuss this topic and said several times before we got started that it was an area of increasing concern that needed more discussion. Quinn was very interesting to speak with and very insightful. Quinn was clearly very proud of the work that they did and the team that they had. It felt like the interview flowed as Quinn has a lot of experience working with CYP. Quinn's passion for the job and care for the CYP really came through. It was clear that this is an area that Quinn has really considered. I feel like Quinn did most of the talking and while I did ask some questions Quinn naturally moved on to the questions I had. This reassured me that I was thinking of the right kind of questions to ask. I feel that I did not necessarily end the interview as well I could have done and this is something I will consider and take forward

Interview Two

Today's interview with Cassidy felt very different to the first interview I did. I'm not sure if that is because Cassidy spends more time in the classroom than the first participant, but they very much brought lots of the questions back to the CYP and their needs even when asking about their needs/challenges. I felt more relaxed about this interview, which I think was because of having done one before and being more familiar with this participant so there was more of a rapport built already. Cassidy was very thoughtful and reflective and gave considered answers to what he was saying. Again, I felt like I didn't say very much but I feel like this was a good thing and the conversation felt natural and flowed quite easily. There seemed to be lots of points of interest and lines of enquiry to go down. Cassidy was very thoughtful and reflective and I really enjoyed the conversation. Cassidy really considered a lot of different aspects and perspectives before answering. Interestingly Cassidy commented that they felt that having the space to talk about this topic, and express their thoughts and feeling, to someone external felt quite like a burden had been lifted and they felt lighter because of this process. I was relieved to hear that positive feedback after discussing such a difficult topic as peer-on-peer HSB.

Interview Three

The interview with Remi felt different to the other interviews I have done so far. Even though we spent some time chatting and I have met Remi previously I could tell they was nervous about the process. In the other interviews I have done I felt that I have not had to say very much and the participants have been sharing their thoughts with

ease. With this interview with Remi I felt there was much more hesitance in their answers and I had to ask a lot more questions than I have done previously. The interview did not last as long either. I wonder if that was about Remi's nervousness. I felt myself feeling that the interview was going to be over and I was not going to get enough data or that I was not asking the right questions. It felt like a much more structured interview than I would have liked it to be, and it felt a bit awkward probing for more at times. I had to choose to stop looking at the clock on the recorder and keep my focus on the conversation we were having. Though I had to ask more questions Remi was lovely and very knowledgeable and did relax over time as I think they realised that I was genuinely interested in their thoughts, feeling and experiences. When the interview ended Remi visibly relaxed and did speak some more about what they thought and felt about the issue. Remi explained that they enjoyed our conversation and it had given them some food for thought about the issue. I was struck by the impact that this interview had on me. I have done many, many interviews over the years and found this one quite hard and wondered why. I think that there was rapport built up between myself and the participant, but I wondered if other factors impacted it. The interview itself took place towards the end of a school day on a Friday afternoon halfway through the summer term and it was really hot. While this may not account for all the reasons that this interview felt more difficult I definitely feel it had an impact as I know that I was feeling the heat and the end of week fatigue too. I think that nerves did play a part on my side as well. When I felt the interview was different to the others I felt myself feeling anxious and wondered if Remi then picked up on this too? As time went on and we both relaxed there was a change in us both and it's key to reflect how my own emotions could be picked up by participants even when I think that I am not showing them.

Interview Four

Bailey had a very relaxing calming presence. They were warm and open and as we walked to the room where we were meeting Bailey explained to me that they were keen to do the interview because it was an important topic to discuss and because they remembered what it was like to try and get participants. After the last interview where I had felt that I had done a lot of questioning I was worried that this might happen again in this interview but the conversation flowed naturally and I feel like I spoke much less than the previous interview. Bailey spoke with pride about what they did in their school and the progress they were making with this issue. This interview was again shorter than my first two and I wondered why? Bailey was very relaxed and open and I didn't pick up on any nerves. Bailey was really interested in my research and wanted to know more about it and I felt that we had built a good rapport. Again it was at the end of the day a particularly warm time of year but I didn't feel that this impacted in the same way as my previous interview. The conversation flowed more easily and I do wonder if my reaction to the interview I did with Remi where I asked lots of questions has been to 'clam up' a bit where I should have been pursuing lines of interest or maybe asking a bit more?

Interview Five

I went into the interview feeling quite nervous. The interview I had planned for Monday had cancelled and I have been unable to reschedule, and the previous two interviews had been shorter than I would have liked. There is something disheartening about when people cancel, and I am never quite sure how much to follow up or chase? Again, I felt like the rapport building at the start of the session was as much to settle me as it was to build trust and rapport with the participant. We had quite a long conversation about how things had changed in Addison's role recently and how the pandemic had affected that. We discussed people/experiences that we had in common I feel that we built up a strong rapport. We are both a similar age and have had some shared experiences in terms of career. Addison was very easy to talk to. They were very thoughtful and considered all their responses. Addison has worked at lots of different levels within education, so their perspective was really interesting as they had a lot of insight as to how things work across the system. Addison raises a point that struck a chord with me when they said that they feel that school are often placed in position of negotiators between families, CYP and professionals. I hadn't really thought about it like that before but it really resonated.

Addison expressed how much they enjoyed sharing their thoughts. I have found it very interesting that several of my participants have said, once the microphone was off and often on they walk out, that the session has felt almost therapeutic and that they have enjoyed having the time and space to think and talk about some of the issues raised. I had wondered about why this might be. Thinking back on my own time working in schools there is very little time and space given over to taking time to think and explore thoughts/feelings/actions. I wondered if maybe that was why the participants were experiencing some of the things they had said to me. There is little time and space in education for reflection and considering my own experiences working in that field, and then transitioning into psychology, I did find it a big shift to be actively encouraged to take the time to think and reflect on what has happened and the impact that then has on practice. I have found it interesting when participants have said how much they have valued this as it reflects my own experience of how feel having that time has impacted me.

Interview Six

Eden was my last interview. Eden had cancelled the week before and I was unsure if it was going to go ahead. I hadn't chased it up as I was unsure if I should or not but Eden came back to me and suggested that we do the interview online. This is the only one of the interviews that wasn't conducted face-to-face and I wondered if this would give it a different 'feel'. In the end it actually went really well. I took the time to set up and test the equipment before we got started and this meant that everything was working and in place for when the interview started. This ensured that that stress was reduced. I also noticed that my own feelings of nerves were not as prevalent this time and I think that may have been down to having a positive experience in my last interview and knowing how much good data I had got already so it felt like the pressure was off in some ways. Eden was an interesting interviewee. They have a lot of experience in the school system and has volunteered in the charity sector. Eden spoke of feeling that they needed no support and often 'compartmentalises' things. I could

relate to this as I recognise it as a coping strategy I used when I was working in schools due to the time constraints and not recognising/understanding the benefits of supervision or having the time to go unpick and go deeper. I do wonder if school staff had a better understanding of the benefits of supervision, and what support is out there, there would be much better outcomes for staff well-being in the long run. It was key to consider that although this school had had some training on HSB there was not the same level of awareness of it as an issue as there has been in other schools I have conducted interviews in, and this left me wondering why?