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Doctoral Thesis:

Young People, Home and Homelessness: A Narrative Exploration

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Word Counts

	Abstract	Main Text	Appendices (including abstract, tables, figures and references)	Total
Thesis abstract	293	-----		293
Literature Review	148	7,838	6,337	14175
Research paper	202	7,784	6079	13873
Critical Review	----	3,935	494	4429
Ethics Section	----	16,897	-----	16741
Total	643	36454	12910	49511

Abstract

This thesis explores the experiences of homeless young people with a particular focus on the process of making the journey out of homelessness. It consists of a literature review, a research paper and a critical appraisal. The literature review comprises a narrative approach exploring the meaning of 'home' in relation to the lives of homeless young people. It explores, synthesises and critically appraises a range of inter-disciplinary research to consider the physical, psychological and social dimensions to this concept. The review then considers the clinical implications of these ideas for supporting homeless young people to regain a sense of 'home' in their lives.

The research paper explores the experiences of seven young people making the journey out of homelessness. The research, developed in collaboration with a research advisory group of young people, adopted a narrative methodology to explore participants' stories. The findings are presented as a 'shared story' containing five chapters. The findings illustrate the psychological and social mediators which impact on young people's experiences of navigating the journey out of homelessness. The contributions of these narratives are discussed in relation to guiding interventions to address the psychological wellbeing of homeless young people.

Finally, the critical appraisal presents my reflections on the research journey and is divided into five chapters. The first chapter details my hopes and motivations when embarking on the research project. The second chapter reflects upon the process of how I conceptualised and planned the project, including the challenges I faced in attempting to do this this. The third chapter provides an account of my experience of undertaking the research project. Finally, the fourth chapter summarises my reflections about the

future dissemination of the research and how my experiences conducting this research have impacted on my personal and professional development.

Declaration

This thesis records work undertaken for the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the Division of Health Research at Lancaster University from August 2013 to May 2014.

The work presented here is the author's own, except where due reference is made. The work has not been submitted for the award of a higher degree elsewhere

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Signature:

Date:

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This thesis is dedicated to all the inspiring young people and staff who made this research possible. It has been such a privilege to share this experience with you all. I would also like to say a huge thank you to Dr Anna Daiches for her wisdom, support, guidance and encouragement throughout this journey. My thanks also go to Dr Ste Weatherhead for all his guidance throughout the project and especially for his confidence in my ability to make this research possible.

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Section One: Literature Review

**An Exploration of the Meaning of Home in relation to Homeless Young
People and Implications for Clinical Practice: A Narrative Review**

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¹See Appendix 1-A for 'Notes to Contributors'

Abstract

The purpose of this narrative literature review is to explore the meaning of 'home' in relation to the experiences of homeless young people. Although the concept of 'home' has been the subject of extensive academic debate across a range of disciplines, to date there has been little discussion about its significance in relation to the experiences of homeless young people. This is despite evidence to suggest that the meaning of 'home' may take on particular importance in their lives. It is argued that meanings of 'home' for homeless young people extend beyond physical dimensions to encompass a dynamic range of social and psychological aspects. To examine these ideas, this review considers a broad range of inter-disciplinary research. The implications of these findings for addressing the psychological wellbeing of homeless young people are discussed, focussing on service delivery within the UK, and with particular reference to clinical psychology practice.

Key words: home; homelessness; young people; psychological wellbeing; holistic

Introduction

Many researchers have endeavoured to answer the question of what a 'home' means to people. The concept has been the subject of extensive multi-disciplinary examination and debate across several decades, particularly within the fields of sociology, anthropology, human geography and psychology (see: Mallet, 2004, Moore, 2000; Somerville, 1997). Historical conceptualisations of the term are often critiqued for being overly conflated with the physical characteristics of housing (Rapport & Overing, 2000) and there has been a move towards broader understandings which reflect the social, cultural, historical and political contexts within which it is experienced (Mallet, 2004; Moore, 2000). Moreover, there has been an academic movement away from attempts to achieve a universal framework within which to conceptualise the meaning of 'home' and rather towards a focus upon generating dynamic and contextual understandings of the concept, which are meaningful to different populations and their circumstances (Annison, 2000; Kellett & Moore, 2003; Moore 2000; Somerville, 1997).

Of interest to researchers has been the relationship between what meanings of 'home' tell us about the experience of homelessness. For example, several researchers have suggested that the experience of homelessness may serve as means by which to understand how the concept of 'home' may gain meaning (Dumbleton, 2005; Kellett & Moore, 2003; Somerville 1992; Tomas & Dittmar, 1995; Watson & Austerberry, 1986). This is reflected in the position taken by Wardhough (1999) who argues "The concept of home...could not exist without homelessness" (p.93). Consequently, research has aimed to generate a richer understanding of the significance of 'home' in relation to the

experiences of homeless individuals, addressing reciprocally what these understandings may illustrate about aspects of the homelessness experience.

However most academic discussion, both about the meaning of 'home', and about the relationship it shares with the concept of 'homelessness', has drawn upon the experiences of adult individuals. There has been little discussion about the concept of 'home' in relation to the experience of homeless young people. This is despite an emerging body of literature which shows that 'home' represents an important concept in their lives (Kidd & Evans, 2011), for example: as a powerful personal and social goal (Kellett & Moore, 2003; Peled & Muzicant, 2008). Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that meanings of 'home' may be differentiated by age, with the concept taking on significance to young people as they develop a sense of social identity (Ahmet, 2013; White, 2002; Wilson, Houmøller & Bernays, 2012). Furthermore, understandings of 'home' to homeless young people may be considered to differ in respect to mainstream notions (Moore, 2000; Kidd & Evans, 2011; Ursin, 2011). For example, literature documenting the more intangible constructs associated with mainstream understandings of 'home' often refers to themes such as 'haven' or 'sanctuary' (Mallett, 2004). These themes may fail to represent the lived experience of young people who have been forced to escape domestic environments characterised by abuse, neglect, isolation and powerlessness.

Aims and Rationale

The aim of this review is to explore the concept of 'home' in relation to the experiences of homeless young people. In turn, the review will consider the clinical implications of these understandings, focussing on service delivery within the United

Kingdom (UK) as an example, and with particular reference to clinical psychology practice.

To achieve these aims, this review will examine, critically appraise and synthesise a range of relevant international research across disciplines. Given the inter-disciplinary interest in these debates, this review will be drawing upon a range of diverse sources such as empirical research, books and third-sector led research. Consequently, a narrative review has been selected on the basis that it may allow for the integration of a wide range of disparate and methodologically diverse evidence in pursuit of these aims (Baumeister & Leary, 1997).

A detailed inter-disciplinary consideration of the concept of 'home' may lead to more integrative frameworks through which to guide a psychological understanding of the experiences of homeless young people (Kellett & Moore, 2003). Recognising the scope of youth homelessness both in the UK and globally, as well as the known impacts of such an experience on the mental health of this group, it is proposed that these efforts are a timely concern for those seeking to promote their psychological wellbeing.

Statistics suggest that there are over 75,000 young people, aged between 16-24 who experience a period of homelessness in the UK each year (Quilgars, Johnson & Pleace, 2008). Over the past decade, an extensive range of research has detailed the adverse impacts of homelessness on young people's psychological wellbeing (Collins & Barker, 2009; Edidin, Garmin, Hunter & Karnick, 2012; Fitzpatrick, 2000). Although a range of service responses have been developed to support young people who find themselves homeless, evaluation of these has shown that there may still exist a difference between the perspectives and priorities of young people and service providers

(Darbyshire, Muir-Cochrane, Fereday, Jureidini & Drummond., 2006). This issue raises the question of whether services, organisations and Governments adequately equate young people's perspectives and priorities with an understanding of their needs. If future service provision is to be responsive to the needs of young people who are homeless and who experience mental health problems, then it is important that those seeking to address their needs are able to consider what it may represent them to be with, or without, a sense of 'home' and the extent to which this may shape their homeless experience (Darbyshire et al., 2006; Kellett & Moore, 2003).

Defining Youth

In order to reach a position regarding the definition of 'young person' for the purposes of the review, it is necessary to consider existing conceptualisations of this term present in the literature. Currently, there is no universal agreed definition of 'young person' and attempts to operationalise this concept vary across research (Helve & Holm, 2005; Mayock et al., 2011; Quilgars, et al., 2008). This issue is complicated by the fact that terms such as 'young person', 'youth', 'adolescent' and 'child' are often applied interchangeably (Helve & Holm, 2005).

Arguably, the most robust parameters which are used to shape how terms such as 'young people', 'youth' and 'adolescents' are defined within research are those found within frameworks such as the courts, government policy and large international bodies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations (UN) (Hartinger-Saunders, 2008). Yet even across these large international bodies, there are various definitions applied to the stage of life between childhood and adulthood and there is overlap in terminology. For example, the UN and WHO define 'youth' as between the

ages of 15 and 24 whilst the term adolescence is applied to the age range 10 to 19. Furthermore, the WHO defines 'young people' as individuals aged between 10 and 24 years. However, some commentators are critical of the concept of 'youth' as applied in such a universal way, suggesting that practices vary across cultures and local populations as to what is seen to represent this point of transition (Hartinger-Saunders, 2008; Helve & Home, 2005).

Given the variability and overlap in relation to the definitions discussed, the review will include studies which use the terms 'youth', 'adolescent' and 'young person'. Consequently, information will be provided regarding how these terms have been defined, to support the reader to place their findings into context.

Defining Homelessness

There are also debates regarding what constitutes 'homelessness' and how this is operationalised within approaches to research (Quilgars et al., 2008). In the case of research with adult populations, the term 'homelessness' is often associated with 'sleeping rough'¹, which some have argued is because this represents the most visible form of homelessness (Riggs & Coyle, 2002). However, such a methodological approach applied in the case of young people risks ignoring a large number of individuals, including those who live in impermanent or temporary accommodation and who may still view themselves as homeless (Riggs & Coyle, 2002). In addition, it is frequently stated that homeless youth are not a homogenous population with a set of common characteristics (Sanabria, 2006). This is reflected by the wide range of identifiers applied interchangeably across the literature to describe young homeless

¹ The term 'sleeping rough' is used to describe the experience of spending the night sleeping on the streets as opposed to a shelter.

individuals, such as ‘runaways’, ‘throwaways’ and ‘street youth’ (Vostanis, 2010; Edidin et al., 2012; Sanabria, 2006). Consequently for the purposes of this review, the term ‘homeless young people’ will be inclusive of all of these groups.

Understanding the Meaning of Home in Relation to Homeless Young People

Introducing the Meaning of Home

In 2000, Moore undertook a comprehensive review to examine the different understandings of ‘home’ across various academic disciplines and explored the diversity and tensions between their theoretical and methodological positions. Moore (2000) deconstructed three key influences upon how ‘home’ as a concept had been understood: historical and cultural influences; philosophical and phenomenological influences; and psychological influences. The review highlighted that dominant theoretical understandings across psychology and phenomenology had been strongly influenced by ideas within historical Anglo-European and American literature since the 19th century, which had overly conflated the concept of ‘home’ with a place of residence.

Despite this critique by Moore (2000), it is evident that phenomenological enquiries into understanding the concept of ‘home’ have sought to conceptualise broader meanings, which encompass aspects beyond the physical and material elements of domestic space (for example: Dovey, 1985; Leith, 2006). These approaches have contributed to a broader understanding of the concept of ‘home’, by illustrating how it can be conceptualised as an emotional and spiritual ‘state’ and a symbol of self-identity. However, phenomenological approaches have been criticised for a lack of empirical enquiry underpinning their accounts (Moore, 2000; Mallett, 2004).

Within psychology, understanding the meaning of 'home' has mostly been considered the territory of environmental psychologists (Despres, 1991; Moore, 2000; Sixsmith & Sixsmith, 1991). Several researchers within this area focus on the affective relationships which exist between individuals and places (Sixsmith, 1986; Manzo, 2003; Moore, 2000). One of the most successful attempts to incorporate psychological dimensions into wider conceptualisations of 'home' is by Somerville (1992) who suggests six different dimensions to conceptualise the meaning of 'home'. These dimensions are: 'Shelter' (relating to physical structure); 'Hearth' (denoting physical warmth and comfort); 'Heart' (denoting the presence of loving and caring social relationships); 'Privacy' (relating to the availability and control over access to private space); 'Abode' (denoting a physical place distinct from everyday life); and 'Roots' (relating to 'home' as a source of identity). A strength of this conceptualisation is how effectively Somerville (1992) has been able to integrate phenomenological, sociological and psychological understandings across these different dimensions. However, what is absent from this account is a clear understanding of the processes that mediate the relationships between these dimensions. In particular, this approach implies universal applicability and overlooks how these processes may be influenced by personal, social, cultural and political contexts.

Consequently, within environmental psychology there has been a move towards generating understandings which explain those mediators that influence affective relationships between people and places. These attempts have been argued to be more reflective of the concept of 'home' as relational and contextual (Kellett & Moore, 2003). Two of the most widely known related theories which have sought to explain the processes involved in how people come to develop attachments to their homes are

‘The Theory of Place Attachment’ (Giuliani & Feldman, 1993) and ‘The Theory of Place Identity’ (Moore, 2000). The ‘Theory of Place Attachment’ seeks to conceptualise the long-standing emotional attachments that people develop to a particular geographical location and the personal meaning that people ascribe to that attachment. The ‘Theory of Place Identity’ extends this to consider how these relationships are then assimilated by individuals as part of their self-identity, through on-going social interactions and experiences over time (Moore, 2000; Leith, 2006).

Research in the areas of ‘place attachment’ and ‘place identity’ is extensive. Lewicka, (2011) conducted a systematic review of research and observed that in the last 40 years, over 400 papers, published across 120 journals, have explored the concept of ‘place attachment’ and ‘place identity’ alone. Consequently, the breadth of research in this area makes it challenging to synthesise, critique and make credible steps from research to practical application. However, a significant epistemological discussion arises out of the application of quantitative approaches and methodologies to measure affective bonds to places (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). For example, this can be observed in the application of quantitative scales to measure dimensions of attachment (Shamai & Llatov, 2005). Consequently, it is questionable to what extent these approaches capture the personal, contextual and cultural meanings through which attachments to places develop. Indeed, research in the area of both phenomenology (Leith, 2006) and psychology (Annison, 2000) has identified that the way in which individuals relate to the emotional and experiential significance of ‘home’ may evolve over time, as their circumstances and contexts change.

In a further critique of psychological approaches to understanding the meaning of ‘home’, Moore (2007) observes that an over-focus on its emotional significance has

led to a tendency for researchers to neglect the relevance of social and cultural influences. Consequently, recent attempts to understand the meaning of home have attempted to assimilate the various disciplinary understandings of 'home' and explore these through a socio-political lens (Moore, 2000; Mallett, 2004). In 2004, Mallett conducted one of the most widely cited inter-disciplinary narrative reviews to examine and synthesise dominant and recurring ideas of the concept of 'home', with the aim of promoting a critical discussion of the issue.

Drawing from an extensive range of sources, Mallett (2004) identifies several recurring themes present across the literature, which depict 'home' as associated with being a 'haven' or 'refuge' and a 'place for freedom', 'comfort', 'control', 'belonging' and 'ontological security'. However, Mallett (2004) also highlights the contradictory socio-cultural ideas underpinning these associations. She critiques idealised understandings of the meaning of 'home', which often assume it to be associated with an environment where young people are cared for and where family relationships are enacted, on the basis that these ideas are premised on discourses of western, white, middle-class, heterosexual families. In deconstructing these ideas, Mallett (2004) draws upon sociological literature to highlight how for many individuals these positive representations of 'home' contradict the reality of their experience.

Mallett's review offers the most comprehensive attempt to integrate such a broad and ideologically diverse body of literature dedicated to understanding the meaning of 'home'. However, it is notable that overall the review largely draws upon literature centred around the experiences of adults with less attention to examining research which explores the concept of 'home' in relation to young people. This is

despite evidence which suggests that meanings of 'home' could take on a particular significance at this developmental stage in an individual's life.

The Meaning of Home to Young People

The terms 'youth', 'young person' and 'adolescence' are socially understood to represent a transitional phase, relating to the period between childhood and adulthood and involving the progression towards independence (Arnett, 1997; Coleman & Hendry, 1990). It is a developmental stage of emerging identity and a critical phase in relation to social and emotional development (Coleman & Hendry, 1990). Themes which are central within broader theoretical and empirical accounts of the significance of 'home', such as independence, autonomy, inclusion and the negotiation of domestic power relations, also mediate identity development during this stage (White, 2002). Therefore, it follows that meanings of 'home' may take on significance for young people at this stage in their lives.

In a study which set out to determine young people's experiences of co-residence with parents, White (2002) drew upon structured interviews with 83 young people aged between 18 and 25 and living in Australia. They found that many of the issues young people identified, such as perceptions of dependence/independence could be "anchored in the idea of home" (p.215). White (2002) concluded that the concept of 'home' represented a "core organising symbol in the discourse about the experience of co-residence with parents, linking the social, emotional and physical dimensions of the domestic environment with the young person's developing sense of self" (p.215).

Research has also attempted to explore meanings of 'home' directly in relation to young people with negative experiences of their domestic spaces. For example,

Wilson, Houmøller and Bernays (2012) undertook qualitative interviews with 50 young people aged between 10 and 18, living in the UK, whose family environments involved parental alcohol and substance misuse. Similar to the study by White (2002), participants' lived experience of 'home' centred on their experience of relationships with adults in that environment. However, these relationships were often characterised by a lack of stability, control and autonomy. Based on these findings, they drew attention to the contradiction between mainstream understandings of 'home', as equated with a secure and stable place, highlighting instead, the marginalisation that participants experienced within their domestic spaces. However, whilst both White (2002) and Wilson et al. (2012) offer a much needed qualitative contribution towards debates about the understanding of 'home' to young people, their studies are both strongly focussed upon understanding meanings of 'home' in the context of domestic spaces.

A broader perspective has been provided by Ahmet (2013) who conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with 15 young people aged between 16 and 19 across various youth groups in London over a 2 year period. The study found that 'home', as a space, could represent multiple sites, extending beyond the fixed space of the family dwelling. The study showed how, for many young people, 'home' was associated with control, freedom, belonging and self-identity. As a result, 'home' could be re-imagined into different public spaces beyond the family residence. For example, urban spaces, such as street-corners and parks came to represent contexts of 'home'.

Collectively, these studies outline the significance of meanings of 'home' in relation to the developmental period between childhood and adulthood. The evidence presented within this section indicates that it is possible to live in a domestic environment and not feel 'at home' and suggests that it is possible to 'feel at home'

outside of a domestic environment. For many young people, an experience of being at home is shown as more than having physical shelter but is reflective of their attempts to develop a sense of identity within a social environment.

The Meaning of Home in Relation to Homelessness

By adopting the logic that homelessness represents the absence of 'home', a number of authors have sought to extend an understanding of meanings of 'home' by relating it to the concept of homelessness (Dumbleton, 2005; Dovey; 1985; Tomas & Dittmar, 1995; Wardhourgh, 1999). Indeed, there is strong support for the notion that it is not possible to truly understand the nature of 'homelessness' without a respective understanding of the meaning of 'home'.

However, it should be noted that this notion has been criticised for polarizing these two concepts, wherein 'home' is idealised and 'homelessness' is assumed to be universally negative (Moore, 2007). Moore (2007) illustrates the impact of this logic with findings from a two year study, with 531 homeless adult individuals and 50 homeless young people, aged between 18 and 25, living in London. The study concluded that participants' personal values, choices, hopes and motivations risked being overlooked and ignored as a result of discourses which place the concepts of 'home' and 'homelessness' in opposition to each other. Thus, whilst the concept of 'home' may be central to understanding the homeless experience, what it represents should not be assumed absent.

In summary, theoretical debates into understanding the concept of 'home' are rich and complex and there are clearly tensions in the relationship between 'home' and 'homelessness'. Whilst physical shelter and housing are both important dimensions to

consider when seeking to understand the meaning of 'home' to individuals, 'home' may also represent a range of social and psychological dimensions. Furthermore, meanings of 'home' are fluid and may evolve over time. Its significance may also be differentiated by age and socio-cultural context. With these conclusions in mind, the review will now explore meanings of 'home' in relation to homeless young people.

The Meaning of Home and Homelessness in Relation to Homeless Young People

As previously stated, only a limited amount of research has explored meanings of 'home' in relation to young people and there is an even smaller body of literature which directly explores the meaning of 'home' in relation to homeless young people. Nonetheless, a small group of researchers have attempted to explore this area in greater depth (Brueckner, Green & Saggars, 2011; Fitzpatrick, 2000; Kellett & Moore, 2003; Kidd & Evans, 2011; Peled & Muzicant, 2008; Ursin, 2011). All of the studies are qualitative in nature and reflect both a UK and international perspective. Many themes identified within these studies are closely inter-related, therefore this section will present a synthesis of the findings from these studies. In order to synthesise the studies, the journal articles have been repeatedly read and re-read and the findings have been compared and contrasted to identify any similarities, differences and contradictions across each author's understanding of key ideas, concepts and interpretations. The collective core ideas that have emerged from this exercise are presented below.

Collectively, the studies acknowledge the extent to which the concept of 'home' was significant in relation to the experiences of the young people they researched. For example, Kellett and Moore (2003) undertook in-depth qualitative interviews with 105 homeless young people (ages unspecified) living in temporary hostel accommodation

across London and Dublin. They found that the process of 'home-seeking' represented an important activity in the lives of participants and 'home' as a concept represented a powerful personal and social goal in their lives. Similarly, Peled and Muzicant, (2008) employed a naturalistic qualitative approach based on interviews with 15 adolescent Israeli girls, aged between 13 and 21, who had run away from their family residences. Their findings indicated that 'home' represented a physical, psychological and social space, which strongly influenced participants' sense of self. These studies illustrate the relevance of 'home' as a multi-dimensional concept, which relates closely to young people's sense of identity in relation to the world around them.

In addition to highlighting the importance of 'home' in relation to the identities of the young people in their study, Peled and Muzicant (2008) found that the concept of 'home' operated at two distinct levels; 'actual' experiences of 'home' (depicting lived experiences in their family residences) and 'ideal' experiences of 'home' (unique hopes and values in relation to the goal of home-making). Indeed, many of the psychological meanings attributed to developing a sense of 'home', such as acceptance, openness, love and stability, were understood in relation to their relative absence up until the point participants became homeless. For example, the relationships within their family environments were viewed as abusive, patriarchal and dominated by pressures relating to their adherence to cultural and religious structures. Moreover, these experiences were emphasised during their transition into adolescence.

The notion that meanings of 'home' may be constructed through their relative absence in the lives of homeless young people has been identified across a number of studies (Kellett & Moore, 2003; Kidd & Evans, 2011; Ursin, 2011). Kidd & Evans (2011) explored the narratives of 208 homeless young people, aged between 14 and 24,

across Toronto and New York. They found that young people often depicted 'home' as something distant from their own personal lived experience. Similarly, in Kellett and Moore's study, it was found that over a fifth of their sample reported that they had "never had a home" which the researchers interpreted as a lack of the psycho-social qualities of the places they had lived in rather than the absence of physical shelter (2003, p. 132). These findings are supported by a longitudinal study undertaken by Ursin (2011) which explored the narratives of young men, aged between 18 and 28 living, on the streets of Brazil, which found that the essential aspects which young people ascribed to a sense of 'home' - autonomy, safety and belonging - were often absent from the domestic environments that they left prior to becoming homeless. These findings concur with research exploring young people's pathways into homelessness which has found that many young people who become homeless, often leave chaotic and abusive family environments, characterised by experiences which offer little of the security, control, safety and predictability associated with wider socio-cultural discourses on the concept of 'home' (Hyde, 2005; Mayock & Carr, 2008; Whitbeck, Hoyt & Yoder, 1999). Indeed, several studies refer to young people's decisions to leave the family 'home' as representing an active attempt to regain a sense of 'home' as they imagined it should be (Kidd & Evans, 2011; Peled & Muzicant, 2008; Ursin, 2011).

What is experienced as 'home'?

So what is it that research suggests young people gravitate towards in their attempts to regain a sense of 'home'? Consistently, this was found to be a sense of safety and security (Fitzpatrick, 2000; Kidd & Evans, 2011; Peled & Muzicant, 2008;

Ursin, 2011), acceptance and belonging (Kidd & Evans, 2011; Ursin, 2011), autonomy (Ursin, 2011) and social-inclusion (Fitzpatrick, 2000).

Fitzpatrick (2000) undertook a qualitative, longitudinal study based on biographical interviews with 25 homeless young people aged between 16 and 25 in Glasgow. Her findings indicate that a sense of safety was given top priority by participants in determining meanings of 'home'. Other studies illustrate how experiences of safety, security, warmth and comfort could be found through access to hostel accommodation arising directly out of the provision of shelter, food and somewhere to sleep (Kidd & Evans, 2011; Peled & Muzicant, 2008). However, in the study previously cited by Kidd and Evans (2011), it was found that as young people journeyed through homelessness "they implicitly and explicitly separated their understandings of 'home' from fixed physical structures..." (p. 762). These findings suggest that meanings of 'home' may come to adopt greater psychological significance in the lives of young people as they journey through homelessness.

In addition to the previous findings already highlighted, both Peled and Muzicant (2008) and Ursin (2011), identified that a sense of safety and security could be found within relationships that young people shared with other homeless young people as well as the broader system of adults with whom their experiences brought them into contact. For example, in Peled and Muzicant's study, a sense of 'home' could be found in stable relationships characterised by warmth, love, attentiveness, acceptance and containment (2008). This was significant for this particular group of participants who had prior experiences of exclusion within their relationships with family members and wider society. Additionally, the study previously cited by Ursin (2011) found that a key feature of young people's experiences were feelings of belonging within

relationships with homeless peers. They describe the significance of this as “being someone to somebody” (p. 230). They also found that developing a sense of ‘home’ through these relationships enabled young people to develop and express their personal and social identities.

The presence and absence of control, autonomy and independence are also recurrent themes across several of the studies already cited (Fitzpatrick, 2000; Kellett & Moore, 2003; Kidd & Evans, 2011; Peled & Muzicant, 2008). Kidd and Evans (2011) found that one way in which young people sought to regain a sense of control was to reclaim the idea of ‘home’. For example, many of the qualities associated with the meaning of ‘home’, such as a sense of control, comfort and belonging were re-imagined in other aspects of their homeless experience, such as their relationships with friends (often described as family). They state that “this transformed and broadened notion of ‘home’ was presented in opposition to the perceived hypocrisy of mainstream defined homes that were experienced as abusive and uncaring” (Kidd and Evans (2011, p. 764).

Across several of the studies, the idea of ‘home’ is shown to represent a significant source of hope and motivation for young people experiencing homelessness (Kellett & Moore, 2003; Kidd & Evans 2011; Peled & Muziacant, 2008). As Peled and Muziacnt (2008) state: “Home continued to be present—as an ideal, as a hope for the future, as a continuous journey of internal and actual searching for a benevolent home” (p. 445). The process of journeying towards a sense of ‘home’ was understood to be critical for young people in terms of redefining a sense of belonging in society (Breuckner et al., 2011; Kellett and Moore, 2003). For example, Breuckner et al. (2011) undertook in-depth qualitative interviews with 19 homeless young people aged between 16 and 22 in Western Australia, finding that stable and permanent accommodation are

key facilitators in supporting young people to redefine their sense of 'home' within society.

What is not experienced as 'home'?

There are contrasting findings across each of the studies discussed as to whether or not young people are able to achieve a sense of 'home' in their lives after entering into homelessness. For example, Ursin (2011) found that living on the streets provided young people with a sense of autonomy and freedom from parental abuse and control. However, a number of the other studies found that leaving home further intensified feelings of instability, powerlessness and social-exclusion (Brueckner et al., 2011; Kellett & Moore, 2003; Kidd & Evans, 2011; Peled & Muzicant, 2008).

In addition to exploring meanings of 'home' to young people, the study by Fitzpatrick (2000) also explored corresponding meanings of homelessness, finding that themes of security and permanence were stressed more often by young people than physical conditions. Only a small number of young people associated the meaning of homelessness with the absence of physical shelter; rather, young people identified that it was their sense of insecurity that contributed most to their feelings of homelessness. Furthermore, themes such as loneliness, rejection, social-exclusion and powerlessness were dominant across young people's accounts of the meanings of homelessness.

Across the studies, participants expressed how a sense of 'home' was strongly connected to feelings of control, independence and autonomy. However, within several of the studies, young people spoke about how they had lost control in many ways as a result of becoming homeless. This included: having a lack of control over living environments (including a sense of privacy and ownership), and a lack of stability and

permanence in relation to their living arrangements (Kellett & Moore, 2003; Kidd & Evans, 2011). Further to the findings already discussed, Kellett & Moore (2003) found that due to the temporary nature and lack of privacy associated with living in a hostel environment, participants did not equate living in a hostel as being 'at home'.

Similarly, the study by Breuckner et al., (2011) found that achieving a sense of home within this environment was inhibited by the control, regulation and surveillance of their behaviour. They found that this power imbalance prevented young people from developing a sense of control and autonomy, which they argued to be central towards achieving a sense of 'home'.

Although access to physical shelter could facilitate a degree of physical wellbeing and safety, personal meanings of 'home' reflected a sense of wider social-inclusion (Kidd & Evans, 2011). For example the study by Breuckner et al. (2011), argued that "permanent roofs alone may not help overcome subjective experiences of homelessness as they relate to feelings of social exclusion, stigmatisation and trauma" (p. 3). It was found that personal meanings of 'home' were overlooked as a result of mainstream discourses reinforced by support agencies, institutions and more generally within society. These findings suggest that representatives working in support services may not fully recognise how dominant societal discourses about the meaning of 'home' could exacerbate young people's sense of isolation. This implication can be observed by attending to findings from the previously cited study by Peled and Muzicant (2011). For the young women in their study, the support offered by representatives from professional agencies was often founded on the implicit assumption that returning them to their family residence was a rational course of action, given their perceived level of

vulnerability. This was despite the likelihood of experiencing abuse and exclusion within this environment.

Summary.

Collectively, these findings have offered valuable insights into understanding how the concept of 'home' relates to the diverse experiences of homeless young people across various socio-cultural contexts. Although a small body of research, it has helped to elucidate the various ways in which homeless young people develop meanings of 'home' in relation to their experiences. It also highlights the many barriers that young people face in their attempts to regain a sense of 'home' in their lives.

Nonetheless, there is a need for further empirical attention in particular areas. For example, one limitation of the existing evidence base is that several of the studies adopted cross-sectional designs (Kellett & Moore, 2003; Kidd & Evans, 2011; Peled & Muzicant, 2008). The dominance of cross-sectional research designs may risk ignoring how 'home' comes to gain meaning as a unique social, cultural and psychological phenomenon, in the lives of homeless young people. Kidd and Evans (2011) observe that the longer young people experienced being homeless, the greater the psychological significance attributed to meanings of 'home'. A possible explanation for this could be that psychological representations of 'home' and 'homelessness' are closely linked to young people's developing sense of self, and evolve over time through their experiences of relationships with family, support staff, institutions and wider society. Future research could usefully adopt a longitudinal perspective, in order to develop an understanding of the fluidity and changing meanings of 'home' over time and within the context of different social environments.

Furthermore, several of the papers referred to were developed following much broader research enquiries into the experiences of homeless young people, through which personal meanings of 'home' were recognised as being significant and thus examined discreetly and published in greater depth (e.g. Fitzpatrick, 2000; Ursin, 2011). Without researchers disseminating relevant insights into this area in more accessible ways, it is challenging to develop a comprehensive synthesis of the research evidence. Given the significance attributed to this aspect of young homeless people's experience, future research addressing the experience of homelessness could make relevant findings regarding the meaning of 'home' more explicit.

Discussion and Clinical Implications

In summary, studies exploring young people's experiences of homelessness have acknowledged the extent to which the concept of 'home' was both meaningful and significant. As a concept, 'home' strongly influenced young people's experience of the world and their sense of identity within it. Further, 'home' represented an important personal goal and source of motivation and hope for the future. Although a sense of 'home' was related to the warmth, safety and security provided by physical shelter, it extended beyond these physical aspects to represent social and psychological dimensions associated with stability and permanence; autonomy and control; acceptance, belonging and social-inclusion.

Although it may appear on the basis of existing literature that exploring the meaning of 'home' is an issue for sociology, these findings suggest the importance of this concept in relation to clinical psychology. The connection between psychological wellbeing and the social and psychological themes identified within this review as

related to the concepts of 'home' and 'homelessness' are well documented. A detailed consideration of these links is outside of this review (see Bowlby, 1988; Seagar, 2007; 2012). However, the significance of these connections should be stressed and promoted, given that homeless young people may be argued to represent a group whose needs are often primarily understood and addressed in relation to the physical absence of shelter. A barrier to promoting this understanding has been that on-going attempts to achieve a singular, universal and epistemologically coherent theory of 'home' have meant that the subject has remained largely within the academic domain. The ideological complexity of these debates has the potential to hold back the contribution that a practice-orientated discipline such as clinical psychology could make in this area. An alternative perspective could be to move towards a position more accepting of the diversity and tensions that may exist across different disciplines (Mallett, 2004; Parsell, 2012). In doing so, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers may move beyond these academic debates and formulate meaningful and applicable understandings aimed at transforming the lives of homeless young people.

These conclusions are significant given that a comprehensive body of research has documented the adverse impact of homelessness on the psychological wellbeing of this group of young people (Edidin, 2012; Taylor, Stuttaford, Broad & Vostanis, 2007; Whitbeck et al, 1999). Furthermore, in 2012, a study by the UK charitable organisation Depaul UK (2012) with over 380 young people aged between 16 and 25, found that mental health was the health issue most commonly identified as important to them when discussing their overall health needs. Indeed, over a third of young people who participated in the study stated that they wanted more support in relation to this.

Holistic Approaches towards Addressing the Multiple Needs of Homeless Young People

Whilst the research literature considered so far highlights the psychological significance of 'home' to young people, physical characteristics such as physical safety, stability and security of residence were also critically important. In addition to identifying that mental health support is considered important to many young people who experience homelessness in the UK, the research previously cited by Depaul (2012) also found that issues relating to housing, education and employment are key priorities. Consequently, supporting young people to regain a sense of 'home' in its broadest sense should involve holistic approaches towards addressing the range of their physical, social and emotional needs. This view is supported by Hughes et al. (2010), who explored mental health, hope and service user satisfaction amongst homeless young people in the UK and found that a comprehensive range of integrated support was necessary in order to support young people to achieve their aspirations. Similarly, on the basis of a comprehensive review of international literature considering approaches to addressing the needs of vulnerable young people, Vostanis (2010) concluded that integrated approaches to service delivery should hierarchically address young people's safety, basic needs, quality of care and psychological wellbeing.

There are examples of dedicated services developed within the UK aimed at addressing the holistic needs of young people who experience homelessness. The charitable organisation Kids Company in London, provides a range of psychological, social, educational/employment and welfare support to homeless young people (Maguire et al., 2010). The service provides holistic care through a multidisciplinary approach, across housing, social work, education and clinical psychology. The service

model is centered on addressing young people's practical needs for stability before moving on to offer therapeutic support. Within the service, clinical psychologists hold a key role in supporting young people directly and offering clinical supervision to staff. An evaluation by the University of London found that 97% of the children and young people who accessed their support, found it to be helpful (Gaskell, 2008). This illustrates how clinical psychologists can effectively engage in holistic approaches towards addressing their multiple needs through effective partnership with community based providers.

Regaining a Sense of Home through Relationships

Findings from this review illustrate how themes of security, stability, control acceptance, autonomy and belonging were dynamic, contextual and mediated through the relationships that young people shared with family, peers, institutions and wider society. Where relationships were positive, 'home' represented an emotional space characterised by warmth, acceptance, openness and support. Yet, the relationships and attachments young people described in relation to historical and current relationships were often characterised by abuse, disempowerment and exclusion.

Psychological frameworks could contribute to a developmental understanding through which to usefully guide interventions for homeless young people, taking account of how these relational experiences may be understood and addressed at an individual and organisational level. Attachment theory, as developed by Bowlby (1969; 1998) is based on the premise that we are all biologically predisposed to develop attachments to others through which we may experience security, stability and comfort. These experiences lead to the development of cognitive 'working models' that

represent our sense of self in relation to others and guide our expectations regarding the capacity for others to meet our needs. These working models of relationships are dynamic and can be continuously revised throughout social interactions with others across different stages of development, including adolescence (Bowlby, 1988).

Consequently, it is argued here that one of the main tasks in supporting young people to regain a sense of 'home' should be to facilitate a social environment through which a sense of security, stability and comfort may be experienced. Research exploring the views of homeless young people accessing mental health support, points towards the critical significance of staff developing caring and trusting relationships with young people (Collins & Barker, 2009; Connolly & Joly, 2012; Hughes et al, 2010). For example, a UK study by Collins and Barker (2009), which examined homeless young people's views about seeking psychological help, found that the most personally significant aspect of their care was that the staff they encountered were caring and reliable. Furthermore, they found that participants considered it to be important that support staff could contain their distress and hear their stories.

In 2007, a National Advisory group was developed to consult upon proactive policy towards addressing the mental health, safety and wellbeing of the UK population (Seagar, 2007; 2012). They advocated for a culture of shared responsibility across health and care professions to address what they argued to be fundamental psychological needs for attachment, trust, empathic communication and emotional containment. Should the aim of national and international policy be to promote evidence-based interventions to support the emotional wellbeing of homeless young people, then the findings from this review, combined with a robust body of psycho-social research into the relationship between attachment and psychological wellbeing

(see Cassidy & Shaver, 2008 and Scott Brown & Wright, 2001), would suggest that greater attention should be paid to strengthening the stability and security of relationships that young people experience over the course of their homelessness journeys. Furthermore, a psychologically-informed culture of care, considerate of these principles, could significantly improve the effectiveness of approaches to addressing the needs of homeless young people and in supporting them to regain a sense of home in their lives.

These discussions have implications for the role of clinical psychology in supporting practice across a range of services that come into contact with homeless young people. In 2010, the National Mental Health Development Unit, published guidelines on meeting the psychological needs of homeless young people in the UK (Maguire et al., 2010), proposing that psychologically informed perspectives and approaches to practice offer a rationale and direction for in-direct therapeutic intervention at group and organisational level. Within the UK, psychological approaches towards addressing the needs of vulnerable young people, for example through indirect means such as multi-agency psychological consultation, are gathering a strong evidence-base (Golding, 2010). The rationale for applying in-direct interventions in the area of youth homelessness is supported by this review, which has found that the concepts of 'home' and 'homelessness' represent a range of psychological needs identified as important to homeless young people. Homeless services and associated agencies need to be aware of these, rather than focussing exclusively on the provision of physical shelter. Clinical psychologists are well placed to strengthen and promote attempts to address these needs where multiple professionals are involved, through in-direct therapeutic interventions such as psychological

consultation, reflective practice, supervision, and the delivery of psychologically-informed training.

Regaining a Sense of Home at a Socio-Political Level

Whilst attachment theory may help to conceptualise how inter-personal patterns may be integrated to shape a young person's sense of self in relation to others, it is often criticised for failing to address the wider-socio cultural contexts within which individuals are positioned (Dallos, 2006). This is significant in the context of the findings of this review, which have highlighted recurring themes of social exclusion and isolation. Consequently, it is argued that, in supporting young people to regain a sense of 'home', greater attention needs to be paid at a socio-political level.

At a policy level, UK Governmental definitions of homelessness, and the associated legislative responsibilities which guide the direction of resources, continue to be predicated heavily upon circumstances relating to housing and accommodation status (Housing Act 1996; Homelessness Act 2002; Homelessness [Priority Need for Accommodation] [England] Order 2002). In order to meet these legislative responsibilities, local authorities may routinely place young people in temporary accommodation, potentially outside of their local area (Shelter, 2004; 2007), particularly given the acute shortage of affordable social housing across many areas within the UK (Clarke & Burgess, 2012). A homelessness policy which focusses exclusively on the provision of accommodation is not providing a 'home' in a way that is fully meaningful to young people. For example, as a result of being placed outside of their local area, young people may find themselves 'physically excluded', disconnected from their cultural and community links, and without access to a landscape of support and social-inclusion (including health, education and employment opportunities). On

the basis of the findings of this review, Governments both nationally and internationally, should consider these broader representations of 'home' if they are to create coherent housing policies which direct resources towards more effective and comprehensive models of service delivery.

The clinical psychology profession could usefully support these endeavours by advocating for psychologically-informed public health policy and guidance. This could be achieved through public health research which attends to young people's accounts of the meaning of 'home' in their lives. This may enable services to equate young people's perspectives and priorities with an understanding of their needs. This requires researchers to consider how an understanding of 'home' may be translated into research which conceptualises definitions of homelessness. Assuming young people to be homeless or not, based purely on accommodation status, may potentially overlook what remains absent in their lives, or and what is protective and meaningful in their lives. One way that researchers could circumvent these assumptions is to involve young people in the design of research and in methodological decisions relating to empirically defining homelessness. These efforts may offer young people meaningful input into decisions about the most effective ways in which Governments may understand and support them to strengthen a sense of 'home' in their lives.

Conclusion

This review has argued that the concept of 'home' holds particular significance in relation to the experiences of homeless young people. Although 'home' may be associated with physical shelter, it can encompass either the presence or absence of: security, stability, warmth, belonging, control, comfort, connection and social-inclusion. The review suggests several ways in which a practice-orientated discipline such as

clinical psychology may contribute to practical and contextual understandings of 'home' in order to inform service delivery for homeless young people. This includes: advocating for holistic approaches to addressing the multiple needs of homeless young people; promoting the application of psychologically-informed frameworks to understand and strengthen positive relationships; and through promoting a more coherent socio-political response to address the social-exclusion that many homeless young people face. Clinical psychology, with its strong research tradition and focus on integrative approaches to promoting psychological wellbeing, is well placed to play a key role in supporting efforts to enable homeless young people to strengthen a sense of 'home' in their lives.

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Appendix A: Notes for contributors to the ‘Journal of Adolescence’

Guide for Authors

-  Author information pack

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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AUTHOR INQUIRIES

- **Introduction**

The Journal is an international, broadly based, cross-disciplinary, peer-reviewed journal addressing issues of professional and academic importance to people interested in adolescent development. The Journal aims to enhance theory, research and clinical practice in adolescence through the publication of papers concerned with the nature of adolescence, interventions to promote successful functioning during adolescence, and the management and treatment of disorders occurring during adolescence. We welcome relevant contributions from all disciplinary areas.

- For the purpose of the Journal, adolescence is considered to be the developmental period between childhood and the attainment of adult status within a person's community and culture. As a practical matter, published articles typically focus on youth between the ages of 10 and 25. However, it is important to note that JoA focuses on adolescence as a *developmental period*, and this criterion is more important than age per se in determining whether the subject population or article is appropriate for publication.
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Preparation

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It is important that the file be saved in the native format of the word processor used. The text should be in single-column format. Keep the layout of the text as simple as possible. Most formatting codes will be removed and replaced on processing the article. In particular, do not use the word processor's options to justify text or to hyphenate words. However, do use bold face, italics, subscripts, superscripts etc. When preparing tables, if you are using a table grid, use only one grid for each individual table and not a grid for each row. If no grid is used, use tabs, not spaces, to align columns. The electronic text should be prepared in a way very similar to that of conventional manuscripts (see also the Guide to Publishing with Elsevier: <http://www.elsevier.com/guidepublication>). Note that source files of figures, tables and text graphics will be required whether or not you embed your figures in the text. See also the section on Electronic artwork. To avoid unnecessary errors you are strongly advised to use the 'spell-check' and 'grammar-check' functions of your word processor.

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Collate acknowledgements in a separate section at the end of the article before the references and do not, therefore, include them on the title page, as a footnote to the title or otherwise. List here those individuals who provided help during the research (e.g., providing language help, writing assistance or proof reading the article, etc.).

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Section Two: Research Paper

Young People, Home and Homelessness: A Narrative Exploration

Word Count: 8000

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Prepared for Journal of Public Mental Health

¹See Appendix 1-A for 'Notes to Contributors'

Abstract

Purpose: Whilst an extensive body of research has attempted to understand how young people enter into homelessness, less attention has been given to understanding how young people navigate the journey out of homelessness. This research aimed to explore the stories of seven young people, living with the UK, making the journey out of homelessness.

Design: The researcher employed a qualitative narrative methodology focussing on the psychological aspects of young people's experiences.

Findings: The findings are presented as a 'shared story' containing five chapters. Stories highlighted a range of psychological and social challenges which impacted on young people's journeys. The findings point towards holistic interventions aimed at addressing the psychological wellbeing of young people where attention is paid to the inter-personal contexts within which young people are positioned.

Implications: The findings have implications for promoting psychologically-informed practice across a range of services supporting homeless young people and particularly upon the resourcing and delivery of psychological support. Clinical implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Originality/value:

This research, developed in collaboration with young people, offers a timely and unique psychological perspective on understanding the challenges young people face in navigating the journey out of homelessness with particular implications for the clinical psychology profession.

Key words: Homelessness, Home, Young People, Qualitative, Clinical Psychology, Stories

Introduction

According to the United Nations (UN), over 100 million people are homeless across the world and within this population young people are significantly over-represented (UN, 2005). Within the United Kingdom (UK), it is estimated that up to 75,000 young people are affected by homelessness at any one time (Quilgars *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, young people between the ages of 16 and 24 represent one of the most rapidly growing groups within the UK homeless population (Kidd *et al.*, 2013; Homeless Link, 2014). Whilst a significant amount of empirical research has drawn attention to understanding the causes and consequences of youth homelessness, fewer studies have attempted to explore how young people resolve these challenges and make the journey out of homelessness. This is despite research suggesting that the majority of young people who become homeless experience this as a temporary period in their lives (Fitzpatrick, 2000; Milburn *et al.*, 2007; Nebbitt *et al.*, 2007; Mallett *et al.*, 2010; Mayock, O'Sullivan and Corr, 2011).

There are a number of associated issues that combine to make the exit from homelessness difficult for young people to achieve. For example, research across disciplines points to the adverse impact that the experience of being homeless can have on the mental health of young people (Collins and Barker, 2009; Edidin *et al.*, 2012; Hodgson *et al.*, 2013). Experiencing homelessness has been shown to precipitate and perpetuate mental health difficulties including depression, anxiety, self-harm and post-traumatic stress (Edidin *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, it has been argued that without access to effective support to address psychological wellbeing, these difficulties are likely to endure (Craig and Hobson, 2000; Depaul, 2012). However, to date, research exploring the mental health of young homeless people has been mostly quantitative and conceptually simplistic. For example, there is growing criticism that existing research has focused its attention too heavily on individual risk and protective factors (Rosenthal and Rotherham-Borus, 2005). This has perpetuated a

flawed assumption that homeless young people represent a homogenous group disconnected from the cultural, social and political contexts which may have shaped their experiences.

Understanding the complex processes which may impact upon how young people navigate the journey out of homelessness has been advanced by the contributions made by qualitative longitudinal studies (for example; see Fitzpatrick, 2000; Karabanow, 2008; Mallet *et al.*, 2010; Mayock, O'Sullivan and Corr, 2011). For example, a study in the UK by Mayock *et al.* (2013) identified the many structural challenges young people face when exiting homelessness, such as: the failure of traditional service structures to meet their needs; continuous movement between hostels leading to instability; a lack of affordable housing; and a lack of access to education, occupation and participation opportunities.

In contrast, a further study by Karabanow (2008), who interviewed 128 homeless young people in Canada, concluded that the most challenging aspect of their experience was overcoming social-marginalisation and stigmatisation. He describes the challenge as “moving from identities of exclusion...to one of ‘fitting in’ to mainstream lifestyles” (pp.786). In summary, this collective body of research demonstrates the importance of considering the socio-cultural contexts within which young people are positioned when understanding the challenges they face in navigating the journey out of homelessness.

Across research exploring young people's transitions out of homelessness, there is contention about how identifiers such as ‘homelessness’ and ‘transition/exit’ are operationalised (Quilgars *et al.*, 2008; 2011; Edidin *et al.*, 2012). There is no universally agreed-upon definition of homelessness (Mayock *et al.*, 2013) and often identifiers are defined relative to the context in which research takes place (for example, in accordance with social policy [Quilgars, *et al.*, 2011]). Consequently, researchers looking to define the concept of a ‘transition out of homelessness’ have varied in their approach. One approach

has been to apply parameters relating to ‘destination’ (the setting to which an individual has transitioned) and ‘duration’ (length of days having maintained a successful exit) (Mayock, O’Sullivan and Corr, 2011). However, these conceptualisations could overlook the personal meanings influencing how young people identify with these concepts (Karabanow, 2008). Consequently, it is important that research which explores young people’s journeys out of homelessness pays greater attention to the self-defined nature of homelessness in order to capture these dimensions of experience.

Mental Health Provision for Homeless Young People in the UK

A series of significant changes in youth homelessness policy and service provision across the UK have occurred over the last ten years, influencing the support available for homeless young people (Quilgars *et al.*, 2008). Yet, homeless young people remain relatively under-represented in accessing mental health services (Taylor *et al.*, 2007). There may be several reasons for this. For example, many policies, service models and approaches to psychological intervention may not adequately take into account the diverse needs of this group (Lindsey *et al.*, 2000; Vostanis, 2007; Berckmans *et al.*, 2012). Indeed, homeless young people may experience difficulties accessing mental health services due their increased mobility, lack of advocacy, experience of societal stigmatisation and limited collaboration between agencies (Taylor *et al.*, 2007; Vostanis, 2007).

Given these challenges, mental health professionals need to re-visit their role in addressing the psychological wellbeing of homeless young people. Increasingly, mental health related professions are acknowledging how psychological wellbeing is connected with a range of social and political issues (Miller and McClelland, 2006; Kinderman, 2014). Indeed, the field of clinical psychology is becoming increasingly concerned with promoting a broader wellbeing agenda, aligned with community psychology, and involving integration

with areas such as social care, education and the third-sector (Kinderman, 2014).

Understanding the experiences of young people making the journey out of homelessness may guide how clinical psychologists (and other mental health practitioners) position their role in promoting psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, research based on the first-person accounts of young people may provide a more meaningful understanding of these experiences within the social and cultural realities of their lives.

The aim of this research is to strengthen an understanding of young people's journeys out of homelessness. A narrative methodology is utilised to explore the stories of young people making the journey out of homelessness within a UK context. The issue of context is critical given that within the UK, public services and the third sector are facing unprecedented spending cuts impacting on services being made available to homeless young people (Homeless Link, 2014). This research is timely in terms of guiding clinical psychology in its vision towards integrating its efforts with a wider community based programme of health and wellbeing.

Narrative analysis is a qualitative methodology which involves the exploration of an individual's story and the personal, ethical, social and political issues that shape this (Weatherhead, 2011). It is based on the premise that "we interpret the actions of others and ourselves through the stories we exchange" (Murray, 2003, p.95). The social and political relevance of narrative analysis makes it particularly suitable, as 'homelessness' is understood to represent a research topic which is powerfully embedded within socio-political discourses (Farrugia, 2010). Consequently, it allows for consideration of wider societal discourses in addition to exploring individual experience (McAdams, 1993; Crossley, 2007; Murray, 2008).

Method

Research Advisory Group

The research design drew upon a participatory approach to develop the research protocol (Clark, 2004; Bagnoli and Clark, 2010). The rationale for involving young people in the design of research is supported by a growing body of literature illustrating the value of service user involvement in mental health research (Clark, 2004; Telford and Faulkner, 2004; Quilgars, et al., 2011) and is reinforced by UK policy initiatives, such as the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (Department of Health, 2005).

A research advisory group (RAG) of young people and staff was formed to ensure young people's participation at the most fundamental level in the development of the research, for example: to establish the relevance of the research to young people and services; to consider ethical aspects of the research; to develop a conceptual framework to guide the research design; and to advise upon the dissemination of research findings.

Ethical approval for the RAG was granted in July 2013 by Lancaster University. Consultation with the RAG involved face-to-face group meetings, email correspondence and phone contact. Members of the RAG were not recruited to participate in the main research. Staff members associated with the national scheme supporting the development of the RAG, were also invited to participate. The rationale for including staff was to provide complementary expertise relating to: nationwide service provision in this area; promoting young people's participation in research and service-delivery; and effective approaches to recruiting for research. In total three young people (two female, one male) and two members of staff (both female) took part in the RAG.

The main study

A qualitative methodology, based on a narrative framework, was employed to enable young people to share the stories of their homeless journeys, focussing on aspects of their experience which they considered to be significant to them (Crossley, 2007).

Participants

Given that the epistemological approach underpinning this research is consistent with a social constructionist perspective, the researcher consulted with the RAG to discuss approaches towards operationalising concepts within the research. The RAG advised that the terms 'home' and 'homelessness' held unique personal meaning and they challenged the assumption that young people make linear exits from homelessness. Consequently, it was agreed that the inclusion criteria for the research would apply to young people (aged 16-25), living in the UK, who identified themselves as having experienced 'homelessness' and assessed themselves as "some way along the journey out of homelessness".

The researcher distributed information packs (developed in partnership with the RAG) to a number of homeless organisations across the UK and via social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook.

In total seven young people participated in the study. Five participants were male (Adam; Skylan; Chris; David; Harry) and two participants were female (Martha; Carla). They ranged in age from 19-25 with a mean age of 21.4. All participants identified themselves as having been homeless and judged themselves to be "some way along the journey out of homelessness". The age at which young people first became homeless ranged between 13-19 with a mean age of 17. Five of the participants were associated with a national scheme concerned with improving involvement opportunities for young people.

(Carla; Harry, Martha, Skylan, Adam). Two additional young people elected to take part in the study after meeting the researcher at a homeless hostel (David & Chris). Demographic information relating to participants can be found in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1
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Procedure

Ethical approval to conduct the research was granted by Lancaster University in December 2013. Interviews took place across England including: Birmingham, Exeter, Worcester and Bradford.

Prior to interview, the researcher discussed the information sheet with each participant, checked their understanding of this, and answered any questions. All young people were asked to provide written consent to participate. Participants were reminded that they could stop the interview at any point and withdraw their consent. All young people were informed that any identifying information would be removed during the transcription phase and they were offered the option of selecting a pseudonym. Unstructured face-to-face interviews lasted between 45-90 minutes. Each interview was digitally-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

The interview structure and approach was designed to enable young people to generate narrative accounts of the important events related to their journeys out of homelessness. Riessman (1993, 2008) highlights the importance of asking questions which open up topics and enable those being interviewed to construct answers that are meaningful to them. Therefore, the researcher asked very few questions and rather adopted an active listening stance (McCormack, 2004), in order to enable young people to have more control over the structure of the information they shared without interviewing practices interfering.

The researcher asked one narrative inducing question at the outset of each interview: “I’m interested to hear about your homelessness journey – it’s up to you where you start. What happened?” A small number of broad open-ended questions about the area of enquiry were available to the researcher as prompts². The extent to which these were required by the researcher varied across interviews. To establish context to the stories, the researcher also asked each young person about where they considered themselves to be in relation to their ‘homeless journey’, as well as what the concept of ‘home’ represented to them.

Support for young people

Given the potentially emotive nature of the issues discussed, the researcher acknowledged the possibility that participants could find talking about their experiences distressing. Young people were invited to bring along a confederate to the interview. One young person chose to do this. Following the interview all young people were fully debriefed about how they could obtain relevant community, statutory and voluntary based support.

Analysis

The researcher drew upon number of published texts to develop a narrative analytical framework through which to analyse the data (Crossley, 2007; Riessman, 2008; Weatherhead, 2011). Initially, the researcher immersed herself in each interview transcript to increase familiarity with the narratives of each participant. Following this, summary stories were constructed to capture key themes and events present within each of the seven narratives as well as changes in the narrative pattern such as emotion, tone, speed and focus (see Appendix 2). Five temporal chapters were created representing a shared plot. A more detailed and structured analysis was then conducted across all seven transcripts. This included an in-depth exploration of commonalities and diversities in self-narration, plot/key

² Appendices of project materials are contained within Section 4: Ethics section

events, key characters, clauses of identity, metaphor and imagery, as well as thematic and linguistic connections. Occasionally, poetic stanzas were used as alternative means to organise the text and explore different aspects of the narratives (Gee, 1991).

The researcher took a number of steps to increase trustworthiness, rigour and reflexivity within the analytical process. Firstly, the researcher invited one of the research supervisors to listen to an initial interview and provide feedback. Secondly, the researcher held regular detailed discussions with both research supervisors to refine the analysis and provide additional insights regarding interpretations. Thirdly, the researcher maintained a reflective journal detailing thoughts, feelings and ideas which may have impacted on the research process (Riessman, 2008). Finally, the researcher participated in a peer-supervision group with fellow narrative researchers to discuss the process of conducting narrative analysis.

Findings

The following section provides a narrative analysis of young people's stories, presented in the form of a shared story told through five chapters. These chapters are entitled: "I didn't even feel like a human - Becoming Homelessness"; "I was someone - The Process of Reconnection"; "In the middle of nowhere" - Journeying Beyond Hostel Accommodation; "Homelessness can either make you or break you" - Finding Meaning in Experience; and "That's when I'll be home" - Journeying Towards Home.

Chapter 1: "I didn't even feel like a human": Becoming Homelessness

With the exception of one participant, all young people positioned the start of their homelessness journeys within their family homes. This chapter is fast in pace, reflecting the speed at which events occurred. This was encapsulated in David's description of "a snowball

effect” which powerfully illustrated the cumulative nature in which events escalated and the relative powerlessness that several participants experienced in the face of this.

Narratives illustrated that whilst the family home provided a physical structure, participants experienced the absence of an emotionally-containing relational structure. For example, themes of conflict, loss, rejection and exclusion permeated several accounts (Martha, Skylan, Chris, Carla, Adam). The characters of “nobody” and “no-one” were dominant throughout participants’ narratives, representing the absence of a supportive and containing presence. For example, when David talked about his suicide attempts whilst living at home, he reflected: “sometimes it was cries for help to be honest, cos you’re in a place and you think “ahh, no one’s going to come and help me”.

This lack of emotional containment, characteristic of participants’ experiences within their family environments, was reflected in the lack of narrative structure available for them to make sense of family histories. These stories were described as “hidden” (Adam), judged as “too painful” (Adam) and considered beyond their understanding as children (Carla). As Adam explained: “...it was all hidden if you like... I didn’t know how to deal with it and no one helped me. My family found it too painful”. However, without these stories available, some young people generated narratives which led them to internalise problems which existed within their families, as Carla explained: “I was a problem child... a child that needed anger management...(Mum) was my problem, that’s why I was angry...I didn’t understand it cos it was depression but no one sat me down and explained it to me”.

As the “snowball” gathered pace, young people faced decisions about remaining in their family homes. For the majority, this decision represented limited choice or agency. This was expressed through vivid descriptions such as being “kicked out” (Chris; David;

Martha) and “shipped off” (Carla), which were illustrative of how they viewed themselves in relation to their families as unwanted and inconsequential.

In contrast, Martha’s narrative was characterised by a greater sense of agency over her decision to leave the family home. However consequently, she believed that ‘the people’, a character depicting wider society (Chris; Martha; Carla; Skylan), judged her as responsible for becoming homeless and deserving of any repercussions: “...yeah I did walk, because it was the best situation for me...society and people always assume that if you chose to do that, then you choose the repercussions”.

At this juncture, the chapter is punctuated by a transitional phase, characterised by participants’ active attempts to negotiate places to seek shelter with extended family and friends. This relatively hidden aspect of their homelessness journey was referred to as “sofa surfing” (Chris, Skylan, David). The hidden quality associated with this experience was reflected in Carla’s distinction between being “technically” homeless, representing her identity in relation to the “the system”, and her own understanding of when she became homeless, which she determined as being much earlier in her journey.

At this stage, the tone of the chapter adopts a downward trajectory as young people experience a gradual disconnection from the world around them. Skylan described this as watching “everything in the world disappear”. Although the shared plot depicts a physical and relational disconnection, the emotional tone of sadness, dejection and despair present in several of the individual narratives, demonstrated that young people remained powerfully connected to the emotional impact of their experiences.

The end of this chapter has a climactic feel, culminating in the event of participants becoming physically homeless. At this stage, young people embodied their internal sense of homelessness, experienced up until this point within family relationships, through the process

of being officially “classed” (Martha) as homeless by ‘the people’. The impact of this shift in identity in relation to wider society is captured by Harry. When he attempts to access shelter for the evening, he is told he is “not a priority need”. He described “feeling like nothing, like a piece of dirt” and that he “didn’t even feel like a human”.

Chapter 2: “I was someone”: The Process of Reconnection

This chapter tells the story of young people’s entries into supported living. Following the downward oscillation in chapter one, it has a progressive tone characterised by an overarching theme of reconnection.

At this stage, several participants described a process of connection with the emotional impact of their journeys so far. Harry described the point at which he was initially housed as the point at which “the mental health kicked in”. His vivid use of imagery reflects the way in which his psychological distress took on an objective form with a forceful and debilitating influence: “I deteriorated physically and mentally...I could barely get up...I was losing weight, y’know my hair was falling out, I couldn’t sleep, there were times when I could barely talk”.

Psychological distress was conceptualised as “a dark place” (Chris), an emotional landscape characterised by fear, uncertainty and isolation, where one could encounter painful memories (Adam, Chris). The use of the adjective “mental” was applied to describe psychological distress, for example; “going mental” (Carla) or “being mental (Chris), reflecting fear that the experience of psychological distress could be embodied as a more intractable and stigmatising characteristic of their identities, particularly in relation to ‘the people’. As Chris articulated; “they just can’t realise....you can come out of being mental”. This challenge to participants’ sense of self could discourage them from accessing therapeutic

support, as Carla explained; “I’m not really one to see counsellors and stuff cos straight away that’s like you’re mental”.

Consequently, several participants reflected on their attempts to seek emotional support from hostel staff. Yet, they had mixed experiences of these attempts. Martha and Carla described staff who “didn’t care enough” (Carla) and Martha’s narrative illustrated how she assimilated these interactions into beliefs and expectations of relationships more generally: “It just kinda made me lose faith in a lot of people...and I was just like, the only way I’m gunna survive in this world is by myself like, the only person like that I know won’t let me down is me”.

However, several participants emphasized the significance of relational encounters with staff characterised by: “nurture” (Harry; Adam); “compassion” (Harry); and being “believed in” (Adam; Martha; Harry). For David, the unconditional availability of staff was vital: “If you’ve got a problem, there’s help here 24/7...”. There was also a perceived safety to be found within these relationships which allowed for young people to “open up” (Martha) and share the burden of their distress which had otherwise been considered as too powerful.

Several young people used the metaphor of “family” through which to conceptualise positive experiences of relationships with staff and friends (Adam, Carla, Skylan). This was despite contrasting experiences in relation to their families of origin. The metaphor of family provided a cultural script through which participants could articulate a sense of relational security. Both Skylan and Carla spoke about their personally selected family made up of friendships that they could invest in with a sense of certainty, security, depth and longevity. However, Martha’s experience of relationships with other hostel residents contrasted with the sense of relational security described by other participants. Rather, she felt that as a result of

her identity as a White British Muslim, other female Muslim residents assumed her circumstances to represent a personal, moral and cultural failing on her part:

“...It was hard because a lot of the women were like Asian women...and...I started getting called stuff and started getting abuse there...just a lot of them were like “oh, you’ve ran away to be with your fella” and I was just like “what!”.

This chapter is also punctuated by key “acts of kindness” (Harry), experiences which represented exceptional interactions with ‘the people’. These acts contradicted expectations of others developed through earlier negative experiences. For example, whilst Adam was “at (his) worst”, a lecturer from his college visited him at his hostel with a bag of shopping. This represented a “turning point” in his journey, which he described as “spiritual”, reflecting how this experience affirmed his sense of worth in in a broader ontological context:

“I couldn’t believe it, cos it was my lecturer...they thought it was my Mum...I couldn’t imagine someone doing that for someone...I didn’t know that someone could have that sort of care for a stranger...they didn’t realise how much that helped me” (Adam).

Similarly, Harry reflected on his college lecturer buying him breakfast after a “very, very scary” night spent sleeping on the streets. He illustrated the significance of this experience in validating his selfhood as he explained: “I was made to feel like a human being again...I was someone”.

With the exception of one young person, all participants articulated the importance of accessing voluntary and participation opportunities during their homelessness journeys. For example, Harry volunteered to host an Olympics event at the hostel he lived in, with an “opening ceremony” for residents. In addition to the motivation to generate a sense of wider social connection amongst residents, this was also about developing a visible and valued role

through which he could experience self-efficacy and power in the face of chronic disempowerment and isolation. Volunteering was seen as an important bridge for participants to access the “the working world” (David), a landscape of social inclusion and mobility through which they could experience a sense of purpose, influence and self-worth (Harry; Martha; Skylan; David: Adam).

Chapter 3: “In the middle of nowhere”: Journeying Beyond Hostel Accommodation

This chapter runs in parallel to the previous chapter but illustrates how some participants’ narratives diverge as they journey beyond the hostel environment and into the community (Carla, Skylan & Martha). As these journeys progressed, they grew increasingly turbulent as young people searched for a “normal life” (Martha). This part of the journey was depicted through the use of metaphors such as “heart-monitor” (Carla) and “heart-beat” (Skylan), illustrating how these participants oscillated between a sense of home and homelessness.

Both Skylan and Carla reflected on feeling “excited” about the prospect of independence and home-making. Yet, they reflected on the challenges they faced in their attempts to create a sense of home for themselves within their residences. Skylan recalled how the relationships that he had come to rely upon during his time in the hostel had been “stripped out” from him when he moved into independent living, whilst Martha recalled how her attempts to develop new relationships only exacerbated her sense of isolation as she found herself drawn into relational patterns characteristic of her past experiences:

“When you’ve had like a volatile family relationship ...you’d assume that you’d look for the opposites, like the care and affection that you haven’t felt...instead you end up with the exact same relationship that you lived (with) at home cos that’s the norm to you, that’s what you’re used to”.

Further, Carla recalled how her attempts to integrate and develop relationships within her community were met with hostility, where she felt “trapped” and vulnerable as a result of her status as a young person accessing supported living.

In addition, Martha and Carla spoke about how they found themselves geographically isolated from communities within which they had developed friendships and connections to education and employment. Despite their efforts to maintain these connections, they struggled due to logistical and financial challenges, as Carla explained; “It’s only about seven/eight miles but it’s in the middle of nowhere, there’s no train...I couldn’t afford to live”. For Martha, these difficulties impacted on her attempts to generate a sense of “stability” as a result of isolating her from opportunities to develop and maintain friendships: “I couldn’t make like a group of solid friends so I still didn’t feel like I had any stability”.

Further, their attempts to develop a sense of residential stability were impacted by living under the psychological threat of eviction (Martha; Carla). This insecurity was partly as a result of explicit threats made by those they lived with. However, it was also closely connected to their prior exposure of being made homeless as a result of powerful others (Martha; Carla). Consequently, not only were others able to make these threats, they were also perceived to have the power to make these a reality.

The cumulative impact of these challenges had a profound effect on psychological wellbeing. For Martha, it felt that she had returned “back to square one” and for Carla she slipped “back down to like proper depression”.

Chapter 4: “Homelessness can make you or break you”: Finding Meaning in Experience

An important aspect of young people’s stories was the way in which they assimilated an understanding of their homelessness journey. Although all young people described

personal distress and suffering when narrating their journeys, they contemplated questions centred on the meaning of their experiences.

There was a sense that homelessness provided a valued lens through which to achieve perspective. For example, David explained how: “you just look at life completely differently” and he valued his “life” as a “gift”. This metaphor enabled him to view his experiences as purposeful and as something that had brought privilege and opportunity. This theme of privilege was also evident in Harry’s narrative, where homelessness took on the form of an enabling character that “opened up doors” by facilitating opportunities for volunteering and training.

Physical metaphors of homelessness as a “challenge” (Chris) or “hurdle” (Skylan) depicted homelessness as leading to personal growth. For Chris, the fact that he was overcoming this challenge engendered feelings of pride as illustrated by his comment: “it’s something you can tell your grand-kids about”. However, although Adam found meaning by reflecting on the development of strength and resilience, the tone of his narrative was tempered with a sense of ambivalence and regret at the personal cost to this: “I think it’s all made me stronger...maybe weaker in some areas”.

One of the ways in which young people found meaning in their experiences was to contrast their progress against cultural discourses of homelessness. David used humour as a way to engage in these discourses: “It’s just absolutely crazy...I’d probably be on the streets with a massive ginger beard...long hair...probably with like a trolley...that’s the stereotype but that’s what I think I would have been”. This positioned him as fortunate that circumstances had not been worse.

An important determinant of the nature in which young people found meaning in their experience of homelessness was the opportunity for their stories to be validated by ‘the

people'. For example, Carla described the experience of sharing her story with a researcher as a "healing process", implying a restorative dimension to this experience through which she generated insight into aspects of her journey. This enabled her to re-author a narrative through which she could assimilate her experiences in a coherent way.

Through these opportunities, young people's voices, which were otherwise relatively unheard up until this point, were ascribed value and purpose by 'the people'. But for Martha, there was a sense that 'the people' held a hidden political motivation. As an audience, their presence took on a voyeuristic and exploitative quality as a result of their demand for narratives characterised by hope, success and triumph over adversity. This is captured in the poetic extract "Award Speech" (Appendix 3a).

Nonetheless, this opportunity led to an identity shift for some participants by focussing their attention on their own personal strengths and resources. Making the journey out of homelessness positioned them as sources of "inspiration" (Carla) and "hope" (Harry), which enhanced feelings of self-worth. Consequently, internalising homelessness as a core and valued part of their identity generated feelings of "pride" (Adam) and "achievement" (Martha) and was a route to visibility, social influence and agency, as Harry commented: "it's made me!".

However, narratives diverged in relation to participants who did not have access to opportunities through which they could share their stories (David; Chris). Whilst these young people identified positive meanings to their experiences, there was a sense that remaining "positive" was their only defence against the powerful and oppressive presence of homelessness. Whilst positivity was considered essential, its presence was fragile and constantly threatened. For Chris, a condition of remaining positive was to disconnect from more negative aspects of his earlier story, as he explained: "I don't wanna keep thinking

about it, I just think about good shit basically”. For David, remaining positive was achieved by disconnecting himself completely from his homeless identity, as he explained: “I’m a completely different person now”. Chris used “some young people” as characters through which he could indirectly express his more negative emotions, for example he explained: “Some young people would be different; some people would really hate being here, like really desperate”. Consequently, whilst Chris and David described their outlook in “positive” terms, homelessness continued to be described in an objectified form, externalised as an oppressive and powerful force in their lives. For example, Chris believed that homelessness had the power to “destroy” him. These circumstances left David and Chris with a reduced sense of agency moving forward in their journeys, as Chris explained: “there’s not really much you can do about it”.

Chapter 5: “That’s when I’ll be home”: Journeying Towards Home

Within the final chapter, young people positioned themselves in relation to their journey towards ‘home’. The chapter has a dichotomous quality to it as young people reflected on how a shift in their social status as “no longer homeless” (Martha) did not imply they had reached their destination of ‘home’. ‘Home’ as a destination, represented a unique range of physical, social and psychological dimensions which were not always experienced as congruent. These more intangible representations of ‘home’, beyond the realms of physical space, influenced where young people positioned themselves in relation to the destination of their homelessness journeys. This is captured in the poetic extract “Then I’ll be home” (Appendix 3b).

The position in which young people identified themselves was related to whole life histories and imagined futures. As Carla illustrated; “On my journey...I’m not even a quarter

of the way...for everything that's happened, including like before being homeless like...I haven't found home...that's why I'm not far on my journey...until I find home”.

For David, home as a destination had a fluid and intangible quality, as he described: “sometimes it's there, sometimes it's not”. This mirrored the changing significance of ‘home’ in the lives of young people at different stages in their journey.

For the young people who considered themselves to be in the early stages of transition towards independent living, ‘home’ was considered a physical space associated with ownership and “privacy” (Chris; David). As a result Chris, who lived in a hostel, continued to identify himself as homeless: “Home to me...(is) your own space, y’know... a bit of privacy man...basically, this is not really home”. However, for participants who had experienced living independently for longer, their position in relation to home as a destination grew increasingly dependent on psychological influences such as security, safety, authenticity and stability. As Martha illustrated:

“(Home) means stability. It means not having to look over your shoulder and think “what is going to happen next” and “what if” and “my 2 years are up”... It's not having to be afraid of someone and feel that you have to amount to living for someone else, you can live for yourself and do what you wanna do...knowing that you're safe and secure”.

A sense of ‘home’ could be realised through relationships characterised by a sense of security and permanence. Carla illustrated this with her metaphor of having a “base” around her; a protective, secure and stable relational foundation built and fortified over time. Similarly Skyln described “home” as his “best friends”.

Wider social inclusion and a sense of belonging were also an important aspect of the destination young people journeyed towards. However, Adam illustrated a dichotomy

between his strong sense of identity whilst living at the homeless hostel, and his identity as an “outsider” in relation to wider society, where he felt like “a complete sort of nobody”. There was a sense that employment and education represented a key currency for young people to access social inclusion and “have a life” (Adam). For Harry, achieving in these areas, allowed him to “stand tall” and assert a ‘home’ for himself in society.

For three of the young people (David, Skylan; Adam), the dichotomy that could exist between physical and psychological aspects of home left them feeling conflicted as they found themselves existing in a space between homelessness and home, not fully identifying with either context. Although they no longer ‘classed’ themselves as homeless, this status facilitated access to an environment which reinforced a psychological sense of home. As Skylan explained:

“There’s been times when I’ve felt I’m out of homelessness but...this is the weird thing...it would probably sometimes be easier to be homeless again and be in a hostel than it would to be in my own setting because...I miss the whole interaction on a daily basis...without that, you’re in a world of your own mind”.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to strengthen an understanding of young people’s journeys out of homelessness. A key finding was that ‘home’ and ‘homelessness’ represented dynamic concepts, embodying a range of physical, social and psychological dimensions. Indeed, participants described how they had not yet reached home, despite no longer identifying themselves as physically homeless. This finding is consistent with literature which highlights the potential incongruence between physical and psychological states of homelessness (Riggs and Coyle, 2002; Moore, 2007; Kellett and Moore, 2003).

At a psychological level, homelessness was strongly connected to young people's sense of identity. This is not surprising given that theoretical understandings often closely connect the developmental stage of adolescence with the development of social identity (Coleman and Hendry, 1990). Narratives illustrated how cumulative experiences of insecurity came to be embodied as an objective and a static characteristic of young people's identities when they became 'classed' as homeless in relation to society. For some, this event brought great loss, hopelessness, shame and disempowerment. Miller and McClelland (2006) argue that this process of embodiment should be recognised as a psychological process "where oppressive practices can become internalised and interact with identity formation" (pg, 147). This process was significant in how young people negotiated their exits out of homelessness, as their experiences reflected a journey towards rediscovering self-worth, agency and social-inclusion.

Furthermore, the study found that the absence of an understanding of complex family histories led participants to construct alternative narratives through which they assumed personal responsibility for family circumstances. This process could be attributed to socio-cultural ideas of childhood and family given that discourses of family are often idealised within society and overlook the conflict and complexity present in the lives of many young people (Burman, 2008).

Consistent with these understandings, the study found that a significant facilitator of young people's journeys towards rediscovering self-worth and agency were opportunities to structure a validating account of their experiences. This was often achieved through access to participation opportunities. As a result of constructing and sharing stories in these contexts, homelessness was internalised by young people as a valued part of their identity. Where participants experienced fewer opportunities to construct and share narratives of their experience, "homelessness" existed as a powerful force leading young people to disconnect

from this aspect of their identity. Psychological writings within the field of narrative therapy (see White, 2007) would suggest that the process of externalisation should increase a sense of agency. However, the opposite effect was found within this study, whereby the chronically oppressive and stigmatising nature of homelessness positioned it as a constant threat to identity.

Compassionate mind theory could offer a developmental, social and neuropsychological perspective towards understanding this process and in guiding interventions (Gilbert, 2009). For example, the findings from this study illustrate how the experience of homelessness was found to have its roots in early experiences of rejection, exclusion and family conflict. Research suggests that these experiences can contribute to feelings of shame and self-criticism (Kaufman, 1989). Furthermore, Farrugia (2010) proposes that within wider society, homelessness is often associated with irresponsibility and moral failing which can become embodied as part of young people's identities. Notably, in one young person's case, the roles of gender and ethnicity represented key mediating influences in terms of exacerbating this sense of personal and moral failing, due to the impact of perceptions held by other female Muslim hostel residents that her homelessness represented a failure to conform to expected cultural standards. A compassionate mind approach would suggest that the process of externalising homelessness could serve as a form of self-protection given that young people came to regard their internal and external worlds as more and more hostile (Gilbert, 2009).

Those who experienced the opportunity to structure a narrative through emotionally-containing and compassionate relationships, could engage in a process of formulation through which they could make sense of their histories and construct a validating perspective to these experiences. As a result, 'homelessness' became less of a threat to identity. This would suggest that integrating a compassionate mind approach into interventions for young people

could be regarded as useful. For example, therapeutic interventions could aim to facilitate a social environment through which young people feel safe to share their stories, knowing that these will be responded to with sensitivity, empathy, validation and compassion. Such an inter-personal focus may enable young people to regulate their threat-protection system and replace feelings of shame and self-criticism with self-compassion, self-efficacy and agency (Gilbert, 2009). Moreover, a compassionate mind approach, with its focus on enhancing compassion in self and others, could translate to an overall culture of care towards supporting young people's psychological wellbeing.

Although several young people spoke about negative past experiences of relationships, others provided examples of "turning points", where relational encounters had challenged their negative beliefs and expectations of others. Consistent with existing literature, participants highlighted the significance of professional and peer relationships in providing emotional-containment and availability (Fitzpatrick, 2000; Milburn *et al.*, 2009). However, previous research which has explored exits from homelessness has focussed mostly on the enabling role of family members, highlighting processes such as family mediation (Mayock, Corr and O'Sullivan, 2011). The findings of this research illustrate how, given the absence of a containing family structure, the concept of family was reimagined into relationships with friends and wider systems of support and was reflective of the sense of security and stability young people valued within these relationships. Consequently, although efforts to engage young people in family mediation may be helpful in facilitating exits from homelessness, an exclusive focus on this may overlook the personal significance of these alternative family systems, and the resources that may be utilized within these. Future qualitative research may usefully explore the perspectives of young people and key workers, regarding the significance of the key-worker relationship in relation to the psychological wellbeing of young people who have experienced homelessness.

Consistent with previous literature, the experiences of participants within the study highlight how the process of making the journey out of homelessness was psychologically challenging (Hyde, 2005), yet often they expressed fear of stigmatisation for their experience of psychological distress. These findings are significant given research which has demonstrated that homeless young people often experience difficulty accessing services due to fear of further stigmatisation (Homeless link, 2014; Quilgars et al., 2008). Consequently, it is important to note that a significant proportion of the current evidence base seeking to understand the mental health needs of young people is heavily focussed on individual risk factors and “psychopathology” (Edidin *et al.*, 2012; Rossenthal and Rotheram-Borus, 2005). These findings highlight the potential for these research approaches to reinforce an ideology of psychological distress which is individualised and decontextualized. These understandings may contribute to responses which detach young people’s distress from their individual stories and pathologise those who may already be vulnerable through the distress and confusion of their homeless experience. In developing an evidence-base through which to guide interventions, future qualitative research is needed which broadens individualistic constructions of mental health difficulties and reconnects young people’s experiences with their historical, social and cultural contexts.

Clinical implications

Over recent years, attempts have been made to call attention to the impact of social inequalities within the field of mental health (e.g. Kinderman, 2014; Miller and McClelland, 2006). Within a socio-cultural context dominated by the association between homelessness and housing, psychological contributions should seek to extend the psychological dimensions relevant to the needs of homeless young people. Clinical psychologists could contribute to the development of psychologically-informed operational frameworks within services that support homeless young people (for example see Maguire *et al.*, 2010). They could also

collaborate with housing providers and third sector organisations to holistically address the multiple needs of this client group and strengthen existing relationships through which young people may experience a sense of safety, security and belonging. Further, clinical psychologists could have a role in emphasising the psychological dimensions to the homeless experience at a service, organisation, commissioning and policy level as well as advocating for more creative and accessible approaches towards engaging young people in support. Clinical psychologists may usefully contribute to research, including feedback to local statutory services in support of these endeavours. Future research should seek to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions currently provided by clinical psychologists within homeless services where there is established clinical psychology input.

Finally, it is important to consider these findings in light of the UK Government's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme (DoH, 2008) currently impacting on the resourcing and delivery of psychological support to young people. Implicit within this service model is an assumption that psychological difficulties may be understood to represent discrete conditions (Marzillier and Hall, 2009). This assumption sits in contradiction to the findings of this research which position psychological distress within a much broader context of human experience, encompassing historical, social and cultural dimensions. The implication is that in order to promote psychological wellbeing for homeless young people, there is a need for holistic and integrative interventions, embedded within a compassionate culture of care, which pay greater attention to the inter-personal context within which young people are positioned. Without sufficient attention to these implications at a policy level, resources are unlikely to be directed in the most effective ways to address the needs of this group.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study regards its generalizability given it is based on the accounts of seven young people. However, whilst in a professional context, the concept of generalizability may be regarded as important, this was not the primary concern of the research given its epistemological foundation (Riessman, 2008). . A further limitation is that the young people who participated were all connected with support services. Thus, it cannot be assumed that these findings would relate to the experiences of young people who are not connected to these resources. Furthermore, five participants were actively involved with a UK based participation organisation. Consequently, these young people may have encountered strong mediating influences upon how they had constructed and re-produced their stories over time. Future qualitative research could contribute towards a broader understanding by exploring the experiences of young people who are not connected with support services or participation opportunities.

Conclusion

This study has provided a valuable insight into young people's experiences of making the journey out of homelessness. The research found that the experience is associated with more than having access to physical shelter. Consequently, providing a physical shelter alone is unlikely to address the challenging psycho-social dimensions to this experience. These findings provide direction as to how professionals, services, organisations and Governments can develop meaningful approaches to supporting the multiple needs of young people making the journey out of homelessness, by affording greater attention to facilitating a compassionate culture of care that promotes belonging, validation, compassion and agency.

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Table 1: Demographic details of participants.

Name	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Age at becoming homeless	Circumstances at time of interview
Martha	Female	24	British Asian	13	Living independently in privately rented accommodation with her best-friend. Employed full-time. Engages in participation opportunities for young people who have experienced homelessness.
Skylan	Male	25	British Asian	19	Living independently in privately rented accommodation. Un-employed. Engages in participation opportunities for young people who have experienced homelessness.
Adam	Male	20	White British	18	Recently moved into privately rented accommodation. Living independently. Employed part-time. Engages in participation opportunities for young people who have experienced homelessness.
Carla	Female	20	White	14	Recently returned to live with Mother and Sister. Employed part-time. Regularly engages in participation opportunities

British for young people who have experienced homelessness.

David	Male	19	White British	19	Recently moved into supported accommodation. Unemployed and looking for work. Regularly volunteers for various local organisations.
Chris	Male	20	White British	19	Living in a hostel. Unemployed. Hopes to return to education in the near future.
Harry	Male	23	White British	17	Living independently in privately rented accommodation. Accessing full-time education.

Note 1: Pseudonyms have been used throughout.

Appendix 1: Author guidelines for the Journal of Public Health



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Format	All files should be submitted as a Word document
Article Length	Articles should be between 4000 and 6000 words in length. This includes all text including references and appendices. Please allow 350 words for each figure or table.
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Maximum is 250 words in total (including keywords and article classification, see below).

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Article Classification	<p>Categorize your paper on the Article Title Page, under one of these classifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewpoint • Technical paper • Conceptual paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study • Literature review • General review.
Headings	<p>Headings must be concise, with a clear indication of the distinction between the hierarchy of headings.</p> <p>The preferred format is for first level headings to be presented in bold format and subsequent sub-headings to be presented in medium italics.</p>
Notes/Endnotes	<p>Notes or Endnotes should be used only if absolutely necessary and must be identified in the text by consecutive numbers, enclosed in square brackets and listed at the end of the article.</p>
Research Funding	<p>Authors must declare all sources of external research funding in their article and a statement to this effect should appear in the Acknowledgements section. Authors should describe the role of the funder or financial sponsor in the entire research process, from study design to submission.</p>
Figures	<p>All Figures (charts, diagrams, line drawings, web pages/screenshots, and photographic images) should be submitted in electronic form.</p> <p>All Figures should be of high quality, legible and numbered consecutively with arabic numerals. Graphics may be supplied in colour to facilitate their appearance on the online database.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figures created in MS Word, MS PowerPoint, MS Excel, Illustrator should be supplied in their native formats. Electronic figures created in other applications should be copied from the origination software and pasted into a blank MS Word document or saved and imported into an MS Word document or alternatively create a .pdf file from the origination software. • Figures which cannot be supplied in as the above are acceptable in the standard image formats which are: .pdf, .ai, and .eps. If you are unable to supply graphics in these formats then please ensure they are .tif, .jpeg, or .bmp at a resolution of at least 300dpi and at least 10cm wide.

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<p><i>For journals</i></p>	<p>Surname, Initials (year), "Title of article", <i>Journal Name</i>, volume, number, pages.</p> <p>e.g. Capizzi, M.T. and Ferguson, R. (2005), "Loyalty trends for the twenty-first century", <i>Journal of Consumer Marketing</i>, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 72-80.</p>
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<p><i>For unpublished conference proceedings</i></p>	<p>Surname, Initials (year), "Title of paper", paper presented at Name of Conference, date of conference, place of conference, available at: URL if freely available on the internet (accessed date).</p> <p>e.g. Aumueller, D. (2005), "Semantic authoring and retrieval within a wiki", paper presented at the European Semantic Web Conference (ESWC), 29 May-1 June, Heraklion, Crete, available at: http://dbs.uni-leipzig.de/file/aumueller05wiksar.pdf (accessed 20 February 2007).</p>
<p><i>For working papers</i></p>	<p>Surname, Initials (year), "Title of article", working paper [number if available], Institution or organization, Place of organization, date.</p> <p>e.g. Moizer, P. (2003), "How published academic research can inform policy decisions: the case of mandatory rotation of audit appointments", working paper, Leeds University</p>

Business School, University of Leeds, Leeds, 28 March.

<p><i>For encyclopedia entries (with no author or editor)</i></p>	<p><i>Title of Encyclopedia</i> (year) "Title of entry", volume, edition, Title of Encyclopedia, Publisher, Place of publication, pages.</p> <p>e.g. <i>Encyclopaedia Britannica</i> (1926) "Psychology of culture contact", Vol. 1, 13th ed., Encyclopaedia Britannica, London and New York, NY, pp. 765-71.</p> <p>(For authored entries please refer to book chapter guidelines above)</p>
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<p><i>For newspaper articles (non-authored)</i></p>	<p><i>Newspaper</i> (year), "Article title", date, pages.</p> <p>e.g. <i>Daily News</i> (2008), "Small change", 2 February, p. 7.</p>
<p><i>For electronic sources</i></p>	<p>If available online, the full URL should be supplied at the end of the reference, as well as a date that the resource was accessed.</p> <p>e.g. Castle, B. (2005), "Introduction to web services for remote portlets", available at: http://www-128.ibm.com/developerworks/library/ws-wsrp/ (accessed 12 November 2007).</p> <p>Standalone URLs, i.e. without an author or date, should be included either within parentheses within the main text, or preferably set as a note (roman numeral within square brackets within text followed by the full URL address at the end of the paper).</p>

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Appendix 2: Example summary story

Carla's Summary Story**“Problem child”**

Carla stated that she was 14 when she became homeless. She identified herself as having been a “problem child” with “anger issues”. Looking back, Carla felt that her Mum was “her problem” and the reason why she felt so angry. Although she didn’t understand it at the time, she believed her Mum had “depression. She remembered that her Mum was often unable to get out of bed so she would often have to take on the caring responsibilities for herself and her sister. As a child, Carla remembered being fearful of comments that people used to make about the need for her to “go to anger management”. She thought that “people” would think she was “crazy”. Carla’s recalled that eventually her Mum “couldn’t deal with it anymore” and as a result she remembered being “shipped off” to her Nan’s.

Personally homeless.....

Carla remembered moving back and forth between living with her Mum and her auntie. She remembered occasions when her Mum threatening to commit suicide if she didn’t return to live at home. Often she felt that there was no choice but to attempt to return home and she would cause a “kick-off row” with her auntie so that she would be forced to leave their house and move back home to her Mum.

Technically homeless

Eventually Carla became “technically” homeless when she was 16; whereupon she entered into a homeless project. It was during this time that she started to take drugs. She found she became addicted to “pretty much everything”. Looking back, she didn’t realise how bad it was getting at the time. She felt that she couldn’t “face” her family as this was too upsetting and she felt that they “couldn’t be bothered with (her)”. She found herself in a “circle” of friends and boyfriends who were either dealing or taking drugs. The situation became “worse and worse” As a result, Carla isolated herself from her friends and family.

Turning point.....

During her stay at the homeless project, Carla made one of her best and lifelong friends, Peter. Throughout her journey, he has been like a brother to her. At the time, she had “no one else in (her) life like that”, someone who she could trust and feel close to. She was convinced that “everyone was out to get (her)”. During this time, her relationship with Peter was really important. They spent every day together. He was someone that Carla could relate to. He’d also had a difficult journey growing up and they each supported one another.

One evening, after an argument with a friend, Carla self-harmed with a glass bottle. As a result she ended up in hospital where she was “crisis teamed”. She knew that she needed help; she’d done something that she felt she would never have done in her entire life. Two months after she was discharged from hospital, she was visited by two “random people” who

she'd "never met" from the mental health team. She told them she was ok, but she felt it was obvious by her face that she was lying. Carla didn't want to see a counsellor; she believed that meant she was "crazy" and had "serious issues".

My own place.....

A few months later, Carla moved out of the homeless project into her own place in a supported housing scheme. It was "really good" moving into her own flat, however she felt like she knew no one in the area. She had no means to get to and from the community where everyone she knew lived. It felt like "the middle of nowhere". She quickly found that she couldn't afford to get to and from work and college as well as eat and pay her rent. There was no one to help her learn how to budget. She didn't know about how to manage "real" rent and council tax or how to buy furniture and white goods to fill her house. She didn't feel prepared or ready for the change. She felt that she had little support from her support workers who should have been there to help her. She felt as though she was labelled as "a lost cause" and because of this the support workers didn't really care.

Cara felt that the whole experience just "fucked her up" and she slipped back in to depression. Her Mum tried to persuade her to go to the doctors and to access medication but she really didn't want to. Her friend Peter was a "God Send". He was there for her and understood how she was feeling. She needed that one person who would realise that whatever she was doing, she was "hurting". She was scared and worried.

Eventually, Carla found a new flat. On her first day unpacking she awoke at 6am, excited to unpack her belongings and start decorating the flat with the support of her friend Peter. However, the woman living downstairs started banging forcefully on the ceiling shouting abuse. This began happening more frequently. As she grew more fearful, she spent less and less time in her flat; she couldn't cope being on her own there. She felt that she would be blamed for everything that had happened because she was the youngest resident in the block and she felt "trapped". She noticed that her neighbours would stare at her and none of them would speak to her. She decided that she could no longer live there and she decided to move out.

Living with friends and family.....

Carla then moved into her friend Peter's house with his Mum and his little sister. However, the situation became "awkward" because his Mum would often threaten to throw everyone out of the house. So after 6 months of living there she moved out to live with her auntie.

Carla struggled at first to find a job. She felt that her auntie was "always on at her" for "paying her way"; because she couldn't afford to pay her, she did work around the house. Eventually she found work 2 days per week at a local McDonalds. She gave all the money she could to her auntie. However she was told that this wasn't enough. Carla couldn't afford to give her any more money; she had debt collectors "coming after her" and had to pay them all she could. Eventually she was "kicked out"

Eventually, Carla moved back to her local community to live with her Mum. Her friends helped her to transport all her belongings. Since moving back to her Mum's house, Carla has successfully applied for a job at large supermarket which is where she currently works. Peter also works there as well as one of her other best friends which is one of the main reasons that Carla enjoys working there so much.

Carla believes her friends were really important to her during her journey; they were like "family" to her and they were there for her through difficult times. She didn't feel as though she had ever fitted in with her birth family. Given everything that she had experienced, she anticipated that her birth family would likely disown her. Yet with her friends she felt that accepted, loved and respected.

The new chapter day.....

Carla has noticed a lot of changes in her attitude towards people and life. She feels that she has grown up, has a more positive outlook and is more able to deal with "bad things". She recalled that one day, she woke up and realised that a difficult part of her life was over and she was facing the next part; her "new chapter day". She has a plan to become a manager in the supermarket chain within which she works. She hopes to be able to use her experiences and share her story to support and inspire other young people so that they know they do not feel alone. Leading up to the new chapter day was the realisation that she had people there around her, who would do anything for her, unconditionally.

Carla felt that her participation opportunities have helped her to develop lots of insight into her experiences. She now understands why certain things happened to her and can "pin-point" – the bits in her life that have brought her to where she is. She believes that being interviewed is like a "healing process"; a reflection period, facilitating greater insight into her life before she became homeless and during her time as a homeless young person.

That's when I'll be home.....

Carla describes her journey as like a "heart monitor", she had to keep pulling herself back up when things went wrong. She still doesn't feel as though she has found "a home". But she feels "far enough". To Carla, home doesn't have to be somewhere that belongs to her but somewhere that she can be herself. Home represents both a place and the people around her.

Appendix 3a: Poetic Extracts

Increasingly, qualitative researchers are using poetry as a means of data representation (for example; Gallardo et al., 2009; Furman, 2006; Poindexter, 2002). For the purposes of this research, poetic stanzas were utilized for a number of reasons. Firstly, to support the researcher during analysis by focussing attention on the sequencing, phrasing, tone and pacing of aspects of young people's stories. Secondly, they were used to organise and examine the data in a different way to open up new areas of focus (Poindexter, 2002). Thirdly, poems within research can serve as a powerful and effective means to communicate the depth of an individual's (or group of individuals) emotional experience in a concise way. Therefore, the poems are included in the final write-up of the research to further give voice to young people's stories and support those reading the research to engage empathically with participants.

Award Speech

(The following poem represents an extract from Martha's interview. Each line of the poem is presented in the order in which it was spoken by Martha in the interview. All of the words are Martha's. Some passages have been condensed to improve the pacing and conciseness of the poem).

What I've done
 My journey,
 I've had to do it to survive.
 Because if I didn't do the things I were doing,
 If I didn't volunteer,
 And if I didn't talk to people,
 If I didn't try and change things for other people,
 I wouldn't be here today,
 I know I wouldn't,

I can't,
 I can't accept it".
 I don't understand why I've been given it.

Such idiots.
 "Can we do interviews with ya?"
 "Can we talk to ya?"
 "Can you be like our role model"
 "And our ambassador"

At first I was like, "Yeah, I'll do it,
 I'll do it"
 And then I was like...

Why are you exploiting me...?
 Two years ago when I needed people to help,
 When I needed...
 When I was in the gutter,

And I needed someone to support me,
None of you wanted to know.

Because all of you just thought of me as a homeless person,
That's just come from a different city,
You didn't wanna know,

Your schools didn't wanna know,
Your colleges didn't wanna know,
Your support services didn't wanna know,

And suddenly I've won this award
I look amazing for all of you's
And you all wanna know"

(Martha)

Appendix 3(b): 'That's when I'll be home' ...Participants' meanings of home

(The following poem represents extracts from the interviews which describe young people's accounts of the meaning of home in their lives. Each verse represents a passage of text from one young person's interview and each line of each verse is presented in the order in which it was spoken. In some cases, there is more than one verse per participant. All of the words are those of the participants. The verses were then brought together as an overall poem. Some passages have been condensed slightly to improve the pacing and conciseness of the poem).

Home,

Home means to me like..
Somewhere where you sleep,
Somewhere that's yours,
Sometimes it's there,
Sometimes it's not,

Taking pride in the place you live,
That's home to me
Somewhere you're lucky enough to have
Cos some people don't have homes,
Doing your washing when you want to,
I just love it,
I love home,
I love it.

I haven't found home,
I still haven't,
That's why I'm not far on my journey,
Until I find home...
Home is somewhere,
It doesn't have to be mine,
Somewhere that I can sit down
And be me
And not feel on edge all the time,
Home is somewhere that I've bought,
It is mine,
It doesn't have to be a place,
It can be a person,
I'm not sure what it is yet,
But I'll know when I'm there.
It's the people there that make it home.
There has to be people there,
That's when I'll be home...

I've got a roof over my head y'know,
It's a hostel like
Who does call that home really?!

Home to me...?
 Y'know your own space,
 A bit of privacy man!
 Y'know what I mean like?
 It's my own space,
 My own flat
 That's a home...
 Somewhere where I can take my kid
 Do things I wanna do,
 Have people round,
 ...This is not really home,
 It's not meant to be,
 I'm fortunate to have this y'know
 I'm grateful...
 But, it's not a home really,
 We're still homeless really aren't we...

Only now, I feel like I've got a home
 I don't feel like my journey's ended,
 I think it's just the beginning
 But it's a journey away from feeling insecure,
 It's like a stable home now,
 It's my place that I can live,
 That I feel comfortable.

I feel like I've got a home now,
 I don't feel like I'm homeless
 It's a different kind of home
 Not every home is a two point four family,
 Not every home has a Mum and Dad
 Why can't home be with your friends?

Home is how you feel,
 Right now I feel at home,
 It means stability..
 Not having to look over your shoulder
 And think "what is going to happen next"
 And "what if"
 And "my 2 years are up"
 Or "I've only got 6 months left"
 It's not having to be afraid of someone
 And feeling that you have to amount to living for someone else,
 You can live for yourself ,
 You can do what you wanna do,

It's the best feeling in the world,
 Knowing that you're safe and secure
 Ultimately it's that stability...
 Knowing that you have somewhere that is yours...
 Its stability,

One word just describes it all to be honest.

Home
 Would have been...
 Being around your family,
 Being loved,
 looked after
 and cared for.
 Being nurtured...
 Knowing things will always be all right
 Cos you have your family there,

I would happily go live on the streets
 And be content
 And not have belongings and stuff like that
 And still be happy
 Because happy is what's inside
 You take home with you wherever you go,
 Home is who is in my life...
 Not the family that I was born into
 Home is my best friends,
 Home is my heart,
 Its where I take myself
 That is my home
 You make home wherever you go,
 A snail takes its home on its back
 It takes its home with it...
 Home is me
 being content...
 Home is like 'now' ...

People think I over-react when it comes to my home
 "You take home too seriously!"
 And I do,
 I know what it's like not to have it.
 I wouldn't wish homelessness on anyone..
 Home isn't just bricks and mortar to me.
 It's everything...
 It's my life.
 Its security,
 Warmth,
 Shelter,
 Food,

It's a place where I put my head down.
 It's a place where my life is centred around.
 It's the place I eat,
 Socialise,
 It's where I come back to and chill.
 It's my space.

It's my home.
It's that place where I feel secure,
Where I feel safe,
If I don't have a home, I don't feel like anyone.
I just don't function,
So I protect my home,
Like it's my castle...
Like it's my Kingdom.

(All participants)

Section Three:

Critical Appraisal: 'My Research Journey'

Word Count: 3935

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Introduction

This critical appraisal discusses my reflections upon developing and conducting a research project aimed at exploring the experiences of young people making the journey out of homelessness. In keeping with the ideology of the research itself, this critical appraisal adopts the conceptual metaphor of a 'journey' to reflect upon the process of how my understanding developed over the course of the research project. It is divided into five chapters. The first chapter details my hopes and motivations when embarking on the research journey. The second reflects upon the process of how I conceptualised and planned the project. The third chapter provides an account of my experience of undertaking the research project. Finally, the fourth chapter summarises my reflections about the dissemination of the research and how my experiences conducting this research have impacted on my own personal and professional development.

Chapter 1: Inspiration for the Research Project

When I first embarked on this journey, I had little personal, clinical or research experience related to the area of youth homelessness. Indeed, I had never experienced homelessness myself. However, during clinical psychology training, I developed a strong professional interest in understanding more about the psychological wellbeing of young people considered to be marginalised within society and at risk of poor mental health outcomes (Vostanis, 2007; 2010). I had previously worked in a dedicated mental health team for looked after children and completed research regarding the experiences of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. Consequently, my decision to undertake this research was influenced by a hope to broaden my personal and professional insights into this aspect of young people's experience.

However, I was surprised by how little clinical psychology professional practice literature existed which focussed on the psychological wellbeing of homeless young people, particularly given the existing integration of clinical psychology input into service-models for other vulnerable groups, such as looked after young people (National Institute of Clinical Excellence, 2010; Golding, 2010). Despite research indicating that many homeless young people leave the care system (Fowler *et al.*, 2009), it appeared the level of clinical and empirical attention within the profession of clinical psychology seemed much lower in comparison to these groups. This was somewhat reflected in my experience of finding it difficult to identify a clinical psychologist dedicated to working in this area to act as a field supervisor for the project. On reflection, I wonder if this reduced level of attention is reflective of the social-exclusion that many young people describe within this research. For example, Stuttaford (2007) suggests that often homeless young people find themselves with reduced access to therapeutic landscapes, through which they may advocate for their mental health needs and rights (e.g. access to G.P's, education).

At this point, I made contact with a national organisation which supports homeless young people and arranged to visit them. During the visit, I learned that the issue of emotional wellbeing was a key area of importance to many homeless young people and yet they felt this was often overlooked at a socio-political level. I recall feeling slightly disappointed that, despite this identified need for support, the organisation had limited experience of the role of clinical psychology. I felt excited to share an understanding with them and listen to their ideas about how such a role may be useful in supporting the young people that they worked with.

This experience was a real turning point in my research journey. I felt inspired and motivated to understand more about the potential relevance of clinical psychology in this

area. Consequently, I immersed myself in existing research and policy to seek a unique research angle on the area of youth homelessness. I recall conflicting feelings of enthusiasm and trepidation; I felt as if I lacked a sense of ‘belonging’ and ‘home’ within the subject area, given that much of the relevant research originated from the disciplines of sociology and housing. This was a challenge to my sense of security and certainty. However, by exploring these feelings in supervision, I was able to develop a much broader, critical and holistic understanding of the potential relevance of clinical psychology (Miller and McClelland, 2006). This process enabled me to think further about the transferable knowledge and experience that I could usefully apply towards conceptualising a piece of psychological research in to this area.

Chapter 2: Conceptualising and Planning the Project

At this point, I began developing a research idea which sought to explore the experiences of young people in making the journey out of homelessness. Given that the ways in which research is developed and conducted are shaped by epistemological standpoints (Forrester, 2010), I considered it to be important to spend time reflecting upon my own epistemological position.

I understand myself to have more relativist, social constructionist approach towards knowledge. As Forrester articulates, I believe that “the world is not a simple reflection of how it actually is, but is created and sustained by social processes, particularly language” (pp. 22). A strong influence on this epistemological understanding has been my experience of clinical training, within which I have learnt about the wider social processes and contexts relevant to how mental health issues are understood (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2013).

This position influenced how I approached the research methodology and in particular how I approached the concept of homelessness, by encouraging me to consider the socio-political context through which homelessness could be experienced and understood. Having spent time with a homeless organisation discussing these issues, I learnt that there existed many ways in which homelessness may hold meaning in the lives of young people. I felt that to understand how young people experience making the journey out of homelessness, the issue of both identity and context were central. Consequently I considered that these reflections pointed towards a narrative methodology (Riessman, 2008)

Initially, I found it challenging to reach conceptual conclusions relating to 'homelessness' in the research design. Whilst I took time to carefully consider the existing evidence base, I found that there were several inconsistencies in terms of how researchers had approached decisions about how to conceptualise 'homelessness' and 'transitions out of homelessness'. Even across the United Kingdom (UK), there was evidence to suggest that services varied considerably in their statutory definitions of homeless and how they operationalized and applied these in approaches to service delivery (Quilgars, *et al.*, 2008).

Consequently, in line with the underlying social constructionist philosophy of the research, I set up a research advisory group (RAG) of young people and staff to develop these discussions further. I felt that this approach would enable me to consult upon both the research idea and how this could be conceptualised in a meaningful way to the individuals whose situation I was attempting to research (Morrow *et al.*, 2012). Recognising that it can be considered helpful to involve young people from local or national youth organisations (Morrow *et al.*, 2012), I re-approached the national organisation I had originally visited to collaborate in establishing the RAG.

As part of this process, I sought ethical approval from Lancaster University and I was able to recruit three young people and two members of staff to participate in the RAG. I recall being struck by the investment that both the young people and staff made to this project and I considered this a reflection of the importance that young people attributed to their active involvement in defining priorities for research and to having their voices heard. Considerate of this level of investment, I hosted a half day event at the university. As part of this event, young people shared their knowledge and expertise about the homelessness context whilst I sought to promote an awareness of the role of research in developing approaches to policy and service provision.

As part of the discussion, I shared my struggle in attempting to define 'homelessness' and what would constitute a 'transition out of homelessness'. I was curious to understand the personal meaning that young people attributed to these concepts. It was during these conversations that I was reminded of my own assumptions about their experience and how these may have been dominating my approach to developing the research design. For example, one of the group members said to me "before you can begin to define what homelessness means, you need to understand what a 'home' means to a young person". This statement had a powerful impact on how I viewed my ideas so far. I realised that my thinking had been dominated by assumptions relating to the physical dimensions of home which implicitly overlooked the personally meaningful dimensions that might hold relevance for young people. This prompted my interest in further understanding the meaning of 'home' to homeless young people and it was on the basis that I developed the idea to conduct a narrative literature review in this area.

Furthermore, the group challenged the assumption implicit in my initial research idea, that young people make linear and definable 'transitions' from homelessness on the basis that

homelessness could be represented a 'state of mind'. Indeed, as one young person stated "homelessness does not have a beginning, middle and an end". She qualified this with a description of her experience by explaining that despite having moved in to independent accommodation, at times she would still "feel homeless". As a result of these discussions, I decided to conceptualise the process by which young people sought to exit from homelessness as a 'journey' rather than a 'transition'. Furthermore, I concluded that there was a strong rationale for the inclusion criteria to be that young people identified themselves as having once been 'homeless' and assessed themselves as on the journey out of homelessness.

On reflection, I feel one of the strengths of this study is that the inclusion criteria extended beyond an objectivist stance to this area of human experience by enabling young people to self-define homelessness in relation to their experiences and current circumstances. Although such an approach may receive criticism on the basis of its validity, I feel that it allowed for a rich and dynamic exploration of the qualities of home and homelessness in the lives of young people and in particular how these influence their journeys out of homelessness.

Chapter 3: Conducting the Research Project

Recruitment

It is known that the process of undertaking qualitative research can pose a number of challenges to researchers (Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2007). One of the first challenges I encountered was in relation to recruitment. I contacted a number of national homeless organisations in attempt to assist dissemination of the research information to young people. However, I found that on occasion, my requests were declined on the basis that these large organisations were already committed to existing in-house research projects. Nevertheless, I

was left questioning the ethics of this decision. I did not consider that my request constituted an attempt to seek their participation as an organisation, nor was it intended to seek their permission for the research to take place. Rather my request was to share the information with young people so that they could make an informed decision about their participation. Whilst I strongly value the role of organisations in protecting the wellbeing of young people, a reasoned balance needs to be achieved between protecting the best interests of young people whilst respecting their right to make their own informed judgement about participation in research (Daley, 2013; Claveirole, 2004). The research proposal had been subject to ethical scrutiny under the university hosting the research. Since the inclusion criteria from the research related to individuals over the age of 16 in the UK, potential participants did not require an adult to provide informed consent (BPS, 1995). Furthermore, whilst homeless young people may be considered a vulnerable population (Vostanis, 2010), under the Mental Capacity Act, a functional approach is adopted whereby the assumption is always that someone has capacity to make an informed decision unless there is a particular reason to consider otherwise.

Despite my efforts to promote the research to organisations across the country, I faced significant difficulty recruiting young people to take part. Consequently, I took steps to strengthen the recruitment strategy. I revisited discussions with the RAG and we agreed that a further way to promote the research could be via social networking sites such as 'Twitter' and 'Facebook'. These methods are gathering increasing attention as an effective means by which to promote research participation (Browne, 2005). Consequently, I submitted an ethical amendment in order to adapt the recruitment strategy so that I could recruit in this way. Furthermore, I re-contacted a nationwide membership body for homelessness organisations across the country who then assisted me to identify a range of smaller organisations through which I could promote information about the study.

The Interview Process

Dickson-Swift *et al.*, observe that as qualitative researchers "...we go into other people's lives, sometimes at points of crisis and stress" (2007, pp.330). With this in mind, I was aware of the potential that participants may share painful, distressing and intimate accounts of their experiences. A number of young people shared distressing stories, yet I was struck by how calm and composed many of the young people were during the process of interview. Conversely, I found hearing stories characterised by abuse, loss, rejection and social-exclusion very emotive and at times I felt intense feelings of sadness, anger and guilt. I recall one young person saying "I won't share that part with you, you won't want to hear it". On reflection, my feelings of guilt and anger were underpinned by my increasing understanding that I was positioned as part of a wider societal system that actively distances itself from these painful stories (Burman, 2008). This left me wondering to what extent young people feel that there is even a place for their stories in wider society. Indeed, this was illustrated when Martha talked about 'the people' only expressing an interest in aspects of her story that represented hope and triumph over adversity. She suggested that society had turned away from her at the points at which she felt hopeless. Aware that feelings of sadness, guilt and anger are often experienced by qualitative researchers (Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2007), I explored these feelings through the process of supervision. Through this dialogue, I was able to reflect on these feelings critically and formulate an understanding that helped me to reflect upon how these processes may influence how young people journey through homelessness and understand their place in society.

Throughout the research process, I felt privileged to have been in a position to hear young people's stories. The theme of researchers feeling privileged in this way has been documented in literature (Johnson, 2009). However, on occasion I felt that this sense of privilege impacted on my position as a researcher. For example, after one particularly

emotive interview, a young person asked me if I would join him for a coffee and look around the hostel that he used to live in (and in which the interview had taken place). I recall feeling slightly conflicted – on the one hand, I was distinctly aware of the ethical importance of maintaining appropriate boundaries (BPS, 1995). Yet, I recognised that I could not be completely disconnected from my own values as a researcher in this context. I felt privileged that this young person had invited me into his life in this way. Consequently, I felt that I had both a personal and ethical responsibility as both a researcher and as a member of wider society to bear witness to, and validate, his lived experience.

For me, this was one of the most powerful aspects of my research journey.

Afterwards the young person commented how much it had meant to him that I had taken the time to learn more about his life and the work he was involved in. This experience taught me that whilst the research relationship is neither intended to be personal nor therapeutic, it is possible that the experience can be experienced therapeutically by both the participant and researcher (Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2007). It also highlighted the tension that can exist between maintaining your identity as a researcher and maintaining your integrity as an individual with personal values.

Another challenge that I faced related to the issue of anonymity. Prior to interview, I engaged in detailed discussions with each young person about issues of confidentiality and anonymity (BPS, 1995). However, on one occasion a participant requested that his information not be anonymised in the write-up of the research as he wanted to maintain ownership of his story. It struck me that implicit in the design of my research was an unquestioned assumption about preserving anonymity, through mechanisms such the removal of any identifying information and allocation of pseudonyms. Indeed, such an assumption is embedded into ethical guidelines about the conduct of research (for example BPS, 1995).

However, after further consideration, I discovered the importance that participants may ascribe to maintaining ownership over their stories and I realised that allocating pseudonyms held the potential to reduce this sense of ownership. Indeed, Grinyer (2002) states: “There is after all an ethical dimension to a researcher deciding on behalf of respondents that their identity should be concealed without verifying the respondents’ wishes” (pp.4).

Unfortunately, given the tight timescales involved with the research, it was not logistically possible to submit an ethical amendment to address this issue. However, I agreed in collaboration with the young person, that following the submission of the thesis, and prior to disseminating the findings more broadly, I would submit an ethical amendment to request that his name be included in wider dissemination of the research.

Given the recruitment challenges and timescales of the project, I was only able to recruit seven young people to participate in the research. Unfortunately, one young person withdrew from the research due to ill-health. Although, I had invested significant effort into recruitment and captured a rich and in-depth amount of data, I acknowledge that the small sample size could represent a limitation to the research. Furthermore, five of the young people who expressed an interest in participating were connected with a participation organisation. I worried that this circumstance could represent an additional vulnerability of the research, given that these individuals may share similar experiences of sharing their stories.

On reflection, underpinning these concerns was that I anticipated criticism regarding the generalizability of the findings. However, through the process of supervision, I was able to recognise that whilst in a professional context, themes of generalizability are considered important, this was not necessarily consistent with the underpinning philosophy of this research. Indeed, Riessman (2008) asserts that although the findings of narrative analysis may not be considered generalizable in a ‘traditional’ sense, they can still allow for

inferences about social processes as well as generating knowledge that may become the basis for further empirical study. Consequently, I learnt that there was not a 'truth' to be discovered, rather the research aimed to provide a meaningful illustration of the unique and diverse experiences of the individuals who took part. Furthermore, despite the small sample size, I had gathered a large amount of rich and in-depth data.

Experience of Narrative Analysis

My experience of undertaking a narrative analysis was challenging. At times I felt overwhelmed by the amount of information within individual stories and at first I struggled to work out how I might begin to assimilate this in a meaningful way. Having not undertaken narrative analysis previously, I sought after the security and safety of a particular set of 'guidelines'. However, I found that there is not a single approach or 'right way' to conduct narrative analysis (Weatherhead, 2011; Riessman, 2008). Despite the challenging nature of the methodology, I realised that this approach offered me the opportunity for flexibility and creativity that I had not encountered before in research. To help me to develop my confidence and understanding, I developed a narrative analysis supervision group in collaboration with peers. This process was a valuable source of guidance and support for me throughout my research journey.

I considered narrative analysis an appropriate methodology for the research for a number of reasons. Firstly, it aligned with the social constructionist epistemology of the research as it places central importance in the role of context (Weatherhead, 2011; Riessman, 2008). Secondly, whilst other qualitative approaches, such as Grounded Theory or Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis could have provided a detailed analytical framework through which to explore the experiences of young people, I felt that a narrative methodology enabled preservation of the sequential features of young people's accounts

which the RAG had identified as being important (Riessman, 2008). Furthermore, its non-directive philosophy in relation to interviewing practices offered the opportunity for young people to focus on the aspects of their homelessness journey's that were important to them. Finally, I feel that an important feature of narrative enquiry is its potential to contribute to social change through the opportunity it allows for encouraging a socio-political dialogue of the experiences of individuals.

Chapter 4: The Journey Continues

Dissemination of the Research

Many young people stories described the on-going nature of their homelessness journeys. Reflective of this position, this research does not have a defined end-point either. My experience of working alongside the RAG, and hearing the stories of the young people who gave up their time to participate in this research, has left me determined to disseminate the findings. It is planned that the RAG will be reconvened in the coming months to develop a dissemination strategy. A particular focus of this will be to consider the most meaningful ways to share this information with young people, services and organisations (BPS, 2006). To promote further interest in this area, I also intend to submit this research for publication in a multi-disciplinary academic journal. In doing so, I hope to engage more of the clinical psychology community in discussions about advancing the contribution that the profession can potentially make in this area.

Personal and Professional Development

Finally, an important aspect of my research journey has been in relation to my own personal and professional development. At the outset of the project, I recall feeling daunted in relation to whether I was capable of conceptualising a thesis in this area given both the ideological and methodological challenges it presented. For example, my decision to conduct

a literature review to explore 'meanings of home' to young people was incredibly complex. I needed to wrestle with complex ideological concepts and areas of practice that were relatively unfamiliar to me (such as sociology and housing). Consequently, at times throughout my journey, I have felt emotionally exhausted, which I recognise is an experience not uncommon to researchers (Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2007). Indeed, I have worked hard to address these experiences in supervision.

Looking back, I feel proud and also privileged to have taken on this piece of work and in doing so, responded to the areas that were identified as important to the young people who participated in the RAG. I also recognise that as a trainee clinical psychologist, there are likely to be limitations to my knowledge in areas relating to the wide range of disciplines concerned with youth homelessness. Nonetheless, I think this experience has helped me to journey further towards my professional 'home' and identity as a clinical psychologist, by helping me to recognise that I can work in integrative ways and with attention to the socio-cultural position within which individuals who experience psychological distress may find themselves positioned. Most importantly, I have learned that whilst there is a central role for evidence-based practice and theoretical models in governing psychological assessment, formulation and intervention, it is important not to lose sight of the credibility in the stories that people tell.

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Section Four: Ethics Documents

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Research Protocol**Young people, Home and Homelessness: A Narrative Exploration****Researchers****Principal Investigator****Jennifer Hewitt****Trainee Clinical Psychologist**

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Introduction

According to research commissioned by leading charity Centrepoin, in 2008, approximately 75,000 young people across the UK experienced a period of homelessness (Quilgars, Johnsen and Pleace, 2008). This figure included: young people who met the definition for 'homeless' under statutory legislative definitions; young people using supported housing services; and approximately 3,800 young people who 'slept rough'³ within this period.

Whilst 'youth homelessness' has often been conceptualised as a 'housing issue', recent developments in the field of sociological, psychological and psychiatric research have drawn attention to the social and psychological wellbeing of this group (Fitzpatrick, 2000; Collins & Barker, 2009; Edidin, Garmin, Hunter & Karnick, 2012). Young people who experience homelessness are often suggested to be at an increased risk of poor mental health outcomes compared to their non-homeless peers (Rosenthal and Rotheram-Borus, 2005; Taylor, Stuttaford, Broad & Vostanis, 2006; Martijin & Sharpe, 2006; Edidin et al., 2012). These difficulties have been shown to include higher rates of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress (see Edidin et al., 2012). Unfortunately, there is strong evidence to suggest that the major disruptive experience of becoming homeless not only places young people at risk of a range of adverse mental health outcomes, but also at a social disadvantage in terms of participation in employment, education and training opportunities (Rosenthal & Rotheram-Borus, 2005; Quilgars et al. 2008).

Consequently, it is not surprising that a growing body of research has become interested in increasing our understanding of the needs of this population of young people. To this end, a significant proportion of empirical literature has aimed to strengthen an understanding of young people's pathways into homelessness (Martijin & Sharpe, 2005, Hyde 2005; Mallett, Rosenthal & Keys, 2005), risk factors associated with homelessness (Eddin et al., 2012) and the impact of homeless on a range of outcomes related to physical, emotional, cognitive and educational functioning (Martijin & Sharpe, 2005; Shin et al., 2008; Eddin et al., 2012). However, so far, there has been little discussion about how young people navigate pathways out of homelessness. Indeed, a recent literature review in the area of youth homelessness concluded that research to date has overly-focussed on vulnerability,

³ The term 'sleeping rough' is used to describe the experience of spending the night sleeping on the streets as opposed to a shelter.

deficits, pathology, risk taking behaviour and problems; factors which may be incongruent with achieving an understanding of more positive constructs of wellbeing (Edidin et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, some researchers have attempted to provide an insight into young people's transitions out of homelessness (Milburn et al., 2009; Mayock et al. 2011). Predominantly from within sociological (Fitzpatrick, 2000) and housing studies (Mayock et al., 2011), research approaches have mostly adopted longitudinal designs and have utilized biographical approaches such as life history interviews as a means to understand the complex interplay of factors that may influence young people's experiences. This research has demonstrated that the process of exiting homelessness is complex and contingent upon a range of different areas including: access to housing; support from family, peers and professionals; personal motivation; and how these influences interact with personal and structural factors (Mayock et al. 2011).

However, whilst this research offers a valuable contribution towards understanding the experience of young people who transition out of homelessness, there is less published research which aims to explore this process of transition from a psychological perspective. This gap within the existing literature has important implications, given that transitions out of homelessness have been argued to be "*neither easy, nor emotionally uncomplicated*" (Hyde, 2005, pg 181). Young people who experience homelessness may have limited access to the protective factors that psychological models traditionally associate with emotional resilience (Collins & Barker, 2009). Consequently, it is argued that the experiences of homeless young people do not always align with these mainstream psychological understandings, but are nonetheless characterised by personal agency and self-determination towards achieving emotional wellbeing (Ungar, 2006). Consequently, understanding young people's experiences within these existing psychological frameworks may fail to attend to the wider socio-cultural and structural issues. It is proposed that further research is needed to offer such a perspective. The proposal for this research aims to address this gap in the literature through its unique narrative approach to the subject area.

In addition to a lack of research which aims to explore young people's transitions out of homelessness, there is growing criticism that existing research in this area has focused its attention too heavily on individual risk and protective factors (e.g. Milburn et al., 2009), a focus which arguably detracts from the political, cultural and structural issues which may

have shaped young people's experiences and how these are understood by researchers (Rosenthal & Rotheram-Borus, 2005; Zerger, 2008). For example, social exclusion and discrimination may be argued to impact significantly on the extent to which young homeless people may evoke their rights to mental health support and seek psychological help in their attempts to transition out of homelessness (Stuttaford, 2007). Thus, in order to achieve a more holistic, contextualised understanding of their experiences, it is important that future research positions itself more towards understanding the significance of how young people resolve these challenges and make the transition within the context of the societies they live (Lindsey et al., 2000, Malindi and Theron (2010).

It is important to consider the implications of these debates on how practitioners develop psychological services and interventions for this client group. Many existing policies, service models and available psychological interventions have been criticised for failing to account the circumstances faced by homeless young people (Lindsey et al., 2000; Vostanis, 2007; Berckmans et al., 2012). For example, young people may encounter difficulties accessing mental health services with generic criteria due to the multiplicity of their needs, increased mobility, lack of advocacy and societal stigmatisation (Vostanis, 2007). Thus, in order to complement existing research, it is important that future research is approached from the voices of young people themselves, so that their psychological needs are understood within their social, cultural and political contexts.

As a profession, clinical psychology is increasingly acknowledging how psychological wellbeing is closely related to social and political issues. Indeed, commentators from within the clinical psychology profession have observed that the field is becoming increasingly concerned with promoting a much wider programme of health and wellbeing beyond the delivery of psychological therapies and involving greater integration with areas such as education, social care and the third sector (Kinderman, 2013), . Understanding the diverse experiences of young people who have made the transition out of homelessness may hold valuable insights towards how clinical psychologists (and other mental health practitioners) situate their role in supporting these young people within these systems.

Rationale for the current study

In summary, the majority of previous research exploring the experiences of young people who are homelessness has focussed on pathways into homelessness, risk factors

associated with homelessness and the impact on homelessness on outcomes for young people. This research intends to strengthen an understanding of young people's experiences of transitions out of homelessness. This information has been argued to be critical in developing support for this group of young people (Mayock et al., 2011). Moreover, a significant proportion of research has tended to adopt an epistemological position which has characterised homeless young people as a homogenous population. Crucially, this gap in the literature leaves little in the way of understanding the context of these young people's experiences (including social, cultural and location specific influences) and the personal meanings they ascribe to these.

Consequently, this present study will adopt a narrative methodology to explore the stories of young people, within the UK, who consider themselves to be making the journey out of homelessness. The proposed research is argued to be timely in terms of guiding the profession of clinical psychology towards integrating its efforts with a wider community based programme of health and wellbeing.

Design

This research will use a qualitative design (utilising a narrative methodology) in keeping with exploratory nature of the research question.

Service User Involvement in the design of the research

The research has been developed in collaboration with a small research advisory group made up of young people who have experienced homelessness. Ethical approval for the research advisory group was granted in July 2013 by the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (see appendix L).

The advisory group has served to ensure young people's participation at the most essential level of research development. The research advisory group is made up of young people (aged 18-25) who are members of the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The [REDACTED] is made up of young people across England who are homeless/have experienced homelessness. It is proposed that the group will provide

consultation to the research at different stages within the research process. Specifically, in terms of providing direction and feedback to key parts of the study relating to:

- The relevance of the research question and whether this is considered useful and meaningful to them.
- Defining key concepts and definitions within the research.
- Developing an effective recruitment strategy and promoting the research.
- Developing participant information documents.
- Disseminating and feeding back the research in ways that are meaningful and engaging for the broader population of young people who have experienced homelessness as well as the staff and services who come into contact with them.

Membership of the group is likely to be fluid throughout the duration of the research process; this is given the potentially transitory nature of the client group. Involvement may also reflect the different interests, skills and experiences that individuals may wish to offer to the research project. Moreover, contact between the researcher and the advisory group may take different forms, for example, face to face contact, email correspondence and phone contact. Young people who form the research advisory group will not be recruited to participate in the main research itself. All young people who participate in the advisory group will be over the age of 18. To provide an additional layer of expertise to the advisory group, staff members associated with [REDACTED] have also been invited to participate in the research advisory group.

The main research study

Participants

Despite a growing body of international research in the area of understanding youth homelessness, there are significant methodological debates about how identifiers such as 'youth', 'homelessness' and 'transition/exit' are operationalized and defined (Edidin et al., 2012; Quilgars, 2008; Mayock et al., 2011). It may be argued that these identifiers may be defined relative to the context in which research takes place (for example, in accordance with international definitions within statute and policy, as well as dominant social and cultural understandings [Quilgars, et al. 2011]). Quilgars (2008) observes that there is long standing evidence that UK local authorities have varied considerably in their statutory definitions of homeless and how they operationalize and apply these. This ambiguity is also argued to be

reflected in the case of ‘non-statutory’ definitions, which are applied across different housing associations and charitable/third sector associations. These agencies often use their own criteria for assessing who is and who is not ‘homeless’.

Researchers looking to define the concept of a ‘transition out of homelessness’ with both adult populations and child populations have often applied key parameters relating to ‘destination’ (the setting to which he/she has transitioned to and relative dependence/independence from the state) and ‘duration’ (number of days having maintained a successful exit) (see Mayock et al., 2009). Yet a study by Mayock et al. (2009) found that had they applied a definition of ‘transition’ by parameters relating to financial independence or relative independence from the state, none of the study’s young people would have been deemed to have exited homelessness – this is despite the fact that many of these young people no longer identified themselves with the term ‘homeless’ and considered themselves to have ‘transitioned’.

Given that the epistemological approach underpinning this research is consistent with a ‘social constructionist’ perspective, the researcher consulted with a research advisory group of young people to discuss this methodological issue. Young people stated that the term ‘home’ and ‘homelessness’ held different meanings according to each individual. Furthermore, it was stated that: “homelessness does not have a beginning, middle and an end”. Therefore in collaboration with the group, it was agreed that the inclusion criteria for the study would apply to young people who identify themselves as having once been ‘homeless’ and assess themselves as somehow along the journey out of homelessness.

Young people are defined within the research as between the ages of 16-25.

Recruitment and Procedure

The researcher will distribute an information pack to a range of major community and voluntary services across the UK who support young homeless people (this includes: the National Youth Reference Group, St Basils, Crisis, Depaul UK, Foyer federation, Centrepoint UK, CAYSH, HYH, Young Devon). Staff will be invited to share information about the study with young people associated with their respective organisations.

The information pack will provide details about the research and include a covering letter (see appendix B), information sheet specifically for staff (see appendix C) and an information sheet for young people (see appendix D). The information sheets for both young

people and staff have been developed in partnership with the research advisory group of young people and professionals consulting on this project. Each information sheet explains: the purpose of the study; details relative to the decision to participate in the study (such as issues relating to confidentiality, anonymity, the risks and benefits of taking part; the voluntary nature of the research); as well as detailing how young people can express an interest in participating in the research. The information pack will also include poster/advert (see appendix E) for organisations to publicise the research either within their office/community venues, on their website, and/or on their official pages via social networking sites. The researcher will also utilise social networking sites such as twitter and face-book as a means to publicise the research to relevant organisations and young people (attaching a copy of the poster – appendix E). To further promote the research, the researcher will contact these organisations directly by phone to raise awareness of the research project. Where possible, the researcher may also offer to provide a presence at these services to discuss the project with staff and young people, subject to permission from the organisation.

Young people will be invited to contact the researcher directly to find out more information or to express an interest in taking part. The information sheet contains the researcher's contact details. Young people can also make contact with the researcher indirectly through members of staff within these organisations, who will then pass on the young person's expression of interest to the researcher. The researcher will then contact the young person directly. The information sheet also invites young people to pass on the information pack to peers who may no longer be in contact with support services but who may wish to find out more information about participating in the research. Should the researcher recruit any participants via this route (i.e. young people who are no longer in contact with support services), the researcher will encourage their access to support services where appropriate. Young people who wish to find out more information about the research and/or express an interest in taking part may contact the researcher by telephone, text, email or free-post (using an enclosed 'expression of interest' form – see appendix F). For those young people who express an interest in taking part but who are not eligible to take part or make contact following the recruitment phase of the research project, they will be thanked for their expression of interest but informed that they will not be able to participate. This possibility will be explicitly referenced on the information sheet. If this initial recruitment phase does not result in enough participants, the researcher will re-distribute the information pack to organisations with a further covering letter (see appendix G)

Interviews will be conducted at community facilities locally convenient for participants (for example: children's centres, youth centres/facilities, support organisations which the young person is in contact with, local academic institutions. The researcher will adopt the Lancashire Care lone working policy and be considerate of Lancaster University lone working guidelines. Young people will be invited to bring a key worker/friend along to the interview for support if they wish. Should this be the case, the researcher will provide information to the accompanying individual about the nature of the interview process. Once the recruitment phase of the project is complete, services will be contacted via letter (see appendix H) to request that they remove any advertising of the study in order to minimise any disappointment for young people.

Immediately prior to the interview, the researcher will read through the information sheet with the young person to check that they have understood the information and offer the opportunity to ask any questions. The researcher will offer to read out a copy of the information sheet to young people who may experience difficulty reading this. If the young person demonstrates that they have understood this information and that they are aware of the voluntary nature of their participation, they will be asked to sign a consent form. If the young person does not consent then the interview will not be conducted. Young people will be reminded of the limits to confidentiality. Each young person will be reminded of their right to withdraw from the research study at any time (including their right to withdraw their data up to two weeks after the interview has taken place). In seeking consent from young people, the researcher will engage in a dialogue with the young person to explore their understanding of what they are consenting to (using the information sheet as a tool). The young person will be asked to sign two copies of the consent form – one of these will be kept by the researcher and the other one will be kept by the young person. Copies of the consent form will contain details should the young person have any queries about the research.

The interviews will last approximately 45 -90 minutes although the duration of the interview is deemed to be flexible subject to the individual needs and preferences of the young person. Demographic details will be collected at the start of the interview. After the interview, the participant will be provided with a de-brief sheet (see appendix K). Young people may be interviewed more than once if required and if they are willing to meet again. If it is not possible to meet with the young person directly for a follow up interview, the researcher may utilise alternative forms of communication such as telephone or SKYPE.

Materials

Data will be collected using a semi-structured interview format which will invite young people to tell the story about their transition out of homelessness. The main interview will follow a narrative framework aimed at helping the interviewee generate a narrative account of the important events in their life, in this case focussed on the particular topic of their homelessness journey and their transition out of this situation. Reismann (1993) recommends that researchers must carefully consider how they facilitate narrative telling in interviews. It is important to ask questions that open up topics and enable those being interviewed to construct answers that are meaningful to them (Reismann, 1993). Therefore the researcher will aim to employ a flexible stance with less structure within the interview schedule, instead approaching the interview as conversation in order to enable young people to have more control over the information they share without interviewing practices interfering with this. A small number of broad open-ended questions about the area of enquiry have been be drafted (see appendix I). In order to protect participants' anonymity, they will be given the option of choosing a pseudonym prior to the interview, or instead be assigned one by the researcher for use within the write-up of the research.

Interviews will be recorded on a digital tape recorder and subsequently transcribed by the researcher. The researcher may also take field notes immediately following the interview to record/highlight any other aspects of the interview that may be pertinent to consider in the analysis. In order to protect the participant's anonymity, they will be given the option of choosing a pseudonym, or be assigned one by the researcher, for use within the write-up of the research. The researcher may also take field notes immediately following the interview to record/highlight any other aspects of the interview that may be pertinent to consider in the analysis.

During the study, non-electronic information (such as notebooks) will be stored in a secure filing cabinet at the researcher's home address. The data that will be retained for storage will include the consent forms, all raw data (for example, interview transcripts) and any coded data produced during analysis. Consent forms will be scanned and saved electronically. All electronic information (including audio-recordings, transcripts and scanned consent documentation) will be stored in password-protected and encrypted files on the university's secure server. Audio-recordings of participants' voices will be deleted from the digital tape recorder immediately following the point at which they have been transferred to

the university's secure server. In the meantime, the digital recorder will be stored securely in a locked cabinet. Following the completion of the study, all of the data generated by the study will be stored in a secure cabinet for ten years in accordance with the Lancaster University data management policy.

Should participants subsequently request that their data be destroyed following the interview, the researcher will aim to ensure that their data is destroyed and removed from any datasets. However once the data has been anonymised and analysed it might not be possible for it to be withdrawn, although every effort will be made to extract their data up to the point of publication.

Data Analysis

Narrative analysis will be used to analyse the data (McAdams, 1993, Crossley, 2000). Narrative analysis is considered to offer the potential to provide a rich and "*unique perspective*" (Weatherhead, 2011 p.47), in particular by offering an account of how young people think and feel about important events in their lives, including how they view themselves, with attention to the personal, social and political influences on their narratives. It offers the flexibility to provide a contextualised understanding of the data, guided by the stories of young people themselves. The researcher will also invite the research supervisors to listen to taped recordings of interviews and view coded transcripts, in order to provide feedback that may enhance the research process.

Dissemination Strategy

The results will be written up and submitted to the university. The final report may also be submitted for publication in an academic or professional journal. The researcher intends to work in partnership with the research advisory group to discuss a wider dissemination strategy of the research findings to interested young people and services nationwide. This may include presenting the findings at relevant conferences and events. The researcher may also submit a paper based on the research findings to a specialist journal or publication. In dialogue with the research advisory group, the researcher will also produce a summary report for participants containing findings/messages. Young people will be asked at interview if they would like to receive a copy of this.

Practical issues (cost and logistics)

There will be practical costs involved in a number of aspects of the research. There will be costs associated with facilitating meetings of the research advisory group meetings. These costs will be covered by [REDACTED] and the DClInPsy Programme. Photocopying, mail costs and the researchers' travel expenses will be covered by the Clinical Psychology Programme. Use of the phone to contact participants will be paid for by the researcher. Refreshments will be provided for at the expense of the researcher.

Young people will not be offered any financial incentives to take part in the research. This is to protect against any young people being in a position where they feel coerced to participate by a financial reward. However, participants will be recompensed for any incurred costs or out-of-pocket expenses up to a limit of £10. These costs will be covered by the DClInPsy programme.

Ethical issues**Safety and support for young people**

It is not expected that this study will be distressing to those young people who participate. However, given the sensitive and emotive nature of the issues discussed, it is possible that talking about some of their experiences may affect how they feel either during or following the interview. It also recognised that a reasoned balance needs to be struck between protecting participants and recognising their own agency and capacity to decide what they wish to share (BPS, 2010). To ensure that young people are supported during the interview process, the researcher will ensure the following:

1. Prior to interview, the researcher will make young people aware of the potential for the discussion to affect how they feel either during or following the interview. The researcher will remind young people that they have control over what they wish to share as part of the interview process.
2. Young people are invited to bring a supportive other along to the interview e.g. a key worker, friend or family member to interview.
3. Prior to the interview taking place, the researcher and the young person (and staff member in attendance where this is the case will have an informal discussion about

the young person's expectations and wishes regarding what they would like to happen should they feel distressed during or following the interview.

4. Should a participant become distressed during the course of the interview, the researcher will pause the interview temporarily and allow them time to take a break to recover. The researcher will offer them the option of continuing with the interview, rescheduling the interview for another time, or withdrawing from the research (without having to give a reason). The researcher will utilize her clinical skills to support any young people who become distressed during interview.
5. Every young person will be de-briefed following the interview. This will include a discussion between the researcher and the young person about their experience of the interview and how they can obtain additional support locally should they wish. The young person will also be provided with written signposting information to local community, statutory and voluntary services. The researcher will take responsibility to help facilitate access to support where the young person needs assistance.
6. If the participant has an identified key worker, then they will be advised to seek support from that worker with support from the researcher. If the participant is no longer associated with a service or agency providing them with support, the researcher will signpost them to the appropriate local service/agency to offer support.

Informed Consent

Young people who have experienced homelessness are often referred to as a vulnerable group. Accordingly, it is important to address where possible the impact of any potential power differential between researcher and participant and between any services/organisations acting as 'gatekeepers' for the recruitment, each of which may impact on a young person's decision to participate. Safeguards will be put in place to ensure that young people are given ample opportunity to understand the nature, purpose and anticipated consequences of the research project. Participants will also be reminded that their decision about whether or not to participate will not affect their access to services or support. At the point of recruitment, young people will be provided with an information sheet containing a clear statement of those aspects of the research which are relevant to their decision about whether or not to participate – including the research aims, the research procedure, what would be involved in their participation, and specific details relating to anonymity, confidentiality and their right to withdraw (see appendix D). Following this, young people

will have an opportunity to discuss this information again with the researcher when they make initial contact to enquire about the research, and once again at the interview stage before the interview commences.

All young people who participate will be over the age of 16 which is the age at which the British Psychological Society indicates that an individual can provide their consent to participate in research (BPS, 2009). Indeed, within clinical practice in the UK, individuals who are over the age of 16 years are considered to be autonomous adults (Hunter & Pierscionek, 2007). However, to ensure that this research process is considerate of the unique circumstances and needs of individual young people, the researcher will adopt a cautious approach and consider key principles relating to Gillick competency, Fraser guidelines and the Mental Capacity Act, when making decisions about whether a young person is mature enough to consent to their participation.

Confidentiality

The researcher will remind participants of the following; that any information they give will be treated as confidential; all identifying information will be removed during the transcription phase; and information will not be provided to services with which they are in contact with. Participants will be reminded that the only exception to this is if they state anything which may indicate a risk to themselves or anyone else; in this case, the researcher may have to take further action. The researcher would endeavor to take any further action in collaboration with the young person concerned utilizing clinical risk assessment skills. If this should occur, the researcher will seek advice from the research supervisors and take appropriate action to manage the risk. This may include notifying other professionals. The researcher will ensure that, at point of first contact (e.g. when young people receive the information pack), young people are made aware of the limitations of maintaining confidentiality including the researcher's legal and ethical obligations. Breaches of confidentiality will only occur in exceptional circumstances where there is sufficient evidence to raise serious concerns about; the safety of the young person; the safety or welfare of another child or vulnerable adult. Should this be the case, the researcher will bring the interview to a halt, explain to the participant that the information they have given highlights a risk/safeguarding issue, and explore the issue further to ensure that either the participant or other individual is not at continued risk of harm. Where appropriate, the researcher will

request additional information from the participant to determine whether further action needs to be taken. Should further action need to be taken, the researcher will report the safeguarding issue to the appropriate agency. The researcher will make all decisions relating to safeguarding/confidentiality in dialogue with the young person and with guidance from the research supervisors.

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Timescales

May – June 2013	First meeting with the research advisory group. Prepare and submit ethics application to University Ethics Committee.
August – Oct 2013	Following approval from ethic committee, begin recruiting young people to take part.
August- Dec 2013	Interviews/Transcription
Dec – April 2014	Analysis/Write up the research. Meet with research advisory group.
Jan – April 2014	Submit drafts to supervisors
May 2014	Complete write up of project.
June – August 2014	Viva. Meet with research advisory group to discuss dissemination of research findings.
August 2014	Dissemination of results.

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Appendix A: Research Advisory Group Ethics Application

Ethical research at Lancaster: STAGE 1 SELF-ASSESSMENT (PART B)

This form should be completed if you have selected option 5(f) in Part A of the stage 1 self-assessment form, or following discussion with RSO. The information provided will be reviewed by the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). If you cannot easily fit the information within the space below, consider whether a stage 2 form would be more appropriate.

Principal Investigator/ Student name: Jennifer Hewitt

pFACT ID number (if applicable – staff only):

6. Please state the aims and objectives of the project (no more than 150 words, in lay-person's language):

I would like to establish a small research advisory group to consult on the development of my thesis research. The main thesis research project will aim to explore the experiences of young people who have transitioned out of homelessness. The research advisory group will be made up of young people (aged 18-25) who are members of the [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] is made up of young people [REDACTED] who are homeless/have experienced homelessness. The group regularly consults with national/local government to develop their involvement opportunities for young people. The researcher intends to develop a small research advisory group made up of [REDACTED] members to consult on the development phase of the research and throughout the project.

7. Please explain why you consider the ethical risk to be low, with particular reference to any areas of potential concern highlighted in Q.3 and Q.4 (PART A):

Please see supplementary information.

8. If your research involves human participants, please summarise (as applicable) how participants will be recruited and consent obtained (copies of supporting documentation - information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc should be attached, if available*).

Full supporting documentation attached

Supporting documentation will be submitted if grant awarded

Supporting documentation to be submitted later (please include details below)

Please see supplementary information.

9. If you have any other relevant information please provide details below:

Supplementary Information

Responses to Question 7 and 9

Young people who participate in the advisory group will all belong [REDACTED] [REDACTED] familiar with providing service-user consultation to local/national government, services and organisations) and they will not be recruited to participate in the main research itself. The [REDACTED] is facilitated, managed and staffed [REDACTED] (a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]) and therefore all these young people have existing direct links into support services. All young people who participate in the advisory group will be over the age of 18. Young people involved in the advisory group will always be accompanied by a member of staff from the [REDACTED] - meetings will take place at either Lancaster University or at the [REDACTED] offices. Any expenses incurred by members of the advisory group will be covered between the [REDACTED] and the DClinPsy programme.

To establish the advisory group, the Coordinator for the [REDACTED] will circulate an information sheet (appendix a) inviting existing members of [REDACTED] to participate. It is proposed that the researcher will meet with the advisory group at approximately three different stages throughout the research: at the development phase of the research protocol (please see next paragraph); once the findings and recommendations have been drafted; and at the conclusion of the research to discuss approaches to dissemination. Young people involved in the advisory group will offer their expertise related to the research process and therefore will not be expected to discuss information of a personal, sensitive or distressing nature. Members of the advisory group can choose how they wish to contribute to the group – for example, by attending face to face meetings or communicating with the researcher via phone, email or via the coordinator of the [REDACTED]. Members will also be reminded that they can participate in any or all of the different stages of the research project dependent on their interests, knowledge and skills. It will be made clear to members of the advisory group that they may withdraw from the research advisory group at any point. Young people and staff who express an interest in participating in the advisory group will be asked to sign a consent form (appendix b) prior to participating in the group. Throughout the course of the research, the [REDACTED] coordinator may identify other young people and staff who wish to be involved and the same process will be followed.

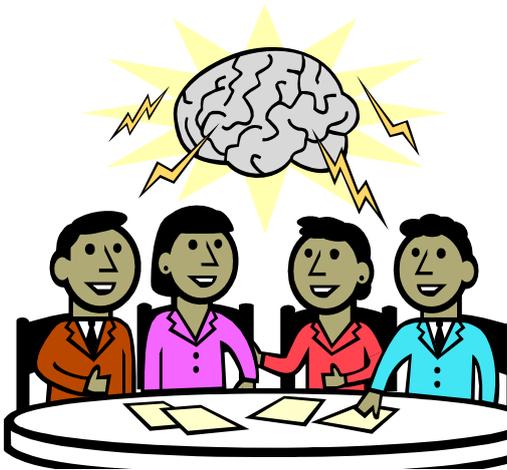
At this early stage, the research proposal is still under development. A small advisory group of young people [REDACTED] to consult at this stage would ensure young people's participation at the most essential level of research development. For example, their expertise would assist the researcher to define key concepts within the research (e.g. concepts of 'homelessness' and 'transition'), establish the relevance of the research to young people and services, and to develop a recruitment strategy. Given that the part of the role of the advisory group will be to advise in the development of the research idea, it is suggested that approval for the group is required in advance of the full ethics application for the research itself. At the first meeting of the group, an informal group agreement will be drafted acknowledging expectations regarding the nature and level of the group's involvement in the research and how their contribution to the research will be acknowledged – this will be appended to the ethics application for the main research itself.

Jennifer Hewitt

Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Appendix B: Research Advisory Group Information Sheet

Research about Youth Homelessness!



I need your advice and expertise!

Insert organisation logo



Hi!!

My name is **Jenny Hewitt** and I'm a trainee clinical psychologist at Lancaster University.

As part of my training I am doing a research project about the experiences of young people who have been homeless. I am particularly interested in young people's stories about how they moved out of homelessness and what that was like.

Lots of services that support young people use research to help them plan how they provide support. I think it would be a good idea to focus on how young people move out of homelessness, so we can understand what might help with this. I think this would be useful information for services....but I want to know what you think!

I would like a group of young people from the (Insert organisation name) to provide me with some advice about whether this research might be useful and what might be the best way to do it. I hope that the group might be able to offer guidance and expertise about.....

- Whether this research would be useful?
- How I might promote the research so that young people across the country might hear about it and know how to take part.
- When I've finished the research, how I should share the findings with young people and services.

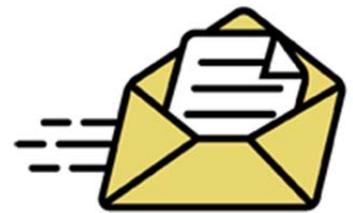


At this stage, I plan to call this group the 'Research Advisory Group' – but, once the group is set up we might think of a better name!

Before you decide whether or not you would like to take part in the Research Advisory Group, here is some important information you need to know.

1. To take part in the group, you need to be between the ages of 18-25 and belong to the(insert organisation name).

2. The group will meet about three times between May 2013 and May 2014. If you are interested, I will let you know when the meetings are taking place (I can contact you by phone, email or via ---- --from the -----). You can attend as few or as many of the meetings as you like.



3. The meetings will either be held at (insert organisation location) or at Lancaster University -----will be present for any group meetings and will make sure that all your travel arrangements are sorted out. You do not have to come along to all of the meetings – you can come to as many or as few as you like and can withdraw at any point.

4. If you would like to contribute your ideas, but would rather not meet for the group sessions, you can also contact me with your ideas and suggestions about the research idea!



5. If you choose to participate in the group at any stage of the project, myself and -----will make sure that any costs involved in your participation are covered, for example: travel costs and food.

If you would like to get involved, please contact -----her details are at the bottom of the page. Then, either myself or -----can get in touch with you to let you know when the meetings are.

If there is anything you would like to ask, you can get in touch with either myself or -----for more information:

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet!!

Jenny Hewitt
(email/contact number)

(email/contact number)

If you have any concerns, or if you would like to make a complaint about anything do to with the group and you do not want to speak directly to Jenny or-----, you can also contact Anna Daiches. Her address is: Dr Anna Daiches, Lancaster University Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YT. Her contact number is 01524 592970 and her email address is a.daiches@lancaster.ac.uk.

Appendix D: Research Advisory Group Consent Form



(Insert organisation logo)

I have read the information sheet and understand what it involved in participating in advisory group. Please tick below

I am above the age of 18.

I'm already a member of the (insert organisation name)

I agree to take part in a group discussion and understand that the researcher (Jenny Hewitt) will take notes about what we talk about.

I understand that the group will meet approximately three times between May 2013 and May 2014 to give advice about the research project.

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask Jenny and/or -----any questions that I have about participating in the group.

I understand that being a member of the research advisory group is entirely voluntary and I can withdraw from the group at any point during the research project, without giving a reason and without any of my rights being affected. However, my ideas and contributions to the research advisory group may still be used to help develop the research project.

I understand that I can get in touch with Jenny (the researcher) or -----) if I have any questions that I would like to ask about being part of the group (contact details are on the information sheet).

I consent to take part in the research advisory group.

Pease print your name here: _____

Please sign your name here: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Ethical Approval (Research Advisory Group)

Applicant: Jennifer Hewitt
Supervisor: Dr Anna Daiches
Department: DHR

LANCASTER
UNIVERSITY



29 May 2013

Dear Jennifer and Anna,

Re: Understanding the experiences of young people who transition out of homelessness

Thank you for submitting your research ethics application for the above project for review by the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (FHMREC). The application was recommended for approval by FHMREC, and on behalf of the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), I can confirm that approval has been granted for this research project.

As principal investigator your responsibilities include:

- ensuring that (where applicable) all the necessary legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and the necessary licenses and approvals have been obtained;
- reporting any ethics-related issues that occur during the course of the research or arising from the research to the Research Ethics Officer (e.g. unforeseen ethical issues, complaints about the conduct of the research, adverse reactions such as extreme distress);
- submitting details of proposed substantive amendments to the protocol to the Research Ethics Officer for approval.

Please contact the Research Ethics Officer, Debbie Knight (01542 592605 ethics@lancaster.ac.uk) if you have any queries or require further information.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Taylor
Secretary, University Research Ethics Committee

Cc Professor T McMillan (Chair, UREC); Professor Paul Bates (Chair, FHMREC) Research Support Office
Research and Enterprise Services

Lancaster University
Bowland Main
Lancaster LA1 4YT
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1524 592002
Fax: +44 (0) 1524 593229
Web: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk>

Appendix E: Ethics Application (Main Study)

Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (FHMREC)

Lancaster University

Application for Ethical Approval for Research

Instructions

1. Apply to the committee by submitting
 - ✓ The University's Stage 1 Self-Assessment Form (standard form or student form) *and* the Project Information & Ethics questionnaire. These are available on the Research Support Office website: [LU Ethics](#)
 - ✓ The completed FHMREC application form
 - ✓ Your full research proposal (background, literature review, methodology/methods, ethical considerations)
 - ✓ All accompanying research materials such as, but not limited to,
 - 1) Advertising materials (posters, e-mails)
 - 2) Letters of invitation to participate
 - 3) Participant information sheets
 - 4) Consent forms
 - 5) Questionnaires, surveys, demographic sheets
 - 6) Interview schedules, interview question guides, focus group scripts
 - 7) Debriefing sheets, resource lists
2. Submit all the materials electronically as a SINGLE email attachment in PDF format. Instructions for creating such a document are available on the FHMREC website (<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/shm/research/ethics/>).
3. Submit one collated and signed paper copy of the full application materials. If the applicant is a student, the paper copy of the application form must be signed by the Academic Supervisor.
4. Committee meeting dates and application submission dates are listed on the research ethics committee website <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/shm/research/ethics/>. Applications must be submitted by the deadline stated on the website, to:

Diane Hopkins
Faculty of Health & Medicine
B03, Furness College
Lancaster University, LA1 4YG
d.hopkins@lancaster.ac.uk
5. Attend the committee meeting on the day that the application is considered.

1. Title of Project:

Young people, home and homelessness: A narrative exploration

2. If this is a student project, please indicate what type of project by ticking the relevant box:

 PG Diploma Masters dissertation MRes MSc DClInPsy SRP

<input type="checkbox"/> PhD Thesis <input type="checkbox"/> PhD Pall. Care/Pub. Hlth/Org. Hlth & Well Being <input type="checkbox"/> MD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DClinPsy Thesis
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Study Module (3 rd year medical student)
3. Type of study <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Involves direct involvement by human subjects <input type="checkbox"/> Involves existing documents/data only. Contact the Chair of FHMREC before continuing.

Applicant information
4. Name of applicant/researcher: Jennifer Hewitt
5. Appointment/position held by applicant and Division within FHM Trainee Clinical Psychologist
6. Contact information for applicant: E-mail: hewittj1@exchange.lancs.ac.uk Telephone: __07852 132499 __ Address: _ Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Furness College, Lancaster University, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 4YG__ _____
7. Project supervisor(s), if different from applicant: Name(s): __Dr Anna Daiches (First Supervisor)

<p>E-mail(s): daiches@exchange.lancs.ac.uk</p> <p>Name: ___Dr Stephen Weatherhead (Second Supervisor)</p> <p>E-mail: ___weatherh@exchange.lancs.ac.uk</p>
<p>8. Appointment held by supervisor(s) and institution(s) where based (if applicable):</p> <p>Dr Anna Daiches (Clinical Director, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Health and Medicine, Lancaster University)</p> <p>Dr Stephen Weatherhead (Lecturer in Health Research & Clinical Tutor, Faculty of Health and Medicine, Lancaster University)</p>
<p>9. Names and appointments of all members of the research team (including degree where applicable)</p> <p>Principal Researcher - Jennifer Hewitt BSc (Hons) - Trainee Clinical Psychologist.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">The Project</p> <p>NOTE: In addition to completing this form you must submit a detailed research protocol and all supporting materials.</p>
<p>10. Summary of research protocol in lay terms (maximum length 150 words).</p> <p>Young people who experience homelessness are often suggested to be at an increased risk of poor mental health outcomes compared to their non-homeless peers. To date, research exploring young people's experiences has helped to establish an understanding of pathways into homelessness, risk factors associated with homelessness and the impact of homelessness on physical, social and emotional wellbeing. However, much less is known about understanding young people's experiences of transitioning out of homelessness (Mayock et al, 2011). Learning more about these experiences may offer valuable insights towards how clinical psychologists (and other practitioners) situate their role in supporting these young people through this process. Accordingly, this research will involve directly interviewing young people who identify themselves as making or having made this transition. Their stories will then be analysed in detail. The research design has been shaped by a research advisory group of young people who</p>

have experienced homelessness.

11. Anticipated project dates

Start date: September 2013 End date: May 2014

12. Please describe the sample of participants to be studied (including number, age, gender):

The researcher hopes to recruit a sample of between 8-12 young people aged between 16-25 (male and female), who consider themselves to have been 'homeless' and who identify themselves as in the process of transitioning out of homelessness (please see appendix A for further information).

13. How will participants be recruited and from where? Be as specific as possible.

The researcher will distribute an information pack to a range of major community and voluntary services across the UK who support young homeless people (which may include: - insert organisation names). Staff will be invited to share information about the study with young people associated with their respective organisations.

The information pack will provide details about the research and include a covering letter (see appendix B), an information sheet specifically for staff (see appendix C) and an information sheet for young people (see appendix D). The information sheets for both young people and staff have been developed in partnership with a research advisory group of young people and professionals consulting on this project (see question 20 for further information). Each information sheet explains the purpose of the study, details relative to the decision to participate in the study (such as issues relating to confidentiality, anonymity, the risks and benefits of taking part, and the voluntary nature of the research), as well as detailing how young people can express an interest in participating in the research.

The information pack will also include a poster/advert (see appendix E) for organisations to publicise the research either within their office/community venues, on their website, and/or on their official pages via social networking sites. The researcher will also utilise social networking sites such as twitter and face-book as a means to publicise the research to relevant organisations and young people (attaching a copy of the poster - appendix E).

To further promote the research, the researcher will contact these organisations directly by phone to raise awareness of the research project. Where possible, the researcher may also offer to provide a presence at these services to discuss the project with staff and young people, subject to permission from the organisation.

Young people will be invited to contact the researcher directly to find out more information or

to express an interest in taking part. The information sheet contains the researcher's contact details. Young people can also make contact with the researcher in-directly through members of staff within these organisations, who will then pass on the young person's expression of interest to the researcher. The researcher will then contact the young person directly.

The information sheet also invites young people to pass on the information pack to peers who may no longer be in contact with support services but who may wish to find out more information about participating in the research. Should the researcher recruit any participants via this route (i.e. young people who are no longer in contact with support services), the researcher will encourage their access to support services where appropriate.

Young people who wish to find out more information about the research and/or express an interest in taking part may contact the researcher by telephone, text, email or free-post (using an enclosed 'expression of interest' form - see appendix F).

For those young people who express an interest in taking part but who are not eligible to take part or make contact following the recruitment phase of the research project, they will be thanked for their expression of interest but informed that they will not be able to participate. This possibility will be explicitly referenced on the information sheet.

If this initial recruitment phase does not result in enough participants, the researcher will re-distribute the information pack to organisations with a further covering letter (see appendix G).

Interviews will be conducted at community facilities which are convenient for each participant and where the researcher can negotiate this free of charge (for example: children's centres, youth centres/facilities, support organisations which the young person is in contact with and local academic institutions. The researcher will adopt the Lancashire Care lone working policy and be considerate of Lancaster University guidelines.

Young people will be invited to bring a key worker/friend along to the interview for support if they wish.

Young people may be interviewed more than once if required and if they are willing to meet again. If it is not possible to meet with the young person directly for a follow up interview, the researcher may utilise alternative forms of communication such as telephone or SKYPE.

Once the recruitment phase of the project is complete, services will be contacted via letter (see appendix H) to request that they remove any advertising of the study in order to minimise any disappointment for young people.

14. What procedure is proposed for obtaining consent?

During the first contact with the young person and immediately prior to the interview, the researcher will read through the information sheet with the young person to check that they have understood the information and to respond to any questions. The researcher will offer to read out a copy of the information sheet to young people who may experience difficulty reading this themselves. In seeking consent from young people, the researcher will engage in a dialogue with them to explore their understanding of what they are consenting to (using the information sheet as a tool) and to indicate their understanding of the voluntary nature of the research and the likely outcomes related to their participation (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2010). This is particularly important given the vulnerable nature of this population and the potential

power in-balance that may exist between the young person and the researcher. It is important that young people do not feel coerced into taking part in the project by perceived disincentives to not participating. If the young person demonstrates that they have understood the information sheet and the key issues within it and that they are aware of the voluntary nature of their participation, they will be asked to sign a consent form prior to the interview taking place (see appendix J). If the young person does not demonstrate informed consent, then the interview will not be conducted and the reasons will be sensitively explained to the young person.

The young person will be asked to sign two copies of the consent form - one of these will be kept by the researcher and the other one will be kept by the young person. Copies of the consent form will contain details should the young person have any queries about the research following the interview.

Participants will be informed (both prior to and following the interview) that they can withdraw from the research at any time, without giving a reason. However, participants will also be informed that once their data has been anonymised and analysed it may not be possible for it to be withdrawn from the study, although every effort will be made to extract their data up to the point of publication.

15. What discomfort (including psychological), inconvenience or danger could be caused by participation in the project? Please indicate plans to address these potential risks.

It is not intended for any part of this study to be distressing to those young people who participate. However, given the sensitive and emotive nature of the topic, it is possible that talking about some of their personal experiences may affect how young people feel either during or following the interview. It also recognised that that a reasoned balance needs to be struck between protecting participants and recognising their own agency and capacity to decide what they wish to share (BPS, 2010).

To ensure that young people are supported during the interview process, the researcher will ensure the following

1. Prior to interview, the researcher will make young people aware of the potential for the experience to affect how they feel either during or following the interview. They will be reminded that have choice and control over the information they wish to share as part of the interview process.
2. Young people will be invited to bring along someone to support them during the interview other along to the interview, for example: a key worker, a friend or a family member.
3. Prior to the interview taking place, the researcher and the young person will have an informal discussion about their expectations and wishes regarding what they would like to happen should they feel distressed during or following the interview.
4. Should a participant become distressed during the course of the interview, the researcher will pause the interview temporarily and allow them time to take a break. Young people will then be offered the option of continuing with the interview, rescheduling the interview for another time, or withdrawing from the research. Given that the researcher is a trainee clinical psychologist, she will utilize her clinical skills to support any young people who become distressed during interview.

5. Every young person will be de-briefed following the interview (see appendix K). This will include a discussion between the researcher and the young person about their experience of the interview and how they can obtain additional support locally should they wish. The young person will also be provided with written information signposting them to relevant community, statutory and voluntary services. The researcher will take responsibility for facilitating access to support where a young person is deemed to need assistance.
6. If the participant is already in contact with an identified key worker or mental health practitioner, then they will be advised to seek support from that individual with help from the researcher. If the participant is not associated with a service or agency providing them with support, the researcher will signpost them to the appropriate local service/agency to offer support.
- 7.
8. If the researcher deems that the participant is at risk of serious harm, she will follow the local trust policies and procedures to ensure the safety of participants and any other individuals deemed at risk of harm. The researcher may contact the research supervisors (Dr Anna Daiches & Dr Stephen Weatherhead) for further advice and support under these circumstances.

16. What potential risks may exist for the researcher(s)? Please indicate plans to address such risks (for example, details of a lone worker plan).

There are potential risks to the researcher given that she will be travelling alone to interviews. To mitigate against any risks associated with this, the researcher will adopt the Lancashire Care Lone worker policy. In line with this, the researcher will ensure that there are 'buddying' arrangements in place with a colleague from the DClinPsy programme. The researcher will also notify the first supervisor of planned interviews (including date, time, location and travel arrangements). The researcher will carry a mobile phone at all times.

17. Whilst we do not generally expect direct benefits to participants as a result of this research, please state here any that result from completion of the study.

There are no immediate monetary benefits or incentives for young people to take part in the study. However, according to psychological literature, it is known that some people find the process of sharing their stories to be a positive experience in itself. In the long term it is hoped that the findings from this study will be used to strengthen a psychological and sociological understanding which may inform service delivery for other young people. In this way, the research hopes to demonstrate to young people the value of their story in making a difference.

18. Details of any incentives/payments (including out-of-pocket expenses) made to participants:

Young people will not be offered any financial incentives to take part in the research. This is to protect against any young people being in a position where they feel coerced to participate by a financial reward. However, participants will be recompensed for any incurred costs or out-of-pocket expenses that arise as a result of their participation, for example: food/drink and travel, up to a limit of £10. Young people will be informed that should they decide to withdraw either themselves or their data from the research, they will not be expected to return any

financial recompense. These costs will be covered by the DClinPsy programme.

19. Briefly describe your data collection and analysis methods, and the rationale for their use

The study will employ a qualitative methodology in keeping with the exploratory nature of the research question.

Data will be collected using semi-structured interviews. The interviews will last approximately 45 -90 minutes although the duration of the interview is deemed to be flexible, subject to the individual needs and preferences of the young person and how long it takes them to tell their story. A series of demographic details will be collected at the start of the interview. The main interview will follow a narrative framework aimed at helping the interviewee generate a narrative account of the important events in their lives - in this case, focussing on their homelessness journey and their transition out of this situation. Reismann (1993) recommends that researchers must carefully consider how they facilitate narrative telling in interviews. It is important to ask questions that open up topics and enable those being interviewed to construct answers that are meaningful to them (Reismann, 1993). Therefore, the researcher will aim to employ a flexible stance with less structure within the interview schedule, instead approaching the interview as a conversation in order to enable young people to have more control over the information they share without interviewing practices interfering with this. A small number of broad open-ended questions about the area of enquiry have been drafted in order to prompt participants to provide an extended account of their experiences (see appendix I).

Interviews will be recorded on a digital tape recorder and subsequently transcribed by the researcher. The researcher may also take field notes immediately following the interview to record/highlight any other aspects of the interview that may be pertinent to consider in the analysis. In order to protect the participants' anonymity, they will be given the option of choosing a pseudonym prior to the interview for use within the write-up of the research (if they do not wish to choose one themselves, the researcher will choose one on their behalf).

Narrative analysis will be used to analyse the data (McAdams, 1993, Crossley, 2000). Narrative analysis is considered to offer the potential to provide a rich and "unique perspective" (Weatherhead, 2011 p.47) on the data, in particular by offering an account of how young people think and feel about important events in their lives, including how they view themselves, and the personal, social and political influences on their narratives. It offers the flexibility to provide a contextualised understanding of the data guided by the stories of young people themselves. The researcher will also invite the research supervisors to listen to digital recordings of the interviews and coded transcripts in order to provide feedback throughout the research process.

20. Describe the involvement of users/service users in the design and conduct of your research. If you have not involved users/service users in developing your research protocol, please indicate this and provide a brief rationale/explanation.

In order to provide service user input into the design and conduct of the research, the researcher has established a small research advisory group made up of young people who have experienced homelessness and professional colleagues. This advisory group has ensured service user participation at the most essential level of research development. For example, their

expertise to date has been used to date to assist the researcher to develop the research protocol and to define key concepts within the research (e.g. concepts of 'homelessness' and 'transition'). The group have also helped to establish the relevance of the research to young people and services, as well as offering consultation to refine the recruitment strategy. Ethical approval for the on-going involvement of the research advisory group has previously been granted by the FHMREC (see appendix L).

The research advisory group is made up of young people (aged 18-25) who are members of the -----a national scheme ----- . The ----- is made up of young people across England who are either homeless, or who have experienced homelessness. The group regularly consults with national/local government to develop their involvement opportunities for young people.

All young people and staff who participate in the advisory group will be associated with the ----- and they will not be recruited to participate in the main research itself.

It is proposed that the research advisory group will provide consultation to the research at different stages within the research (approximately 4 times over the course of the main research project).

Membership of the group is likely to be fluid throughout the duration of the research process - this is given the potentially transitory nature of the client group. Involvement may also reflect the different interests, skills and experiences that individuals may wish to offer to the research project. Moreover, contact between the researcher and the advisory group may take different forms, for example: face to face contact, email correspondence and phone contact.

The research advisory group also intend to meet at the conclusion of the research to discuss how the findings may be disseminated to young people and services.

21. What plan is in place for the storage of data (electronic, digital, paper, etc.)? Please ensure that your plans comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

During the research, all electronic data will be stored on the university's secure server (in encrypted password protected files) which the researcher may access from her password protected home PC. This includes consent forms (signed consent forms will be scanned electronically and hard copies will subsequently be destroyed), digital audio-recordings, anonymised interview transcripts and coded data produced during the analysis. This is with the exception of the researcher's contemporaneous notes which will be stored at a secure filing cabinet at the researcher's home address.

Following final submission and examination of the project, digital recordings will be destroyed. Following completion of the research, all remaining electronic data will be transferred to a memory stick and be retained by the university for a period of 10 years. This is in accordance with the University's data management policy and within the regulations of the data protection act (2000). The DClinPsy Research Administrator will be responsible for storing the data securely until the end of the storage period, at which point it will be deleted/destroyed.

22. Will audio or video recording take place? no audio video

If yes, what arrangements have been made for audio/video data storage? At what point in the research will tapes/digital recordings/files be destroyed?

Interviews will be recorded on a digital tape recorder and will then be electronically transcribed by the researcher on a password protected PC at her home address. All digital audio recordings will be stored as electronic files on the university's secure server which the research can access from her password protected PC at home. Audio-recordings of participants' voices will be deleted from the digital tape recorder immediately following the point at which they have been transferred to the university's secure server. This will take place as soon as possible after the interview. In the meantime, the digital recorder will be stored securely in a locked cabinet. In addition, any identifiable data held on the university's secure server, including audio-recordings, transcriptions and consent documentation, will be password protected and encrypted. Audio-recordings will be stored up until the point of final submission and examination of the project, following which they will be destroyed by the researcher

23. What are the plans for dissemination of findings from the research?

A copy of the final report will be submitted to Lancaster University as a doctoral thesis in partial fulfilment of the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. The researcher intends to work in partnership with the research advisory group to discuss a wider dissemination strategy of the research findings to interested young people and services nationwide. This may include presentation of the findings at relevant conferences and events. The researcher may also submit a paper based on the research findings to a specialist journal or publication. In dialogue with the research advisory group, the researcher will also produce a summary report for participants containing findings/messages. Young people will be asked at interview if they would like to receive a copy of this.

24. What particular ethical problems, not previously noted on this application, do you think there are in the proposed study?

Informed Consent

Young people who have experienced homelessness are often referred to as a 'vulnerable group'. Accordingly, it is important to address, where possible, the impact of any potential power differential between the researcher and participants and between any services/organisations acting as 'gatekeepers' for the recruitment, each of which may impact on a young person's decision to participate.

Safeguards have been put in place to ensure that young people are given ample opportunity to understand the nature, purpose and anticipated consequences of the research project. Participants will be reminded that their decision about whether or not to participate will not affect their access to services or support. At the point of recruitment, young people will be provided with an information sheet containing a clear statement of those aspects of the research that are relevant to their decision about whether or not to participate - including the research aims, the research procedure, what would be involved in their participation, and specific details relating to anonymity, confidentiality and their right to withdraw (see appendix). The information sheet has been piloted with young people who are part of the research advisory group to ensure that the language and information is both understandable and

meaningful to young people. Young people will have an opportunity to discuss the information sheet once again with the researcher when they make initial contact to enquire about the research, and once again at the interview stage before the interview commences.

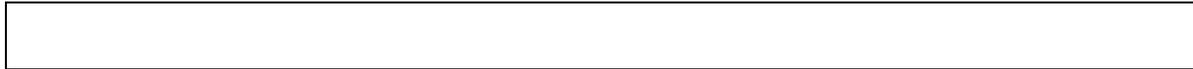
All young people who participate will be over the age of 16 which is the age at which the British Psychological Society indicates that an individual can provide their consent to participate in research (BPS, 2009). Indeed, within clinical practice in the UK, individuals who are over the age of 16 years are considered to be autonomous adults (Hunter & Pierscionek, 2007). However, to ensure that this research process is considerate of the unique circumstances and needs of individual young people, the researcher will adopt a cautious approach and consider key principles relating to Gillick competency, Fraser guidelines and the Mental Capacity Act, when making decisions about whether a young person is mature enough to consent to their participation.

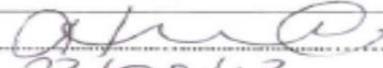
Confidentiality

The researcher will ensure that, at point of first contact (e.g. when young people receive the information pack), young people are made aware of the limitations of maintaining confidentiality, including the researcher's legal and ethical obligations. Breaches of confidentiality will only occur in exceptional circumstances where there is sufficient evidence to raise serious concerns about the safety of the young person and/or the safety or welfare of another child or vulnerable adult. Should this be the case, the researcher will bring the interview to a halt, explain to the participant that the information they have given highlights a risk/safeguarding issue, and that their disclosure will need to be explored further to ensure that either the participant or other individual is not at continued risk of harm. The researcher will remind participants of her responsibilities to report information, but would endeavor to do so in collaboration with the young person and utilizing clinical risk assessment skills. If deemed appropriate, the researcher will seek advice from the research supervisors (Dr Anna Daiches & Dr Stephen Weatherhead) about taking appropriate action to manage the identified risk. This may include notifying appropriate agencies.

Anonymity

Throughout the research, the researcher will preserve the anonymity of participants by using pseudonyms. Young people will be invited to select their own pseudonyms. These pseudonyms will be used throughout the transcription phase through to the write up, dissemination of the final report, and any presentations that form part of the dissemination strategy. Where there is potential for participants to be identified despite the pseudonyms, the researcher will omit additional identifying information. The researcher will also aim to be sensitive to any information quoted within the final write up (for example, anything that is potentially controversial or sensitive) and adopt a cautious approach.



Signatures: Applicant: 
Date: 23/08/13

Project Supervisor* (if applicable): 
Date: 23/08/13

*I have reviewed this application, and discussed it with the applicant. I confirm that the project methodology is appropriate. I am happy for this application to proceed to ethical review.

Appendix F: Letter to Organisations



Dear:

My name is Jenny Hewitt and I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist from Lancaster University. As part of my doctoral training, I am conducting a piece of research exploring the experiences of young people (aged 16-25) who have made the transition out of homelessness in the UK (or consider themselves to be in the process of doing so). I would be grateful if you could take the time to share information about this research with staff and young people within your organisation.

I would like to meet individually with young people between the ages of 16-25, who consider themselves to have been in a homeless situation and **identify themselves** as some way along the journey out of homelessness. It is not important whether young people meet any statutory or legislative definitions for no longer being homeless. I would like to invite young people to tell me the story of their journey. Participating in this research will involve meeting with me for approximately one hour at a community venue that is convenient for the young person.

I hope that this research will offer a unique contribution to the existing research base which has already helped to offer a greater understanding of young people's journeys into homelessness and the potential impact that this experience can have on their physical, social and emotional wellbeing. I hope that by listening to the stories of young people who consider themselves to have made (or be in the process of making) the transition out of homelessness, we can learn more about this important part of their journey.

This research has been developed in collaboration with an advisory group of young people and staff from------. The -----is a national scheme -----and is made up of young people across England who are homeless/have experienced homelessness.

I understand that your organization works closely to support young people with issues relating to homelessness. I would be very grateful if you could raise awareness of the research to staff and young people.

I have enclosed an information sheet for young people and an information sheet for staff. These contain additional details about the study. I have also enclosed an advert should you wish to promote the study on your website. Of course, please don't hesitate to contact me directly to ask any questions about the study and I would be happy to discuss these.

Thank you for your time,

Appendix G: Staff Information Sheet



Research project about young people who have experienced homelessness

Information sheet for staff working with young people

Introduction to me and the research

Hi! My name is Jenny Hewitt and I am a trainee clinical psychologist at Lancaster University. As part of my doctoral training, I am undertaking a piece of research exploring the experiences of young people aged between 16-25 who have been homeless in the UK.

The purpose of this research is to develop a greater psychological and social understanding of this process of transition out of homelessness, based on young people's own personal accounts of this experience. I would be grateful if you could share information of this research with young people aged between 16-25 who you think may be interested in sharing their personal story with me.

What is this research about?

I hope that this research will offer a unique contribution to the existing research base. Whilst existing research already offers a greater understanding of young people's journeys into homelessness and the potential impact that this experience can have on their physical, social and emotional wellbeing, less has been done to explore how young people make the journey out of this situation. I hope that by listening to the stories of young people who identify themselves to have made (or be in the process of making) the journey out of homelessness, we can learn more about this important part of their experience and what was important to them at this time. Learning more about these experiences may offer valuable insights towards how practitioners situate their role in supporting these young people through this process.

This research has been developed in collaboration with an advisory group of young people and staff from the ----- which is made up of young people across England who are homeless/have experienced homelessness.

Who is being asked to take part?

I would like to meet individually with young people between the ages of 16-25 (male and female), who consider themselves to have been in a homeless situation and **identify themselves** as being somewhere along the journey out of homelessness. It is not important whether young people meet any statutory or legislative definitions for no longer being homeless.

You may work with, or know of, a young person/people (aged between 16-25) who may be interested in finding out more information about taking part in this research. Attached to this information sheet, is an information sheet for young people with further information of the research to help them decide if they would like to take part.

What will young people have to do?

If a young person agrees to take part, they will be invited to meet with me at a place that feels comfortable to meet up and where we can speak privately – this may be a local community facility. This meeting will last for about 45-90 minutes depending on how much the young person would like to discuss. The young person can bring a friend or member of staff along to this if they would like to but this is not compulsory. At this meeting, young people will simply be invited to share their personal story, including thoughts, views and opinions about their homelessness journey.

If a young person is interested in participating in the research and would like to find out some more information to help them decide, they are invited to contact me directly for an informal discussion. My details are at the end of this information sheet – they can contact be my text, phone **or** post (an ‘expression of interest’ sheet and free-post envelope are included within the information pack)

Depending on how many expressions of interest are received, it may not be possible to include every person who expresses an interest in the research. If this is the case, I will endeavor to let them know as soon as possible after our conversation about whether they have been selected to take part.

Before we start the meeting, the young person will again be invited to ask any questions they might have. They will also be asked to sign a consent form saying that they understand what the research is about and that they give their consent to taking part.

What about consent?

All young people will be required to provide their informed consent to take part in the research. Their decision about whether or not to participate will not be made known to services, nor would this decision affect their rights in any way. Young people will be provided with an information sheet outlining important information about the research before they decide whether they would like to participate. This includes information about the research aims, what would be involved in their participation, and specific details relating to anonymity, confidentiality and their right to withdraw from the research at any time.

At initial contact with the young person, I will read through this information sheet with them to check that have understood the information within it. I will also repeat this process again at the interview, inviting the young person to ask any questions at any stage.

It is very important that young people do not feel coerced or under pressure to participate and that that they recognise that their decision to participate is entirely their choice. Young people may withdraw from the research at any time – they do not have to give a reason. Prior to the interview, young people will be asked to sign a consent form – they will be able to keep a copy of this for their records.

What about confidentiality and anonymity?

Any information that young people provide during the study will be kept strictly confidential. The only exception to this is if a young person says anything which may indicate a risk to themselves or

anyone else. In this case, I may have to break confidentiality and report the information, but would endeavor to do so in collaboration with the young person concerned.

Whilst the final research report may use some of the words that young people have said, I will not use any information that may identify them to anyone. Instead, young people will be offered the opportunity to select a pseudonym to be included in the final write-up.

All interviews will be digitally recorded and then transcribed. Audio-recordings will then be destroyed. During transcription of the interviews, any identifying information will be removed. Only the researcher will be involved in transcribing the interviews. Young people will be offered the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms for use in the final report.

During the study, all electronic information will be stored on a secure server, and all hard-copy information will be stored in locked cabinet which only the researcher will have access to. Once the study is completed the transcripts will be stored for 10 years in a locked cabinet in Lancaster University and then destroyed in line with Lancaster University guidelines.

What are the benefits of taking part?

There are no immediate benefits to young people taking part in the study. However, some people find that sharing their stories and views to be a positive experience in itself. In the long term it is hoped that the findings from this study will be used to strengthen a psychological and sociological understanding which may inform service delivery. In this way, the research hopes to demonstrate to young people the value of sharing their story.

Young people will not be offered any financial incentives to take part in the research. However, young people will be recompensed for any incurred costs or out-of-pocket expenses that arise as a result of their participation, for example food/drink, travel, time up to a limit of £10. Young people will be informed that should they decide to withdraw either themselves or their data from the research, they will not be expected to return any financial recompense that they have previously been provided with.

What are the risks of taking part and how will these be managed?

It is not intended for any part of this study to be distressing to those young people who participate. However given the sensitive and emotive nature of the issues discussed, it is possible that talking about some of their personal experiences may be affect how they feel either during or following the interview. Young people will be reminded that they have choice and control over the information they share in the interview. They may also bring someone along to support them during the interview if they wish. Prior to the interview, I will discuss with young people what they would like to happen should they feel distressed at any time. If this happens at any point during the research process, the researcher will offer to pause the interview, take a break or discontinue. Given that I am a trainee clinical psychologist, I will utilize clinical skills to support the young person.

Where appropriate, I will support young people to access additional support (for example, facilitating contact a named key worker, and/or facilitating access to the G.P, mental health services or other community support services). All young people will be debriefed following the interview. This will include a discussion with the young person about their experience of the interview and how they can obtain additional support locally should they wish. The young person will also be provided with written information signposting them to relevant community, statutory and voluntary services.

Can young people change their mind about taking part?

Yes they can! Young peoples' participation in this study is voluntary and it should be entirely their choice. Their decision about whether or not to participate will not be made known to anyone, including any statutory or voluntary services that they may come into contact with - this will be made explicit to all young people who express an interest in taking part. Young people are welcome to change their mind about participating at any time prior to and during the interview. Young people may also request that their data is withdrawn following the interview. However once their data has been anonymised and analysed it may not be possible for it to be withdrawn from the study, although every effort will be made by the researcher to extract their data up to the point of publication. Young people do not need to give a reason if they decide to withdraw from the research.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The research will form part of the researcher's doctoral thesis which will be submitted to the university and may be submitted for publication in an academic or professional journal. The findings may also be disseminated to services and organizations in collaboration with young people from the-----.

Has this research received ethical approval?

This research has been reviewed by the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee and reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee at Lancaster University.

How do I make a complaint or provide feedback?

If you would like to make a complaint or provide feedback about any aspect of this study and you do not want to speak to the researcher, you can contact Dr Anna Daiches, Lancaster University Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YT (email: daiches@exchange.lancs.ac.uk, Tel: 01524 592970)

Where can I find out further information about the study if I need to?

This research is carried out by Jenny Hewitt, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Health & Medicine, Furness College, Lancaster University, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 4YG, email: jhewitt@lancaster.ac.uk (07508 375658)

If you wish to speak to somebody who is not the researcher, please contact Dr Anna Daiches, Clinical Director, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Health & Medicine, Furness College, Lancaster University, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 4YG (Tel: 01524 592970) Email: daiches@exchange.lancs.ac.uk)

If you wish to speak to someone outside of the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Programme, you may also contact:

Professor Paul Bates, Associate Dean for Research, Faculty of Health and Medicine (Division of Biomedical and Life Sciences), Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YD

THANK YOU for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Appendix H: Young Person's Information Sheet

**Research about young people who have experienced homelessness.**

Information sheet for young people

Hello! My name is **Jenny Hewitt** and I'm a trainee clinical psychologist at Lancaster University.

As part of my training I am doing a research project to find out about the experiences of young people who have been homeless. I am particularly interested in young people's stories about making the journey out of homelessness and what that was like.

Why is this research being done?

Lots of services that support young people use research to help them plan what to do. I think it would be a good idea to find out what young people have to say about moving out of homelessness, so that services can understand what might help young people with this. I think this would help services in the future to support young people in ways that are important to them.

Why have I been asked to take part?

I am interested to hear the thoughts, views and opinions of young people who have been homeless in the past but who consider themselves some way along the journey out of homelessness. You have been asked to take part because this may apply to you.

What should I do if I would like to take part?

You can get in touch with me using the details at the bottom of this information sheet – by text, phone or email. You can also get in touch with me by free-post by completing an 'expression of interest' sheet and I'll contact you. We can talk about the research in more detail and you can ask any questions. If you decide you want to take part, we can arrange a time to meet up. If you know of any other young people who may be interested in taking part, feel free to let them know about the research as well!



If you take part, we will arrange a time and date to meet up. This meeting will last for about 45-90 minutes depending on how much you would like to say and we will talk together about your homelessness journey. If you like, you can bring a friend or member of staff along for support but you do not have to. We can decide together on a place to meet that is local to you and where we can speak privately. Before we start the meeting, you will be able to ask any questions you might have. Before we start the meeting, you will also be asked to sign a form saying that you understand what the research is about and that you agree to taking part.



I will make sure that you get any money back that you spend on

Do I have to take part?

No you do not have to take part – it is completely your decision about whether you take part. Your decision will not affect any of the support that you receive. If you decide that you want to take part, but later decide that you do not want to anymore, that is absolutely fine. You can stop taking part at any time and you do not need to give a reason.

What are the possible benefits to taking part?

It is hoped that by taking part, your story might make a difference to other young people by helping services learn more about what is like to move out of homelessness and what is most important to young people who have been in this situation. Also, some people find that it can be a positive experience to share their story with somebody.

What support can I expect if I decide to take part?

During the meeting, we might talk about things that affect how you feel. If this happens, we can take a break or we can stop our discussion at any point. It is up to you what information you share during the meeting and will not be made to talk about anything that you do not want to. At the end of the meeting, we will talk about what our discussion was like and how you are feeling. If you need any extra help and support with how you feel, I will make sure that action is taken to support you with this. We can talk through this together before deciding what to do and I'll let you know about what will happen.

Will the information I give be kept private?

All the information that we talk about will be kept private and confidential. This means that I will not tell anybody about what you have said. The only time when I may have to break confidentiality and take further action is if you say anything that makes me think that you or anyone else might be at risk of harm. If this happens, I may have to report the information to the project supervisors, your key worker or another person who can help. I will make sure to talk to you about this first before deciding what to do and I will let you know about what is going to happen.

Our meeting will be tape recorded and then typed up by me afterwards – this typed up version is called a transcript. All the transcripts will be kept securely on a password protected computer server – only myself and the two people (Dr Anna Daiches & Dr Stephen Weatherhead) helping me with this project will be able to see this information. Once the tape-recordings have been typed up, they will be destroyed. Once the study is completed all the data from the research will be stored at Lancaster University for 10 years and then it will be destroyed.

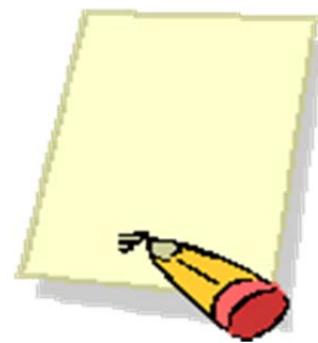
All the information you give will be made anonymous. This means that whilst the final research report may use some of the words that you have said, I will not use any information that may identify you to anyone. Instead we can select different names that I can use when writing about your story.

Who has approved this research (checked that it is ok)?

This research has been looked at by the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee and also by the University Research Ethics Committee at Lancaster University. They have said that it is ok for me to do this research.

What will happen with the results of this research?

The results will be typed up into a report which will be handed in to Lancaster University. I am doing this research with some help from the ----- which is are a group of young people who are/have been homeless – I might present the findings of this research with this group at events to help services learn about what helps young people who are homeless. Your name will not appear in any of the reports or presentations. I may also write about this research in an academic or professional journal – this is a small book which is made available to people who are interested in learning more about this topic.



Where can I find out more information about the research?

If you have any questions, worries or concerns about this research, you can contact me by phone, text or email. My details are: Jenny Hewitt, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Health & Medicine, Furness College, Lancaster University, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 4YG, email: jhewitt@lancaster.ac.uk (07508 375658)

If you have any concerns, or you would like to speak to somebody else about the research and you do not want to speak directly to Jenny, you can also contact Anna Daiches. Her address is: Dr Anna Daiches, Lancaster University Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YT. Her contact number is 01524 592970 and her email address is a.daiches@lancaster.ac.uk.

If you wish to speak to someone outside of the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Programme, you may also contact:

Professor Paul Bates, Associate Dean for Research, Faculty of Health and Medicine (Division of Biomedical and Life Sciences), Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YD

THANK YOU for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Appendix I: Information Poster

Lancaster University

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DIVISION OF
Doctorate In

Are you willing to share your story about moving from homelessness?

I would like to hear the thoughts, views and opinions of people who have made (or are making) the journey out of homelessness.

If you are aged between 16-25 and consider yourself to have made (or are making) the journey out of homelessness, I would like to hear your story. This will involve meeting with me for about an hour (at a venue convenient to you) where we will discuss your experiences.



If you would like to find out more information about taking part in this research, please get in touch by phone, text or email—my name is Jenny Hewitt (Trainee Clinical Psychologist) and you can contact me on : 07508 378658, Email: hewittj1@exchange.lancs.ac.uk. You can also contact a research support member of staff to help you find out more information!

This research is being carried out by the Lancaster University Department of Clinical Psychology and has been formally approved by the Lancaster University Research Ethics Committee.

Appendix J: Expression of Interest Sheet



I am interested in in taking part in the research:

Young people, home and homelessness

My name is.....

I can be contacted on (contact number).....

(email)

The best time to contact me is
.....

Please return this completed form to

j.hewitt@lancaster.ac.uk

If you do not have access to email and would rather use the post, please send this form to:

Jenny Hewitt, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Health & Medicine, Furness College, Lancaster University, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 4YG

My contact number is 07508 375658 if you would like to talk to me about taking part in the research.

Thank you!

Jenny

Appendix K: Participant Consent Form

Consent Form

Before you consent to participating in the study, please read through the participant information sheet and mark each box below with your initials if you agree. If you have any questions before signing the consent form please speak to Jenny Hewitt.

Please initial
box after each
statement

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet and I understand what is expected of me within this study.
2. I am above the age of 16 years old.
3. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask any questions and to have them answered.
4. I understand that my interview will be recorded on a digital tape recorder and then typed into an anonymised written transcript.
5. I understand that audio recordings will be kept until the research project has been examined at which point they will be destroyed.
6. I understand that it is my choice whether I participate and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without any of my rights being affected.
7. I understand that once my data have been anonymised and analysed it might not be possible for it to be withdrawn, though every attempt will be made to extract my data, up to the point of publication.
8. I understand that the information from my interview will be pooled with other participants' responses, anonymised and may be published.
9. I consent to information and anonymised quotations from my interview being used in reports, conferences and training events.
10. I understand that any information I give will remain strictly confidential and anonymous unless it is thought that there is a risk of harm to myself or others, in which case the researcher (Jenny) **may** need to share this information with **her** research supervisor and/or other professionals.
11. I consent to Lancaster University keeping written transcriptions of the interview for 10 years after the study has finished.
12. I consent to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant _____ **Signature** _____ **Date**

Name of Researcher _____ **Signature** _____ **Date** _____

Appendix L: Participant Debrief Sheet

**Debrief Sheet**

Thank you very much for taking part in this research!

Today we have talked about your homelessness journey, including what you remember about this and how you felt about it. We might have talked about things that you remember which may have made you feel upset, sad, angry or worried. We also talked about what it was like to share your experiences as part of this research.

After the interview, you might want to access some extra support with how you are feeling. There may be people that help you at the moment that you could contact such asat You can also go to your local GP/Doctor. There are also lots of organisations that you can contact for support – I have made a list of these for you.

You may also want to feedback your experiences (ether positive or negative) in other ways as well. Within the list are some organisations which can help you to do this.

Remember, if you have any questions about the research you can contact me. My contact details are: Jenny Hewitt, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Health & Medicine, Furness College, Lancaster University, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 4YG, email: jhewitt@lancaster.ac.uk (07508 375658)

Talk to Frank - provides friendly, confidential advice and information about drugs

<http://www.talktofrank.com/> 0800 776 600

Samaritans – provides 24 hour confidential emotional support (365 days a year) for all kinds of situations, feelings and thoughts that might be troubling you.

<http://www.samaritans.org/> 08457 90 90 90

Mind – provides confidential information and advice about anything to do with mental health

<http://www.mind.org.uk/> 0300 123 3393

Crisis – a national charity for single homeless people. Offers help and advice about finding accommodation, accessing support, applying for jobs and much more.

<http://www.crisis.org.uk> 0300 636 1967

Centrepoint – a national charity for homeless young people. Offers help and advice to young people about a range of issues including housing, physical and mental health, as well as education, employment and training. Also offers opportunities for young people who have experienced homelessness to have an influence in raising awareness of youth homelessness to Government.

<http://www.centrepoint.org.uk/about-us> 0845 466 3400

ChildLine - private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of nineteen. Young people can contact a ChildLine counsellor about anything - no problem is too big or too small.

<http://www.childline.org.uk> 0800 1111

Brook - Provides free and confidential sexual health advice and contraception to young people.

<http://www.brook.org.uk/> 0808 802 1234

National Debt Helpline - Free debt advice and support for people with money worries and debt difficulties in England, Wales & Scotland.

<http://www.nationaldebtline.co.uk/> 0808 808 4000

National Youth Reference Group - The National Youth Reference Group is made up of young people aged 16-25 from across England who are homeless/have experienced homelessness. The group

exists to assist National and Local Government, Local Authorities and organisations to develop and improve their involvement opportunities for young people.

<http://www.nationalyouthreferencegroup.co.uk/> 0121 772 2483

Appendix M: Feedback from DHR Ethics Committee

Our ref: FHMREC13006

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16 September 2013

Jennifer Hewitt
Division of Health Research
Faculty of Health and Medicine
Lancaster University

Dear Jennifer,

Re: FHM Research Ethics Committee application for project titled:
'Young people, home and homelessness: a narrative exploration'

Thank you for sending in the paperwork for your application. We appreciated reading about the project. We have a few minor concerns, and ask that you address the following in revising your application materials:

- **Application section 13**
 - If, as you hope, you recruit young people who are no longer in contact with the support service, we suggest that you encourage them to be in touch with the relevant services if appropriate, and amend this section accordingly.
- **Application section 14**
 - Note here that the participant information sheet could be read out to potential participants who have literacy issues.
- **Application section 15**
 - We appreciate all the thought you have put into considering the psychological discomfort which might be caused by participating in this study, and the means by which you will address it. We would, however, recommend caution about how this is expressed to the young people taking part, in order to avoid focussing on this potentially negative aspect, and thereby generating distress. We trust that you will use your clinical training to present these elements to the participants in a way which avoids causing distress.
- **Application section 22**
 - State that data on portable devices will be encrypted; if it cannot be encrypted can you confirm that any identifiable data (including recordings of participants' voices) will be deleted from the recorder as quickly as possible (eg when it has been transferred to a secure medium, such as a password protected PC) and in the meantime the recorder will be stored securely.
 - We suggest that you wait until your project has been submitted before destroying the original recordings, and amend this section accordingly.
- **Application section 24**
 - You note that the PIS will be piloted with young people who are part of the advisory group. If this results in any changes, the PIS must be re-submitted for approval via an amendment request. We suggest that you complete the

Physics Building
Lancaster University
Lancaster LA1 4YD
United Kingdom

Tel: +44(0) 1524 593169
Fax: +44(0) 1524 592658
Email: shm@lancaster.ac.uk

Professor Tony Gattrell
Dean of Faculty


Faculty of
Health & Medicine

consultation process with the advisory group before proceeding further with your study.

- Information Sheet for Young People
 - What are the possible disadvantages or risks of me taking part in this research?
 - As noted above, we are concerned about an over-emphasis on the distress which could be caused by participating in the study. We suggest that you reconsider the way in which this section is worded, so that it doesn't in itself cause concern to participants.
 - Whilst you will talk to participants about what is to be done in the event of their becoming distressed, it is your responsibility to decide on action to be taken. We suggest you reword this section, making this clear, and noting that you will talk to them before you decide what to do, and will let them know what is going to happen.

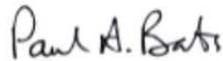
In addition to the above a number of minor changes and typos are noted on your application form, attached with this letter. Please address these, as well as the matters above.

Ensure consistency between the application form, the Research Protocol and the supporting materials in line with the changes requested above.

Please use Lancaster University letter-headed paper for all participant materials

We ask that you attend to these in writing by (re)submitting to the FHMREC via Diane Hopkins (d.hopkins@lancaster.ac.uk) the application document and materials with any changes highlighted. If your responses to the above are satisfactory then approval will be recommended on Chair's action. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Paul Bates

Chair of the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee
Lancaster University

Physics Building
Lancaster University
Lancaster LA1 4YD
United Kingdom

Tel: +44(0) 1524 593169
Fax: +44(0) 1524 592658
Email: shm@lancaster.ac.uk

Professor Tony Gatrell
Dean of Faculty



Appendix N: Response to DHR Ethics Committee

Ref: FHMREC13006

21 September 2013

Professor Paul Bates
Faculty of Health and Medicine
Lancaster University



Dear Professor Bates,

Re: FHM Research Ethics Committee application titled: *'Young people, home and homelessness: a narrative exploration'*

Thank you for your letter regarding my application and for the feedback you have provided. I am grateful to the committee for taking the time to review my application. In light of your comments, I have made the following amendments and highlighted these on the attached application form and any other relevant appendices to the application;

Application section 13

- *"If, as you hope, you recruit young people who are no longer in contact with the support service, we suggest that you encourage them to be in touch with the relevant services if appropriate, and amend this section accordingly".*

Thank you for this suggestion. A comment to this affect has been added to Section 13 of the application form. I have also added an additional comment on the participant information sheet regarding the recruitment of young people who are no longer in contact with support services as I realised this was not included in the original document.

Application section 14

- *"Note here that the participant information sheet could be read out to potential participants who have literacy issues".*

Thank you for your suggestion. A comment to this affect has been added to Section 14 of the application form.

Application section 15

- *"We appreciate all the thought you have put into considering the psychological discomfort which might be caused by participating in this study, and the means by which you will address it. We would, however, recommend caution about how this is expressed to the young people taking part, in order to avoid focussing on this potentially negative aspect, and thereby generating distress. We trust that you will use your clinical training to present these elements to the participants in a way which avoids causing distress".*

Thank you for your feedback on this section of the application form. I must admit that I found it a difficult balance to ensure that I had adequate safeguards in place to address any potential distress to participants without over-emphasising this aspect of the research. The feedback provided has been very helpful and I appreciate the suggestions.

In response to these suggestions, I have decided not to include the 'informal support plan' as I feel this is not necessary and could lead to undue anxiety or distress. Rather, I have suggested the option of having an informal discussion with the young person prior to the interview regarding their expectations about how I may support them in the event that they become distressed.

I have amended the order of the appendices accordingly.

Application section 22

- *"State that data on portable devices will be encrypted; if it cannot be encrypted can you confirm that any identifiable data (including recordings of participants' voices) will be deleted from the recorder as quickly as possible (eg when it has been transferred to a secure medium, such as a password protected PC) and in the meantime the recorder will be stored securely".*

It is not possible to encrypt the digital tape recorder being used for the interviews. However, I have made it clear that recordings of participants' voices will be transferred from the recording device to the university's secure server as soon as possible after the interview and that in the meantime, the device will be stored in a locked cabinet. In addition, I have also made it clear that any identifiable information will be stored on password-protected encrypted files on the university's secure server. Information to this effect has been added to Section 21 and 22 of the application form and relevant appendices.

- *"We suggest that you wait until your project has been submitted before destroying the original recordings, and amend this section accordingly".*

Thank you for this suggestion- I have amended Section 21 and 22 accordingly and have updated the relevant appendices.

Application section 24

- *"You note that the PIS will be piloted with young people who are part of the advisory group. If this results in any changes, the PIS must be re-submitted for approval via an amendment request. We suggest that you complete the consultation process with the advisory group before proceeding further with your study".*

Unfortunately, I made a mistake within the original application. To clarify, I have already piloted the participant information sheet with young people who are part of the advisory group and the feedback they provided has subsequently been incorporated into the final version forming part of the original ethics application. May I apologise for the error - I have now rectified this mistake within Section 24 of the application form.

Information Sheet for Young People

- What are the possible disadvantages or risks of me taking part in this research?

"As noted above, we are concerned about an over-emphasis on the distress which could be caused by participating in the study. We suggest that you reconsider the way in which this section is worded, so that it doesn't in itself cause concern to participants".

Thank you for your feedback about this part of the participant information sheet – I have amended this part of the information sheet in line with your suggestion. I trust that these amendments achieve the balance that you were looking for, however please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like me to make further changes.

"Whilst you will talk to participants about what is to be done in the event of their becoming distressed, it is your responsibility to decide on action to be taken. We suggest you reword this section, making this clear, and noting that you will talk to them before you decide what to do, and will let them know what is going to happen".

Thank you for your suggestion – I have amended the participation information sheet to make this information clearer.

"In addition to the above a number of minor changes and typos are noted on your application form, attached with this letter. Please address these, as well as the matters above".

Apologies for the typing errors within the document – I have reviewed the application and addressed these. I have also made the changes in line with the comments made by the reviewer.

I trust that I have made all the necessary amendments that you requested. However, please don't hesitate to let me know if I need to make any further changes.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to review my application.

Yours Sincerely,

Jennifer Hewitt

Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Appendix O: Approval Letter form DHR Ethics Committee

Applicant: Jennifer Hewitt
Supervisor: Dr Anna Daiches
Department: DHR

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31 October 2013

Dear Jennifer and Anna,

Re: Young people, home and homelessness: a narrative exploration

Thank you for submitting your research ethics application for the above project for review by the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (FHMREC). The application was recommended for approval by FHMREC, and on behalf of the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), I can confirm that approval has been granted for this research project.

As principal investigator your responsibilities include:

- ensuring that (where applicable) all the necessary legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and the necessary licenses and approvals have been obtained;
- reporting any ethics-related issues that occur during the course of the research or arising from the research to the Research Ethics Officer (e.g. unforeseen ethical issues, complaints about the conduct of the research, adverse reactions such as extreme distress);
- submitting details of proposed substantive amendments to the protocol to the Research Ethics Officer for approval.

Please contact the Research Ethics Officer, Debbie Knight (01542 592605 ethics@lancaster.ac.uk) if you have any queries or require further information.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Taylor
Secretary, University Research Ethics Committee

Cc Professor T McMillan (Chair, UREC); Professor Paul Bates (Chair, FHMREC)

Research Support Office
Research and Enterprise Services

Lancaster University
Bowland Main
Lancaster LA1 4YT
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1524 592002
Fax: +44 (0) 1524 593229

Appendix P: Amendment Request to DHR Ethics Committee



**Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (FHMREC)
Lancaster University**

Application for Amendment to Previously Approved Research

Instructions: Please re-submit your original research ethics approval documents with any amendments highlighted in yellow, attaching this form as a cover sheet. Completed documentation should be submitted as a single PDF by email and in hard copy to:

Bethan McMullen
Faculty of Health & Medicine
A71 Physics Building
Lancaster University
LA1 4YD
b.mcmullen@lancaster.ac.uk

1. Name of applicant: Jennifer Hewitt
2. E-mail address and phone number of applicant: Hewittj1@exchange.lancs.ac.uk
3. Title of project: Young people, home and homelessness: A narrative exploration
4. Project reference number:
5. Date of original project approval as indicated on the official approval letter (month/year) October 2013

Amendment request
6. Please outline the requested amendment(s): To introduce the option of the researcher utilising social networking sites such as twitter and facebook to promote the research to organisations and young people.
7. Please explain your reason(s) for requesting the above amendment(s): In the current research protocol it was agreed that organisations that support young people who have experienced homelessness may promote the research via their social networking sites. it would be of additional benefit for me to be able to publicise information about the study in this way to reach as many organisations and potential participants as possible.

Signatures

October 2011

Appendix Q: Amendment Approval from DHR Ethics Committee

Applicant: Jennifer Hewitt
Supervisor: Anna Daiches
Department: DHR



17 December 2013

Dear Jennifer and Anna,

Re: Young people, home and homelessness: a narrative exploration

Thank you for submitting your amendment for the above project for review by the Faculty of Health and Medicine Research Ethics Committee (FHMREC). The amendment was recommended for approval by FHMREC, and on behalf of the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), I can confirm that approval has been granted for this amendment.

As principal investigator your responsibilities include:

- ensuring that (where applicable) all the necessary legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and the necessary licenses and approvals have been obtained;
- reporting any ethics-related issues that occur during the course of the research or arising from the research to the Research Ethics Officer (e.g. unforeseen ethical issues, complaints about the conduct of the research, adverse reactions such as extreme distress);
- submitting details of proposed substantive amendments to the protocol to the Research Ethics Officer for approval.

Please contact the Research Ethics Officer, Debbie Knight (01542 592605 ethics@lancaster.ac.uk) if you have any queries or require further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S.C. Taylor".

Sarah Taylor
Secretary, University Research Ethics Committee

Cc Professor T McMillan (Chair, UREC); Professor Paul Bates (Chair, FHMREC)

Research Support Office
Research and Enterprise Services

Lancaster University
Bowland Main
Lancaster LA1 4YT
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1524 592002
Fax: +44 (0) 1524 593229
Web: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk>

Appendix R: Interview Schedule

**Interview schedule****Introductions**

- Explain who I am
- Explain the purpose and aims of the research
- Review the information sheet

Describe the interview process

- Explain what will happen
- Provide rough estimate of the duration of the interview
- Discuss confidentiality and anonymity
- If young person has brought a confederate along, run through information for confederate
- Discuss potential for participant distress and agree with the young person what support might they may find helpful should this occur
 - o Complete informal support plan
- Discuss informed consent
 - o Check understanding and offer opportunity to ask further questions
 - o Complete consent form (provide young person with a copy)

Main interview

- Invite young people to tell me the story of their homelessness journey
 - o Suggested questions and prompts
 - “I’m interested to hear about your homelessness journey – What happened?”
 - “it’s up to you where you start”, “where would you like to start?”
 - “are there any key events or experiences that come to mind – good or bad?”
 - o Suggested questions and prompts
 - “when did things change for you?”
 - “Was there a turning point in your journey – good or bad?”
 - “How did you go from being homelessness to making the journey out of homelessness”
 - “What was important to you at this time?”
 - “Were there any significant events/experiences/people in this part of your journey”
 - “Looking back on this part of your journey –what do you think?”

- Establishing some context to young people's stories
 - o Prompts
 - "When you think of the word home, what does it mean to you?"
 - "When you think of the word 'homeless' what does this mean to you?"
 - "Are there times in your life where you have felt more or less 'homeless'?"
 - "Do you consider yourself to have a 'home' (in what way)? "Do you consider yourself to be 'homeless' (in what way)?"
 - "What is important to you in your life?"
 - "What would you like your future to be like?"
- Demographic information
 - o Prompts
 - "How old are you?"
 - "What is your life like at the moment?"
- Additional general prompts
 - o "Could you tell me a bit more about that please?"
 - o "Is there anything else you would like to tell me?"
 - o "what happened next"
 - o "who was there?"
 - o "What was that like?"
 - o "What did you think about that?"

Debrief process

- o Discuss young person's thoughts and feelings about their experience of the interview process
- o Establish if the young person requires further support and facilitate this where required
- o Provide debrief sheet – check understanding
- o Remind young people about where they can obtain further information about the study
- o Provide young person with any out of pocket expenses
- o Thank young people for their involvement in the research