WHO WOULD BE A RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE WORKER? AN EXPLORATION OF THE MOTIVATION FOR ENTERING AND REMAINING IN THIS ROLE

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Professional Doctorate

2014

**WHO WOULD BE A RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE WORKER?
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REMAINING IN THIS ROLE**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
the University of East London for the degree of Professional
Doctorate**

July 2014

Abstract

Residential child care is most often seen as a placement of last resort and not a placement of choice. The only time one hears of it is when something has gone wrong therefore, workers are seen in a poor light. The terms and conditions are poor and the work is challenging, both physically and emotionally. This being said there are dedicated, well qualified people entering then remaining in this field of work. This study sets out to understand not only how people got into the work but more importantly once they were in it why they decided to stay. This is an in-depth study based primarily on the life-story narratives of a small sample of participants plus the responses to a web-based questionnaire to add a second dimension. The work of Pierre Bourdieu and aspects of psychoanalytical theory have been used to examine both the sociological and psychological backgrounds of the participants giving a truly psycho-social account of their journeys. The study identified that the routes into the work were often complex and varied and that they played little part in the reasons people chose to remain in the work. Being disappointed with initial work choices, due to familial and social pressure, played a significant part in why the participants were looking for something in their lives. However, once in the work the participants not only enjoyed the work but were also able to meet familial and societal expectations by gaining qualifications, and for some status. More importantly, the work offered opportunities to be creative and feel of value as there was a 'fit' between the individual and the home. Significantly, the work allowed the participants to make reparation for real or imagined harm that they may have caused or had been done to them in early childhood. It is this combination of opportunity to meet familial and societal pressure whilst feeling good about oneself that has meant that for this sample they have remained working within the sector.

To my inspirational mother and best friend Jayne, may they rest in peace.

Who would be a residential child care worker?
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Introduction - Why this subject matter?

For over thirty years I have worked, in either a voluntary or paid capacity, with children and young people. I started as a volunteer working with young people with learning difficulties on evenings and at weekends. I was fortunate to meet a Youth Officer who took it upon himself to help me develop. Richard supported, and at times pushed, me to take up training as a youth and community worker. I then moved across into the residential sector some 20 years ago. During the course of my work I met some exceptional workers and some who should not be in post. Considering residential child care is challenging and often stressful I wanted to inquire into why there are people still willing to take up this work.

Often working with children and/or young people who have, at times, no wish to be there, workers also deal with the consequences resulting from the traumas experienced by them. This may present itself in forms of self-harming, disordered eating and includes aggressive and even violent behaviour. In addition to the struggles within the working environment, be this related to the actions of the young people, their social workers' expectations or the organizational difficulties, workers sometimes felt there was little support or recognition for the work they do from the community at large. However, one cannot deny there have been crises within the sector leading to Government inquiries. After each of these inquiries into residential child care, which I will refer to later, negative images of workers abusing or mistreating children/young people in care are in the public domain, often perpetuated by the media. In mitigation for some of the failures one could cite the lack of formal training that is neither required nor often given for such a challenging role. Packman (1975) noted that at the time of the Curtis Committee the complexity of the role was not acknowledged:

> The residential task as something more sophisticated, requiring relationship and therapeutic skills of a high order, equal to even exceeding those needed in the field, only gradually came to be recognized and articulated as the service developed. (Packman, 1975, p.43)

However, this was not be the case as the was reported by the National Council of Social Service (1967, quoted in National Institute for Social Work Training

Series, [NISWT] 1969, p.18): 'Unfortunately there has not been in the community as a whole a general recognition of the importance of the work nor of the knowledge and skills required to do it well.' I suggest this has continued to be the case and that the role of residential child care worker is still not highly regarded. This image, is not mine alone, Ward (2007) states:

> Many readers will be aware of the continuing undervaluing of residential work in particular, and the damaging effects that this undervaluing can have both on the providers and on the consumers of the service, for example in terms of low salaries, poor working conditions, inadequate budgets for building maintenance and the consequent low morale of all involved. (Ward, 2007, pp.2-3)

Where does this attitude originate? One might consider societal views about the children themselves or the families they come from. Payne (1991, cited in Crimmens and Milligan, 2005) suggests that in part this is due the stigma of the Victorian workhouse still being attached to residential child care. However, Packman (1975) posits that it was following the professionalization of social work and because Curtis wanted residential workers to only have some fairly basic training, as compared to the university education required for Boarding-out visitors[1].

> At its inception training merely underlined the second-class status of residential care, which was already spelled out in the statutory preference for fostering. It thus contributed to an uneasy split between the two main branches of the child care service - a split still apparent in some degree, today. (Packman, 1975, p.43)

There is evidence that it is increasingly difficult to recruit high quality people to enter this demanding and at times rejecting role. A role which I would argue is not just a state approved substitute parent, as workers may also be required to: provide comprehensive reports, liaise with other professionals, act as therapist, teacher, law enforcer and in some cases provide support to those placing the child or young person in care. All this and at times more is required. As

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[1] The term first used to describe social workers as their primary role was to place children in foster care.

someone within the work I am also aware there are many times when the work has been enjoyable and one feels one has achieved something positive. I have also worked with some amazing young people who have overcome many obstacles and one could consider it is for them that workers remain. However, it would be dishonest of me not to say that I have always known I benefitted from being involved in the work. It wasn't until I was fortunate enough to study at the Tavistock Clinic that I came to understand that I was benefiting psychologically; as the work presented opportunities for making reparation for the real or imagined harm done by me or to me.

The aim of this research is therefore to gain an understanding of how people entered this work and why they remain. Furthermore, through the use of psychoanalytical theory it aims to identify whether, and if so, to what extent those working in the role of residential child care worker have an understanding of their unconscious need to make reparation for phantasised or real damage caused by them or done to them in their early childhood. Psychoanalytical theory states that to alleviate feelings of guilt, which can be overwhelming, there is a need to make reparation. At a conscious level, reparation is made to those whom we feel we have hurt, whilst at an unconscious level reparation, or as Dockar-Drysdale (1990) calls it restitution, can be made through our actions to others. She explains that it, '*… may not be made in the form which is expected or recognized by the unwary adult.*' (Dockar-Drysdale, 1990, p.4) This is often seen in children who will offer to help or will undertake additional tasks after they have done something wrong. Just as in Dockar-Drysdale's (1990) examples of the girl who polishes all the furniture in her office after having stolen some money or the boy who looks after the younger children who was '*… acting the part of his own mother making restitution towards her rejected child [himself]*'. (Dockar-Drysdale, 1990, p.6) It is recognised that working with others such as residential child care workers is in some way making reparation. (Dockar-Drysdale, 1990, pp.4-8)

> Reparation implies growth and integration – so just as we try to help the child, unwittingly the child may also help us. We call it job satisfaction, or talk about commitment but I feel that in some respects what we mean is that we do this work because it repairs and heals our own childhood experience. (Lanyado, 1989, p.146)

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As so much of the media attention is based on poor care or abuse experienced by children in residential care it would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that parentless children and vulnerable young people can attract people into the work for negative reasons. Furthermore, workers can also get caught up in the behaviour and/or projections of the children and at least collude and at worst react in abusive ways. Clearly there are practices that enable workers to understand what is occurring and many that do not, which may explain why it is that we keep hearing about these issues. However, as the participants that volunteered come from good quality homes I will be focusing on the positive aspects of the work. This being said the study also aims to enable employers to gain a deeper understanding of the types of people who are likely to be attracted to this work and to consider ways in which they support their staff, thus enabling them to provide high quality care whilst the organization and the individuals within it remain well.

To meet these aims I then considered how I was going to discover the answers to the following questions:

1. How do people initially get into the work?
2. Once in the work, why do they remain?
3. Are workers aware of the emotional meaning of the work for themselves, including the possibility for making reparation for real or imagined wrongs?
4. Are there any particular characteristics common amongst workers and is there a single type or more than one?
5. Are people working in therapeutic organization more reflective than those working in regular homes?

My decision was to undertake in-depth interviews with a small group. I also chose to use the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) as my research method. As Wengraf (2004) writes this method assumes that:

> … "narrative expression" is expressive both of conscious concerns and also of unconscious cultural, societal and individual presuppositions and processes, it is concerned with both the 'inner' and the 'outer' worlds of

'historical person-in-historical situation'; it is both psychodynamic and sociobiographic in approach. (Wengraf, 2004, p.2) *[2]*

To analyse the data from the narratives I chose to make use of both psychoanalytical theory and the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. The combination of BNIM interviews and dual analysis of the data have enabled me to achieve an in-depth understanding of this group's journey and why they remain. As the group was small one cannot make generalisations across the sector, however, the information of why they have remained may assist in thinking about the support and training provided for workers at a more general level. Furthermore, the participants who generously volunteered to be part of this study seem to me to be of a high calibre, working in good quality organizations.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide historical information and a context for this study. Chapter 1 will set out the general history of residential child care and of therapeutic communities for children and young people. As a full history would need a study in its own right I have therefore restricted this to after the Second World War, particularly as it was the Curtis Committee and the subsequent *Children Act 1948* (11 & 12 Geo. 6, c.43) which shaped the service for children and young people needing to be cared for outside their familial home. It will also address recent developments in residential child care and the government's support for quality residential care, which is conceived as part of a plan and not a last resort for vulnerable children. Chapter 2 examines training from the time of the Curtis Committee to current thinking.

Chapter 3 will present the two theoretical perspectives that this study draws on. The first is from sociology, specifically the work of Pierre Bourdieu, to examine participant's societal situations before and after they joined the profession. The second is based on psychoanalytical theory, to explore the states of mind of the participants related to their entering and their motivation to remain in this field.

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[2] Author's own italics and quotation marks

Chapter 4 will provide summaries of the initial 9 participants[3] and the organizations they were working in, as these participants are at the centre of this study. I will also introduce a further nine participants, who completed questionnaires on a website designed for Residential Child Care Workers[4]. This second group, though not central to the study, provide an interesting comparison to the original group.

Chapter 5 will present how I identified the participants, the methods I used to gather the data and the processes by which the data was analysed. It will expand on the reasons for choosing to use the BNIM life story interview method with the main group of participants. It will explain how, being a lone researcher, I adapted BNIM to make more use of a Grounded Theory approach to interrogate the data.

Chapter 6 will present a brief history of ethics in social research, examine some current commentaries and identify the ethical issues that were taken into considerations from the initial proposal through to the conclusion of this study.

Chapter 7 will present statistical data from the 18 participants and compare them with Government commissioned statistics.

Chapter 8 will examine what the participants said about their routes to their first post within residential child care.

Chapters 9, 10 and 11 will present the reasons leading up to why the participants became residential child care workers. Using the material from the life-story interviews I will take into account both Bourdieusian concepts, specifically those of *habitus*, *field*, *practice* and *capital*: particularly in the forms of *cultural capital* and *social capital*. I will also be describing how the

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[3] The original group will be known as the LS group as they participated in the life-story interviews.
[4] These nine volunteers will be known as the Web group as they participated in a Web-based questionnaire.

psychoanalytical theory I have used has enabled me to gain a deeper understand of the participants. All nine participants will be presented across the three chapters depending on where they best fit.

Chapter 9 and 10 attend to the notion of disappointment being a trigger leading to the participants looking for something else in their lives. Chapter 9 presents the idea of disappointment from a Bourdieusian perspective and Chapter 10 from a psychoanalytical point of view.

Chapter 11 will present other reasons that were significant to the participants, with absent parents being an underlying theme, which led them to becoming residential child care workers, from both perspectives.

Chapter 12 explores the changes that have occurred in the participants' lives since they became residential child care workers. It will consider how they have developed within their work-lives and what factors have led them to remain or leave this field. I will also be commenting on the organizations they work in, from a management perspective, and exploring what if any impact this has had on their experiences in the work and their relationships to the organization. I will describe what it is about the work that has led them to remain.

Chapter 13 will present a discussion on the findings and on my experience of making use of the two chosen theoretical frameworks. It will then present my conclusions, regarding this particular cohort of residential child care workers, which suggests how good practice regarding training and support can be facilitated. I will also suggest further research that could be of benefit to the sector so that the best care possible can be provided for the children and young people who need to be cared for away from their familial homes.

Chapter 1: The Modern History of Residential Child Care

Introduction

I am aware that there is a tension between my perspective as a child care practitioner and that of the law and public policy. This represents the tension which has existed from early times up to the current day. The wish of residential child care workers to provide the best care they can is at times limited by financial restraint, policy decisions or the rights of children/parents, whether this is in the best interest of the child or not. This tension has become more evident in recent history, particularly with the necessary introduction of legislation protecting children's and parents' rights and the continued wish for children and young people to be placed in foster care or returned home as soon as possible. Most of the participants commented on their frustration when children were removed from the home before they were ready, commenting that at times the policy of placing children in foster care or leaving care at 16 overruled good practice. This will be addressed later in this document.

Post war history

During the Second World War many children from the big towns and cities were sent to the countryside for their own safety. Some children were housed with families and others in group homes set up in manor houses by the wealthy. At the end of the War there were children left behind as their families had been killed and they needed to be looked after. The first of many changes affecting the care of children both in residential settings and in foster homes came about after the Government instituted an inquiry into the tragic death of Dennis O'Neill, who died whilst in foster care in January 1945. It was due to public outcry about the sentencing of the foster-father that the Government decided to set up a public inquiry. This was led by Myra Curtis and became known as the Curtis Committee. The Curtis Committee made a number of recommendations that influenced the way child care was carried out and monitored in relation to the standards of service and training of the staff. (Packman, 1975) The Committee's recommendation with the greatest impact was that each Local Authority was to have a Children's Department, '…with responsibility for most groups of derived children…' (Packman, 1975, p.6) The Curtis Committee felt

that previously there was lack of oversight due to the fragmentation of responsibility:

> Some of the poor standards of child care found in institutions were also blamed on ineffective and overelaborate subcommittee structures, and on too great a reliance on local guardians' committees, with old-fashioned 'poor law' attitudes.

> The simple and comprehensive pattern of the new service was therefore designed, hopefully, to avoid tragedies like the O'Neill case, and the lesser, but more widespread scandals of poor and unimaginative care for deprived children. (Packman, 1975, pp.6-7)

After the introduction of *Children Act 1948* (11 & 12 Geo. 6, c.43) the new Children's Departments were to have the sole responsibility for receiving a child into care. The Curtis Committee also noted that the attitude about children who had to be taken into public care was still very negative. They were given evidence that showed that the public's attitude was such that, '… children suffered from the attitude of the public to children maintained under the Poor Law'. (Packman, 1975, p.14) The wish of the Committee was that future provision should be improved. Therefore, authorities were made responsible for ensuring better standards of care. The Committee was clearly influenced by its expert witnesses. These were:

> … children's psychiatrist Dr D. W. Winnicott, Dr Susan Isaacs, who had written of the problems of evacuees in Cambridge, Miss Clare Britton, who subsequently founded the first child care training course at L.S.E. and-most significantly - Lt.-Col. John Bowlby. (Packman, 1975, p.22)

It was the wish for these better standards that led the Committee to recommend that the first preference should be foster care. Foster care being the first choice dictated that the first employed child social workers by the Children's Departments were called, *Boarding-out officers* in some areas and *Child Care Officers* in others. However, this was not to take away from the focus of the Act being to '… ensure that "substitute care" was no longer synonymous with "substandard care".'[5] (Packman, 1975, pp.15-17)

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[5] Authors own quotation marks

The Committee recognised that residential care would still be needed and although they made recommendations for small homes run by a couple, these were never embodied in the Act. (Packman, 1975, p.38) The Committee recommended that the voluntary organizations providing homes, such as Barnardo's, the National Children's Homes and churches should remain, with the requirement that they register with the Secretary of State. It was from this point on that registration and inspection were to become a requirement for all homes. There was an initial reduction in the number of children placed in voluntary homes after the Act, however, the 1960's saw an increase. (Packman, 1975, pp.82-88)

Moreover, from Packman's (1975) descriptions of what the committee found in many residential facilities it is no wonder that they were so critical of the service:

> In some instances it was the sheer scale of the Homes that depressed the committee, often compounded by the age and decrepitude of the buildings. 'Barrack' type buildings that housed up to two hundred or more children were a relic of the nineteenth century... (Packman, 1975, p.36)

It wasn't just the buildings and amenities that the Committee were very critical of, they also cited, 'The inadequacies of overworked, untrained staff…', (Packman, 1975, p.37) and the lack of any support for them in dealing with either the psychological and at times physical well-being of the children in these establishments. The Curtis Committee was so concerned about the quality of staff that it released its recommendations about the need of proper training of staff working in residential establishments before the final report. (NISWT, 1969, pp.36-38)

The Committee's preference for foster care included the reduced cost of fostering over residential care. Curtis was not in favour of foster carers being paid anything more than the cost of maintaining the child. Packman (1975) cites a paragraph from a Home Office circular sent out in 1952 that one may imagine, with slight changes to the language, could have been sent out at any time since the Curtis Committee days, even now:

> Finally, boarding out is the least expensive method of child care both in money and manpower and in the present financial conditions of the

country it is imperative to exercise the strictest economy consistent with a proper regard for the interests of the children. (Home Office, 1952, cited in Packman, 1975, p.24)

The next milestone in child welfare was the introduction of the *Children and Young Persons Act 1963*. This Act required more input in working with 'juvenile delinquents', (NISWT, 1969) by empowering local authorities to undertake preventative work and do all in their power to keep families together. This included the provision of support and when needed respite care. Consequently the number of children in foster care went '… from 35 per cent of those in Local Authority care in 1949 to 52 per cent in 1965.' (NISWT, 1969, p.39) These measures put pressure on the fostering service and local authority homes, hence social services turned to placing an increasing number of children in residential care provided by voluntary organizations. The strain was once again showing in the residential sector with homes being full and at times overcrowded. It was also noted that these policies led to the more challenging children being placed in residential care as well as a greater number of adolescents. Packman (1975, pp.141-144) notes that the pressure on child care workers to reunite children with their families was cause for tensions between them and social workers. Residential staff often felt that their views were not taken into account.

The early 1970's saw changes in the organization of social services following the publication of the *Seebohm Report* in 1968 and the introduction of the *Local Authority Social Services Act 1971*. The work of the Children's Department was moved into one unified Social Service Department in each local authority in England and Wales. During the Committee stage the associations of both residential and child care officers had made presentation to the committee that a more unified service with close working relationships would be beneficial. (NISWT, 1969) However, there was nothing in the final Act that stipulated how Authorities organized themselves:

> … a community based and family oriented service, which will be available to all. The new department will, we believe, reach far beyond the discovery and rescue of social casualties: it will enable the greatest possible number

of individuals to act reciprocally, giving and receiving service for the well-being of the whole community. (Spencer, 1969, p.240)

From the 1970's and beyond

The mid 1970's saw the highest level of children placed in children's homes with 1976 being the peak.[6] It was however, also the year when the UK hit its first financial crisis since the war. The Government instituted cutbacks in all areas of spending including children's services. At the same time the *Children Act 1975* required social services to develop adoption and fostering services. During the 1980's the desire to place children in families or to provide additional support to keep them in their homes was so pervasive that some authorities closed down some, if not all, their homes. However, fostering did not work for all young people and this saw the rise in the most difficult young people being placed in residential care, often after numerous placement breakdowns. In 1984 the Social Services Committee, produced a report, *Children in Care*, (1984, cited in Parliament, House of Commons, 2009) which examined policy and practice with regard to children looked after by local authorities, voluntary organizations or other bodies other than their families. This report was the

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[6] At the time of the Curtis report there were some 124,900 children and young people in care. (Hendrick, 1994) This figure rose with the highest number in care being in the mid 70's. The numbers of children in care fell during the late 1980's and early 1990's. Over the last decade the numbers have increased from under 60,000 in 2002 to over 68,110 on the 31st March 2013 (DfES,2006 and DfE, 2013) The percentage of children in residential care has gradually decreased from 32% in 1978 to 21% in 1982 (Berridge et al, 2012) to the figure of 9% in 2013 (DfE, 2013)

Figure 1: Numbers of looked after children at 31st March, 1968–2008
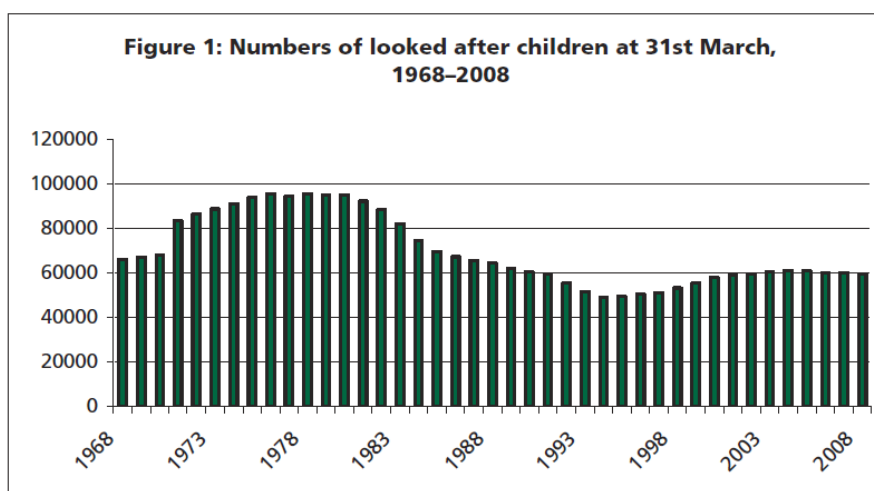
(Parliament, House of Commons, 2009)

basis for the *Children Act 1989* requiring homes to be regulated and for the first time requiring those responsible for the homes to undertake regular visits. Even with the new regulations and inspections from the Social Service Inspectorate the image of homes did not change. Social workers' still considered them as the last resort even with the publication in 1988 of the Wagner Report, *Residential Care: A Positive Choice.* (Smith, 2009)

Crimmens and Milligan (2005) explain that the publication of Levy and Kahan's *Pindown Report* in 1991 led to the first real interest for some time in residential care of children with Community Care launching *Crisis in Care.* Payne (1991, cited in Crimmens and Milligan, 2005, p.22) asked how residential child care had reached its present sorry state. Crimmens and Milligan (2005) explain that during the 1990's residential child care became the focus of a number of government inquiries, specifically: *Children in Public Care* Utting Report, (Department of Health, [DoH] 1991), *Another Kind of Home* (Skinner, 1992) and Welsh Office report *Accommodating Children* (2003, cited in Crimmens and Milligan, 2005). They believe that these three reports were the beginning of a new era and the foundation upon which the recovery of residential child care in the UK was constructed. These were just the beginning of reports, regulations and guidance to impact the sector. Then there were reports and regulation related to protection and practice: Utting's (1997) report; *People Like Us: The Report of the Review of the Safeguards for Children Living Away From Home*, *Lost In Care* – known also as *The Waterhouse Report* (Department of Health, 2000) and the Quality Protects initiative introduced by the Labour government in 1998; requiring local authorities to achieve its performance indicators for children in need. (Crimmens and Milligan, 2005, p.23-26)

Then came the *Care Standards Act 2000* and in 2002 *Children's Homes National Minimum Standards* (Department of Health, 2002) which were far more prescriptive than the *Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Residential Care* (Department of Health, 1991a). With the introduction of the *Health and Social Care Act 2003* the government created a new organization, the Commission for Social Care Inspections, with the task of regulating and inspecting all social care settings. This proved to be a difficult time for some as

homes were inspected by social workers with no background in residential child care. However, this was not to last as the government then went on to incorporate the inspection of children's services with the inspections of schools. The passing of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006* saw the formation of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills which is still known as Ofsted. Since April 2007 the inspection of children's homes has been undertaken by Ofsted. An amendment to the *Children's Homes National Minimum Standards* (Department of Health, 2011) was issued in 2011.

The most recent crisis bringing children's home into the public arena was the Rochdale child trafficking case. During the investigation it came to light that a number of the girls involved had been living in children's homes. Barnardo's published their report, *Puppet on a string. The urgent need to cut children free from sexual exploitation,* where they identified that children's homes were targeted by perpetrators. (Barnardo's, 2011, p.7)   The Secretary of State requested that the Children's Commissioner for England inquire, '... into child sexual exploitation by gangs and groups, with a specific focus on the issue of children in care'. (Berelowitz, 2012) This was to be a two year long inquiry but an emergency report was published nine months into the two years.   In the report it stated:

> Residential children's homes may be perceived as a placement of last resort, rather than as the most appropriate placement for a child. Placement in residential care often occurs either following multiple placement breakdowns, or following a child's late arrival into care with longstanding unrecognised problems (Schofield 2012: Berridge et al 2012). Invariably, the most damaged children and young people are placed in residential care, often with relatively largely unsupported and poorly trained care staff (Pearce 2009). (Berelowitz, 2012, p.7)

The report identified that there should be a number of changes made to the existing regulations governing how children's homes operate and are inspected. Tim Loughton the Minister for Children accepted the recommendations and stated that there would be more rigorous inspections carried out by Ofsted. (DfE, 2012a)

The second inquiry was undertaken by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults and the APPG for Looked-after Children and Care Leavers. Witnesses to the inquiry spoke of the negative attitude held regarding residential care and the high number of placements that many young people will have experienced prior to be placed in a residential home. (Parliament, APPG, 2012)

> Witnesses also spoke of how children's homes were often seen by social workers and other professionals as a 'last resort' for troubled young people with several placements behind them – sometimes more than 40. By the time they arrive, their trust in adults and of usual boundaries have been eroded. (Parliament, APPG, 2012, p.48)

We are waiting to hear what action will be taken following the aforementioned reports.

History of therapeutic communities for children and young people

Although I have stipulated 'modern' it is worth noting that: '... therapeutic community work with children and young people goes back at least 150 years.' (Kasinski, 2003, p.43) The most well know pioneer was Homer Lane, an American invited by the UK Government to help with developing services for juvenile offenders. He started the Little Commonwealth in Dorset in 1913. Though not called a Therapeutic Community, as the phrase was not instituted until after the Second World War, it operated along the same principles by sharing authority with the young people. He believed that this would enable the young people to see that the adults were working with them and not against them. The Little Commonwealth closed in 1918 after allegations made against Lane. (Kasinski, 2003) Leila Rendell had worked with Lane and went to set up The Caldecott Community. She started with a nursery in London 1911 called the Caldecott nursery which then became a residential establishment in 1917. (Collie and Sandiford, 2013)

> Though she shared Lane's ideas, perhaps her most important contributions were in her attempts to bring together care, education and treatment in one setting, and in her capacity to recognise the need for

flexibility and adaptability when working with such children. (Kasinski, 2003, p. 56)

Rendell recognised that there were children outside of the court and Welfare Services that were in need of a secure family environment and so she accepted children not fitting these criteria. During the 1930's other people that were influenced by the work of Lane went on to change or start up special schools for challenging children and young people and to work with them using alternative models. Of particular significance is the work of David Wills, Kasinski (2003, p.57) accredits him with being, '… the person who has probably had the greatest influence in therapeutic community work with children and young people.' It was during his time as warden of The Barns Hostel, 1940-1945, that Wills[7] brought together the different components of care, treatment and education that we would now recognise as the model for a therapeutic community. Additionally, he introduced the idea of bringing outside professionals to work as therapists with the young people and as consultants with the staff. It is all these components that make up what is termed *Planned environment therapy*:

> Planned environment therapy proposed that the child's social needs could be addressed through the experience of shared responsibility within the community: their emotional needs through attention to relationships with staff members and through individual psychotherapy: and their educational needs through measures designed to increase motivation for learning, (Kasinski, 2003, p.58)

Like Leila Rendell, Barbara Dockar-Drysdale started her work with children in East London. She started by setting up a playgroup for children and their families affected by the war. When setting up the Mulberry Bush School in 1948 she was influenced in her thinking both by Anna Freud in relation to child analysis and Donald Winnicott in relation to concept of the *holding environment*. What was special about the Mulberry Bush was, '…its application of child psychotherapy with a group of severely disturbed primary-aged children in a

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[7] Wills along with two other Quakers, Probation officer Geoffrey Brogden and Psychiatrist David Clark was responsible for the opening of Glebe House in 1969, a therapeutic home for young men.

residential school setting.' (Kasinski, 2003, p.59) In addition to being the founder of the Mulberry Bush she was the consultant to the Cotswold Community. This had been an Approved School until the 1960's when under the Directorship of Richard Balbernie it changed into a therapeutic community. John Whitwell (2009), former Director of the Cotswold Community, describes the difficulties he experienced in his early years of working at Cotswold as it was still in a period of transformation:

> Although a lot had changed there were still traces of the old Approved School. For example, there were some staff members who had worked in the Approved School regime and who were not really identified with the new therapeutic community approach. They were going through the motions waiting for the day when these new fangled ideas became unstuck. (Whitwell, 2009, p.3)

Much like the Cotswold Community a second and significant school to change was Park House School, later to be called Peper Harow. This too had been a Special School but when the *Children and Young Persons Act 1969* instituted the abolishment of the failing approved school system Park House was due to be closed. Melvyn Rose, a house master at this time, along with Dr Nora Murrow, the consultant psychotherapist at the school, were able to persuade the Trustees that it was possible to convert the school into a therapeutic community. 'Together, with the support of the trustee board as a whole, they made Peper Harow possible. Melvyn Rose was its first director.' (Kasinski, 2003, p.60) The work of Peper Harow and Melvyn Rose in particular have been influential in the development of other special schools, children's homes and adolescent psychiatric units either becoming therapeutic communities or adopting many of their practices. Although a number of the larger establishments have closed, due to financial pressures, there are still a number of therapeutic communities in existence. Some like The Caldecott Community, now called The Caldecott Foundation, have diversified and include fostering as part of their services. Others like the Mulberry Bush have developed additional services, such as training, education and consultation as a means of supporting their direct work. Some, such as Glebe have continued with the direct work with young people as their main focus but have grown their service by offering more placements to student social workers. Survival is an issue for all these

organizations when funding is a priority for those deciding on placing children and young people.

'Placement of choice of last resort?'

Starting with the Curtis Committee and other Government reports, cited above, and committees, such as the Short Committee,[8] the role of residential care has been recognised as part of a range of services. However, each report though recommended fostering as the first choice has stated that social workers and commissioners should consider residential care as a positive choice. In 1988 came *Residential Care: A Positive Choice*, (Wagner, 1988) again recommending that residential care be viewed as the right place for some young people before they have had multiple placements. The report *Children in Public Care* (DoH, 1991) also noted that children's home may be the best option for some young people. Clearly this advice was not being taken as in 2007 the Department for Children, Schools and Families commissioned Deloitte MCS Limited '[T]o undertake a fact finding review into children's residential care services in England' the title of which is *Determining the Optimum Supply of Children's Residential Care*. (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007, p.6) The objectives of this research was to enable local authorities to find a way of balancing the wishes of young people in their choice of placement, meeting their needs and meeting government requirements in terms of policy and financial restraint. At the time of the research there were some 6,600 children needing state care, this being the same as in 2000.[9] One of the concerns was that despite all the changes that had taken place and government papers that had been written, residential care was, and is still, viewed not as a 'positive choice' but as a 'last resort' for those without special needs. It was also viewed as a short-term placement whilst a suitable foster family was found. Two of the interesting issues highlighted by the report are:

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[8] The recommendations of the Short Committee led to the Children Act 1989.
[9] (Figure taken from the bulletin titled 'Children's homes at 31 March 2000, England' (Department of Health, 2007).

- Negative perceptions of residential care have contributed to a preference for other types of care for looked after children, sometimes at the expense of long-term positive outcomes for children who would benefit from residential care.

- Attracting, recruiting and retaining high quality people to work in residential care is critical but the negative perception of residential care can make this difficult to achieve. (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007, pp.6-7)

They also identified that the patterns of thinking about the most appropriate placement seem not to have altered since the Curtis Committee:

Care providers suggested and social workers confirmed that numerous foster placements would be tried before considering a residential care placement. This substantiates the widely held belief among interviewees that residential care is the 'last resort'. (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007, p.26)

In addition to recommendations with regard to market supply, management and setting up of outcomes based measures the authors recommend that in order to meet the needs of children it would be more appropriate if, residential care was no longer automatically the 'last resort' but an alternative solution viewed positively for the outcomes it can achieve in the right circumstances. (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

Professionals in residential work have for a long time recognised that for some young people living in a family setting, whether with one's birth, adopted or foster parents, is neither appropriate nor healthy. Furthermore, there are a number of young people, and their families, who given the option actively chose to live in a children's home over living in a foster placement. (Sinclair & Gibbs, 1998) There is evidence that the Government continues to want residential care viewed in a more positive light. When responding to the *House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee Looked-after Children Third Report of Session 2008–09* (Parliament, House of Commons, 2009) Tim Loughton MP makes two comments about this recommendation. In point 5 of the *Introduction* he says, 'However, the Government agrees with the Select Committee that for some children the best available option is for them to become looked after by

their local authority.' (Parliament, House of Commons, 2009) Later in the full response he says:

> Residential care

> 34. The Government agrees with the Select Committee that residential care can 'make a significant contribution to good quality placement choice for young people'. Local authorities should see residential care as a positive placement option to meet a child's needs rather than a last resort where fostering placements break down.   (Parliament, House of Commons, 2009)

More recently, recommendation 27 of the *House of Commons Education Committee report, 'Looked-after Children: Further Government Response to the Third Report from the Children, Schools and Families Committee', Session 2008–09*[10] (Parliament, House of Commons, 2011) states:

> While the emphasis the English care system places on family environments is right, the potential of the residential sector to offer high quality, stable placements for a minority of young people is too often dismissed. With enforcement of higher standards, greater investment in skills, and a reconsideration of the theoretical basis for residential care, we believe that it could make a significant contribution to good quality placement choice for young people. (Parliament, House of Commons, 2011, p.11)

Then there was a more recent statement coming from the Office of the Children's Commissioner, 'If residential care is to be used it must be the placement of choice, matched to the child's needs and not a last resort.' (Berelowitz, 2012, p.40)

Even with these statements of recognition, the perception of the public remains the same, particularly as the only time anything appears in the media related to a children's home is when there has been a major incident, usually linked to child abuse and then there is a call for a government inquiry. Rarely does one hear positively about the valuable work of caring for some very difficult, damaged children or young people in residential settings. Some would go even further in that there is a view that residential child care no longer has a place

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[10] Published on the 4th April 2011

within social welfare. In an article in *Community Care,* Pemberton (2013) reported that, 'More than one-third of English councils no longer own or run any mainstream children's homes.   In the Department for Education's report, *Living in Children's residential homes*, Berridge et al (2012) identified that the decline, which started in the 1980's, has continued and that there are plans for further reductions in local authority homes:

> The number of local authority children's homes has shrunk considerably since the early 1980s (Berridge and Brodie, 1998). Today, more than half of the children in children's homes, secure units or hostels are in units provided by the private or voluntary sector, with the majority of these external placements provided by the private sector (Department for Education, 2011a). It seems likely that this trend will continue, as at least 17 per cent of local authorities recently informed Community Care magazine that they plan to close at least one residential home or are reviewing their service. More than one-third of English councils no longer run any mainstream children's homes and almost half have closed at least one of their children's homes since 2008. (Berridge et al, 2012, p.3)

It is not just the local authority homes that some would want closed. In his introduction to Smith's (2009) book *Rethinking residential child care*, Fulcher (2009, cited in Smith, 2009. p.vi) writes, 'Some have argued that all residential or institutional services are oppressive and should no longer be included among the variety of service options available to family or to health, education and welfare professionals.' However, it is clear that residential care continues to have a place within the child care sector as there are young people for whom foster care is not an option or whose behaviour is not manageable by foster carers:

> Today, therefore, children's residential care is used for only a small proportion of looked after children, mostly over the age of 12, many of whom have moved there either from home or from foster care as a result of their challenging behaviour. (Berridge et al, 2012, p.4)

Undoubtedly there are homes that are not performing but one does have to ask why this is the case. One wonders whether more rigorous inspections and the promise of de-registering some homes will change attitudes or if Smith's (2009) statement will continue to be true:

> After many years as a neglected area of social welfare, residential child care has experienced a resurgence of interest in recent years, but often

for the wrong reasons. The picture painted within the literature is generally bleak, depicting episodes of abuse, poor outcomes for children across a range of measures and low levels of qualifications and morale among staff (Smith, 2009, p.1)

To try to understand why this may occur, it is useful to think about the role of residential child care within the wider field of welfare and social care. Cooper and Lousada (2005) and Dartington (2010) explain that one function of the welfare system is to contain unwanted feelings about the more painful aspects of society so that they are hidden away, 'The system of care becomes itself a receptacle for our own unwanted projections of inadequacy into others.' (Dartington, 2014, p.70) However, when things go wrong they are brought to the surface and therefore Government has to act to ensure that the anxieties are once again contained. Cooper and Lousada (2005, p.13) suggest that, '... social policy now plays a far more prominent role in the management of social anxiety.' They suggest that with each failure in the care system the task of risk management has been removed from the professionals only to be more centralized with the introduction of regulation and inspection. Furthermore, society's trust in these institutions, which contain the anxieties, has been damaged, leading to a lack of faith in both the institutions and Government's ability to control them. (Cooper and Lousada, 2005, pp.66-69) Therefore, as the system of care contains the anxieties of society, the current climate of a lack of trust surely means that workers are not only attending to the difficulties of the children and young people they are working with but also with the projections from the community. It is within this context that this study has been undertaken.

Chapter 2: Staffing and Training

Staffing

Although regulations and standards play an important part in the provision of high quality care, the key component is the people that do the work. This study is focusing on them and why they do this work when the image of the workers continues to be so poor. In the most recent Government enquiry one can note that the view of residential care continues to be poor one. Witnesses to the *APPG for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults and the APPG for Looked After Children and Care Leavers* spoke of the negative attitude about residential child care and the high number of placements that many young people will have experienced prior to be placed in a residential home:

> The high turnover and low training and skills levels of some staff in children's homes were also raised with the Inquiry. One practitioner told the Inquiry: "*You can have someone looking after a young person, who the day before their experience may have been working at a deli counter in ASDA".'[11]* (Parliament, APPG, 2012, p.48)

Such negative images are now the norm, one seldom hears of the positive work being carried out in children's homes. Nor does one hear how staff are being asked to work with some of the most vulnerable and damaged young people because of costs or the consequence of a policy that states that children should be within family settings leading to a number of young people having been in multiple placements before they are finally placed in a children's home.

In the National Children's Bureau's (2002) report, *Fit for the Future? Residential child care in the United Kingdom*, McLaughlin (2006) writes the chapter: *Workforce issues*. Her research identified that across all four cohorts, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, staff recruitment and retention were problematic. (McLaughlin, 2006, p.62) The research participants gave a number of different reasons including: the nature of the work with the young people, the fact that it is shift work and is poorly paid. (McLaughlin, 2006, p.67) Smith

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[11] Authors' own italics

(2009) suggests that this is also due to the low status of the work and the lack of progress on the professional status of workers is also of concern to some:

> Rarely too do staff feel adequately valued. The vision of a professionally qualified workforce has not come to pass. … So, as various inquiries have highlighted the need to improve professional standing and qualification levels, residential care has in fact witnessed an incremental 'dumbing down' of the nature of qualification required to work in the sector, at a time when the demands posed by the shrinking population of residential settings are becoming more acute. (Smith, 2009, p. 47)

Some places have a difficult time recruiting staff, for the reasons stated above, as well as the fact that for some, dealing with the behaviours of the young people they are now asked to work with can be overwhelming.   With each inquiry there are more stringent inspection and an increase in regulation. Smith (2009) suggests that the regulations have had a major impact on residential care workers.

> Residential workers are viewed with suspicion, both publicly and in their own agencies, often subject to precipitous, back-covering investigation in the event of any complaint made against them. There are consequences for children when residential care workers are so devalued. Care givers need to feel safe if they in turn are to value children in their care. Paradoxically, the more confident and empowered adults feel, the better they are able to listen to and respect children and to take their views into account. (Smith, 2009, p.47)

When things go wrong there have to be inquiries yet one is left wondering, where is the learning? When one sees one's profession being blamed in the media does this not lead to a further reduction of morale?

Training

The Curtis Committee recommended that training should be designed for those working in children's homes, citing the voluntary organization which provided their own training programmes as the basis of their recommendations. As a direct result of these recommendations the Central Training Council set up courses lasting 14 months. (NISWT, 1969, pp.38-40) Twenty years later, the Williams Committee report of 1967, *Caring for People*, states that training for residential workers is still inadequate, 'To do such difficult work satisfactorily, staff need personal qualities ... but clearly they should also be given the

opportunity to equip themselves through adequate training.' (1967, quoted in NISWT, 1969, p.160) This Committee recommended that for those in charge of a home, their deputies and any others with considerable responsibility for children there should be full-time training. Their recommendation was for the setting up a two year full-time course with approximately fifty per cent of the time given to practice and leading to a Certificate in Residential Care. They recommended keeping the existing one year course but only for mature students with experience. They also recommended the setting up of an Advanced Course, which could be quite specialised such as in group work. Furthermore, they included the need to have good quality in-service training and staff development plans as a minimum. The starting point they felt was that each organization had a proper induction programme for all new staff. (NISWT, 1969, pp.175-177) Following their recommendation the Central Council for Training Social Workers, CCETSW, was established in 1971 with the aim of developing education, training and development for all social workers. Alarmed at the lack of training in a paper titled *Residential Work is part of Social Work*, (1973, cited in Packman, 1975) CCETSW proposed a joint training for both field and residential workers, with the placement being the point of difference. However, this was not to be and two separate awards were launched:

> Through CCETSW, two professional awards were made available to social work students - the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) and the Certificate in Social Services (CSS) for social care staff. (Davis, 2008, p.17)

In 1989 CCETSW introduced the Diploma in Social Work (DipSW) and by 1994 this had replaced both the Certificate in Social Service (CSS) and the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW). The DipSW became the professional qualification for social work accepted by employers throughout the United Kingdom. Those working in residential care wanting a professional qualification had from this point onwards no choice but to take the DipSW although it was intended for those wanting to become field social workers. During the 1970's and 80's some educational establishments run such courses as the Advanced Diploma in Residential Child Care.

Vol. 17 no. 3 of *Social work Education* (1998) was a special issue dedicated to training and education for residential child care. The editors state that the

stimulus for this issue was a paper presented at the Realities and Dreams conference in Glasgow by Ian Milligan titled *Residential work is not social work!* (Ward and Preston-Shoot, 1998, p.269) In the editorial they write:

> Residential workers continue to be among the least trained and educated staff in the helping professions, although it is often recognised that they have one of the hardest jobs to do. They have to contend with frequent criticisms of their whole field of practice both from within and without the social work profession. (Ward and Preston-Shoot, 1998, p.269)

Its aim was to re-examine issues related of training, policy and good practice. (Ward and Preston-Shoot, 1998, p.269) The selected papers covered a range of subject matters related to training and staff dynamics. The recurring theme was the importance of training that was appropriate for the task of caring for children away from their parental home which develop practice, skills and understanding. Crimmens' (1998) paper, *Training for residential child care workers in Europe: comparing approaches in The Netherlands, Ireland and the United Kingdom*, explores the concept of social pedagogy as a means of going forwards but concludes with:

> At the very least, further examination of other training systems will sharpen the focus on desirable outcomes, providing clearer definition of what is required to meet objectives in relation to professional education and training for looking after children living away from their homes. (Crimmens, 1998, p.319)

And on a hopeful note Karban and Frost (1998) conclude their article, *Training for residential child care: assessing the impact of the Residential Child Care Initiative*:[12]

> It is to be hoped that a strategic approach to residential child care, responsive and flexible enough to withstand a degree of change and uncertainty, will be developed to meet the challenge of providing quality care for children and young people. Training at pre-qualifying, qualifying and post-qualifying levels needs to be an integral part of any such strategic approach. (Karban and Frost, 1998, p.299)

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[12] This was an initiative in nine universities where there was a programme of study leading to Diploma in Social Work for those working in children's home. This came about as a response to the Utting report 'Children in the Public Care' (DoH, 1991).

The hope for proper training was based on the *Utting Report* (1997) which recommended an adherence to the training strategy from the 1991 (DoH, 1991) report but with continued work to improve the training at all three levels.

> He (Utting) acknowledges that there is considerable scope for improvement at all three levels of pre-qualifying, qualifying and post-qualifying, but recognises that many of the structures and course materials are not yet readily available. (Crimmens, 1998, p.317)

Although the NVQ in *Caring for Children and Young People* has been available since the late 1980's it was the first benchmark training standard set by the 1991 *Utting Report*. (Campbell, 2006, p.51) Later, *Children's Homes National Minimum Standards 2002* (DoH, 2002) required that 80% of care staff attained at least the NVQ Level 3 by January 2005. (DoH, 2002) However, in 2008 the Children's Workforce Development Council, (CWDC) undertook to a survey to identify how many staff in children's home had attained the necessary qualifications. They state that of all staff working in voluntary and private establishments 58% had achieved an NVQ level 2, 3 or 4. In local authority homes 83% of registered managers were qualified and 56% of child care workers had attained the NVQ 3. (CWDC, 2008)

For the majority in-house training is the main method for residential child care workers to receive training specific to their role. All providers of residential child care services have to provide induction training to comply with the requirements of the previous and current *National Minimum Standards*, '… they provide a basis for the induction and training of staff,' (DfE, 2011) These state that staff must complete an induction programme within six months of commencing employment and achieve level 3 NVQ or Diploma as stipulated by the Children's Workforce Development Council.[13] 'The CWDC induction standards set out what new workers should know, understand and be able to do within six months of starting work.' (CWDC, 2010) However, many are dismissive of the

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[13] In 2005 the Diploma in Health and Social Care: Caring for Children and young people was introduced replacing the older NVQ3 Caring for Children and young people following a review of National Occupational Standards.

NVQ as a means of training staff as it is a means of assessing the ability of an individual to gather the material they use as part of their work. It requires the delivery of theory to be undertaken by the home or the parent organization and they question whether any new knowledge is gained or new skills are developed.

Since before the time of the Curtis Committee voluntary organizations have developed their own training programmes and some continue to do so. 'The College is part of the Caldecott Foundation[14], and was established in 1995 to provide specialist training in therapeutic child care'. (Collie and Sandiford, 2013) Later on Peper Harrow organised training in conjunction with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust for their own staff. This training was designed to meet the requirements of the organization and those staff that were able to do so could undertake study to a Masters level. Other organizations interested in therapeutic child care were able to send their staff to the University of Reading between 1990 and 2006 to undertake the MA in Therapeutic Child Care. In 2008 the Mulberry Bush School started its own Foundation Degree course in association with the University of the West of England in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People. However, though of a higher standard than the minimum requirements, there have been difficulties in these being accepted by Ofsted[15].

The issue of training and qualifications have again come into the political arena following the Rochdale Sex trafficking case. In their briefing for the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP, the Office of the Children's Commissioner states:

> National Minimum Standards require that managers of children's homes are qualified to level 5 and staff are qualified to level 3. There is no requirement for managers to have a qualification in one of the core professions of health, education or social care. It is of considerable concern that the workforce tasked with caring intensely for some of our most troubled children is one of the least qualified workforces in the social care sector. (Berelowitz, 2012, p.41)

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[14] The Caldecott College has since closed.
[15] This information came from a conversation with the Director.

The comments from APPG's Inquiry into children missing from care were related to the low level of training.

> The current low levels of training for children's homes staff who are dealing with vulnerable children were highlighted as a key factor in the current low standards of care by many witnesses. (Parliament, APPG, 2012, p.23)

The report identified that one of the reasons for the low level of training was due to a high staff turnover, which is in itself caused by low wages and poor working conditions. However, there was no recommendation in relation to training in this report.

The requirements for a residential child care worker in England and Wales is the Diploma whereas in Scotland it is an SVQ3[16] and an HNC in Social Care. It is interesting to note the difference between the governments of England, Wales and Scotland. Scotland is the most progressive location, where in April 2000 the Scottish Assembly established the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC)[17]. The Institute worked in partnership with Robert Gordon University, University of Strathclyde, Langside College and Who Cares Scotland. The aim for SIRCC was to act '…as a catalyst to influence and improve the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people living in residential care.' (Shaw, 2009) Residential child care workers in Scotland are able to undertake studies and qualification up to degree level specific to their work.[18]

The attitude to residential child care in Scotland is very different than in England it may be that one can look there for progress. In the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care's report *Higher Aspirations, Brighter Futures: National Residential Child Care Initiative Overview Report*, (Bayes, 2009) they identify training, especially academic training, as essential:

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[16] The SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualification) is equivalent to the NVQ
[17] SIRCC is now part of Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) and the web page no longer exists
[18] In October 2012 it was announced that the Scottish government had asked that the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) explore the introduction of a degree level qualification. (SSSC, 2012)

The workforce is the most important resource in residential child care and their status, skills and training as well as the support they are offered, has to be commensurate with the increasingly demanding and challenging task expected of them. (Bayes, 2009, p.15)

The House of Lords' *Library note* (Parliament, House of Lords, 2012, p.1) which provides background reading for; '… the standards of service for looked-after children and, in particular, the Government's response to changes in residential childcare in the light of recent child protection failures' states:

Mr Loughton also stated that one of the priorities for the Government should be to improve training for the workforce in residential care: (Parliament, House of Lords, 2012, p.7)

He is reported as saying;

There are some very good ones, some very dedicated ones, but if you are working in an equivalent home in the Continent you would need a graduate level qualification. You don't need such qualification to work in a home here and that is something we are looking at very closely. (Parliament, House of Lords, 2012, p.7)

To date there have been no further announcements to enhance the training for residential child care workers. In fact in a consultation document regarding inspections of children's homes it states: '**The second proposal** is that registered managers and care staff should meet the qualification requirements as set out in the current national minimum standards.'[19](Ofsted, 2013)

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[19] Authors own bold.

Chapter 3: Theoretical frameworks

Bourdieu's Concepts

The work of Pierre Bourdieu is used to understand the sociological aspects of the participants' life-stories as I am interested in their backgrounds and how these have facilitated their entry and remaining in the work.

Bourdieu as a sociologist identified that in order to understand society one had to enquire into its constituent parts.   His key terms were *habitus*, *capital, field* and *practice*.   He went on to identify different categories of *capital*, including social, cultural, and symbolic capital, I explain these below.   Bourdieu proposed that all individuals occupy a position in a multidimensional society and that one cannot define an individual merely by their social class membership, but by every kind of capital he or she can convey through social relations.

Bourdieu developed these concepts through his work as a researching sociologist/ethnologist initially in Algeria, '… he pursued his ethnological work on ritual, kinship, and social change in Algeria … and took to the sociology of schooling, art, intellectuals, and politics.' (Wacquant, 2006, p.2) In addition to Bourdieu's own research on social class, migration, the arts, political systems and other related sociological concerns, the concepts of Bourdieu have continued to be utilised in research pertaining to education. Grenfell and James (2004) are key proponents of the use of Bourdieusian concepts into researching educational phenomena.   There is an increase in the use of Bourdieu's work in health research. (Cockerham, 2013) Peillon (1998) argues that although Bourdieu did not research the realm of welfare his work is very relevant.   'He has never shown any great interest in welfare studies, his general approach can be mobilised to develop a sociological analysis of welfare.' (Peillon, 1998, p.247) Garrett (2007) puts forward the case that there should be an increase in utilising Bourdieu's concepts in social work.   In support of this he points out that although many feel Bourdieu neglected the field of social work he did have things to say, '…   Bourdieu is alert to the problems encountered by individual social workers, encased in public sector bureaucracies.*'* (Garrett, 2007, p.238) Although this article is intended to argue the case for making use of Bourdieusian concepts in social work it is relevant to this study in alerting one to

the fact that the participants have a relationship with their familial field and also with the organizational field and that of social work in general. Clearly, social workers themselves operate, '… in a field with political capital, and the exercise of their power immediately produces stigma, negative symbolic capital for their clients.' (Peillon, 1998, p.223)

In an interview with Wacquant (1989) Bourdieu stated that he was not overly concerned with the theories from which he developed his concepts or making use of them in a dogmatic way. The concepts were a set of *thinking tools* in the endeavour to explore a phenomenon. Bourdieu himself describes his work thus: 'There is no doubt a theory in my work, or, better, a set of *thinking tools*[20] visible through the results they yield, but it is not built as such.' (Wacquant, 1989, p.50) Bourdieu went on to explain that it is their application that is important and not their genealogy. (Wacquant, 1989) I therefore intend to define these key concepts as it is the inter-relationship between these concepts that is significant in achieving a greater understanding of the individuals and their choices.

Habitus

Bourdieu has described *habitus* on many occasions developing each statement in turn. The following definition encapsulates his ideas:

> Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53)

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[20] Author's own italics

Bourdieu explains that an individual's habitus is learnt from birth and that it impacts all aspects of an individual's life. One's habitus consists of more than physical environment, it includes the history of one's family, even to the point where the history is forgotten but the consequences of the history is passed from one generation to the next: '… habitus proposes that human agents are historical animals who carry within their bodies acquired sensibilities and categories that are the sedimented products of their past social experiences.' (Wacquant, 2011, p.82) Habitus includes the values and attitudes that are core to one's family and is influenced by one's class and economic position or in Bourdieu's terms one's *social space*. (Bourdieu, 2003) This set of learned, unconscious, beliefs and values that are taken for granted, inform all our actions and encompasses: an individual's tendencies, inclinations, thoughts and feelings, a way of being or in other words one's habitual state. It emanates from the objective conditions in one's earliest environment and is created as part of a social process which includes one's social and economic position. The internalisation of the individual's social position, familial values and attitudes creates the unconscious parameters within which an individual operates. Bourdieu (1984) postulates that one's habitus affects one's attitudes to life and one's tastes and preferences; it also shapes one's practices and dispositions, the way in which the world is perceived. Habitus can even affect one's bodily postures and gestures. The development of an individual's habitus occurs through a process of internalisation of one's earliest subjective and objective environment, one's social and economic position within society in addition to one's familial values and attitudes. The creation and reproduction of habitus, much like the process of socialization, occurs unconsciously, '… without any deliberate pursuit of coherence … without any conscious concentration.' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.170)

Bourdieu (1990) states that as habitus is a product of repeated history, the origins of which are mostly forgotten, it produces both individual and group practices and is therefore perpetual, as it exists in the present by governing the '… correctness of practices and their constancy over time, more reliable then all formal rules and explicit norms.' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.54) As one's habitus determines one's responses to situations, one's tastes, perceptions and

thoughts, it is self-perpetuating. Therefore when an individual attempts to behave in a way that is perceived to be outside the parameters of the habitus, this is seen as extravagant, '… not for the likes of us,' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.56) and would be negatively sanctioned, because it is incompatible with the objective conditions. That it is not to say that an individual may not respond to situations consciously but their responses are limited to those that are likely to be positively sanctioned by their particular social field.

Habitus also helps one to understand the behaviour of a group or class. Members of the same group or class tend to hold to the same set of values and attitudes and yet may respond to the same situation in different ways because of their own habitus.

> In fact, the singular *habitus* of members of the same class are united in a relationship of homology, that is, of diversity within homogeneity reflecting the diversity within homogeneity characteristic of their social conditions of production. (Bourdieu, 1990, p.60) [21]

However, this doesn't preclude the habitus of an individual or group from changing. Change occurs when the group or individual comes up against new experiences, training or education, therefore habitus can be seen to control the actions and behaviours of individuals and groups in the present due to their past and enable change:

> Habitus is also a principle of *both social continuity and discontinuity*; continuity because it stores social forces into the individual organism and transports them across time and space: discontinuity because it can be modified through the acquisition of new dispositions and because it can trigger innovation whenever it encounters a social setting discrepant with the setting from which it issues. (Wacquant, 2006, p.7) [22]

In essence, habitus is the embodiment of history, '… internalised as a second nature and so forgotten as history'. (Bourdieu, 1990, p.56) Yet whilst actions, thoughts and practices are still being filtered through habitus change is still possible. In this study I will be exploring the habitus of the participants through their life-stories and to some small extent that of the organizations and will

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[21] Author's italics
[22] Author's italics

consider whether the participants remained working in their organizations for a long time because their own habitus corresponded in some way to that of the organization, or if they were assimilated into it, or if over time there was change due to new experiences of either the individual and/or the organization.

Field

Bourdieu felt that the use of social class, ideologies and economics as a means of analysing society was too simplistic. In order to comprehend the complex relationships that exist, the attitudes of particular groups of people which on the surface seem to belong to a specific grouping, Bourdieu used the concept of *field*. His theory of *field* relates to a socially constructed space in which agents participate. The agents within a particular field are aware of its history and are able to refer to this. Bourdieu (1990) explains the concept through the notion of a game, like a game a field has rules:

> In a game, the field (the pitch or board on which it is played, the rules, the outcome at stake, etc.) is clearly seen for what it is, an arbitrary social construct, an artefact whose arbitrariness and artificiality are underlined by everything that defines its autonomy - explicit and specific rules, strictly delimited and extra-ordinary time and space. (Bourdieu, 1990, p.67)

Later in interview with Wacquant, (1989) [23] Bourdieu describes *field*:

> I define a field as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.). (Wacquant, 1989, p.39)

Unlike a game, social fields are produced over a long period of time developing systems which enable autonomy - they are to be considered as it were '…

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[23] It is worth noting that although published prior to the English version of *The Logic of Practice* the interview dates after the original French version published in1980.

games in-themselves [and not] for themselves'. (Bourdieu, 1990, p.67) Furthermore, an agent does not choose to join a social field one is born a member of it. Members of social fields learn the rules and interests unconsciously, although he did not mean this in the dynamic psychoanalytic sense of this term being always wary of psychoanalysis, and therefore invest in the perpetuation of the *illusio.* Commitment to the investment is total as there is no awareness that this is occurring when one is born into the field as one learns the habitus of the field by the same means as one learns one's own language. With the unconscious adoption of the habitus of the field comes the desire to maintain the field and all its interests and hence its perpetuation. It is this unconscious process of acquiring the habitus of the field and the habitus of one's family that creates the dynamic relationship necessary to remain within the field whilst at the same time being influenced and influencing the field. (Bourdieu, 1990, pp.67-68) One could consider that this also occurs when people remain working within an organization for long periods of time or where the organization provides more than work for the individual.

Bourdieu (2011) contends that one of the main aspects of a field is that within each field there is a constant struggle between the agents to acquire whatever is at stake. Each field has different stakes or as Bourdieu termed them, *capital.* The types of *capital* within fields include: economic, cultural, social, political and symbolic. Each agent, limited by their own habitus, within a field is in a struggle to acquire more capital. Strategies may include the acquisition of additional capital from outside the field which are then used to advance their chances of gaining a better position:

> The field operates like a game wherein agents adopt strategies in competition with others to gain the stakes. All play the same game. Conduct is always strategic, though not necessarily consciously so. (Warde, 2004, p.12)

The limitation of one's habitus and those of the arbitrarily created limitations of the social field create the limits to each agent's aspiration. Bourdieu (2011) describes this process as the system which creates, a '… *sense of reality* i.e.

the correspondence between the objective classes and the internalized classes, social structures and mental structures.' (Bourdieu, 2011, p.164) [24] This process creates an order within the systems of the society. Differentiation may be based on age, gender, social classification etc. and differences are reproduced in order to maintain the power relationships by '… securing the misrecognition, and hence the recognition, of the arbitrariness on which they are based.' (Bourdieu, 2011, p.164) Bourdieu (2003) named this process whereby agent's thoughts and action are limited *doxa*:

> Doxa is the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a habitus and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-far-granted of the world that flows from practical sense. Enacted belief, instilled by the childhood learning that treats the body as a living memory pad, an automaton that 'leads the mind unconsciously along with it', and as a repository for the most precious values, is the form par excellence of the 'blind or symbolic thought' (Bourdieu, 2003, p.69)

In this study I will be exploring whether the doxa of the field is made evident through the narratives of the participants. I will also explore the notion of the struggle within the field and what capital is used or gained to enable occupational progression. I will explore the habitus of the participants operating within the field of residential child care within the field of social work. Peillon (1998) explains that society itself is a field containing many fields that never actually separate from what he terms the 'paramount field'. (Peillon, 1998, p.215) He explains that in order to understand the location of a particular field one needs to identify the level of autonomy it has acquired. Wacquant (2006, p.8) explains that over time the aim of a field is to be more self-contained and self-reliant, and therefore better able to defend itself against attacks from neighbouring fields, consequently the more autonomous it is able to remain. As I am examining establishments that have different aims and objectives, although within the field of residential child care within the field of social work, I am interested in identifying the location of each establishment within this field and the level of autonomy they have gained.

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[24] Author's own italics

An autonomous field is characterised by a high level of specificity: it possesses its own history: a particular configuration of agents operate within it and struggle for a distinctive stake: it induces its own habitus and upholds a distinctive set of beliefs. Such an autonomous field is highly differentiated and marked by sharp boundaries, beyond which the field ceases to have any impact on practice. (Peillon, 1998, p.215)

Capital

In addition to habitus and field the third concept that interrelates is that of *capital*. Bourdieu used the term *capital* to refer to what might be considered as forms of power, '... different types of capital (or power, which amounts the same thing).' (Bourdieu, 2002, p47) Capital is the means by which individuals or groups of agents are enabled to gain what Bourdieu calls, *social energy*. He argues that in order to understand the structure and workings of the social world one must take into account the types of capital that are in use:

[C]apital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights: as cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications: and as social capital, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility. (Bourdieu, 2002, p.47)

I will now provide a brief synopsis of Bourdieu's concepts of cultural and social capital, these being particularly relevant to this study. However, Bourdieu posits that both social and cultural capital can be gained through the use of economic capital, but take time to acquire, and in the end can be converted into economic capital. (Bourdieu, 2002, p.46)

Cultural capital

Cultural capital can be found in three different forms:

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body: in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.: and in the institutionalised

state, a form of objectification … of educational qualifications. (Bourdieu, 2002, p.47)

In relation to this study the two forms of cultural capital which are of interest are the *embodied* state and the *institutionalised* state. Embodied capital refers to external wealth that has become an integral part of an agent and is incorporated into their habitus. Cultural capital is something that is acquired over time and most often at an unconscious level and it will always be marked by its earliest acquisitions, such as an individual's accent. Its acquisition is limited by the agent's mental capacity as well as the availability within the society or period in history. Although its benefits are transmitted from one generation to the next it dies with the individual. The acquisition of cultural capital is linked to the social conditions of the agent more so than is economic capital and as it takes time to acquire. It cannot be purchased in the same way as objectified capital and therefore functions as symbolic capital. In societies that are divided by social classes, cultural capital and economic capital tend to be possessed by the same group of individuals. When economic capital is used to acquire cultural capital there is a need for time before it comes to fruition. Hence individuals with large amounts of cultural and economic capital are able to access the resources to gain capital both in its objectified and institutionalised states. Bourdieu (2002) argues that academic qualifications are objectified forms of cultural capital that have been institutionalised to denote that the bearer has, '... a certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture.' (Bourdieu, 2002, p.50) Furthermore, by giving institutional recognition to academic qualifications a monetary value can be bestowed upon an aspect of cultural capital dependent on its scarcity and the time it has taken to achieve it. This then allows for the exchange of cultural capital into economic capital. (Bourdieu, 2002, p.46-50)

Social capital

Social capital is the amassed actual or potential resources of an enduring group which provides its members with '… the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.' (Bourdieu, 2002, p.51) The amount of social capital held by the group is

dependent on the capital held by each member and vice versa, as being a member of the group will enhance the capital held by the individual. Hence membership of a particular group will be beneficial to the individual as it will enable them to acquire more capital by association. In the field of residential child care one might leave an establishment: that has had a bad inspection, for a promotion, or move to a well-known or specialist establishment as this will enhance one's career development. On the other hand establishments may prefer to recruit personnel that have connections within the wider sector as it will enhance the social capital of the organization.

New members of a group have to go through a joining process; one would recognise this as the induction. Members of the group then have to establish relationships within the group to define their position within it. Some organizations encourage their staff to sit on committees at the National level as, participation in external activities enhances the social capital of both the individual and the organization. The participation of individuals in external bodies is initially due to the social capital held by the organization which they are representing. This process of allowing and encouraging members of the group to participate in external networking is part of its investment strategies, which may be instigated at a conscious or unconscious level and are of use either in the long or short term, but are designed in order to enhance the social capital of the group. Furthermore, it binds the individual to the group as it creates an obligation and a sense of gratitude from the individual to the group. (Bourdieu, 1984, p.287)

In addition to understanding how the participants have been able to grow their capital whilst in their work situations we need to consider how it is that some of them have made what may seem downward or upward movements across different social spaces. Bourdieu (1984) explains that individuals are influenced to act in particular ways somewhat because of their compliance or not to the forces which structure the social space they inhabit and in part because of the capital they hold. At this point he is referring predominantly to one's inherited or *embodied* capital, which comes in the form of one's outlook, and *objectified* capital in the form material goods, education and qualifications. The amount of

inherited capital and objectified capital gained will then influence the range of *probable trajectories* that the agent has when considering their options. The range of trajectories differs for each social class due to the options they can attain through the means of gaining objectified capital, principally education and gaining qualifications. Therefore individuals coming from the middle class and above have greater access to good quality education and have inherited the kind of outlook on life which gives them the confidence to take advantage of the varied options open to them. Consequently, they have a greater range of trajectories as opposed to someone from a working class background where their options and attitudes are more limited. However, we are interested in how it has come to be that certain participants have, shall we say, become upwardly or downwardly socially mobile. Bourdieu (1984, pp.101-112) explains that this is possible due to the fact that not all individuals within the same social space have the same individual trajectory hence it is not necessarily fixed:

> To say that the members of a class initially possessing a certain economic and cultural capital are destined, with a given probability, to an education and social trajectory leading to a given position means in fact that a fraction of the class (which cannot be determined a priori within the limits of this explanatory system) will deviate from the trajectory most common for the class as a whole and follow the (higher or lower) trajectory which was most probable for members of another class. (Bourdieu, 1984, p.111)

Nash (1990) brings together a number of Bourdieu's ideas regarding social class and education. He explains that people from working class backgrounds don't even ask about opportunities for higher education because of the values held by their social class and the family, as regards education. This is further affected by the cultural capital held by the family as well as the ethnicity and gender of the individual. (Nash, 1990, p.438) Furthermore, Bourdieu's theory enables an understanding of how society regulates the differences in educational opportunity in order to maintain the different social classes and therefore the distribution of capital. The idea of capital, principally in its social form, and the struggle within each field for individuals to gain further capital also enables us to see how it is that some individuals coming from what may seem to be a higher social class have taken a lower status job. Whereas, Manning (2010) uses Bourdieu's theory to examine therapeutic communities' place within

the field of mental health and their survival, 'The intersection and interaction within and between these fields, with varying mixes of capitals, resources, and habits of thinking, have shaped the collective biography of therapeutic communities.' (Manning, 2010, p.439)

Moral Capital as a subgroup of Symbolic Capital

A further form of capital to be considered for those participants of a higher social class is that of 'symbolic capital'. Bourdieu (1984) introduced the idea of symbolic capital in *Distinction*,

> By contrast, for those who, like the professionals, live on the sale of cultural services to a clientele, the accumulation of economic capital merges with the accumulation of symbolic capital, that is, with the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability that are easily converted into political positions as a local or national *notable.* (Bourdieu, 1984, p.291)

Later he identified that any form of capital can be perceived as symbolic capital because it is given value by others. (Bourdieu, 2003, p.47)

> Symbolic capital is an ordinary property (physical strength, wealth, warlike valor, etc.) which, perceived by social agents endowed with the categories of perception and appreciation permitting them to perceive, know and recognize it, becomes symbolically efficient, like a veritable *magical power:* a property which, because it responds to socially constituted "collective expectations" and beliefs, exercises a sort of action from a distance, without physical contact. (Bourdieu, 2003, p.102)

Therefore, working within residential child care for low pay may in some social spaces be considered as doing good work for the community and hence given symbolic value. Helping those less fortunate than oneself could also be considered as having *moral capital*. Zug (2014, pp.80-81) suggests that moral capital is a subcategory of symbolic capital since it is acquired through the moral actions of an individual. He goes further to expand on this by citing works which explain how moral capital has enabled the processor to gain employment or further their career:

> A 'moral capital' consequently is defined as the part of symbolic capital that evaluates the quality of social acts against moral standards. A 'good' person inside a social field is a person in possession of 'moral capital'. (Zug, 2014, p.82)

Both moral capital and symbolic capital are only relevant to those participants whose habitus and the social space they occupy gives a value to this work and will not necessarily apply to all the participants. Where it does apply it can be used to benefit the holder:

> Persons in possession of 'moral capital' can utilize this symbolic capital for their own benefit. If persons are perceived as trustworthy because of their moral acts, their 'moral capital' can transfer over into social capital, and evolve finally into material benefits. (Zug, 2014, p82)

To conclude, although the different types of capital can be derived from economic capital there are some, such as social capital, where the investment is not necessarily economic and the benefits take time to acquire. Furthermore, one may have the same amount of status and money but will not automatically have the attitudes that are an intrinsic part of a particular field or social space. The value of each type of capital will vary dependent on the field in which it is to be used and at different times:

> A capital does not exist and function but in relation to a field: it confers a power over the field, over the materialized or embodied instruments of production or reproduction whose distribution constitutes the very structure of the field, and over the regularities and the rules which define the ordinary functioning of the field, and thereby over the profits engendered in this field. (Wacquant, 1989, pp.38-9)

Practice

The term *practice* is used to describe the actions which a person carries out. Bourdieu (1990) contends that in order to comprehend the social world it has to be viewed as more than a '…representation … or a performance (in the theatrical or musical sense), and practices are seen as no more than the acting out of roles.' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.52) However, in the real world, where practices exist one must understand the habitus of the individual and the field in which the practice takes place plus the available capital. Bourdieu (1984) contends that an individual's practice is influenced by their habitus and that habitus over time is thus influenced by their practice. In *Distinction* (1984) he explains that in order to understand the complexities that underlie a particular *social condition* or in this instance a particular establishment one has to examine the inter-

relatedness of the components that allow for practice to occur. Bourdieu (1984) suggests one make use of the formula:

$$[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice$$

Therefore, the habitus of the individuals, the capital which they hold set within the context of a field brings about practice. Hence one cannot examine practice without taking into account the field in which the practice is set nor giving due consideration to the habitus of the individuals. (Wacquant, 2006, p.8)

In giving consideration to why the participants, having become residential child care workers, have chosen to remain I will be examining their habitus, the field in which they work and the practices of the organization they work in. It will be important to hold in mind the complexities of practice as Bourdieu (1990) explains that systems develop practice based on, '… principles that are coherent – that is, capable of generating practices that are both intrinsically coherent and compatible with the objective conditions - but also practical. (Bourdieu, 1990, p.86)   Moreover, there is a necessity for these systems to include both their unity and their regularities and at the same time, their 'fuzziness' and their irregularities and even incoherencies. It is these essential components which have developed over time and can allow for practice to develop within the limits of the original principles. (Bourdieu, 1990)   As some of the participants have remained within the same establishment for long periods of time it will be possible to gain some insight into any changes that have taken place, and if there have been how these may have impacted on the individuals involved.

Psychoanalytical theory

For the purpose of this study four aspects of psychoanalytical theory will be explored, as these have been applied to enable a more in-depth understanding of the participants' given life-stories. The first is to consider the state of mind of the participants during the interview - thus anxieties and their origins will be addressed. Hollway and Jefferson (2003) suggest that the act of participating in an interview, no matter how open the questions, creates a situation whereby the participants and the interviewer are going to be anxious and therefore in some

way be what they call 'Defended subjects'. (Hollway & Jefferson, 2003, p.45) One of the themes in participants' life-stories was relationships with parents therefore a brief outline pertaining to oedipal issues will be set out. Reparation is addressed, being one of the hypotheses of the study, in that working within residential child care allows the workers to make reparation for real or imagined harm that was done either to them or by them in early childhood. The last area will be that of organizational dynamics as this has some bearing on why people remain.

Anxiety

Freud (1926, p.81) posits that anxiety is experienced from the start of life and is the ego's response to traumatic experiences, which are understood to be dangerous situations. As the infant develops these situations change however, there is a common element in that they are related to loss, be this the loss of life, the loss of the loved object or the loss of love. He suggests that the response to anxiety is both physiological and psychological. The psychological responses, being defence mechanisms, have the function of ensuring survival or of making the situation more tolerable. Freud (1926, pp.132-143) recognised that in adult life though the situations may change the early defence mechanisms may still be deployed. The way in which adults deal with anxiety relates to their early experiences when the world was dominated either of being fed (good) and satisfied or of being hungry and in pain (bad). This stage of development is known as the 'paranoid-schizoid position' because it is a time when the world is split into good and bad and of anxiety. (Segal, 1988, p.26)

Klein (1998) came to understand that the one of the earliest forms of anxiety was not linked to the fear of loss alone but also as a result of feelings of guilt due to one's own aggression and fear of retaliation: 'Clinically she understood that the anxiety she was dealing with ... was concerned with a very primitive conflict between aggression and the remorseful reaction to it.' (Hinshelwood, 1991, p.114) One of the earliest forms of defence is 'splitting' into good and bad which as adults is used by seeing the world in simple 'black or white' terms and some things are either very good or very bad, there is no 'grey area'. Amongst the other forms of defence mechanisms that are developed during this

time that are relevant to this study are: projective identification, idealization and denial. Projective identification is used to get rid of difficult feelings. The feelings are projected onto another person so that they no longer have to be dealt with; whilst at the same time these feeling are seen as belonging to the other person. Idealization occurs to protect the good object by making it perfect and impervious to attacks; such as when an individual who is feared can do no wrong or is put on a pedestal. Denial can occur when the feelings of persecution are too much, so by denying them they no longer exist. This is much the same in adult life, such as when someone has experienced loss but behaves as if everything is fine.

As the infant develops and moves into the 'Depressive Position' the nature of the anxiety-situations also change. It is not that the first types of anxiety disappear but are added to with a new concerns connected to one's feelings of aggression. During the move into the depressive position the infant becomes aware of the mother as a whole and realises that some of the aggressive feelings were directed at her. The infant then fears that it has damaged the very person that is loved. Hence the anxiety now felt is linked to the fear for oneself and the fear for one's loved ones. Hinshelwood (1991) explains that Klein made a distinction between the fear for oneself as 'persecutory anxiety' and fear for ones loved one as being 'depressive anxiety'. 'Persecutory anxiety is a fear for the ego: depressive anxiety is a fear for the survival of the loved object.' (Hinshelwood, 1991, p.145) It is not that depressive anxiety replaces persecutory anxiety but that both exist and will appear at different times dependent on the situation in which one finds oneself, even into adulthood.

Under healthy and loving circumstances the infant reduces its use of projections as its ego becomes stronger and is better able to tolerate anxiety. As the infant recognises that it can, love and also hate the good object at the same time new feelings begin to emerge. These feelings are of mourning for the good object it feels it may have damaged and of guilt for causing this damage. (Segal, 1988, pp.67-70) However, Klein came to realise that '… through the progressive modification of the depressive anxiety', (Hinshelwood, 1991, p. 149) came the

desire and capacity for reparation. I will be saying more about reparation under its own heading.

Oedipal issues

It became apparent that for some of the participants there were oedipal issues at work and I wanted to examine if this was a particular theme across all the participants. It is not the details of the Oedipal complex that are of interest to this study but its consequences for the adult, however simply put: Freud used the myth of Oedipus to denote what he believed to be, '… universal phantasies and desires in the young child to possess the parent of the opposite sex and to get rid of the parent of the same sex.' (Waddell, 1998, p.65) She suggests that much phantasy to have sole possession of the loved parent starts much earlier though originally it was of the mother, '… to the exclusion or detriment of the father:' Waddell (1998, p.65) With the wish for possession comes the fear of loss of the loved one and the fear of attack from the other parent who then is hated and feared. It is these opposing emotions of idealization of the loved parent and the denigration or contempt of the hated/feared parent that are experienced as a defence against ambivalence towards the loved parent. Initially these feelings are often about the same parent but during the oedipal stage they can be directed more strongly towards either one parent or the other. As these defences occur during the depressive position they are also connected with the fear of separation, therefore they may be acted out during the oedipal stage and through adolescence, and into adult hood.

Waddell (1998, p.66) explains that there is a second aspect to the story of Oedipus that is of interest. His father's fear of being surpassed by him and his mother's fear that she would love Oedipus more than she did his father led them to try to have him killed. This image describes the oedipal phantasies of the infant in wishing to replace the father and be with the mother. She suggests that these fears came from Oedipus himself and rather than the parents containing them they acted on them and removed him. In the real world every parent knows that they are likely to be outlived by their children and this brings hope and optimism. However, it can also bring with it '… a sense of anguish, and even, dread, about being displaced and left behind.' (Waddell, 1998, p.66)

In the same ways the fears and wishes of the child can impact the parents as can the fears of the parents' impact the child. The parents' abilities to contain and healthily manage these anxieties are crucial in the development of the child and where this has not occurred these will affect the child into adulthood.

Britton (1989) suggests that what is important for healthy development is the cognition of the different relationships that exists between the parents and the one between the parents and the child. However, if these differences are not tolerated by the infant it can lead to a sense of loss and envy. The development of the capacity for the infant to accept the reality of the parental couple and their sexual relationship brings resolution to the Oedipus situation and unites its psychic world. He goes on to suggest that:

> The closure of the oedipal triangle by the recognition of the link joining the parents provides a limiting boundary for the internal world. It creates what I call a 'triangular space'—i.e., a space bounded by the three persons of the oedipal situation and all their potential relationships. (Britton, 1989, p.86)

It is the capacity to consider not only being a participant but to be able to '… stand aside and observe a relationship.' (Hinshelwood, 1991, p.64) It entails the idea that there can exist a third person whom can be participant, observer or observed. This capacity is one of the main characteristic of the depressive position.

Reparation

In the *Introduction* I have suggested that this work has a reparative quality and question whether the participants have any awareness of this. Furthermore, I suggest that some people entering this field have an unconscious wish to make reparation. In order to consider these two points it is necessary that the theories related to issues of guilt and reparation both in relation to human development, as described Klein (1998) and Segal, (1988) and in relation to its impact in the work place is used to understand this concept. Zagier Roberts (1996, p.115) explains that, '... it is the drive to effect reparation, partly consciously, but largely unconscious, that is the fundamental impetus to all creative, productive and caring activities. This drive has its roots in our own experiences with our earliest caretaker.'

In developing Freud's ideas about aggression and guilt Klein (1998) identified that during the depressive position the infant comes to realise that in order to repair the consequences of its aggressive acts and alleviate its feelings of guilt there is a need to make reparation. The infant does this as it realises that its aggression has been directed to the people it loves. It is because of this love that the infant develops the wish to make amends for the real or in phantasy hurt that it has caused. One may have seen infants crying after they have thrown their teddy out of the cot and not being settled until it is replaced and they are hugging it, almost as if to say sorry for having thrown it out. At that point, the carer would normally smile as the infant is once again content and not in distress. Through the carer's action of giving back the teddy and smiling the infant experiences a reliable mother that understands what has occurred.

Winnicott (1990) explains that once the infant has had opportunities to understand the positive effects of giving and making reparation, through the presence of a reliable *environment-mother*, the infant can tolerate feeling guilt and then acting on these feelings in a positive way rather than as a sense of sadness or depression. He goes on to say that as the infant gains confidence through repeated experiences of this cycle, hence the infant gains the capacity to experience concern:

> Arrival at this stage is associated with ideas of restitution and reparation, and indeed the human individual cannot accept the destructive and aggressive ideas in his or her own nature without experience of reparation, and for this reason the continued presence of the love object is necessary at this stage since only in this way is there opportunity for reparation. (Winnicott, 1990, p.176)

As a result of how the infant experiences its reparative acts, Hinshelwood (1991) explains that Klein identified that there are three forms of reparation:

> (i) manic reparation, which carries a note of triumph, as the reparation is based on a reversal of the child-parent relation, which is humiliating to the parents (ii) obsessional reparation, which consists of a compulsive repetition of actions of the undoing kind without a real creative element, designed to placate, often in a magical way: and (iii) a form of

reparation grounded in love and respect for the object, which results in truly creative achievements. (Hinshelwood, 1991, pp.413-416)

What is also of interest to this study is that Klein (1929) not only believed creativity was a manifestation of the wish to make reparation but also linked reparation and people's wish to parent others. She suggests that to act as good parents towards other people may also be a way of dealing with the frustrations and sufferings of the past. (Klein, 1998, pp.312-313) Therefore, one must be careful to differentiate between those for whom the wish to make reparation is used creatively in the provision of care for others and for those whose experiences have led to a need whereby the primary focus is achieving care for oneself, by working within a caring environment. That is not say that one type of worker is better than the other as the quality of their work with the children and young people is what is significant, however, there are likely to be implications for their management and the way they interact with their colleagues. There are workers who identify closely to the young people they care for and this can be a means of feeling good about themselves, 'Since in being identified with other people we share, as it were, the help or satisfaction afforded to them by ourselves, we regain in one way what we have sacrificed in another!' (Klein 1998, p.311)

Organizations

Relevant to understanding the participants' thoughts or comments about the work-settings are the psychosocial concepts related to working within organizations. Each individual joining an organization brings with them their own ideas of what the work will be and how the organization functions as well as their own psychological histories and assumptions about how one relates to others at different times. Armstrong (2005) has taken the term 'organization-in-the-mind', coined by Pierre Turquet, and developed it in his work with organizations. Armstrong (2005) posits that individuals within an organization influence its functioning, due to the projections and fantasies of the individual members, who are in turn influenced by the organization. Thus the organization has in some way its own capacity to impact on an individual's capacities.

Armstrong, as an organizational consultant, comes to understand how this model will be present, '… so everything that takes place in these consultations is seen in relation to this assumption of an inner psychic space, that is organizational and not just individual: the "workplace within", to use Larry Hirschhorn's graphic phrase. (Hirschhorn, 1988)' (Armstrong, 2005, p.34) Later on in the same paper Armstrong (2005) explains the relationship between an individual and their work: 'He experienced himself as *in* the school but not *of* the school, whereas the emotional reality was that the school was *in* him but not *of* him.' (Armstrong, 2005, p.35)[25] Therefore in order to understand the participants' relationship with the organization one must also have a sense of the *socio-psychic* nature of the organization they work in.

As well as the nature of the inter-relatedness between the individuals and the organizations it is important to understand the nature of group functioning. Therefore one must start by recognising that people working together form a group. Bion's (1996) work on groups is particularly useful when considering the type of group that the individual is part of. Bion (1996, pp.132-133) suggest that humans are 'group animals' and therefore when people get together they form a group and dependent on what occurs within the group it will either be a 'sophisticated work group', later shortened to a 'work group', or it will be a 'basic-assumption group' or move between the two dependent both on membership and outside influences. Both types of groups must have a primary task in order to function:

> The sophisticated work group is a group called into being for a predetermined, clearly defined primary task that has been openly accepted, at least at the conscious level, by its members and at which, again consciously, they have agreed to work. (Turquet, 1985, p.74)

The aim of an organization is usually to function as a work group thus achieving its primary task. On the other hand a basic assumption group is one whose '... primary task arises entirely from within its own midst and is pursued solely for the satisfaction of the internal needs of the group.' (Turquet, 1985, p.76)

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[25] All italics are author's own.

What is important to understand in relation to working within an organization or professional establishment is, not that there are different types of group behaviour but, that a work group is very likely to function as a basic assumption group when it is experiencing difficulties either from within or external to the group. 'Bion's basic assumptions can all be seen as different ways of unconsciously resisting the threat, actual or potential'. (Armstrong, 2005, p.32) Additionally, some professions make use of what Bion '… termed the *sophisticated use of basic assumption* mentality,' (Stokes, 1994, p.25) to achieve the primary function of the work.

In his work as an organizational consultant Hirschhorn (1988) has identified a further defence mechanisms used by organizations, which he terms 'Covert Coalition'. 'Covert coalitions control anxiety through a more durable and sustained set of relationships.' (Hirschhorn, 1988, p.63) Unlike the other basic assumption modes, these relationships are based on familial roles, though not necessarily related to the relationships as experienced by the individuals in the group but based on the organizational culture. It is also worth noting that the culture of the organization can in itself create anxiety. As previously stated, when anxiety is experienced defence mechanism are utilised in order to protect the individual. Anxiety when experienced by a group of people, whether this is due to internal or external factors, will therefore be defended against by the group acting out in one of the ways stated above dependent on the causes of the anxiety and the prevailing culture within the organization.   'Again, the character of the work played a critical role in shaping the underlying psychodynamic process,' (Hirschhorn, 1988, p.66) Defence mechanisms come into being when the work group is in some way under attack, whether this is due to changes within the organization, such as when a leader leaves, or from external circumstances. The current inquiries into the work of children's homes with the likely increase of regulations and inspections have the potential to bring further pressure on the establishments in addition to their actual work with the children and young people.

Summary

This study will explore the motivational factors to get into and reasons for remaining in the work through the application of both Bourdieusian and psychoanalytical theory.   Through Bourdieu's theories of the systems and functioning of societal structures I will be able to examine factors related to family status and prior education thus bringing to light what one may consider the 'push' and 'pull' factors. Psychoanalytical theory when applied to the content of the narratives and the countertransference that took place during the interview can enable an understanding of the psychological connectedness between the participants and this particular type of work. Chapter 5: Methods will discuss further how these two theories will be utilised.

Chapter 4: Who are these professionals?

A brief introduction

In this chapter I will introduce the participants of this study, giving a summary of their professional careers and present situations from the data they have provided. I will present each organization (Home) followed by the participants in the BNIM life-story (LS) interview process. I will then present the nine participants that took part in the web-based (Web) questionnaire. Homes and participants will be written about in the past tense.

Home 1[26]

Home 1 was a Private Sector Child Care organization which was established in 1989 by two friends in the caring profession. They identified that in the area they lived there were few resources for some of the children and young people they came across. They decided to set up a home for children with challenging behaviour. At the time of the research Home 1 was a large organization offering a number of different small group residential homes, education and a fostering service. Their model was based on: 'We believe that the needs of our young people can best be addressed by using a good parenting model and providing a safe, secure environment in typical family houses.' (Statement of Purpose, 2011) [27] It employed some 250 staff across these services and at their headquarters. It has since been divided up with the children's homes and school being sold off and the fostering service operating under an amended name. A number of the homes within the Home 1 group were rated as outstanding by Ofsted at the time of the initial interviews.

Jack[28]

Jack was a white male probably in his early 50's, he had chosen not to provide

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[26] Please note that as far as possible the identity of the homes has been kept confidential, though some background information has been given.

[27] The Statement of Purpose was given to me by each home in 2011. For purposes of anonymity they will not appear in the reference list.

[28] The names of all the participants, places and establishments mentioned and all third parties have been changes for the purposes of confidentiality.

the information about his age but I have inferred this from the information he provided about his education and the length of time he had worked. At the time of the first interview he was a Group manager. Prior to entering this field he had held a large variety of jobs.

In his mid-twenties he went to university and got a BA Hons in Psychology. His first contact with the field was as a volunteer in a Local Authority Assessment Centre where he fairly quickly got a temporary contract. After getting a permanent contract he went to work in secure units within the same Local Authority. Whist there he studied for a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Administration and one in Applied Social Studies as well as gaining his CQSW and later the NVQ4 Management. Jack was working for Home 1 for nine years before leaving to go and travel. Whilst at Home 1 he also opened his own small group children's home. Jack was single at the time of the interview and we have no information as to whether he has ever married or has any children.

Janet

Janet was a 39 year old white woman. Her role within the organization was that of a Senior Support Worker, having moved into the Families section of the organization out of residential work a few months prior to the first interview. Prior to entering the work Janet was the PA to the Director of Personnel at her local hospital, having gone to work there on an YTS programme. Janet had been in the work 12 years, moving up the career ladder from child care worker to senior and then Team Leader. She had worked for Home 1 throughout. More recently she was studying part-time for her social work degree having got both the NVQ 3 and 4. After the organization was split in two Janet continued to work for the fostering side and held the same position. Janet stated though she was single she would one day like to have her own family.

Ann

Ann was a 42 year old white woman. Her role was Senior Support Worker, supporting Foster Carers, having recently moved across to the Families section of Home 1 when I first interviewed her. Prior to working in the sector she had been in the catering field. Having qualified in catering and hotel management,

she decided she did not enjoy working in a hotel after a few months. She returned to the family home and took a position as a cook in the home where her mother worked. She later applied to be a residential worker in the unit. When this closed she went to work as a live-in worker on the residential side of a boarding school for looked after children with behavioural difficulties. Not enjoying this she left and met the two people who had started up Home 1. When they found she was not working they suggested she contact them to arrange an interview. She got a post as a residential worker. She had worked in a range of units within Home 1 and progressed to a Team Leader. Prior to going on maternity leave with her first child she was moved to the Families section within Home 1, for her own safety[29]. On returning she went back into working in the intensive residential units, '…*which are the smaller homes where you've got either one young person placed or two young people placed with a higher ratio staff.*'[30] It was during this time she completed her NVQ4 having already completed the NVQ3. During a re-organization she was asked if she would like to move to Families on a permanent basis, which, though reluctant at first, she did. Ann became a single parent of two young children when her marriage of ten years ended. She had moved further away from the offices so that she could be closer to her family.

Home 2

Home 2, was formed in 1965 and opened as a Children's Home on its final site in 1969. It was a voluntary organization that used the therapeutic community model in its work with the residents. Home 2 worked with adolescent boys, '…who often have had little alternative support and we can demonstrate great success over a long period of time.' (Statement of Purpose, 2011) It provided therapeutic care and treatment as well as education on site for 12 young people. In 2006 it opened a semi-independence unit to enable residents, who

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[29] In my experience it is common practice that pregnant women working in residential child care are given administration duties once they have passed the first trimester as a precaution against a possible assault from the children or young people. It is not simply that workers are often dealing with violent and aggressive behaviour but there is also a potential of envious attacks based on the fear that the new born child will replace them in the mind of the worker.

[30] Direct quotes from the participants will be set out in '*italics*' within single quotes for short quotes or in *italics* and indented for longer quotes.

had finished their therapeutic programme, to practice the skills enabling them to then move to independent living. Home 2 was registered with Ofsted and had been rated as outstanding both overall and in all areas that the service was rated.

Gopal

Gopal was a 45 year old Anglo-Indian man. His role within the organization was Head of Policy. Prior to working in the sector he had just failed his second year at university, doing a maths degree, and had been unable to secure a post in computing. His first experience of working with young people was working on summer play schemes with children with learning difficulties. He'd done this for '… *four or five* summers'. His first post in residential work was a temporary part time residential child care officer in a respite centre attached to a special needs school. He continued to work within the Local Authority for eight years during which time he qualified as a social worker, though he never practiced as a field social worker. During his time there he worked in a variety of residential establishments. He knew of Home 2 as the manager of the first unit he had worked in was later to be the Director of Home 2. Gopal arranged his own long placement whilst doing his Diploma in Social work so that he could do it at Home 2. After completing the required two years' post qualifying service he got a post at Home 2. During his 16 years at Home 2 he has had a variety of roles. In addition to being part to the team, working shifts, he had also undertaken some clinical work and practice teaching social work students. Gopal said he couldn't see himself ever leaving Home 2. He was married, had two children with his wife and a son from a previous relationship. He lived in a village near to where he worked.

Tina

Tina was a black British woman aged 40 and had been working in the sector for 16 years. Her latest role was waking night worker, having requested a change of role after her maternity leave. Soon after her son was born they discovered he had a rare heart condition and she asked to change roles so either her or her husband was available at all times. She lived in a small village 25 miles from her work.

Prior to working in the sector she was a housing officer, having got the post because she '… *wanted to help people'*. She left this when she found herself evicted a mother of three on Christmas Eve and realised that she was not really helping people the way she had wanted to. Tina looked for work that would allow her to do this and gave her status. She got a post working with children with disabilities, '… *it was a career move plus it was doing something that what I thought I was good at which was helping people.'* She continued in this post for seven years and as she could not progress she started to do an access course whilst working full-time. Tina then went on to university and completed her Degree in Social Work. On completing the degree she secured a post in a children's home back in the area where her family lived. She described it as a home for, '… *hard to place young people.'* After two years she became disillusioned as she felt that no real work was taking place with the young people. She then applied to work at Home 2 and at the interview she thought they worked so differently that she took the post. Tina had been at Home 2 for six and a half years.

James

James was a 49 year old white male and had been working in the sector for 12 years. Prior to moving into the sector he was running his own pub. He had had a career in sales and estate agency before the pub. James decided he needed a job that gave him more time for his family so started looking for work so he could sell the pub. He saw the post at Home 2 advertised and though having no experience he applied for it. Although not successful he was offered some locum work to see if he liked it and could do the work. Initially he was covering a few shifts per month and gradually this increased. Over time he worked more and more regular shifts to the point where he was able to make use of his past experiences in catering, '… *I'd started like a cooking club.'* After about 18 months it was suggested that he be put on a part-time contract working, '… *fifty to sixty hours a fortnight on a regular basis, regular shifts.'* James was told he would have to be interviewed for this and agreed to it. Before the interview he pointed out that some of his regular shifts had not been taken into account and if they wanted him to continue with them, it was going to be more expensive if

they paid him as a locum for those on top of the contract. He was interviewed for a full-time post and had been there since. Home 2 was the only establishment James had worked in. He was married with three children and lived in a village near to his work.

Home 3

Home 3 was a residential school providing therapeutic care, treatment and education. It was established on its current site in 1948. Its founder had looked after children who were evacuated from London during the wartime blitz. The founder dedicated herself, with others, to understanding and finding ways of helping such children, and is now recognised as a pioneer of therapeutic child care.

The original model of work with the children in large groups remained in place until the late 1990's. Between then, whilst valuing its roots, the focus was changed to working with smaller groups and physically differentiating professional tasks through an extensive redevelopment of the site. (From its website, 2011) Home 3 had developed its work within the community linking with local primary schools and developing training for its own staff as well as working with a university and had a consultancy service. Home 3 was rated as outstanding by Ofsted.

Bill

Bill was a 39 year old white man holding the post of Head of Training at Home 3. Prior to entering the field he had been to university which he left after his first year to go and live with his sister in Jordan. On returning to the UK Bill then worked in a children's' home and later a residential school for children with Autism/Asperger Syndrome. He then went to train as a social worker and did his placement at Home 3. Bill was a qualified social worker and since working at Home 3 had achieved an MA in Therapeutic Child Care and one in Consultation & the Organization. Bill was married with two children and lived in the same village as the establishment. He had been working in the sector for 19 years having spent the last 14 years at Home 3.

Tom

Tom was a white male of 46 and was the Director of Home 3. Prior to entering the field he was a Qualified and Chartered Surveyor. Whilst working as a Chartered Surveyor he did some voluntary work at a school in Brighton and going on weekend and week long trips. After being made redundant he undertook some voluntary work firstly at an Approved School in Birmingham and then at Home 3 before taking up a paid Therapeutic Care Worker's post. He had been working in the sector for 19 years all of them at this establishment. Whilst at Home 3 Tom attained both the Introductory and the Certificate in Family Therapy and the MA in Therapeutic Child Care. He was married, having met his wife at Home 3 at the time when he was in family therapy, with three children, who were very important to him and he felt keep him grounded. Tom was living in the same village where he worked.

Helen

Helen was a 56 year old white woman whose role at the time of the interview was a House manager. Prior to taking up work at Home 3 she was studying for her BSc in Psychology and Sociology whilst working part-time. She started at Home 3 covering shifts for ten months before she was interviewed for a permanent position. She had been working in this establishment 10 years when, I was informed, she left to go to another one and then to work in a garden centre. Helen had had a number of different jobs including running a pub. Helen was a single mother of two grown up sons and described herself as coming '... *from a long line of single mums.*'

The Web-based Group (WB)

Ben

Ben was a 31 year old male and had been in this work for eight years. Prior to entering he had been studying to be a teacher. He worked briefly as a teacher and did some voluntary work with Youth Offending services. He had worked in a range of small group homes, some specialising in working with boys displaying sexualised behaviour, in both the private and non-profit sector. His

last known position was deputy manager of a home for young males displaying sexualised behaviour.

Wendy

Wendy was a 24 year old woman and had been working in the field for two years. Prior to working in the field she had worked as a maintenance manager in a private company and had worked as teacher's assistant and an art teacher for a year. She started out working in the main office then moved into the school within the organization before moving across into working in a small group home.

John

John was a 59 year old male and had been in this work for 21 years. Prior to entering this work he had his own business. He had worked in a therapeutic community as a residential child care worker and senior and then moved to managing small group homes in order to apply therapeutic community principles to those settings. He was the clinical services manager for a private care organization and a part-time lecturer. He also provided consultancy services in the field on attachment and childhood trauma.

Fiona

Fiona was a 22 year old woman and had been working in this field for nine months. Prior to entering this field she worked in a nursery school for three years. She moved into the sector once she had passed the minimum age of entry at 21.

Jo

Jo was a 51 year old woman and had been in this work for 21 years. Prior to entering this field she worked as a youth and community worker and a youth advisor. She had always worked in the private sector starting as a residential child care worker and making her way up to managing group homes. She had held the position as therapist across a number of homes and managed independent homes for young people with learning difficulties. Latterly she

provided consultancy in the field of learning difficulties and worked therapeutically with challenging young people.

Neil

Neil was a 49 year old man and had been working in the field for 11 years. Prior to working in the field he had had a variety of jobs including working in the retail industry, had done some youth work and had worked on a farm in Denmark. He had worked for the same organization throughout but had moved around its different homes, sometimes at his request and other due to management re-organising staff teams. He had worked in immediate access, small group homes, intensive homes and lastly in a primary therapeutic home.

Mike

Mike was a 52 year old man and had been working in this field since he was 18 with two years out to '… *gain life experience.*' Prior to entering the field he was at school. After his year as a Community Service Volunteer he remained a further four years. Taking a two year break he then returned and had worked in a range of small homes and specialist schools both in the independent and local authority sectors and had completing his Certificate in Social Services. He took two years out to go sailing amongst other things. On returning to the sector he was a manager of a private crisis intervention unit. He was the Director of Care of a private therapeutic home and school.

Rick

Rick was a 47 year old man and had been in this work for 27 years. Prior to entering the field he was a shop assistant. He had worked in a variety of organizations and had a range of roles. These included working in a night shelter for homeless young people, working with young people and adults with learning difficulties and working with children with complex needs. He was latterly a care manager.

Rob

Rob was a 44 year old white male. He went to his local Volunteers Bureau to get some ideas of what he could do with his degree. He went to work in a

community base centre for children and young people and whilst he was there it developed a residential unit. He remained there for seven years but then took some time out for himself but returned later. He had worked in the residential sector for 15 years all together before leaving to become a trainer. As a trainer his work included working with residential child care workers, which he enjoyed very much. He was head hunted to take on the role as training manager within a residential organization.

Where do they work?

I will now present the types of establishments where people from both groups worked, as set out in Figure 1.
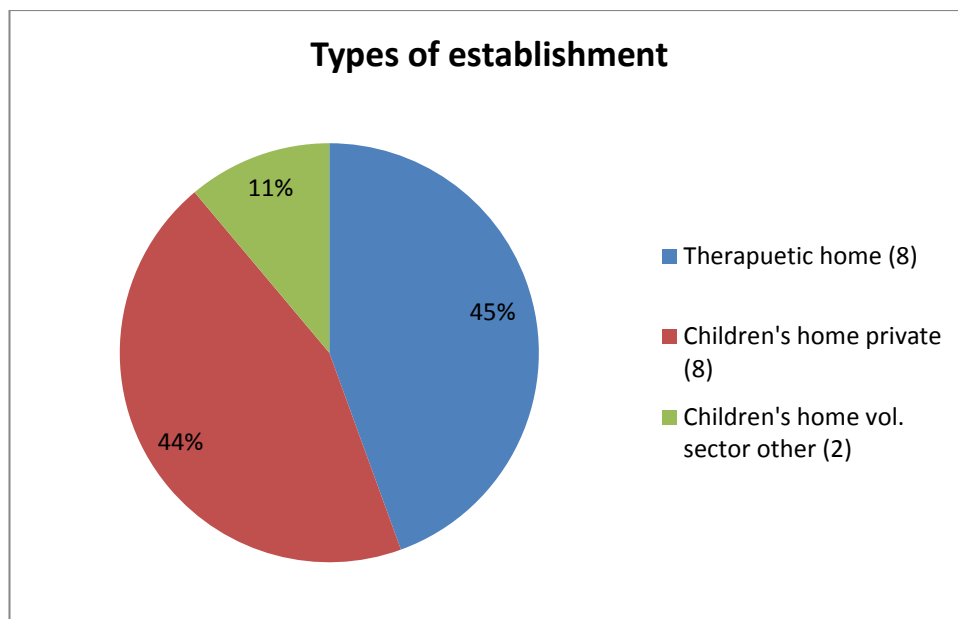
Figure 1: Types of Establishments

As can be seen half of the participants from both groups worked in the private sector. This is unsurprising as the Department of Education (2012b) *Children's Homes In England Data Pack* of March 2012 reports that 76% of children's home are run by the private sector or voluntary organizations. All those that participated in this research are in fact from these sectors as there were no participants working in a Local Authority children's home.

The LS group looks a little different, as in Figure 2, with the majority coming from therapeutic establishments. I have to consider whether the positive responses from these homes were due to my association with the sector and my relationship with the Directors at the time.

Figure 2: Establishment of the LS Group

Having given a brief introduction of all the participants I will be presenting more in-depth information about the participants in the LS group. The information from the Web-based group will be used either to compare or supplement the initial findings.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Introduction

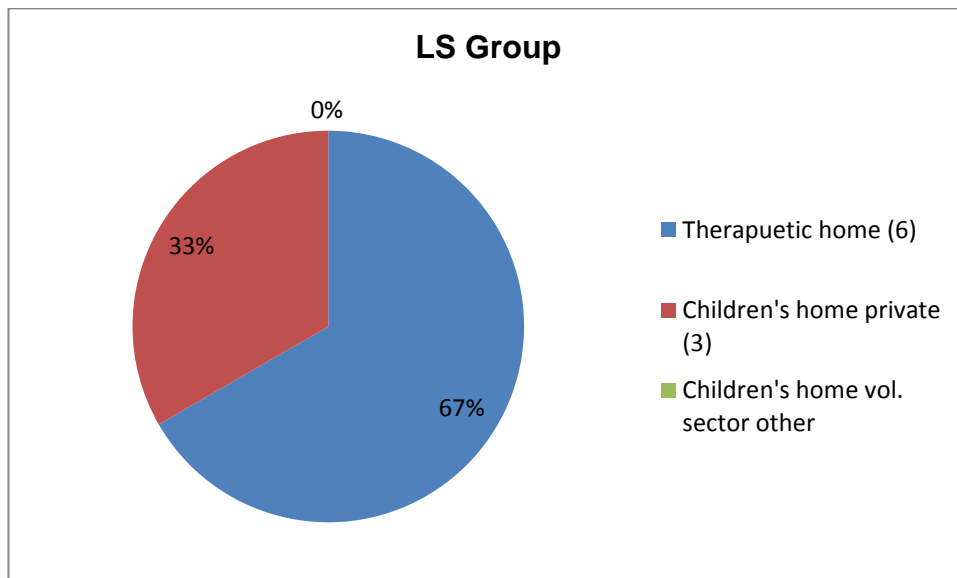The aim of this study is not to provide a comprehensive representative study from across the sector of residential child care but to examine in detail why a self-selecting sample entered this work and remained there. Working with a small sample using qualitative research methods will enable an intensive study to be done and provide insight where a large study using quantitative methods would have been unlikely to achieve this. The study does not claim to make sector wide generalizations or of typicality but aims to shed some light on why the participants chose to become residential child care and then remain in this work.

Insider research

As a researcher coming from the field of residential child care, therefore being an 'insider', it was important that I took into account my position both as a professional and as a researcher. Not to do so would ignore the behaviour of the participants during the interview process and hence the answers they gave as well as my interpretations of the data. van Heugten (2004, pp.207-210) writes about these same concerns and so identifies the use of Bourdieu's concepts of reflexivity, psychoanalytical theory and the use of Grounded theory as the way she attended to this concern. She identifies that:

> Intersubjective conjunctions occur when dominant discourses (that reflect the organizing principles of respondents, professions, or institutions) are assimilated by the researcher into similar organizing principles. This may lead to collusion, and unexplored areas. (van Heugten, 2004, p.209)

However, to ensure this does not occur Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.43) note the importance of keeping the balance between being subjective and objective as they are both 'necessary for making discoveries'. They also note the importance of giving the voice to the participants by taking into account the researcher's own: values, culture, training, and experiences. (Strauss And Corbin, 1998) Hollway and Jefferson (2003, p.45) take this one step further by making use of psychoanalytical theory so that one takes into account the unconscious processes that occurred during both the interview and the data analysis. They also explain that both the interviewee and interviewer in the

research process are likely to be affected by their own life and early childhood experiences and will be re-acting to each other. (Hollway and Jefferson, 2003, p.43) The application of psychoanalytical theory enables the making of an interpretation of the participants' narrative that, having been tested against the data, enabled a more useful understanding of their life stories. (Hollway and Jefferson, 2003, pp.58-65)

However, to make good use of this method the researcher must make use of reflexivity. This idea is very much in keeping with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) idea of careful use of sensitivity. Both note that we are individuals with our own cultures, family, histories and that these have usefulness in identifying and naming certain incidents, subject areas etc. Jefferson (Hollway and Jefferson, 2003) explains how aspects of his own family were similar to that of an interviewee and that his own subjectivity was useful in gaining some understanding of this particular interviewee: 'However, this would have been less easy had I (Tony, since I was the interviewer) not also deployed my own subjectivity to assist with the analysis.' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2003, p.65)

> As we come across an event of interest in our data, we ask, "What is this?" Later, as we move along in our analysis, it is our knowledge and experience (professional, gender, cultural, etc.) that enables us to recognize incidents as being conceptually similar or dissimilar and to give them conceptual names. It is by using what we bring to the data in a systematic and aware way that we become sensitive to meaning without **forcing**[31] our explanations on data. (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.47)

Where they agree, and although Strauss and Corbin (1998) do not use the term reflexivity, is that there is need for caution so that it is the interviewees' and not the researcher's data that is being reported on. Hollway and Jefferson (2003) explain that by making use of another person's subjectivity one can check out if the research is misinterpreting the data because of their own subjectivity:

> Using reflexivity is not a substitute for utilising theory. But, as the above examples show, it can strengthen a theoretical conviction or alert us to a

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[31] Authors' own bold.

misreading. Like everything else, subjectivity too must be checked: (Hollway and Jefferson, 2003, p.67)

Bourdieu (2002) also makes reference to the importance of reflexivity, emphasising the importance that the researcher is aware of their own relationship with those whom they are researching:

> Yet it remains the case in these matters that one cannot trust simply to one's own good faith, and this is true because all kinds of distortions are embedded in the very structure of the research relationship. It is these distortions that have to be understood and mastered as part of a practice which can be reflective and methodical without being the application of a method or the implementation of a theory. (Bourdieu, 2002, p.608)

This was very important for Bourdieu as when writing about him Wacquant (2008) writes: 'This points to the single most distinctive feature of Bourdieu's social theory, namely, its obsessive insistence on reflexivity.' (Wacquant, 2008, p.273) He explains that in Bourdieu's view there were three factors to be taken into account during this process.   These are all pertaining to one's social, cultural and educational background as well as one's place within the intellectual field and the influence of any theoretical framework that one is using to interpret the material:

> The first and most obvious is the personal identity of the researcher: her gender, class, nationality, ethnicity, education and so on. Her location in the intellectual field, as distinct from social space at large, is the second: it calls for critical dissection of the concepts, methods and problematics she inherits as well as for vigilance towards the censorship exercised by disciplinary and institutional attachments. (Wacquant, 2008, p.273)

As a lone researcher I was grateful to my supervisors when they pointed out how either my own experiences of the work were impacting my interpretation of the data or when I had missed the significance of the narrative. This other voice enabled me to go back and look again at the narratives and check out my interpretation or the significance of what I had been told.

Selection of the participants

There are two sets of participants in this study, the first are those that participated in Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) interviews and the second that participated in Web-based questionnaires.

One of the aims was to identify if there was a difference in how people think about themselves and the work between people working in a children's home and one that stated it was a therapeutic community. I therefore wrote to six children's homes of different types and based in different parts of the country, but I was only able to get three to agree to participate in the research. Of the three others, one didn't reply to my request letter even after the manager had confirmed interest during the initial telephone conversation. Other attempts at communication were declined, left messages not responded to, requests for conversations left unanswered. One of the homes declined to participate due to the pressure of work at the time. The third, having agreed, later declined as the parent organization didn't feel it wanted the staff involved in this research.   Of the three that participated two stated they were therapeutic communities and the other was a medium sized private organization consisting of children's homes, school and a fostering service. I was initially looking for a fairly large number of initial responders and would then reduce the number to ten participants in total but I only got nine, three from each of the three homes.   I had to consider if the low response rate was due to the fact that as a doctoral researcher I had insufficient authority or if there existed a climate of distrust given the public criticism of the sector.

As my sample was small I decided I should try and look for some participants that would provide a different perspective. As part of my research I had come upon the Residential Child Care Network (2010), a website for residential child care workers stating that it is for: '**A MEETING PLACE FOR THOSE THAT ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE**'[32]. I joined and then started a conversation about why people become residential child care workers.

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[32] Format copied from the website.

Selecting the research method

Considering the research questions, as previously set out, it was evident that the method to be employed had to allow for an in-depth study. The method had to allow me to gain an understanding of: who are the people that do this work, the journeys they took to get into the work and also what it was about the work that meant people either remained or were about to leave.   It was with these aims in mind that I chose to use a qualitative research method, wanting it '… to answer the *whys* and *hows* of human behavior.'[33] (Guest et al, 2013, p.1) Furthermore, I conjectured that the reasons for entering and remaining in the work came from both conscious and unconscious wishes and therefore needed a method that would enable me to discover how far this was the case.

In selecting the method for acquiring the data the main consideration was that it should allow the participants to talk about their lives, enabling me to explore not only the reasons given about why and how they got into the work but that I may also take into account their textured experiences of life. Hence the model should allow the participants to create their own life- story narratives. As stated, unconscious processes were also an aspect of the research question therefore the method used needed to facilitate both of these aspects. The life-story interviews used in Biographical-Narrative-Interpretive-Method, (BNIM) [34] met both criteria: Firstly, because, it '… is primarily interested in processes of change in individual lives over sequences of time.*'* (Chamberlayne et al., 2002, p.9) Furthermore, it assumes, '…that "narrative expression" is expressive both of conscious concerns and also of unconscious cultural, societal and individual presuppositions and processes.' and 'It facilitates understanding both the "inner" and the "outer" worlds of "historically-evolving persons-in-historically-evolving situations", and particularly the interactivity of inner and outer world dynamics.' (Wengraf, 2006, p.1)[35]

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[33] Authors' own italics and spelling.
[34] As this method was new to me I attended training provided by Tom Wengraf and Prue Chamberlayne.
[35] Author's own double speech marks.

The BNIM life-story interview

The starting point of the BNIM method is an open question, known as a SQUIN, 'Single Question (aimed at) Inducing Narrative'. (Wengraf, 2004a, p.113) This creates an opportunity to discover more about each participant. The purpose of the first interview is to allow the participant to tell their life story in a way that they choose; 'The **initial narrative interview**[36] starts with a single question designed to elicit the life-story of the informant as he or she chooses to tell it.' (Wengraf, 2004, p.2) Through the given life-story one can then consider the inter-relatedness between social status, life events, entering and remaining in the field. The SQUIN for this study was:

> *"As you know, I'm researching why people enter and remain in residential social work with children and young people. So can you please tell me the story of your life? All those events and experiences that were important to you. I'll listen first. I won't interrupt. I'll just take some notes, in case I have any questions for after you've finished telling me your story. Please begin wherever you like."*

This was read out to each participant at the start of the first interview and repeated on request. The aim of the SQUIN is that it enables the expression of their, '… *Gestalt* (a whole which is more than the sum of its parts, an order or hidden agenda).'[37] (Hollway & Jefferson, 2003, p.34) Wengraf (2004a, p.69) suggests that the use of the SQUIN enables the interviewee to freely give their story without, as far as possible, the concerns of the interviewer being expressed. The use of such an open question could seem daunting to some participants, however with BNIM their reactions are also considered as data. The use of both field and debriefing notes are an integral part of BNIM and need to be considered as part of the study. (Wengraf, 2004a)

Field notes are taken during the interview, which are then used to formulate the follow-up questions. Debriefing notes are a record of all that is remembered about the interview in whatever form it comes into the mind. Notes are taken

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[36] Author's own bold.
[37] Authors' own italics and brackets.

about thoughts of what had occurred and any feelings that were provoked during the process. It was these notes that were to be used to help make sense of the material as well as what may have been going on for the participants. It is this second aspect to the BNIM method that allows for the consideration of unconscious processes to be taken into account as they are considered as data in their own right.

Gathering the data

Life-story (LS) Group

Having gained permission from the three homes I sent them a number of questionnaires to be completed by all those wishing to participate in the research. In addition to the data provided by life-story interviews I also wanted some statistical data about the workers. I had hoped for more volunteers so I could use the responses in order to select a representative sample covering: the hierarchy of the organization, gender, ethnicity and age. This data will be presented in Chapter 7.

The data from the LS participants came from the responses to the initial questionnaire, the transcripts of the recorded life-story BNIM interviews and responses to a follow-up set of questions.[38] A further source of data was my debriefing notes, as these contained my recollection of the interview and my reflections about the process.

In order to gain an understanding of the organizations the participants were working in I spent some time, during my second visit, getting a feel for the organization through observing interactions between staff and between the staff and children or young people. Either at the same time or a later date I met members of the senior management team. I had a number of set questions

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[38] It became evident that some participants had said very little about their family backgrounds and that the children and young people they worked with were missing from their narratives. One could posit that this was because the SQUIN asked the participants to talk about their life story and not their work.

related to staff, both in terms of the organizations expectations and the support systems.

Web based (Web) Group

I started a web discussion on Residential Child Care Network site that produced some interest in my research. Therefore, I decided to produce a questionnaire that I could use to compare with the LS group and support or not the findings. The questions related to people's history in the work and why they remain or not, the support they receive and the good and bad aspects of the work. There was also a request for the respondent to write about a case that they either enjoyed or found difficult. Any member of the Network, there were some 1000 at that time, could download the questionnaire and email it to me on completion. Nine members returned completed questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The method used to analyse the data could be considered as a hybrid of BNIM. In so far as there was a greater emphasis on Grounded theory than is usual in BNIM and I did not make use of a panel.[39] Within the BNIM method there are many elements of Grounded Theory, particularly as one moves '… from close-to-data coding to later higher-order, more abstract "coding"'. (Wengraf, 2004a, p.257) Wengraf (2004a, p.258) suggests that the main difference is that '… Glaser and Strauss are concerned primarily to establish typical actions of typical actors,' whereas with BNIM the aim is to identify more individualized actions and actors. For the purpose of the study I wanted to identify whether there was some typicality across the participants, hence the greater emphasis on Grounded Theory.

Whilst transcribing the interviews thoughts and reflections were noted as memories of the interviews are stronger on the first listening of the recordings.

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[39] I note that the use of BNIM as a research method has become ever popular; particularly for PhD students wanting to undertake qualitative research. Some adhere to the use of the full method and others disregard aspects as it has proved to be unsatisfactory, e.g. Jones, 2002

Wengraf (2004a) recognises that this can lead to a much longer process but considered these notes to be more important than the transcripts themselves when using BNIM. Once all the interviews were transcribed each transcript was worked on to identify the structural segments. Alongside each segment one notes into which of the five categories of speech type the segment best fits. This is known as text sorting and the five categories are known 'as DARNE classification': Description, Argumentation, Report, Narrative and Evaluation. (Wengraf, 2004, p.29) This process allows for the production of initial hypotheses about the participants' life-stories based on the different emphasis they had made at each change of subject matter.

As with Grounded theory the next stage is to return to the narratives and start the process of coding. Coding is a process whereby, *tags or labels* are assigned to;

> '… "chunks" of varying size – words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting. They can take the form of a straightforward category label or a more complex one (e.g., a metaphor).' [40](Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.56)

The codes created stemmed from the research question but as these were quite broad they needed to be broken down into more meaningful codes. The factual information from the questionnaires was entered into tables covering such areas as: gender, age, ethnicity, qualifications, number of establishments worked in etc. During the coding process further codes emerged and the transcripts were scrutinised repeatedly. At the same time memos were written down noting themes that appeared across one or more of the participants:

> Memos are primarily conceptual in intent. They don't just report data: they tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster, often to show that those data are instances of a general concept. (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.72)

Having noted these themes I went back over the other transcripts to see if there was evidence that they appeared elsewhere. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that there is a need for the researcher to become *immersed* in the data

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[40] Authors' own quote marks and brackets.

to look for other meanings in much the same way as Wengraf (2004a, p.258) explains the importance of creating at least two hypotheses, one counter to the original and one tangential to the first two.

The transcripts were again coded, this time making use of psychoanalytical ideas. A table was created using these themes as headings and contained the material from each participant, evidencing where it occurred. Using these tables I was then able to produce life-story summaries. To ensure that the hypothesis I was recording were grounded in the data there had to be evidence within the narratives.

Following the presentation of one life story for discussion at a supervision it was noted that though interesting, the section called 'Social context' was rather sparse and did not add anything of value to the research. It was at this point that is was decided to make use of Bourdieu's theory, as described in Chapter 3. This led me to go back again to the transcripts with the intensions of answering the following headings:

- Background (childhood, family, social etc.)
- Education aspirations and attainment. Qualifications
- Attitudes/thinking/values etc.
- Field of participants

These headings were the codes I used when re-interrogating the data, which arose out of the theory of habitus. Entering the information into this table brought out aspects that had not been examined and gave new information about the participants. It was at this point that I realised that some of the LS participants had told me very little about their families. Janet for example started her story at the point of leaving school and only briefly mentioned her parents. I re-visited the three establishments and met with four of the participants. As three were on annual leave I undertook two telephone interviews and one returned the questionnaire by email. Two had left so I was unable to get further information from them.

During the second visit I arranged to meet with some senior managers and ask them a set of questions about the management of the organization, training and the support structures they provided. I also spent time getting a feel for the organizations by observing interactions between the staff and children/young people. These visits lasted for a day and included time in communal areas as well as observing some group sessions. The notes made following these visits were more for background information, as a one day visit gives a snapshot of that day and was not sufficient to get a feel for the true culture of the organization. Therefore, as I was interested in the field in which the LS participants operated, the management interviews along with the visit provided additional material to consider.

The next stage was to write up the biographies of each participant using the same headings. These headings came about by bringing together the research questions, the themes that had emerged from within the data and the two theoretical frameworks that I had used to interrogate the data. The information contained in these documents was used to write up the different chapters with the insertion of direct quotes from the transcripts.

Analysis of Web-based Questionnaires

The information regarding age, gender, length of service, qualifications etc. from the completed questionnaires was entered into a table alongside the same data from the LS group allowing for a comparison between the two groups. The remainder of the data was analysed after the completion of the LS data by asking questions of it related to the themes. These questions were based on some of the codes used previously, but were in fact limited due to the nature of the initial questions asked. One question asked was, 'What do you think made you take up this work?' The responses, as one would expect, varied in length. Some respondents wrote a single sentence whilst others wrote more extensively about aspects of their life story. Each question asking for detail was therefore coded so that the data could be used alongside the LS group data. Where appropriate this has been written up to add substance to the findings from the LS group, though it must be noted that at times it is significantly thin data as there was no follow-up. However, the contributions made by this group

should not be dismissed as it gave additional credence to some of the themes that emerged.

Reliability of the data

In the telling of one's life-story participants were enabled to make their own connections between events, experiences and people which had some significance for them. Although for some the reliability of the stories might be questioned, as it is recognised that in the telling of one's story the recollection of an event is altered by the impression a teller wants to create for the listener. However, I posit that the application of psychoanalytical theory to both the interview process and the data takes this into account and enables an understanding of the participants within the context of this research. As the, '… focus of [my] analysis is the people who tell the stories about their lives: the stories themselves are a means to understand [my] participants better.' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2003, p.32)

Chapter 6: Ethics in social research

Introduction

The proceeding chapter set out the methodology employed in both gathering and analysing the data. Alongside methodology sits the standards and values which underpin both these aspects in this and other social research. Bourdieu (2012) writes; 'How can we not feel anxious about making *private* worlds *public*, revealing confidential statements made in the context of a relationship based on a trust that can only be established between two individuals?' (Bourdieu, 2012, p.1)[41] He goes on to explain the responsibility of the researcher of not only protecting the identity of the individuals but also in their responsibility to, '…protect them from the dangers of misinterpretation.' (Bourdieu, 2012, p.1) He further states that the researcher has a complex and at times contradictory role in presenting the participants objectively whilst at the same time not turning them into specimens to be observed. It is this role and the responsibility that forms the basis of ethical research practice. This chapter will: set out a brief history of ethics in social research, discuss current ethical frameworks and their application to this research project.

History and perspectives

Post War codes of ethical practice to protect human subjects started in Europe, initially following the trial of the Nuremberg Doctors with the publication of the Nuremberg Code in 1947. The code in essence set up the concepts that research must be ethically sound, that there is an assessment of risk and that participants must give their consent. Later on in 1964 the World Medical Association produced the Declaration of Helsinki which, 'Locates "respect for persons" at the centre of research ethics – people should not be regarded as a means to an end (life, health and dignity of participants should be protected)'[42]. (Lancaster University, 2014)

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[41] Author's own italics.
[42] Authors' own italics.

Dingwall (2012) provides an historical account of the ethics in research both in the USA and the UK, but is then quite critical of the way that regulation was developed within the United States as '… they are driven more by institutional reputation management than human subject protection.' (Dingwall, 2012, p.3) He continues to say that, prior to the 1960s '… certain conventions were established very early in the development of the empirical social science.' (Dingwall, 2012, p.9) The main change came about in the USA following concerns that government funding was being given to studies, under the auspices of social research, which were considered to be spying, particularly in South America. These concerns led to the creation of the National Research Act in 1974 which covered research in both the medical and social sciences. From this point onwards all research that was to be funded by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) or any government department had to be approved by Institutional Review Boards (IRBs).   This included university research, as many were indeed funded by the NIH. (Dingwall, 2012)   In the US the National Association of Social Workers ratified their first *Code of Ethics* in 1996 which amended the 1979 code. Both codes had points governing research, though it is more recently that real interest in ethics in research has been on the agenda for social workers. (Reamer, 2013)

In the UK the initial development of centrally supported ethical regulation came from within the National Health Service.   However, there was clearly some form of ethical regulation in existence before this as Gallagher et al. (1995) write about the dilemmas being faced by social researchers as early regulators, which included professional bodies, ethics committees and the academic community, were unable to help resolve some of the conflicts that such research often came across.   Some social scientists were unhappy with the medical model of regulation as they felt a more flexible approach to social science was necessary and therefore lobbied the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to negotiate on their behalf. (Dingwall, 2012) Dingwall (2012, p.15) suggests that this was '... an ill-advised strategy', as the ESRC has for the last 30 years, '…increasingly seen itself as a manager of the UK social science community.' Others see the ESRC is a more positive light,

such as Butler (2002) who was tasked with drafting a new *Code of Ethics for Social Work and Social Care research* following ESRC sponsored workshops.

The ESRC published the first ethical framework in 2005 and henceforth universities were required to create committees to undertake ethical reviews should they wish to receive funding from the ESRC. Dingwall (2012, p.19) posits that in order to get some research projects through the regulatory process social scientist are limiting themselves thus leaving others, not restrained by such regulations, to write about sections of society that formally would have been studied by social scientists. However, many feel strongly that there is a need for a stated ethical framework to ensure the protection of the participants, as Israel and Hay (2006) state that both social scientists and regulators want the same thing, 'After all, we each start from the same point: that is, that ethics matter.' (Israel and Hay, 2006, p.1) Guillemin and Gillam (2004) state that there is a tendency for social scientist to complete ethical forms in language that is understandable and ensures they come across as, '… competent and experienced researchers who can be trusted.' (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p.263) However, they feel that this is only part of the ethics process, with ethical practice during the entire process being of greatest significance. For them the idea of reflexivity should be practiced by social researchers as it is by being reflexive that one can bring together the procedural and practice of research ethics. Others feel that the framework is not sensitive to needs of the social work researcher, Dominelli and Holloway (2008) put forward an argument for an ethical framework specifically for social work research; Shaw (2008) suggests that qualitative research doesn't always fit neatly into existing frameworks. Although these and other criticisms exist the general consensus is that there is a need for a recognisable framework to exist, even though it may need to be one that is flexible and wise.

Principles

Universities are now required to comply with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) principles contained in *The Concordat to support research integrity*, (Universities UK, 2012) which includes a statement pertaining to research being carried out professionally, legally and ethically.

Non-compliance can have implication for future funding as its function is to, '…assure Government, the wider public and the international community that the highest standards of rigour and integrity will continue to underpin research in the UK.' (HEFCE, 2014)

Proposals must be submitted by postgraduate students undertaking research involving, '…***human participation***, ***personal sensitive data*** or ***human material***…',[43] (University of East London [UEL], 2014) to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) for approval. The UREC is then responsible for ensuring the proposed research complies with the six principles of ESRC framework. (The Research Ethics Guidebook, 2014)

Furthermore all organizations where research takes place, including universities, are required to provide support and training on ethical matters. There is guidance on completing the necessary forms as well as meeting the requirements of the FRE. (ESRC, 2012) There are also two recommended websites dedicated to ethics in social science research: (*The Research Ethics Guidebook*, 2014) and *Social Science Research Ethics* (Lancaster University, 2014). There is also a plethora of books as well as chapters within research handbooks – such as Harrison and Rooney (2012) who posit that ethics and wisdom have to go hand in hand to create wise research, Oliver (2003, p.27) states that '… consideration of ethical issues should ideally be integrated with all phases of the research design process.' Mertens and Ginsberg's (2009) and Iphofen's (2011) handbooks are dedicated to ethical social research. There are many journal articles related to ethics in social research, Davison (2004) addresses concerns for students undertaking research.

The Application Process

When writing the research proposal I took the following ethical issues into consideration;

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[43] Authors' own bold and italics.

Confidentiality

All participants will remain anonymous in the final write up. Any names stated in the interviews will be changed to ensure all participants and non-participants remain anonymous.

There was no intention to make available any of the data gathered to other researchers or bodies. However, I wanted to be able to keep some data for further work. Therefore the actual recorded interviews will be destroyed but the transcripts will be retained and kept securely once the thesis has been finally assessed.

Informed consent

I was aware that in the life-story and follow-up interviews there is the potential for participants to talk about aspects of their personal or professional lives that they had not consciously thought about for a long time and may have not even considered as pertinent to their work. It was therefore important to ensure informed consent addressed both what it meant to participate in the process and what may transpire during it. Hollway and Jefferson (2003, p.88) state that, 'The decision to consent, then, cannot be reduced to a conscious cognitive process but is a continuing emotional awareness that characterises every interaction.' They posit that though it is important that consent is given by the participants, it is impossible to achieve the level of informed consent as may be required in research that is not psychosocial. Furthermore, the consent requires ongoing negotiation, which takes place within the interview process and is based on the relationship established between researcher and participants. (Hollway and Jefferson, 2003, pp85-89)

Therefore, all volunteers would be asked to sign a consent form prior to participating. The form made it clear that participating would have neither a negative or positive effect on their position within the organization/establishment; agreement was obtained from senior managers to this effect. Furthermore, consent to participate without coercion was a crucial component in my conversation with the management.

Avoidance of harm

As previously stated, participants may find themselves talking about sensitive and intimate aspects of their lives. This could be distressing to them and there would be a need to attend to their distress in a sensitive way. Wengraf (2004a) and Hollway and Jefferson (2003) suggest that the researcher must not try to change the subject, as this would relay negative feedback to the participants, but must use appropriate language that allows them to feel heard and give voice to painful experiences. In his hand-out for students of the BNIM, Wengraf (2004, p.8) suggests that the researcher should mirror the feelings of the participants and suggests such phrases as, 'That's still hard for you…', '…it's still painful for you to remember that…', '…that makes you sad when you think about it…', should be used in an empathetic and non-judgmental way. Hollway and Jefferson (2003, p.98) explain that psychoanalysis has shown that talking about traumatic or distressing events within a containing environment enables one to realise that talking about these events is not '… threatening to the survival of self.' They go on to explain that; '…it is not necessarily harmful if research raises painful and distressing experiences, though it may be discomforting.' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2003, p.98)

Disclosures of poor practice

One of the major dilemmas of anyone undertaking this type of research is what to do should one be informed of some wrong doing within the establishment/organization. Should this happen I would be bound by the law to report on any disclosure of this type. The first step would be to encourage the individual to use the organization's own procedures to share this information with the relevant authority. However, if I felt they had not done this then I would have to report it on and I would inform them of this fact. If the disclosure related to a very serious concern the *Children's Act 1989* obligates me to pass on any information regarding the safety of children or young people in the care of the local authority to either social services or the Commission of Social Care

Inspectorate[44]. I would inform the management of my concerns and that I had made a report. I was prepared in an extreme case to assess that the continued use of that service could become untenable and an alternative establishment would need to be sought.

These four considerations were the basis for completing the Ethical Review Form, which was submitted for review by UREC along with the research proposal, a sample consent form and project information sheets in September 2005. Thus through seeking ethical review, the aim was to ensure that the principles were met, namely:

> The UREC review process is intended to ensure research sponsored by our University has a minimal risk of harm, results in benefit, creates impact and is also sensitive to the unique parameters of the research. (University of East London, 2014)

Having received approval from UREC on 5th November 2005[45] the participants were recruited and as part of the recruitment a letter, composed at the outset of the research, explaining the process and the aims of the research was sent out. Attached to this was the consent form to be signed prior to participation.[46] 'A central feature of social science research ethics is the principle that participants should be fully informed about a research project before they assent to taking part.' (Oliver, 2003, p.28) Ransome (2013) suggests that as part of the process whereby consent is sought the participants should also be provided with information about the entire research project, including how the material will be stored, managed and used. On looking back, I see it does cover the key issues of consent, confidentiality and anonymity and conforms to data storage requirements.

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[44] The Commission of Social Care Inspectorate was in existence at the time when the ethics approval was sought.
[45] A copy of the approval letter is attached as Appendix 1.
[46] The letter introducing and describing the research and consent form is attached as Appendix 2.

Narrative based research

Of significance to this study, as narrative based research, is Josselson's (2007) suggestion; that there are additional factors to be taken into consideration because of the dual position of the researcher, that of being in relationship with the participant whilst at the same time holding a professional researcher role.   I have referred to both Bourdieu (2012) and Hollway and Jefferson (2003) in this chapter not simply because of their relevance to the theoretical frameworks employed but because their methodology for gathering data is based on narratives.   In Hollway and Jefferson's (2003) chapter on ethics they discuss how appropriate the existing guidelines[47] are when taking their concept of the defended psychosocial subject.   They identify that for them the '… principles of honesty, sympathy and respect would be central.' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2003, p.102) Coincidentally, Wengraf (2004a, p.186) refers the reader to the Hollway and Jefferson (2003) chapter in a footnote.   Bourdieu's (2012) final chapter in *Weight of the World* addresses what he calls, '... the intentions and the procedural principles.' (Bourdieu, 2012, p.607)   I suggest that when he discusses some of these ideas they would easily be recognised as belonging to an ethical framework. Those particularly pertinent are his ideas of *Non-violent communication* and *Intrusion*. He states that *Non-violent communication* should be '... *to reduce as much as possible the symbolic violence exerted through that relationship.*'[48] (Bourdieu, 2012, p.607) With regard to the idea of *Intrusion*, he states that this necessitates the careful navigation through the interview so as not to be intrusive.   He further discusses the concept of, *Spiritual exercise*, which, he identifies relates to the work that goes into sensitively questioning the participants so they feel free to talk about the things that are important to them, a sort of, '... *induced unaccompanied self-analysis*'.[49] (Bourdieu, 2012, p.615)

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[47] It is worth noting that Hollway and Jefferson (2003) refer to ethical principles as set out by the British Psychology Society in 1996
[48] Author's own italics
[49] Author's own italics

Ethics in practice

Harm and/or distress

One of key ethical principles is to avoid causing harm to the participants as a consequence of the research. However, asking the participants to speak freely gave them the opportunity to tell me whatever came into their minds. Those participants that disclosed painful aspects of their own history did so willingly even though for some like Helen (see pages 143-144) it was clearly distressing. Hollway and Jefferson (2003, p.86-7) pose the question, 'However, is it necessarily harmful to experience being upset or distressed?' Helen's comment to me, '*I think I'm a bit overwhelmed by your ability to listen*', would indicate that though painful it was not harmful but rather therapeutic. Although it was not intentional that the participants would disclose painful aspects of their lives, it had been a consideration that this could occur. Making use of psychoanalytical theory throughout the process enabled me to take up a position whereby the participants could talk about distressing subjects whilst offering them a sensitive and responsive approach to any difficult emotions encountered.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The avoidance of harm has also to be thought about in the presentation of the findings as one never knows what consequences there may be if others recognise a participant in a study. It is for this reason that confidentiality and anonymity are and have always been one of the principles of social research. The participants in this study spoke openly of sensitive subjects such as abuse, difficulties at work and their own personal circumstances; therefore, I had the responsibility of ensuring that I respected their candidness. Throughout this study all names of the participants and the people they spoke of have been changed, the names of towns and cities and places of study have also been changed. The homes where the participants worked have just been given numerical titles.

Some material has been condensed to ensure that the main points of the stories given are presented whilst at the same time being sensitive to and

respectful of the honesty that I was shown when the participants told me their stories. Furthermore, when writing the psychoanalytically informed sections I discussed with my supervisors how best to present the material so that the meaning was retained whilst ensuring that ethical standards, including protecting anonymity, were maintained.   I revisited the children's homes to undertake follow up questions and aimed to discuss with all the participants, the progress of the research. Seven participants took part in these discussions. Two participants were not available, as both had left the organizations.[50] Holland and Jefferson (2003) suggest that it is possible to re-negotiate consent, especially when studies are longitudinal. In this case, the study was not longitudinal but obtaining the consent of participants at each stage of the process- prior to the interview and after analysing the data for example – would have been desirable. These are complex issue and there is continual learning from experience. The final outcome is that I feel I have achieved the aim of retaining the integrity of the data without compromising the anonymity of the participants. However, if I were to undertake a similar study in the future I feel now that I would have included in the consent form that I would share my findings with the participants as I went along so that some of the more complex issues could be attend to in a discussion.

Conclusion

Though it is clearly the function of social research to study a phenomenon with the aim of identifying something that is of worth to a part or the whole of society the entire research process must be built on an ethical and moral basis. Ransome (2013) states, that social researchers have to meet the requirements of a specific body and also have to be ethical and moral themselves. There are some that feel that the existing framework is not comprehensive enough or that the process is currently unhelpful, however, the consensus is that there is a need to have a framework that protects those participants willing to take part, thus allowing for the discoveries, whilst at the same time enabling new learning to occur. I have to agree with Bourdieu (2012) and feel anxious about making

[50] There was no current contact information for one and the other was living out of the UK.

public the lives of the participants; I am therefore beholden to treat them with the utmost respect. This chapter has discussed how I put these principles into practice in this study and my reflections on these processes.

Chapter 7: Comparison with other samples

Introduction

This chapter aims to situate the sample group of this study within the wider field of residential child care by comparing some basic information with three other Government funded studies. The three studies are: the *National Survey of Care Workers Final Report*,[51] (Skills for Care, 2007) *Living in Children's residential homes*, (Berridge et al, 2012) commissioned by the Department for Education and the Children's Work Force Development Council's (CWDC) publication, *Understanding The Children's Social Care Workforce* (CWDC, 2010).   The CWDC report identified that there was a lack of data held about this group of professionals, 'The missing data is simply not sought or collected across England, and neither is there a mechanism for the data to be processed were it to be available.' (CWDC, 2010, p.12) There was a request to address the lack of good quality data in the most recent Government report into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups:

> **Appendix D: Recommended scope of a thorough examination of residential care**
> The thorough examination of residential care should as a minimum, cover the following:
> * The place of residential care within the wider care and child protection system
> * A workforce review similar to that conducted into social work by the Social Work Taskforce, led by Moira Gibb and currently being implemented by the Social Work Reform Board. This should examine recruitment, qualifications and training for both managers and staff in residential children's homes
> * Examination of the nature and frequency of the supervision provided to staff and the qualification of supervisors
>
> (Berelowitz, 2012, p.54,)

As the two groups consisted of nine participants in each I have either used percentages to match other data or a percentage of the total number in each

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[51] The survey was of all types of care workers so I have only been able to make use of the data that specifies those working with children (aged up to 18). It will henceforth be referred to simply as the Survey.

category of those participants in the Survey to make the comparisons more equitable.

In order to distinguish the different groups I have given each a title. 'LS' continues to represent for life-story participants and 'Web' those that participated in the web-based questionnaire. The data from the Survey has been labelled, 'Survey'. Where I have been able to compare the data in the tables with that in the CWFDC's (2010) report I have used 'CWDC'. 'DfE' denotes data from the Berridge et al (2012) report.

Age of participants
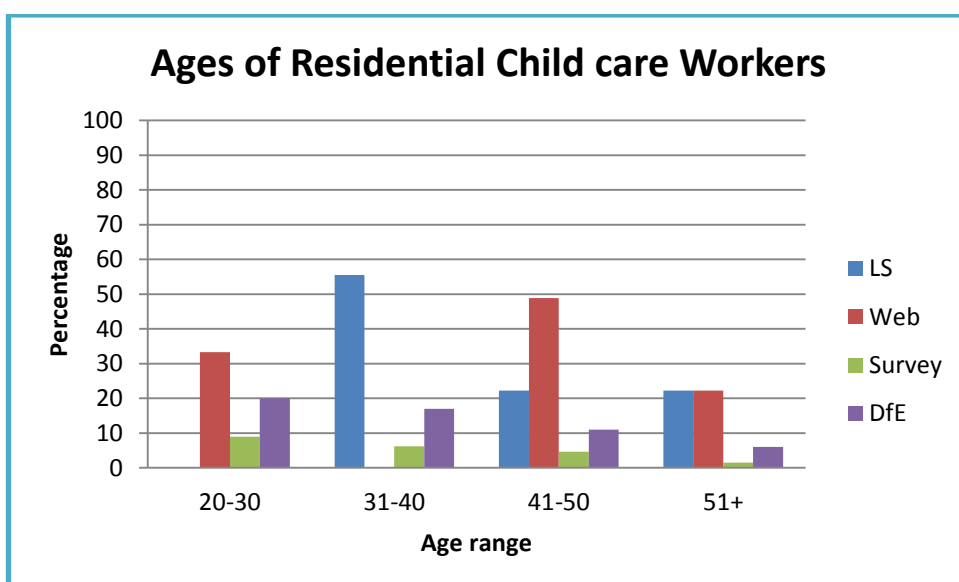
Figure 3: Ages of Residential Child care workers

The average age of the LS participant group was 45 years with the largest group, being in the 35-44. The Web group brought younger workers into the study, although the average age from both is 43½. Comparison of these figures with the Survey shows that there is a similar representation with the exception of the under 25s and over 55s. The CWDC (2010) report identified that across the private and voluntary sector the average age was 38½, it being older in the voluntary sector, 42.7 years, and in the statutory sector with, '… more than two thirds of staff in the 25-49 years bracket.' (CWDC, 2010, p.29)   All the participants in the LS group work in either the voluntary or private sector and

their average age is slightly higher than the CWDC's, with the average for the voluntary sector being 45 years old and in the private sector 45½. It is worth noting that the LS group members from the private sector were more senior staff so one would assume the age range would be higher. The participants from the voluntary sector were from all grades but as these are more specialised services again one would assume the ages to be higher than average.

Gender and ethnicity

Gender and ethnicity
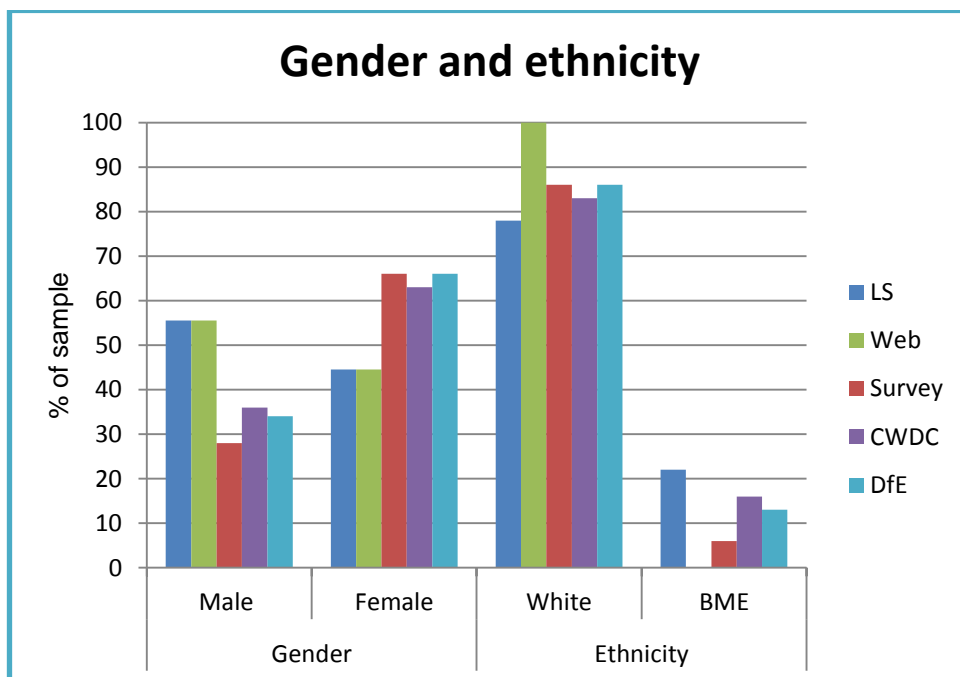
Figure 4: Gender and Ethnicity

I am left wondering why my two sample groups have a far greater representation of men than the other reports. I have considered whether men are more likely to put themselves forward to participate in interviews as the invitations were sent out to all staff in the organizations. Statistically it is recognised that there are more women doing this work, the Survey identified that 66% of the respondents were women.

When considering the issue of ethnicity, I found that the LS group fairly well matched the Survey, even though all three establishments were in rural areas, but there was an under-representation from any BME group in the Web group.

The CWDC (2010, p.12) reports, 'The number of workers from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher in the voluntary and private sector at 16% than the statutory sector (11%), but it remains a small percentage across both providers.'

Length of time in sector
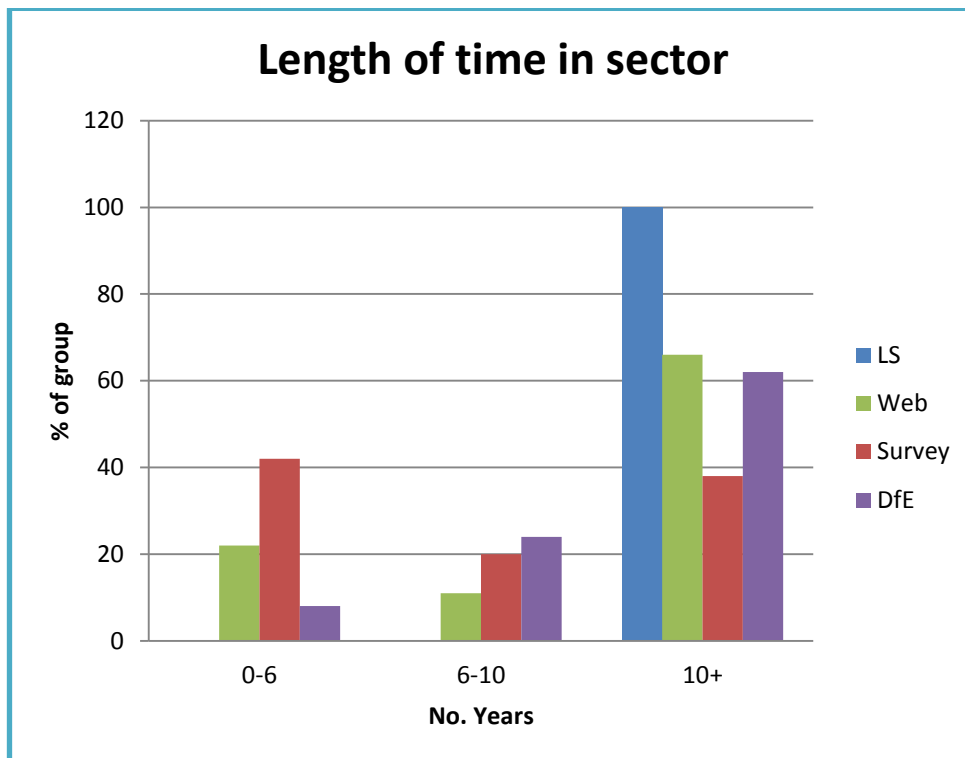
Figure 5: Length of time in the sector

When comparing the four sample groups there appear some distinct differences.[52] The LS participants' length of service spans 11 years plus, with the majority being 11-20 years but the Web group introduced newer workers to the field. When thinking about the longevity of service, particularly of the LS group, I was left to wonder if this genuinely reflected a true image of the organizations or was it the longer serving members that had volunteered. There is some evidence from the participants that this is fairly normal in their services, Gopal makes a comment that, '… *it is a place where staff tend to stay,*' about Home 2. Bill and Tom both mention that, '… *a lot of them had been here a couple of decades,*' and '… *there were people who'd been in the school*

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[52] The CWDC (2010) reports length of service in a format that made comparison impossible.

a very long time.' Whilst things may be different at Home 1 as Ann comments that there have been a lot of changes from when she started as one of the first few employees, *'… there's only a handful of people that were here from when I first came.'* A common thread amongst the nine is the level of support they have received and the opportunities for the development which exist.

Qualifications

As stated in Chapter 2 there are minimum requirement for residential child care workers. For staff this is the NVQ3 or Children & Young Peoples Workforce Diploma and for managers Level 4/5 or equivalent in Working with children plus a Level 4/5 in management.
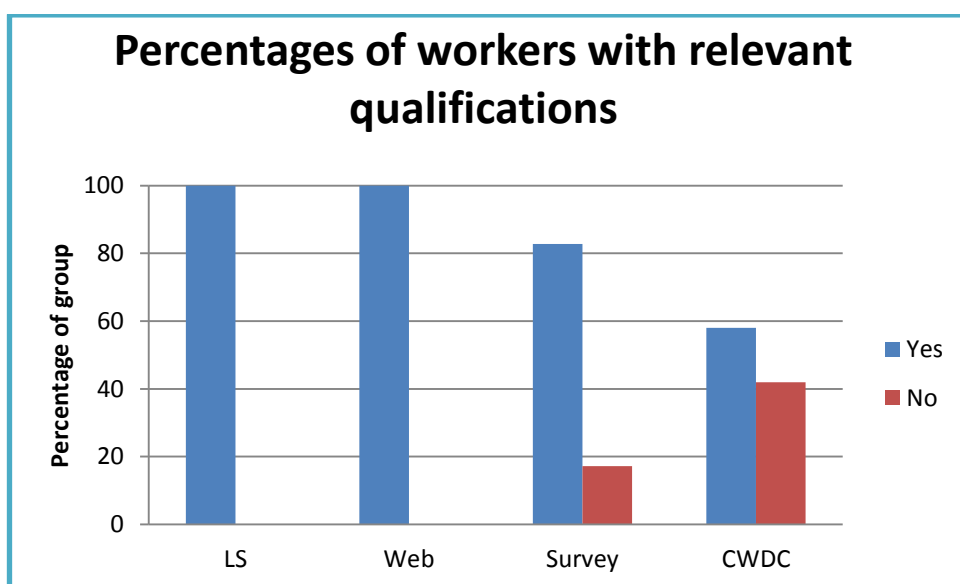
Figure 6: Workers qualification

The Survey (Skills for Care, 2007) only reported whether an individual was qualified or not by sector, but not the level of qualification.[53] The CWDC (2010) reports whether a qualification is held, but it only breaks down the level of

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[53] The National Survey of 2007 (Skills for Care, 2007, p.47) reports the levels of qualifications across the whole sector and there is no possibility to separate these out according to adult or child care services. In the body of the report it identifies that across the care sector out of 502 respondents, 11% have an NVQ level 3, 6% had a degree level and a further 2% held a higher degree.

qualification for managers and reports qualification for residential workers in terms of NVQ.

The range of qualifications held.
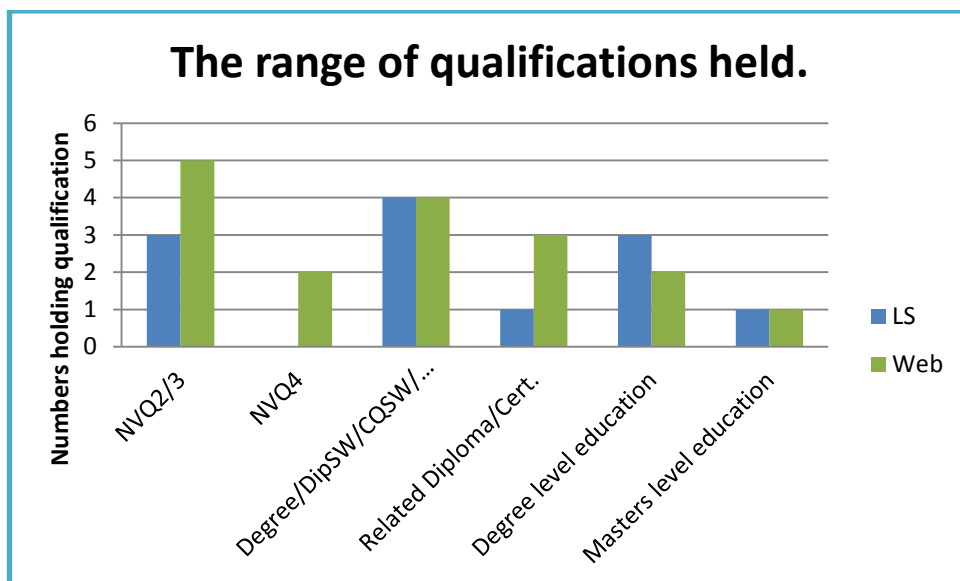
Figure 7: The range of qualifications held

There was one participant from the Web group with an NVQ level 2. This person had only been in post nine months at the time of completing the questionnaire. It is also worth pointing out that one of the participants, again in the Web group, held a total of 14 different qualifications. In the section that asks if the individual is going to be taking further training, he has stated that he is having some time out from studying. The CWDC (2010, p.24) report states, 'The main qualifications held were professional social work (43%)' and '… management (28%), S/NVQ registered manager (21%) and other S/NVQ (22%).' When reporting the information for residential child care workers it states:

The main qualifications held were:
- Caring for Children and Young People NVQ Level 3: 24% of staff (11% studying).
- Care or Health and Social Care NVQs at Level 2/3/4: 22% of staff (15% studying). (CWDC, 2010, p.24)
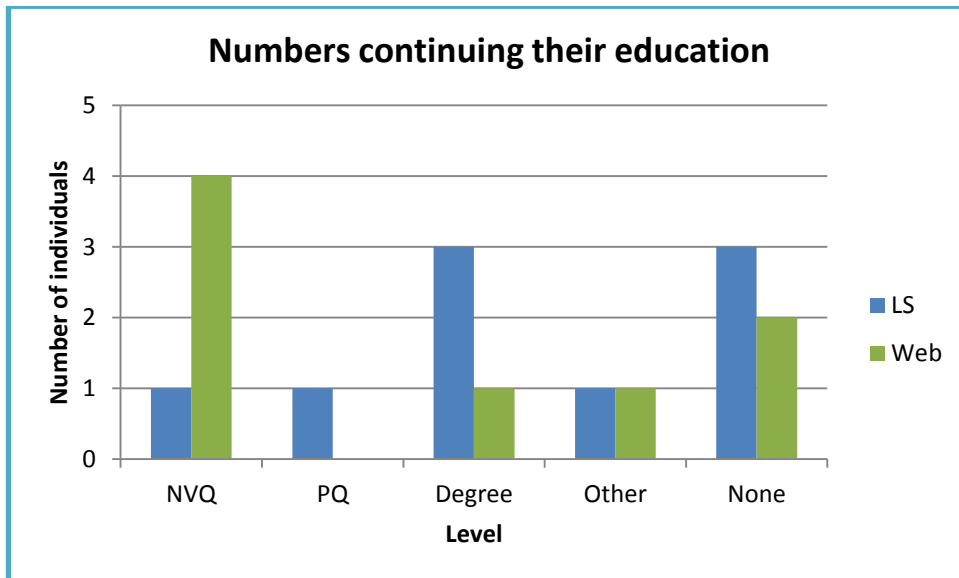
Figure 8: Numbers continuing their education

The CWDC (2010) reports that 23% of managers and 33% of residential child care workers were continuing with their studies. In the LS group two thirds of the participants were continuing with their studies whilst in the Web group 78% were engaged in studying.

Conclusion

It is noticeable from the comparison data that the study's samples seem to differ from the majority of workers in the field. The key differences being they are generally older and above average in their length of service. The majority of the LS group have all worked in more than one establishment unlike other sample groups. Both the LS and Web groups have the required minimum or higher levels of qualifications and many have continued with their education. Two big differences are in the number of males in both the LS and Web samples and the higher representation of people from the BME community within the LS sample. The significance of these differences will be explored through the data provided by the participants. One hypothesis is that it is the higher achievers that have put themselves forward and if so the impact this has had on the outcome of this study has to be considered. On reflection, has the high quality of the sample meant that weaknesses in the field, such as poor support for staff and the lack of training, which have been brought in the open following official inquiries are not represented in my study?

Chapter 8: Routes to people's first Job in Residential Child Care

Introduction

My own experience alerts me to the idea that routes into the work may be complex. While two of the participants felt they had always wanted to do some kind of caring work not one of them thought, 'I want to be a residential child care worker', and most had an individual that made the connection for them or had facilitated their move into the work. It could be someone opening a door to a previously unseen opportunity or giving them some encouragement to do something different or inspiring them to enter the work.

During the analysis it transpired that there were three routes that people took into the work, although there is some overlap for some participants. There were those individuals that applied for a position without having any prior connection within the field; I have called this group, 'Applied for a Position Directly'. There was a group of people that either had plans to do something else or had no definite plans with regard to work and through a range of circumstances found themselves connected to a residential children's home; I have called this grouping, 'Came to it by accident.' The third route was through someone introducing the participants to an establishment as they were considering working in the welfare or social care sector but had not considered residential child care; I have called this group, 'Someone gave them an introduction.' It is not surprising that the four participants that came to work by accident also needed someone to introduce them, considering the negative image of the field, (Figure 9 shows the routes people took).

The data will be presented in two parts; firstly the LS group followed by the Web group.

LS Group

It was not surprising that two thirds of the LS group had come to the work through an introduction, whether this was a family member, friend or colleague.

Jack was very unlikely to have come into the field as he was looking for work in the commercial sector before he started volunteering in a children's home.
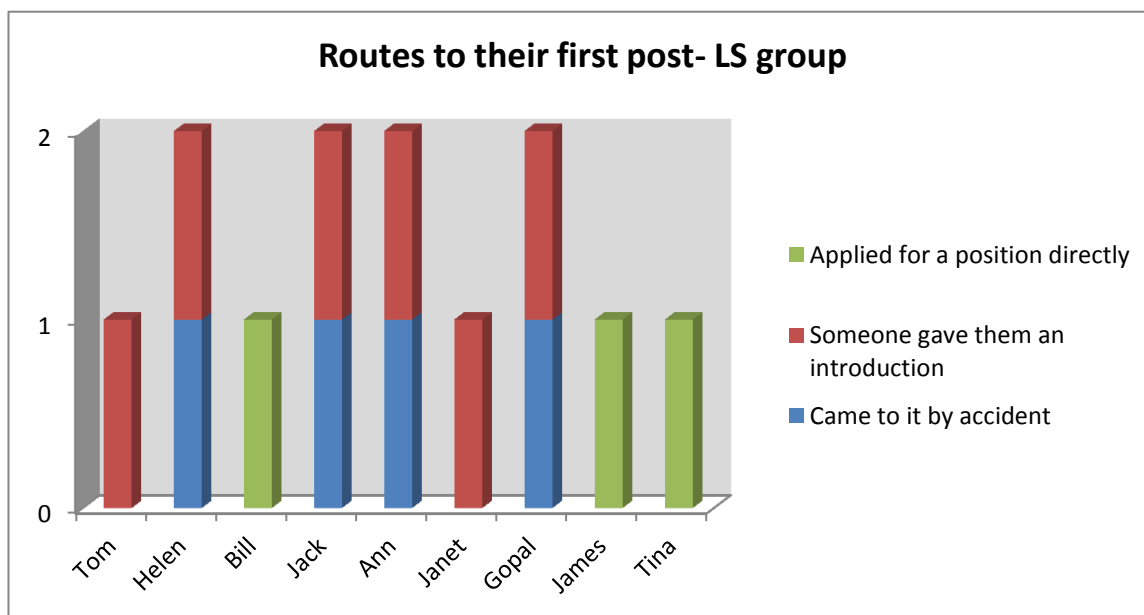
Figure 9: Routes to their first post-LS Group

Applied for a position directly

There were three participants that 'Applied for a position directly'. Neither Bill nor James had any connection to either statutory or voluntary sector service providers though Bill's father worked for the local authority as a civil engineer. On the other hand Tina was working for the local authority so possibly had an awareness of the services as she applied for a post within the local authority. The backgrounds of these three are very different from each other as are the reasons they applied for a position:

Bill

As stated, Bill had gone to Jordan to look after his sister's first child and it was this experience that made him think about working with children. As commented on in Chapter 4, Bill felt that his primary carer was this older sister.

Um, and actually moved abroad to live with my sister for…it was for a short period of time but I ended up staying for about one and a half years. Um, by which point she had a daughter, um, and was pregnant with her second child, which…which was part of the reason I stayed abroad, um, was to be with her children, um, and to be around when she gave birth to her…her youngest son.

Um, I think that possibly triggered my thinking about being alongside children, wanting children, working with children, um, and I did come back to the UK.

On returning to the UK he went to work in, '… *a small independent residential unit for children with behavioural problems*'. He stayed there about a year and then went to work in an EBD[54] school for children with learning disabilities, primarily autism and with Asperger's syndrome. He stayed there for three years. At this point he felt he was clear about the type of work he wanted to do, '*I was very clear that this is a…an area that I wanted to work in.*'   Feeling that there were many things wrong with the two places he had worked and others he had visited, he decided he needed training so that he could have a professional input. Bill went on to study to gain a DipSW.

Um, I saw many faults with the residential places that I worked in and visited and wanted to have greater input as a professional. Um, hence I…I went to college to study my diploma in social work.

He undertook his placement at Home 3 and on completing his diploma he got a post there, '*Um, and I haven't actually left since.*'

James

Prior to working at Home 2 James was running a pub and although he was successful he had a young family and was thinking about doing something that would give him more time with his family '… *but I wasn't wanting to make backward steps.*'   He was talking to a friend one day and saying he had no idea what he wanted to do. A job in Home 2 was advertised in the local paper and his friend and neighbour, who knew about the interactions he had had looking after his friend's son whom I shall call Tim, suggested that as he had felt good so he should apply for the post. James told the story of what occurred with Tim in great detail as it was clearly very significant for him. He starts by setting the stage:

We'd recently had a friend of ours' son whom was slightly delinquent, um, from Brighton where we used to live, had come up and stayed with us, um,

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[54] (Emotional Behavioural Disorder/Difficulties)

and it was supposed to be for a period of about two weeks, which ended up to be about four months. Um, and I saw a huge difference in him whilst he was living with us. Um, I mean when he first came, he was… because he lived with his mother on his own, he couldn't really relate to men, he was quite unboundaried, um, quite aggressive, err, verbally and physically.

Err, he came to us and over a period of time, he built up quite a strong relationship with me, um, and what I found was that a lot of the time was because I was quite boundaried, um, and he obviously needed it, liked it and that's why he, sort of, slightly came to me.

There is a long description of an incident which leads to Tim breaking down and talking to James (set out on pages 146-7).

He… you know, he went… he talks to us about stuff that had happened to him, about the amount of violence that his mother used to suffer from his father, um, the amount of violence that he had suffered from when he was small. Um, you know, he just went on and on and on and on, and I just saw a totally different person afterwards and it was incredible the change in him afterwards, after he had expunged all this pain.

James has connected this incident to his own childhood experiences which influenced him to apply for a post. His concept of the work also fitted in with an idea that James had had, '*I've always said… the way I put it is to be the person that I never had.*'

After the interview, though not offered a full-time post as he lacked experience, he was invited to join their locum pool. James also wasn't sure if he was capable of doing the work,

.. in actual fact that suited me down to the ground, because you're just going to give me an experience of something I don't know without a huge commitment, um, but also at the time, I was in the pub.

Slowly his hours as a locum were increased until he was at times working more hours than a full-time member of staff. He continued to do this for 18 months and then the Director contacted him to come in for a formal interview as they wanted to offer him a permanent job.

Tina

Whilst working in the housing department at the local authority Tina had to carry out an eviction on a Christmas Eve. This incident made her think about her work to the point that she no longer felt she was helping people, something she

had always wanted to do, and aged 23 she applied to work with children with learning disabilities.

I've got to do something so then I applied for another job which was working with children with disabilities but for me it was more about the helping as opposed to my career move at this time but it an a roundabout sort of way it all fitted together I thought that I've got this this something about me to to do that.

She continued to work in this department for seven years. At the point she realised she could not progress further she took an access course and then went to university to undertake a degree in Social Work.

I just loved it but then I got to the stage where I actually couldn't go anywhere with the job because I didn't have the qualifications to take me anywhere with it and I just thought I've got to bite the bullet now. So I went back to college as well as holding down a full-time job.

Summary

All these participants applied for positions in residential children's homes of one kind or another. For all of them there was a sense that they could do the work with the children although only one of them had worked with children or young people in a professional setting before they applied. I have included Bill as working with children because even though it was for his sister, he had gone to look after her children. James had dealt in some capacity with a child that was not his own, but this had been to support a friend. Both Bill and Tina came to realise that in order to progress they needed to become qualified and both though qualified as social workers have never practiced as a field social worker. James undertook locally provided training and has completed the necessary NVQ3.

Came to it by accident

This group of four people had not considered this line of work in their career plans. Some of them had completed or were undertaking vocational training, as in the case of Ann, some had completed their degrees and were thinking about their next steps.

Helen

Helen had decided that she needed to do something positive with her life so went back to study. '*So I elected to do a Healthcare Study in, a BTec in Healthcare Study and Science, then got a place at [B..] and did my degree in psychology and sociology.*' However, she had no idea what she wanted to do afterwards.

> *As I was coming to my final year in university, I met somebody who knew somebody at Home 3, and we met up, talked one evening, and I thought, I so badly want to go and work there. And I finished university in May/June, err, got in touch with Jane Smith, and they asked me, "Can you have a look around?" which I did.*

She instantly liked the place and was offered 20 hours per week. She was so pleased she took them and quickly her hours were increased. By the time she applied for a permanent post she was already working 40 hours and doing sleep-ins. Helen recalled being very anxious when she had to apply for a permanent position;

> *So it was pretty grim going through the interview for it, even though I thoroughly enjoyed the interview thing, I was worried to death that they'd turn round and say, "No we don't want you after all, we've found somebody better."*

Gopal

Gopal's route into the work starts at the point where he had a near death car accident:

> *[A]t the end of the.... the beginning of the second year of A Levels, well no, about halfway through actually, it was in March, I had err a significant road accident, that I always think of as having changed.... changing something in my outlook on life. I was very, very lucky to survive it and.... and also woke up on a head injuries unit and so I was surrounded by people, some people who.... many of whom had kind of permanent brain injuries or whatever, so forms of disability. And so suddenly in an environment that was very odd, and also was undergoing my own recovery and rehabilitation.*

His best friend's mother was running a playscheme for children with learning disabilities and he got a job there the summer after the accident:

> *And after my.... basically after my car accident, I was um.... I mean, I think I was better than.... I came out a bit better than they thought I would and I*

was.... and I, you know, I needed to build myself. Err my muscles, I'd been laid up for some long, in a coma and whatever, that I needed me muscles.... which I didn't need to do something physical, not particularly taxing or stressful. So I was on.... I was on a playscheme where, I don't know, some people may have thought I was more like one of the young people on the residents or clients I had met, you know, because I was just having a good time and being with these children and I didn't.... you know, I certainly didn't have much.... didn't feel like I had much responsibility apart from having a nice time. And actually, to doing something where I just get out and about as part of.... it almost felt like it was part of my own rehabilitation.

Every summer after his accident for four years, he worked on the summer playscheme as it was something he enjoyed doing. For the first couple of years he didn't have much responsibility and describes it as, '…*lots of young people having fun with lots of other young people'*. For the last couple of years he helped to organise the activities and coordinate the staff. He remembers it was very well resourced and that the worst thing about it was the weather.

Having failed his second year at university, where he was studying for a maths degree, he returned home and whilst on the playshceme he successfully applied for a temporary part-time job working as a residential child care officer at an all-year-round respite centre, linked to a special needs school. The manager at the time later became the Director of Home 2. He then got a permanent position and after four years he started to study for his Diploma in Social Work. Requesting to organise his own second year placement he went to Home 2 and decided that was where he wanted to work. He had to remain working for social services for a further two years to complete his contractual obligations following sponsorship for the Diploma.

Jack

Jack had gone back to university as a mature student and although it was initially difficult he stayed and got his degree in psychology. Whilst he was waiting to hear if he had an interview in advertising his girlfriend's mother, a cleaner in a children's home, suggested that he did some voluntary work as they were '*desperate'* for adult men to work with the young people. He readily said yes and went to meet with the manager.

Her mother was working as a cleaner at a children's home. I had no concept or understanding what a children's home was, what it was about. It was just totally alien to me because I'd never had any sort of contact with it… I never give it another thought and she said, "While you are waiting for a reply, they are absolutely desperate for help. Do you want to do some volunteer work" and I said "Yes, no worries, I'll go and do some voluntary work up there."

After a few visits as a volunteer the manager suggested that he applied for a temporary contract:

Within the space of probably three or four trips up there, the Unit Manager spoke to me and said "Would you like a temporary contract". He knew what my situation was, "would you like a temporary contract while you're waiting for a response from London?" and I said, "Yes" because I thought it was really good and then I went in and I took a temporary contract

Within three or four months a permanent job as a night worker became available. He was '*convinced*' by the manager to apply for this as a means of securing a permanent position. The manager explained that once he had a permanent post he could more easily move around and get the job he really wants. Jack did so but did not enjoy being a night care worker:

Jack: *What a terrible, boring job that is.*

Lydia: *Okay. (Laughter)*

Jack: *Frustrating because you want to work with youngsters and you go into work at ten o'clock at night and they are going to bed and you wander round with a torch, and then you go off in the morning before they get up.*

After a month Jack left this position and took up a post in a secure unit as a residential worker. Then after about a year there was a reorganisation and he applied and got a group leader's position in an Adolescent unit. Though he joked about his career, this would suggest that he was rather confident in his abilities and had a desire to progress within the structure.

Ann

On completing her catering training Ann got a job as a hotel manager. She realised that this was not for her so returned home. '*I actually went out and worked in a hotel when I left after three years and thought, this isn't for me.*' But on reflection she also wondered if it was connected to being away from home:

'*Whether it was because I just wanted to be back home, I don't know, but I came back home.*'

At the time Ann left the hotel her mother was working in a children's home and a position came up for a cook, '… *cooking, um, lunches and preparing teas and things.*' Ann took this job and then found that she enjoyed the contact with the young people, '*I thought, you know, this is really, you know, whether or not it's something I could do, but I wouldn't mind actually spending more time with them.*' At weekends Ann would go in and see her mother but also spent time with the young people. When a position came available as a residential care worker Ann decided to apply. She got the job and found that she enjoyed the work even though she wasn't sure why the children where there:

> *Um, whether it was because I felt I've had such a great upbringing, um, and I wasn't very clear about why these young people were here, but they were there for all different reasons, um, mostly because of the way that they'd been brought up and their parents, really, had had a lot to do with why they were there.*

Ann enjoyed the role of Link Worker best as this gave her an opportunity to work closely with the young people, '… *offering them all sorts of differences really that they, differences in life really*'.

When this establishment closed Ann took on a position working in a residential school for children with behavioural difficulties. It was a live-in position operating on a '*Landing bases*' taking the young people who remained at weekends out on activities, but she did not enjoy it at all: '*I did find it difficult because it was very strict, very bound.*', '*It was more structured, um, boundaries in place.*' Ann realised that this wasn't for her: '*Um, and I thought, this isn't for me. This isn't what I wanted to do really.*' Ann left there without another job to go to. A chance meeting with a former colleague at the school led her to going to Home 1:

> *Um, and he said, "Well, you know, why don't you come along and have a chat with us and, you know, an interview or whatever, and see whether it's something for you." Um, so I came along and I thought, well, you know, I'd like to give it a go, um, and started.*

Ann remained working for Home 1 until it was divided and the residential side sold off.

Summary

In this route only Gopal had previous experience of working with children or young people. Although Ann talked with the young people when she visited her mother she had not done any direct work. Helen had her own children at the time she went into the work. Gopal and Ann had knowledge of and family connections to the residential child care or wider social work field so were aware of residential work although neither had initially thought of going into this type of work. Jack clearly states that he had no knowledge of the sector beforehand.

Someone gave them an introduction

There were two people who were considering going into some kind of caring profession when someone that gave them an introduction.

Tom

Tom was made redundant by the company he worked for as a Chartered Surveyor and he saw this as a blessing in disguise, '*Then I was actually made redundant um and I sort of took that as an opportunity to change direction.*' He had an opportunity to think about what he really wanted to do with his life. Tom went to Dundee to spend some time working in a home with a prominent Director for whom he had a very high regard. Tom's mother was a counsellor and supervisor at the time and one of her colleagues knew the Director of Home 3.

Having said that his parents thought he was a fragile child, too fragile to go into this type of work, he felt that they were probably right:

> *Um, and I think one of the reasons why my parents didn't want me to go into anything like this was because they didn't think I'd survive at that time, I think they just thought I was too fragile. They were probably right and I think I would probably have been killed off fairly early by the children.*

However, once made redundant he decided that he was ready to enter into this work. After making contact with the Director of Home 3 he started as a volunteer. He worked alongside the Trustees in developing a business plan, making use of his experiences gained whilst a surveyor. Looking back he felt that the work he did was probably inappropriate but he had the skills and Home 3 needed to do this work, '*I look back and think it was highly inappropriate really and it must have been very difficult for an awful lot of staff here.*' Once appointed as a residential worker he felt that he was a bit of a '*favoured child*', which must have been difficult for the other staff at the time. He recognised that the consequences of having worked with the Director as a volunteer had mixed outcomes:

> *It helped me in my development in the school and I also think it held me back in terms of, as I progressed I, it's been very difficult to relate to Peter as another manager, if you like, but I think that's changed, now..*

Tom has remained at Home 3 his whole career.

Janet

Janet had worked for nine years in the NHS, working her way up to PA to the Director of HR. She described her frustrations with her job: '*I worked there for nine years and gradually got more err, well fed-up with the whole um paper shuffling of it really.*' Janet decided that she wanted to do something of value, '*I felt like I wanted to make a difference, so I decided that I would like to do my social work diploma.*' She was telling her friend that she couldn't go out at the weekend as she was saving up her money to go and train as a social worker when her friend, working at Home 1, said, '*Don't be so stupid, go to Home 1 because you can do your social work course and they'll pay.*' So she applied to Home 1 and got a position as a residential child care worker.

> *I found the first six months really difficult because, being a very different person to who I am now um, I was quite sort of reserved, didn't want to say no to the children and used to walk in and you're a bit shocked.*

Just before the end of the six months she found herself '…*really fed-up with the whole thing and didn't think I could do it, I didn't think I was cut-out for it.*' Soon after feeling like this she described when, '…. *everything seemed to sort of click together and it all suddenly sort of made sense.*' She was then determined to make a go of succeeding.

Summary

Tom has had the most experience of working with children or young people before getting into the work of all the participants, both LS and Web. He is also the most senior person to participate in the research.

The Web group
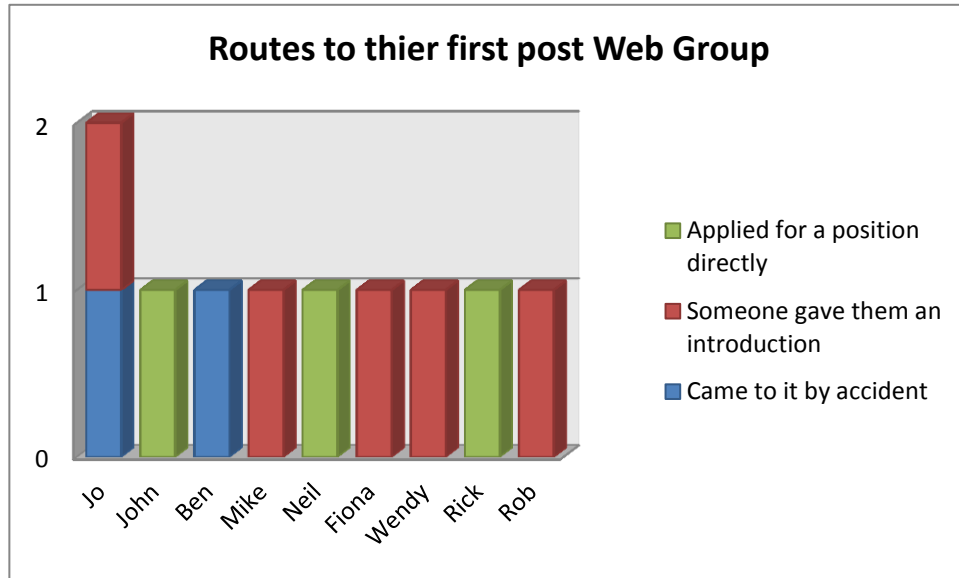
Figure 10: Routes to their first post-Web group

Applied for a position directly

Rick

Rick had been a shop worker but wanted to do this kind of work so applied to work in a night shelter. From there he went to work as a ward orderly until he finally applied for and got a position working with children with learning difficulties. After moving to work with adults with learning difficulties he returned to working with children.

John

John had his own business and wanted a change in his life, leaving the commercial world. He broke his hip so had time to think about his future. He felt he related well to young people so he applied for a post of 'House Parent' in a therapeutic community and remained working in the sector.

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Neil

Neil had a variety of jobs after leaving school. He worked part-time as a youth worker for a period but continued to hold a day time job in retail. He went to Denmark to work on a farm and on his return he needed to find a job. Having had a difficult childhood he was drawn to applying for a position as a residential child care worker when he saw an advertisement. He has worked for one organization during his entire career. Neil is the only one of this group that had previously worked within a professional setting for young people.

Came to it by accident

From the Web group there were two participants that came to the work by accident but only Jo had an introduction.

Jo

Jo had been working as a youth and community worker and had decided that in order to progress she needed to get qualified. She went to study for her Diploma in Youth and Community Work and when thinking about her placement her tutor suggested she may enjoy one in a residential setting. She went to work in a 12 bedded unit for six months and at the end of the placement was offered a permanent position.

At the end of my placement I was offered a full time job and I decided that I would be far happier and fulfilled in residential child care than in the youth service so I stayed and did not return to complete my course.

Ben

Ben had graduated as a primary teacher but felt that teaching was not for him as he did not agree with the National Curriculum. He had been doing some private tutoring to earn some money which he found he really enjoyed. He saw an advertisement for a teaching position working with small groups of children and thought he would enjoy this. At the interview he was offered a choice of working at the school or working as a residential child care worker:

At interview I found out that it was with a residential child care company. Due to my strong interview and the voluntary work I had been doing with

young offenders they offered me a job on shift and gave me six weeks to choose between the education or care post. Until I attended the interview I was unaware that such a sector as residential child care existed!

Except for one year out, after five years working in residential establishments, Ben has continued to work in the residential sector.

Jo and Ben had worked in either a paid or voluntary capacity with young people in their previous work lives.

Someone gave them an introduction

From the Web group there are more people that only fitted into this category.

Fiona

Fiona's brother had been a resident with the organization and the work had always interested her. However, they had a minimum recruitment age of 21 so Fiona worked in a nursery school until she was old enough to join the establishment. She had only been there nine months at the time she participated in the research.

Mike

On leaving school Mike had no idea what he wanted to do so he signed up with Community Service Volunteers to take a year out. After talking with them it was suggested that he go and work in a residential school that was run as a therapeutic community. After the year he took a full-time position and after four years left to gain some, '*life experience'*. He returned to the social care sector and apart from taking a two year break to sail around the world he has remained: '*I have done other jobs in social care and took a two year career break to go sailing but have always returned to my first love and have been in current post 12 years.*'

Wendy

Wendy wanted some experience of working with young people before training to become a teacher. She took a position working in the admin office and watched the interactions between staff and young people when they were taken

in for meetings or therapy. She took a position as a teacher's assistant when one came up within the organization, still thinking that she would go into teaching:

I had already seen a number of staff work with the young people and was impressed by their ability to manage difficult behaviour and engage with young people, and decided that it would be a good place to learn.

After a year she decided that she wanted to become a residential child care worker and gave up the idea of teaching.

Rob

Having completed his degree in Psychology and Sociology Rob had no idea what he wanted to do. He went to his local Volunteers Bureau which helped him '*shape some opportunities*'. He started working in an organization that provided community based services but when it developed a residential unit he moved across: '*I had the opportunity to learn and develop in an experienced team of which three key members had a profound impact on my developing career and practice.*' He qualified as a social worker and had moved within the social sector but returned to the residential sector taking on the role of Training and Development Manager to have an impact on improving the workforce.

Summary

Although there are some similarities between the LS and Web group, in that introduction to the work plays a significant part in people's entry, it is noticeable that fewer of the Web group came to the work by accident. The same number of people applied directly, but only half the number in the Web group came to the work by accident. The most marked difference is with the number of people that came to it by accident following an introduction.

Combination of Routes

When looking at the combination of routes into the work, see Figure 11, we can see that the number of participants entering the work with only an introduction has dropped to 33% matching the percentage of participants that applied directly.
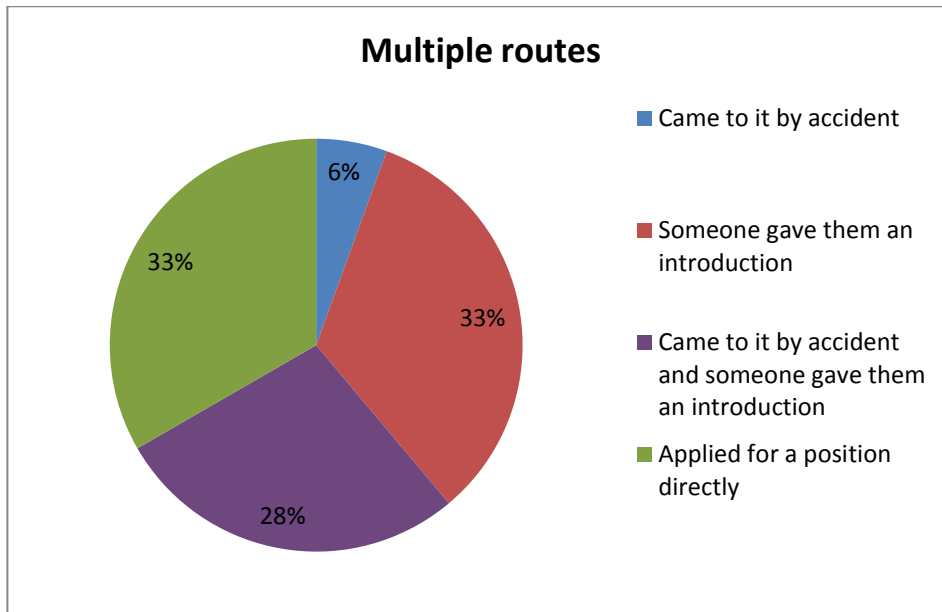
Figure 11: Multiple routes

As only one third of this group had entered the work because they applied directly, I wonder whether the others would have even gone into the work had they not been in contact with someone connected to the sector or had they not responded positively to the requests or suggestions made to them. It is likely that for those looking to do, or in other terms had some kind of unconscious affinity for, some form of caring work may have found their way there. Clearly we will never know but what we do know is that the average length of service for this group is 14.8 years with the shortest being nine months and the longest being 26 years. The other two thirds needed some form of signposting to get them there.

Previous experience

Also of interest to this study is how many of the participants had any experience of working with children/young people before becoming residential child care workers, whether this was in the same or an allied field. One statement about the lack of experience of workers has stayed with me from reading the APPG report (Parliament, APPG, 2012).[55] It is not just official inquiries that raise this

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[55] See comment in Chapter 2.

issue, as Jack in his interview talked about the low status of the job and the assumption that anyone can do the job, even though he himself came into the job after a short time as a volunteer:

> *If you start from the premise that not every person in the world can be a Police Officer, a Fireman or all the other specialist jobs, why should we start from the premise that everybody could be a Residential Social Worker? You deal with such a multitude of problems. You are dealing with some of the most challenging, emotionally, physically challenging young people. Why do we start with the premise that everyone can be trained to do that? I think it undersells the job. And inherent in that, there are problems.*

Jack, who started as a volunteer with no previous experience, went on to get qualifications. He is one of the 38% of all the 18 participants that had previous experience of working with young people before taking up employment. However, as can be seen in Figure 12 48% had no experience of working with or relating to children or young people in any form before they took up employment. Clearly unlike other work we all have experience of having been a child and gone through the process of growing up, yet it is how these experiences are made use of that I suggest Jack is talking about.

Previous experience of working with children or young people

- Had previous expereince of working with children/young people in any capacity — 38%
- Had no previous expereince of working with Childreb/young people in different settings — 48%
- Had expereince of relating to children/young people in personal life — 14%
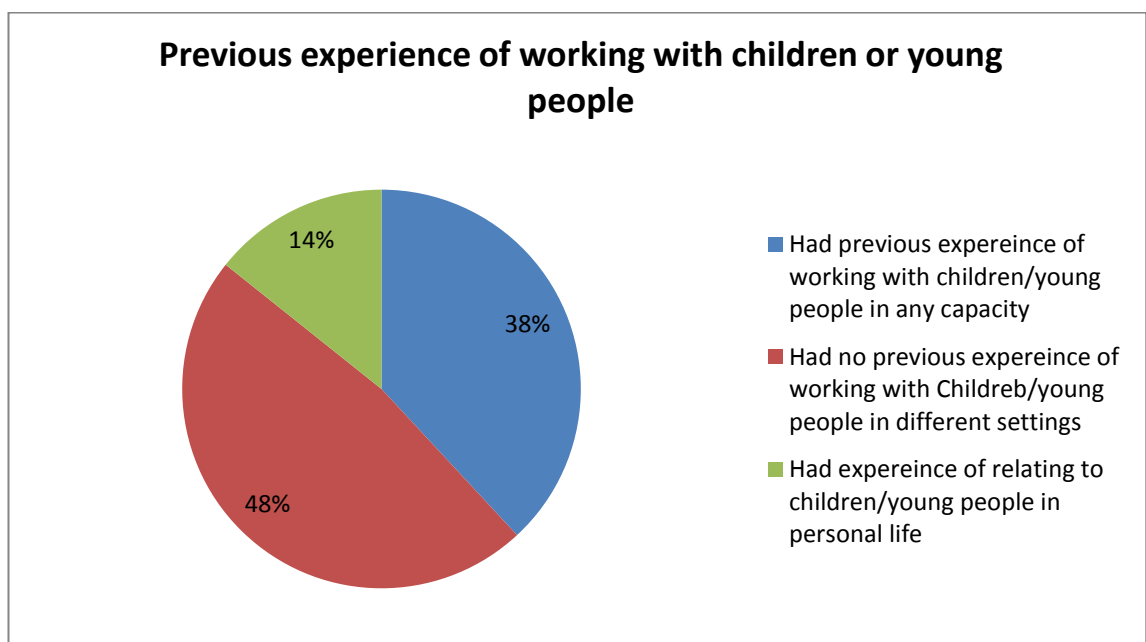
Figure 12: Percentage of previous experience of working with children or young people

Summary of routes into the work

The individual's route into the work for these participants does not seem to have made a significant difference to their progress within the work, as there are participants from all routes in senior positions. This would indicate that there was something about the work, in combination with qualities of the organizations, which has kept them interested. Furthermore, something in their disposition meant that when they were given these signposts they followed them and entered the work. Moreover, I posit that there were motivational factors in place at the time when the signposts where given and that these impacted on the actions taken. The following chapters will be examining in detail these dispositions and motivational factors from both a psychological and sociological perspective.

As these categories came out of the told stories of the participants, we have to recognise that story telling is influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, the *habitus* of the individual will affect how the story is told; where emphasis is given to certain aspects and where events or the like are played down. In conjunction with this is of course the listener; it is likely that the listener's *practice*, either social or professional, will be noted by the interviewee and inferences drawn as to how they will respond. Moreover, the defences coming into play for the story teller and the listener will to some extent dictate which aspects of a life story are revealed and which are hidden in order to protect the story teller. Where motivational or dispositional factors are included in this account they will have been grounded in the participants' narratives.

Chapter 9: Why do people become residential child care workers? Disappointment a Bourdieusian Perspective

Introduction

The previous chapter addressed people's route into the work and identified that there were both motivational factors and something in people's disposition that led them to entering the work. The following three chapters will present the motivational factors that came out of the participants' narratives. These were: 'Wanted to work in the caring professions', 'Looking for something to do' and 'Disappointment with aspects of their life' (See Figure 13). Of the reasons, 'Disappointment' appeared across all the participants. It could be argued that this is not a surprise as Craib (1994, p.57) says that disappointment, '… in one form or another, is central to human life.' However, it is in the way the early experiences are managed. Of interest to this study is the capacity of the participants to do something positive with their disappointments.
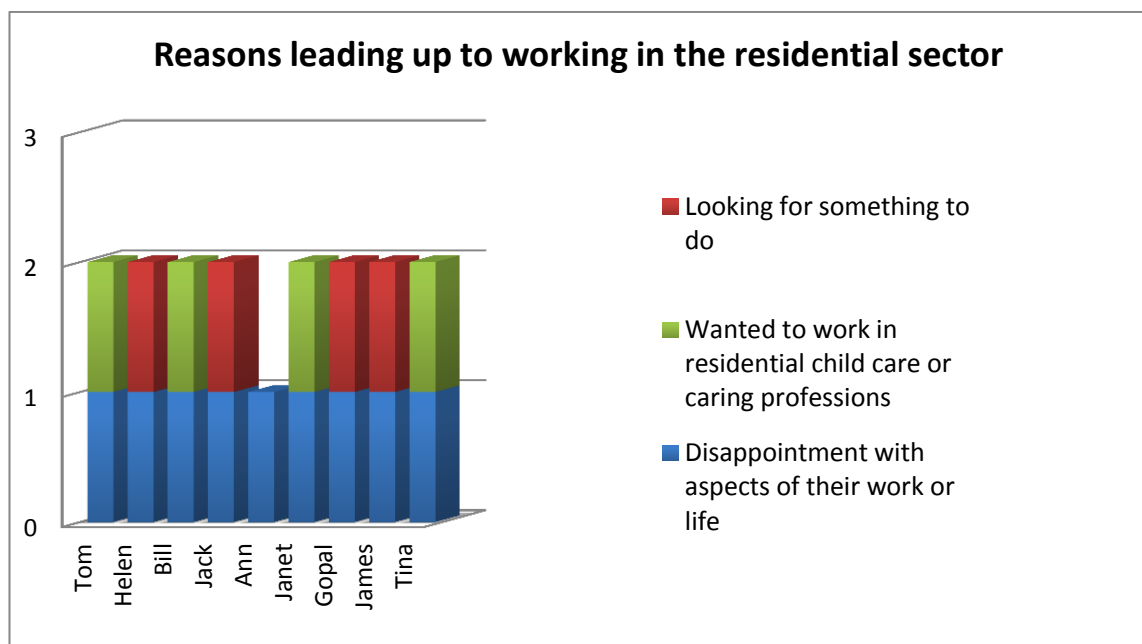

Figure 13: Reasons leading up to working in residential child care

There is initially a summary of the three groupings followed by a more detailed presentation in this and the following two chapters. The participants will be presented in the category that I consider to be the most significant.

Disappointment with aspects of their work or life

This group consists of participants that had been working in professions that they had either chosen, and in some cases had studied for, or had gone into jobs that they or their families considered appropriate to their situation. The reasons that led this group into their initial or early work choices seem to have mainly been influenced by their family and social class of origin. Tom's parents wanted him to have what they considered to be a '*proper job'* so he went to university and studied to be a Chartered Surveyor. Janet states that her mother wanted her to have a job where the '*money was'*. Jack on the other hand does not find any work that is satisfying and moves from one job to the next opting for '*factory fodder'* work because anything else is as Bourdieu (1990, p.56) would say, 'Not for the likes of us.'

All of these participants decided to no longer pursue a career in their early choices of occupation. It would be wrong to say that they all actively sought to become residential child care workers, as for some it was a chance opportunity that connected with their own disposition, but once there they chose to remain. There are some for whom this profession was excluded as an option by the attitudes of their families or class of origin. In Bourdieu's model of the class structure he recognised that individuals could change their positions within the class structure through what he called 'conversion'.

> … that is, an individual's class location and his or her fraction location are simultaneously variable over time. Bourdieu refers to the latter type of movement, in which a preponderance of one type of asset gives way to a preponderance of the other, as a "conversion" of capitals. (Weininger, 2002, p.125)

I would suggest that for some becoming a residential child care worker enabled the acquisition of 'moral capital' which could be converted into both symbolic and social capital.

> Persons in possession of 'moral capital' can utilize this symbolic capital for their own benefit. If persons are perceived as trustworthy because of their moral acts, their 'moral capital' can transfer over into social capital, and evolve finally into material benefits. (Zug, 2014, p.82)

This can only occur if the work is seen as something of value, contributing to society rather than simply as a low paid-low status job, such as for Gopal who values his move into residential work: '… *the bit that I really liked in my life was doing that, sort of do-gooding work*.'   Chapter 11 will examine whether the participants have been able to acquire either this form or that of cultural or social capital within the field of residential child care.

Wanted to work in residential child care or caring professions

Tom and Tina identified that they had in some way wanted to go into the caring professions. However, neither of them went directly into the sector, though Tom did voluntary work for many years before entering into caring work. Bill is the only participant whose first real employment is in the residential sector. What is of interest is that more than half of the participants had one or more members of their original family working within the health or welfare sectors. All of these family members were women and the majority were in nursing. Only Ann had a member of their family actually working in residential child care and it was through this connection that she came to work in the sector.

Looking for something to do!

The third category consists of those participants that were themselves in a transitional state. Jack and Helen had just finished their degrees, having returned to education later in life. Someone suggested to Jack that he do some voluntary work in a home as he had time on his hands. Following a chance conversation and a visit to Home 3 Helen became excited about the work and went to work there. Gopal had had to leave university having failed his second year so was forced to consider his options. He was working on a summer playscheme when someone suggested he apply for a position in a home working with some of the young people on the scheme. James is the fourth member of this group and was looking at employment that would enable him to spend more time with his young family but wasn't sure what career to take up. A friend noticed an advertisement for a position at Home 2 and he decided to apply. One can see that not one member of this group had actually considered going into this work as an active choice but rather circumstance and an

individual signposted the way for them which they then chose to act on, we might suggest because of their disposition towards this work.

Disappointment

When examining the participants' initial entry into the work it was evident that for all the participants there was a sense that they had been disappointed with aspects of either their private lives or their work or a combination of both. Some clearly stated this whilst for others it became evident through their presented life-stories. For some, like Tom, getting into the work was a key to them finding something good and for others, like Janet, the disappointment continues within the work. It is therefore important that we understand both from a sociological and a psychoanalytical perspective how it came to be that these individuals were disappointed with their work/life situations. I will also examine how it was that becoming a residential child care worker has for some resolved the sense of disappointment and where it has not what we can understand about such individuals.

There are two distinct groups. One group of five were in employment that they described as having been chosen either, because of their social circumstances alone, like Jack, or with the additional factor of parental pressure, like Janet. The other four were in jobs they had wanted to do without any pressure from family but became disappointed because the work didn't give them what they wanted. I will take each group separately as there are quite different routes to their disappointment. The first group will be those that went into work or took routes into work due to perceived or stated familial or societal pressure.

Let us examine what may have been the reasons behind the familial pressure. Firstly we will look at Tom who described his parents wanting him to get a '*proper job'*. Tom started off by saying he had always wanted to be in this line of work and that his mother was a school nurse yet his parents had other ideas:

> *I always wanted to come into this line of work, or work in the sort of caring profession somehow. My mum was a school nurse um, and, I was always encouraged by my parents to go into a proper job in an office um, and so did um, which is why I trained and qualified as a chartered surveyor in Birmingham.*

However, Tom was able to find a way to do some form of work in the caring sector by taking up voluntary work to meet this wish.

Um, but while I was there I was um, I worked quite actively with a charity in east Birmingham …. and ran some weekend camps. And I used to visit one afternoon a week at a school um, a secondary school and sort of help with their sports afternoons, which was a nightmare of a place.

Janet's mother wanted her to get a job where the '*money is*':

… because I'd left school and when I left school, err, I remember having conversations just with my mum about what I wanted to do, and I, sort of, didn't really know and I, kind of, had these, sort of, ideas that I wanted to do like hairdressing or make-up artist and something quite creative, you know. And I remember her saying, "Don't be so ridiculous, you need to be a secretary, that's where the money is, that's what you need to do."

Prior to joining the field Gopal was studying for a maths degree and failed his second year: '*I didn't enjoy it at all. I didn't like the people on the course.*' He had gone to study maths because that was what was expected of him, '*I think certainly in terms of lots of expectations of maybe the adults in my life.... you know, my parents and some of the other people.*' Gopal himself had come to the view that, '*I suppose, just having gone down the.... I was always gonna be a mathematician or a whatever maths would bring, it's much more like me dad, in terms of accountancy and finance.*' Additionally he felt there was no room to discuss anything other than career and achievement:

I could never talk to my uncle about what I was feeling about things. It was just buried in a house doing a job, career or kind of that ladder that's lot of um.... lots of connotations about ladders and graphs about how to get to the top of things, you know, academically or um work wise or whatever.

Although very different in sentiments there is a similarity, in that they state a value believed to be held by the family.

Tom, Gopal and Janet felt pushed by their families into types of work that fitted with the families' concept of the kind of work suitable for their social position. Jack on the other hand describes his early work life as drifting from one unsatisfactory job to another with no input from his parents in terms of guidance or pressure:

Um and I worked in a whole range of things from working in shops, working for MEB doing electrical switchboards, installing telephone exchanges. I've worked in race horse stables, forklift truck-driving, loading and unloading lorries, window cleaning. A whole range of things. I worked on … um… at holiday camps, on fairgrounds for a while and then I've got to probably, early twenties and I thought, I can't proceed with this and I actually went …um, on recommendation from my good friends at the Employment Exchange, why don't you go and see an Occupational Therapist?

Jack's early work history reflects Bourdieu's concept that the habitus of an individual sets limits about what is achievable in life because of their values and membership of a certain social space.

All four changed direction, leaving either their early employment or university and moved into a different field. To understand why this movement has been possible, if the habitus is limiting, we need to consider what Bourdieu says about movement between the social classes. In *Distinction* (1984) Bourdieu states it is not simply one's habitus that influences choices but that the social space that an individual belongs to also differentiates between the genders. This is particularly so in terms of defining occupations which are deemed feminine or masculine. Janet's own experience reflects this: '*I went to a careers meeting and I remember them saying pretty much, "So you want to be typist/hairdresser or…, you know, which one?"'* Being told the same thing by the careers advisers as she had been by her mother confirmed the limitations of her choices. She got a place on a Youth Training Scheme (YTS) doing administration in the local hospital. It was there she realised there were other options:

I was in the hospital environment and I'd done work experience at the eye hospital and at the child development centre and, sort of, moved around within the Health Authority and I was thinking, cor, walking around the hospital thinking there's therapy, there's occupational therapy, there's physiotherapy, I could have been a biochemist, I could have… and seeing all these things and thinking (laughs) how did nobody ever mention it this to me, and feeling really like I'd… I'd been… I'd been done out of something. I'd, you know… um, and years later, I spoke to my mum and said, "Why did you never push me" and she said, "Well because, you know, we didn't want to push you, we didn't want to make you feel like you didn't… you had pressure on you" and I said, "But you could have like mentioned college, that would have been nice, instead of just, sort of,

saying, you need to go to work. You know, it wasn't even discussed. I didn't even know I could go to college, you know.

We have seen that even the choices Janet had in mind at the point of leaving school could be considered as more generally feminine occupations. Whereas Tom chose a masculine occupation that also fitted in with his parents' expectations and even though his mother was a nurse going into a caring occupation was not acceptable.

Gopal, who had had to leave a grammar school for boys when his parents moved, is very clear that his chosen field of maths is for males,

And the teacher reading out the err.... the class.... the maths group because you do O Levels, as it was then, and reading out girls names, and me sticking my hand up and saying um excuse me [laughter] you've just read out some girls that are in the same maths class as me, I'm doing O Level maths for boys.

It is not simply the parents that influenced the choices that have been made but there is societal pressure due to what Bourdieu (1984) calls '… *the field of possibles.*'[56] (Bourdieu, 1984, p.110) He explains that individuals are influenced to act in particular ways partly because of their compliance or not with the forces which structure the social space they inhabit and in part because of the capital they hold. At this point he is referring more particularly to one's inherited or *embodied* capital, which comes in the form of one's outlook, and *objectified* capital, in the form of material goods particularly education and qualifications. The amount of inherited and objectified capital gained through one's family will then influence the range of 'probable trajectories' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.110) that the agent has when considering their options. The range of trajectories differs for each social class due to the options they can attain, particularly levels of education and the gaining of qualifications. Therefore classes, such as the middle class and above, that have greater access to good quality education and have inherited the kind of outlook on life that gives them the confidence to take up the options open to them, have a greater range of trajectories as opposed to

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[56] Authors own italics and spelling.

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someone from a working class background whose options and attitudes are greatly limited.

How then has come to be that certain participants have become 'upwardly' or 'downwardly' socially mobile? Bourdieu (1984) explains that this is possible because not all individuals within the same social class have the same individual trajectory - hence it is not necessarily fixed:

> To say that the members of a class initially possessing a certain economic and cultural capital are destined, with a given probability, to an education and social trajectory leading to a given position means in fact that a fraction of the class (which cannot be determined a priori within the limits of this explanatory system) will deviate from the trajectory most common for the class as a whole and follow the (higher or lower) trajectory which was most probable for members of another class. (Bourdieu, 1984, p.111)

The *trajectory effect* allows for a blurring of the relationship between the attitude of one's family and newly acquired attitudes, due to a change of social position, as a way of seeing the future. He explains that this is more visible in the middle classes as new factions of this class evolve and the trajectories become extremely scattered. Furthermore, it is this dispersion of trajectories that is evident in familial units where one may see couples that one may consider to be ill matched, not only in terms of social origin but also of educational achievement or occupation. There is evidence of this in Tom's family:

> *And he was a bit of a hooligan in his days although I didn't hear that till I was older, a bit of a thug. Um and in that way my parents were quite an odd match because my mum was from a very well-to-do sort of wealthy family in Solihull but my dad's family were also from South Birmingham um.*

What is clear from Tom's story is that the values of his mother's family have been in the forefront of this couple as his father's family do not have a history of university education; his paternal grandfather was a wallpaper salesman and his maternal grandfather was a shopkeeper. What may account for this value is Tom's mother's family's support during a difficult time in his parents' marriage. Tom's parents had separated but after 18 months got back together:

> *But I don't know much about them getting back together and my mum's parents were always very close um, and supportive to the family um, and they were quite involved in the moving and looking after us while we all moved and… I actually think I was on something like Cub Camp when*

they moved because I remember just going to the house or something and not… but I don't remember much about it um.

Tom's father adopted some of the values of his wife's family as they purchased their own home in a middle class neighbourhood. However, this change in the individual's attitude is not the same for all, as in the case of Jack who still holds on to being a *working class lad* even though he is a trained social worker and owner of a private children's home: '*We all come across middle class social workers and solicitors that tell the youngsters, well we know what's in your best interests, but the young people don't always see it that way.*' And yet he is exceptionally proud of his achievement:

> *And that, I must say some of that is about myself because as I come from a comprehensive school where you are expected to be a non-achiever you were factory fodder. When I was at school they were talking about what factory are you going in? Are you going in as a machinist or are you going to work on lathes or something like that. But as say, for me, it's about my own, my own self, knowing myself that I've actually done it and achieved it and irrespective of what happens now, I've got there. So I'm quite pleased with that.*

Sennett and Cobb (1972) explain how the measure of one's academic ability becomes used as an indicator of one's worth to and one's social standing within society.

> That ability is the badge of individual worth, that calculations of ability create an image of a few individuals standing out from the mass, that to be an individual by virtue of ability is to have the right to transcend one's social origins-these are the basic suppositions of a society that produces feelings of powerlessness and inadequacy in the lives of people…
> (Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p.62)

Although Jack is disparaging about people of middle class origin he is satisfied with himself that he now has the same standing as them. When introducing the people they interviewed Sennett and Cob (1972) describe a man, 'Frank', also from a working class background, who has got a job in a bank so has joined the ranks of the blue-collared workers. When they ask him about his success 'I was just at the right place at the right time,' Sennett and Cob (1972, p.20) he says again and again. Much in the same way as Jack describes his career progression: '*I would like to say a lot of my career was planned but, and it seems to me like, hardly any of it was. It was just … going along.*' And much like Jack, 'Frank' also has little regard for those whom he has aspired to be like.

Frank feels he doesn't fit with the people whose rank he has joined through work nor does he fit with those he has left behind. (Sennett and Cob, 1972) Whereas Jack clearly still identifies with his working class background as he is the *working class lad made good.*

Bourdieu (1984) notes that where an individual has moved up, though he may have the necessary economic capital, there may be aspects of an individual's social origin that make life more difficult in the new social space. They may find themselves ill at ease in certain situations or with certain aspects of culture as these fields are controlled by the education system. Jack's description of his first two terms at university bears this out:

> *So I was the working class lad off the fairground that went to University. I was out of my depth totally for the first two terms, didn't really understand what was going on, but battled with it and got through University.*

As does his comment above regarding the middle class professionals he has worked with.

We have seen that for Janet and Jack higher education was not an option when they were of school leaving age yet it was an expectation for Tom and Gopal. These expectations are one of the reasons why these four individuals were disappointed with their work lives. For Tom and Gopal it was the pressure to study for a degree and in Tom's case join the profession linked to the degree. For Jack and Janet it was the lack of opportunities. It was gaining a degree that allowed Jack to get out of the cycle of short lasting '*dead-end*' jobs. Janet also saw education as a means of escaping her '…*really dreary and really, sort of, trapped,*' employment. In Tom's case being made redundant from his approved of work enabled him to reconsider his options, '*Then I was actually made redundant um and I sort of took that as an opportunity to change direction.*' For Gopal it was failing the second year of his degree course and at the same time losing his work placement, '*I'd already got a job for a year out job but obviously couldn't go forward because I didn't get through the course.*'

The other three participants were able to take up the work of their choices but these were disappointing for a number of reasons. Ann chose to go into hotel management:

I went to college for three years and studied, um, in catering to become a, um, a Hotel Manager. It was always something I wanted to do, um, so I studied hard for three years and went on all the work experiences. I actually went out and worked in a hotel when I left after three years and thought, this isn't for me.

Ann had been supported by her family to undertake the necessary study plus her chosen work had fitted with their social class. Her disappointment was that it was not the work she had dreamed of and she did not actually enjoy it.

James had also been employed in fields that fitted with his family's expectations as he had been successful in the business world, like his grandfather. He had been running a pub but had become dissatisfied as he found the hours were preventing him from spending as much time with his young family as he wanted. So had started to think about what he could do:

I was thinking about maybe going back into estate agency which I'd done, or going back into sales which I'd done, and I was… then I was thinking about all backward steps and… you know, and I don't particularly want to do that.

I mean I'd been a very successful salesman for a period of time, I earnt huge amounts of money, but obviously there is a sacrifice to that which is the amount of hours I used to put in,

James's sense of disappointment was more allied to his wish to be the parent he never had rather than because he wasn't fulfilling his family's expectations of him.

Tina stated early on that, '*I'd always wanted to work with people...*' and follow in the footsteps of the women in her family:

I do come from a family with a sort of quite a caring background and my mum's like a deputy warden of a old people's home. And I've got an aunty who's a nurse and my sister Angela who's the one who, who does the same sort of work as me but with younger children she's also a qualified nurse so I think in some ways its been in bred the sort of caring side of my you know my family we all come from a they're all from the caring professions I think it's part of it was inbred in me …

Tina left her admin post in the local health authority and got a job that she thought fitted her wishes: '*I suppose I wanted a job with status even though I hadn't got these qualifications and I became a housing officer because again it*

was again it was like helping people.' Although Tina doesn't say what rank her father had in the army there is a sense that being of service to one's country gives an individual status. However, after some time she came to realise that though the position carried the status she had wanted it wasn't really about helping people.

> *I had to do this eviction on Christmas Eve. And it was a lady with a ten year old child err one who's about four and who's about five and we had to take the property back on Christmas eve and cause we couldn't empty it so we just, the locks were changed and I thought to myself I can't do this job anymore. This woman's got three kids, one that's ten days old and here they are on Christmas Eve losing their home. Through rent arrears I can't do this.*

Tina then went to work with children with disabilities and though she initially found this enjoyable she was limited in what she could achieve in the field because of her lack of higher education. Tina was also a victim of the education system as her dyslexia hadn't been identified and she was simply termed as being stupid, '… *because at school they either said to you "oh you're thick, you're thick, you're thick".'* Tina's experience of education, much like Jack's was of being held back. Bourdieu identified the education system as being part of society's gatekeeper to class mobility, 'Bourdieu posits that education plays an important role in aiding and abetting the reproduction of social inequality and social exclusion.' (Tzanakis, 2011, p.76) Sennett and Cobb (1972, pp.81-84) describe the interactions between teachers and students in a school serving a working class area as a 'drama'. This drama '… has as its script the assigning and wearing of badges of ability,' where children perceived of having high ability are rewarded with attention from the teacher and those of having low ability are labelled as failures. Where what occurs is '…that the teachers act on their expectations of the children in such a way as to *make*[57] the expectations become reality.' (Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p.81) They describe an observation over time of one teacher favouring two boys in his class who do well as the other children pick up this behaviour they become disillusioned with school to the point where they are simply waiting out their time there. Both

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[57] Authors' own italics

Tina's and Jack's stories would indicate that their experiences of school were such that the system kept them in their place within society.

Stepping into a new field, one not within the habitus of their origin, has only been possible for this group of people because of an individual that has given them something that was absent in their lives. We could call this individual a facilitator or an agent of change. From a psychoanalytical perspective we will see that there was something in each individual's personal histories that enabled them to connect with the 'gift' they were being offered by the individual that they came into contact with on their journey to becoming residential child care workers. Bourdieu (1984, p.110) recognises that there is the possibility of an encounter or benefactor that enables the shift of trajectory. For Jack it was someone telling him he was more than *factory fodder* and believing in him. Tom met a charismatic leader that saw him as strong and no longer *fragile*, yet at the same time protected him so that he was looked after until he could stand on his own. In James's case he too met a charismatic father figure. However, it was one that he had to win over as he was not initially offered the praise and recognition that he would have liked.   James also found himself in an environment that could heal the emotional damage that he had experienced as a child.

Although also disappointed by their initial choice of employment Tina and Ann had conformed to expectations of their families.   Tina comes from a family where the women are, '… *all from the caring professions*' and actively looked for work that is about '*helping people'*. Ann is a little different from all the others as she was disappointed by the career of her choice. So when she went to work in the residential care sector she joined the same work as her mother.

Summary

Though disappointment is part of the life-cycle it is the consequences of the actions of these participants that have played a significant role in changing the trajectory of their lives. By utilising Bourdieu's theory it has been possible to identify how the habitus had been a limiting factor which led some participants to take up careers that though considered appropriate left them feeling

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dissatisfied either because they were not achieving their potential or because they felt there was something missing from their lives. We have seen that disappointment in their work or life led some participants to be proactive in changing their situation and others to take up opportunities when they were offered them. For some it was only when they were able to break from the bonds of their familial habitus that they were able to find employment that they clearly enjoyed. The journeys taken by Tina, Janet and Jack have been far more challenging than by Tom as he had more capital to start with. The ability to gain or convert capital meant that the role of residential child care worker became acceptable for some and for others they were able to improve their status within their social space.

Bourdieu's theory has allowed the understanding of the societal and familial pressures that led to the participants' disappointment. In the next chapter psychoanalytical theory will be used to gain an understanding of the psychological reasons for and impact of disappointment and the participants' dispositions that facilitated the move into residential child care.

Chapter 10: Why do people become residential child care workers? Disappointment a Psychoanalytical Perspective

Using a Bourdieusian perspective to examine the familial and societal aspects of the participants' life-stories enabled an understanding of how the ramifications of these and their social space contributed to feelings of disappointment with aspects of their lives. Recognising that the participants are defended and that their told story provides information about their early experiences makes it desirable to also bring a psychoanalytical dimension to the understanding of the data. The following therefore applies psychoanalytical concepts, which have been explained in Chapter 3, to the narratives to discover the possible reasons for their disappointments and their dispositions that lead them to entering the work.

Craib (1994) used Freud's model of the psyche to explain that disappointment is experienced from our earliest time. Disappointment occurs at both the conscious and unconscious level as it relates to the internal conflict between the wanting id, '…the drives that push us forward to seek satisfaction,' (Craib, 1994, p.37) and the denying super-ego, '…the authority that we internalise from our parents and the wider society. (Craib, 1994, p.37) The role of the ego is to mediate between these two. The conflict we experience and the ensuing disappointment varies according the strength of the id, super-ego and ego when dealing with our wants, desires and wishes. The capacity to compromise in a way that is not overly painful is dependent on the nature and quality of the internalized figures. Where the internalized figures include a demanding parent or a limiting environment it is likely that feelings of disappointment will more readily occur. In the previous chapter we saw how Jack and Tina had followed the accepted path given their background and that both Tom and Janet had done as their parents wished but all were disappointed. The consequences of these pre-set choices led to the feelings of dissatisfaction and hence disappointment.

Janet had followed her mother's wish and had become successful in her work at the hospital, going from being on an YTS to becoming the PA to the Director of

HR. Yet there is no sense of achievement in this, only a description of her becoming more fed up with her job:

I felt like the letters I was doing were not really that important and the things I was dealing with weren't really that important and I got sick and tired of, sort of sat in this dreary little office just looking out at the world going by.

It is possible to see Janet's sense of dissatisfaction and a feeling of not being able to achieve her full potential. Janet also described herself as the, '*black sheep of the family'*, particularly as compared to her, '*very successful brother',* so we can gather that she didn't feel successful according to her own or family's criterion, even though she has gained seniority within her field. It is possible that for Janet there exist disappointed internal figures. There is further evidence for this when Janet responded to the direct question about family. Seemingly the direct question allowed her to speak openly about her poor relationship with her mother, as she had not done so in the narrative. She described only gaining her mother's approval when she was in a relationship and more recently since she started going to university. Janet perceived that as she had not become a mother herself, believing she was expected to, the next best thing was academic success, '*Once the relationship has finished, I've not heard from her, until I started Uni: now she brings meals one day a week and has been really supportive.*' It would seem that success is important in this family and that gender roles are defined but can also be re-defined if one gains success through academic routes. As a homeowner Janet couldn't afford to stop working and pay the mortgage hence she hadn't been able to finance herself through university, thus she took the job in residential work. Therefore this was not seen as a success but rather a hindrance to gaining her mother's approval. In writing about the work with one of his patients Winnicott (1971, p.28) describes her as having been, 'a disappointment to herself'. This resonated with how not only Janet but other participants described themselves in that their lives had been a disappointment.

The games were unsatisfactory for her because she was simply struggling to play whatever role was assigned to her, and the others felt that something was lacking in the sense that she was not actively contributing- in. (Winnicott, 1971, p.28)

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He continues to explain why this had occurred by ascribing his patient the position of the youngest child: 'This youngest child, however, found herself in a world that was already organized before she came into the nursery.' (Winnicott, 1971, p.28) He suggests that the patient experienced an unsatisfactory early childhood which led to feelings of abandonment leaving her with wished for murderous attacks on the mother whilst fearing retaliation. I suggest this prevented the patient from working through the process of reparation. Hirschhorn (1988) says that the act of working is in itself a form of reparation:

> People can work through the depressive position by repairing their relationships with others. They do this, I suggest, by creating and giving something good to those whom they have hurt, by *doing work*. This process of depression and reparation takes place both in relation to real others and through symbolic acts. In the latter instance the gifts we create and the receivers we seek out are symbols of acts we have committed and people we have hurt in the past. In short, to repair the damage we have done, in splitting apart our feelings of love and hate, we must *work*, we must create something of value for others. (Hirschhorn, 1988, p.206)[58]

However, if the individual gives no value to their work or feels the work is actually harming others, as in the case of Tina when she had to evict a woman and her children on Christmas Eve, (as described on page 124) then it can surely no longer be considered as being reparative. Tina found a position working in her first residential establishment:

> *And I got a job working with children with disabilities erm and that was just that was just the greatest job, that was fantastic. It was through doing that job that actually I then went to do my social work training.*

After training she returns to the same sector but left when she felt she couldn't be as creative as she wanted to be.

> *And then I thought I was always going to stay within learning disabilities but then I became sort of like a bit disheartened because nothing seemed to, there was never any money in disability services for people it was it was never a case of what the people needed it was it was so we haven't got that resource you can't have it.*

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[58] Authors own italics

Tina took a number of different posts repeatedly feeling disillusioned until she went to Home 2. Here she found a different culture and way of working with the young people that connected with her needs:

And what they could have done you know and it's that making them think in this job you know that sort of people the young people here are it's all about it's about making them think as to what made then take that action.

Tina described her feelings for the work with the young people and that she felt she is able to demonstrate her feelings and to be an open person at Home 2:

… there was no passion there was nothing to be passionate about in that job. Whereas in this job, every day there's a reason to be passionate about it.

Because you weren't allowed to say it whereas in this job we're allowed to be very open and very honest and because that's the person I am an open honest person. They get to see the real you. And quite often lads will say well why do you still care for us after knowing all these things about us? And you can give an honest genuine answer to that because we're allowed to be so open and honest here. Whereas in the last job you couldn't be.

It is not simply that act of working but also the ability to be creative that facilitates reparation. I therefore posit that the sense of disappointment experienced by some of the participants is linked to both the destined career paths they initially took and that these positions did not offer them the wished for opportunities to make the reparation they unconsciously needed to make or that the work stopped providing such opportunities.

It was not only Tina that found her work lacking in reparative or creative opportunities so I now present material from the other participants. I am using the idea of creativity not simply as in the production of artistic material but also with the idea of creative thinking and the ability to find creative ways of dealing with situations.[59]

Like Tina, Tom was open about his disappointment and had clearly given much thought to his life. He gave a lot of personal information during the interview

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[59] In Chapter 12 there is a fuller presentation about reparation and creativity.

that will be used sensitively. Interestingly, Tom had not explored why it was that he found such difficulties in his first job but simply stated:

I always hated and I hated the sort of facelessness of it and where you sort of never knew really who people were and they all talked about things that everyone thought were boring but then talk about them anyway. And I just wasn't into sort of getting pissed and talking about rents of buildings in Birmingham and I didn't think anybody else was but everyone did it and I just didn't like the life really.

It is in his use of the word *facelessness* that we are able to identify what it was that he hated. I posit that the position lacked opportunities for him to be creative in any way as he was dealing with fairly concrete subject matters. Furthermore, he was unable to feel good about himself. Having become involved in doing voluntary work through Scouting he continued to do so during this employment. It was through this work that Tom found opportunities to make reparation. Although some time ago he recalls one incident that clearly had an impact on him. It is worth presenting it in its entirety:

Um (pause) yeah there was a boy called John Smith um, and it's still quite vivid in my mind. I think it's one of those times when you… we were going swimming… it was sort of run a bit like Scout Camp and there were sort of patrols and he was in my group. I was given a horrible great big, all the big lads, all the big scary ones and um, and John was scary but quite withdrawn, quite violent but quite withdrawn. And um, we were going swimming… we used to go to all sorts of places and have a nightmare time really but we went swimming … and um everyone was, the whole camp were going, there was about twenty kids or something, I don't remember how many… about twenty kids, and he ran off just before we were going. And I had some sort of connection with him um, you know, there's all types of connections that I still have with children here that I don't quite understand but sort of I linked. I knew he'd linked into me and I linked into him somehow, and he'd run off. I mean I was quite new to this whole business um and um I asked one person to stay back and everybody else went, and I went off to find him and he was… I found him eventually um out on the estate somewhere and brought him back to the tent and we sat and talked. And nobody… he didn't say anything exciting or, you know, there was no, you know, great gore (laughs) like you know there was no great disclosure or all that sort of stuff, but he was very anxious about going swimming and having to take his… or to get undressed I suppose. He was one of these children who was wrapped up in loads of layers of clothing. Um, I look back and, you know, question about sort of all sorts of abuse but um… and he was being bullied, he said he was being bullied by one of the children that he was frightened of, and I

persuaded him to come with me and we went in my car with this other member of staff. We drove to the pool and he went swimming.

Tom then described how later in the week he felt he let John down by not communicating a promise he had made to him. He came to realise the importance of clarity and keeping one's word. What Tom also recalls is the pain he experienced from having not been able to keep the boy on side, '*And it really hurt me, you know, trying to sort of get him back on side and I, you know.*' I suggest the pain he felt was due to the pain he had caused and the loss of a reparative relationship with this boy. This experience as a fairly young man had given Tom his first experiences of the opportunity to make reparation.

Tom started off by saying he had always wanted to be in this line of work. Fairly early on during the interview he said that, '*Um I think now, looking back, why I understand I went into this line of work…*' and then added:

> *At the time, the other thing was that I saw a documentary in Ameri… one of these American documentaries about working with, an outbound thing working with young offenders, and I thought that's really what I wanted to do and um I was, I loved sort of outdoor stuff: climbing, walking and all that stuff.*

He later says:

> *Um, and I think one of the reasons why my parents didn't want me to go into anything like this was because they didn't think I'd survive at that time, I think they just thought I was too fragile. They were probably right and I think I would probably have been killed off fairly early by the children.*

Although Tom was discouraged from entering this line of work when he was younger he was actually doing quite a lot of voluntary work through the Scouts and then later volunteering for an organization working with disadvantaged young people, many of whom it would seem where quite damaged. Tom described the enjoyment he got from this voluntary work.

> *And I remember, you know, making, feeling that you were making a difference to children's lives really, and I think that's what touched me most about it was that there were children there who were desperately sad and disturbed.*

This describes a conscious sense of feeling good about himself as does his description of being a volunteer at Home 3.

I reflect on quite a lot because I think I was here as a volunteer… I enjoyed being used in the way, … I was sort of a bit of a favoured child here and that was quite an odd… it was a bit of a bizarre relationship and I look back and think it was highly inappropriate really and it must have been very difficult for an awful lot of staff here um, but I enjoyed the role at the time and I, at the time wasn't really aware of it, I suppose.

At Home 3 Tom worked with a strong male figure, like other strong figures earlier in his life, particularly the leaders at the Scout troop:

The leaders: one was a county court circuit judge, he was a great, great man. He was killed in a car accident actually while I was on the Oxford course: and a woman who was a librarian at a school … but, an amazing, an amazing lady who um, just one of these highly charismatic um, she was very high up in scouting um, and probably a white witch I should think (laughs). One of these hugely important people, community people in hundreds of people's lives.

Later on there is the Director of his first exploration of residential work, '… *a fantastic sort of inspirational, leader-type guy.*' Clearly these people have influenced Tom in that they are representations of something that is not *fragile*.

It was evident that Tom had had a lot of time and support in thinking about his own history and as such had created his own understanding of why he is in the work. His narrative reflects the thought process he had gone through even to the point that he reflects on why he is in the work:

And I think my dad was probably quite a fragile person um, he um, his parents were very Victorian and um quite um neglectful I think really. And he was a bit of a hooligan in his days although I didn't hear that till I was older, a bit of a thug.

On two occasions Tom talked about abuse experienced by his grandfather that was not talked about until after he had died. Tom linked this abuse to his grandparents' difficult relationship and the behaviour of his father:

And I think consequently my dad did struggle quite a lot, and I now know that he also struggled with life and went through a period of sort of exposing himself and doing very bizarre things.

Tom stated that he felt that he was in some way making amends for the wrongs or harm done in the past, '*So I sort of look back and wonder whether part of my work is about trying to sort of make amends for the things that weren't quite*

right at those times.' He identified the harm as being related to the abuse his grandfather suffered and his father's consequent behaviour. However, as reparation is not an altogether conscious act, my hypothesis is that it is for his own 'wrongs' that he was unconsciously making reparation. We know from Tom that he started the voluntary work and had already been a residential child care worker before he was aware of his grandfather's and father's histories. From Tom's own narrative he informs us that his early years were difficult for his parents:

> *I think I was always a fairly fragile child um, I didn't learn to read until I was about seven and a half. And um, I cried for the first three years of my life and drove my parents absolutely nuts and they took me… my mum was a nurse anyway, so she sort of felt like she should know, but it was at that time when um people were starting to try and tell people how they should look after their children, you know, just leave them crying in a room or everyone had gardens. And they trawled me round various places to try and find out why I was crying and all my mum actually wanted to do was pick me up and carry me around, she now says, but she didn't feel able to do that because people told her that was the wrong thing to do.*

Additionally, when Tom was ten his parents separated and like many children one imagines that he thought it was his fault, particularly as he had been told he was a difficult child:

> *That was for about a year and a half um and then they got back together again um, and at that time it was particularly traumatic for me um, and at that time I said that I wanted to live with my dad. Looking back I don't really know why.*

It is in the previously quoted narrative that Tom stated the reason why he may have wanted to live with his father and have been angry with his mother. It is in the comment '*she now says*' that we can see Tom's expression of anger at his mother for not having picked him up. I suggest that it is for these two described wrongs, or pains, that Tom had a need to make reparation, to repair his own relationship with his mother. This does not preclude that Tom was consciously making amends for what occurred to his father and grandfather.

Unlike Tom, Janet gave little information about her early childhood but as seen earlier she too was very disappointed, having followed her parents' wishes. She presented as feeling angry about having been let down by her parents, particularly her mother and then again by the organization she worked for,

though she continued to work for them. There is also a fairly fragile side to her, which is evident when she is challenged. On two occasions she describes giving thought to leaving when things got difficult, firstly when she could not connect to the work, and secondly when there was a major problem in the work.

Janet had started her life-story at the point when she left school and I was left wondering if she had been in care. Janet either didn't want me to find out anything about her childhood or possibly she didn't have a coherent narrative to tell. However, when talking about her disappointment with her work she recalls her feelings after challenging her mother (see pages 118-119): '*You know, so I… I felt… for some time, I felt a bit of annoyance towards my mum really that she didn't do any of that with me.*' Janet described a conversation with her mother where she was urged to become a secretary but more importantly for Janet where her mother ridiculed the idea that she could do anything else. '*And I remember her saying, "Don't be so ridiculous, you need to be a secretary, that's where the money is, that's what you need to do".*'[60] Janet was left with a sense of not being good enough and consequently pushed herself to give *110%*. However, Janet has an idea of what an ideal parent is:

> *I think I felt like because they didn't have a parent, a parent would be there constantly, and therefore I was acting as that role, that I didn't really have the right almost to switch off. You know, as a parent you don't switch off, you don't just go and forget about them.*

Janet describing working many hours, '*I was virtually working sort of seventy, eighty hour weeks,*' to make things good. However, when talking about her work in the first interview the children were referred to using terms such as, *that child*, *the little girl*, even when she described herself as having been the parent or after describing a difficult experience with one particular child. It could be considered that her reparative behaviour at times represents some aspects of manic reparation because: 'Manic reparation can never be completed, because, if it were complete, the object fully restored would again become lovable and esteemed, and free from the manic person's omnipotent control and contempt.'

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[60] There is more of the conversation presented on page 117; this sentence is re-presented as it is specific to Janet not feeling good enough.

(Segal, 1988, pp.95-6) Later on though she describes feeling that she does nothing, '*I do absolutely nothing, I make no, I make no difference…*', which could also indicate that she felt she was failing an idealised parental figure.

During the first interview I found myself being quite angry with Janet and it took a while before I was really able to listen to what she was saying. I suggest that this was due to projective identification, in that Janet projected rather than expressed her anger and I was feeling it, as once I showed her that I was listening to her and not judging her she expressed her anger more directly at the way she felt she had been treated and the feeling left me.   Janet then revealed some aspects of her inner world:

> *I either do it as best as I can or I won't do it, um, which sometimes causes people a lot of frustration with me, because the, sort of… it's very black and white I suppose, but I just,…*

I found myself having to demonstrate that I understood her and felt sympathy for her difficulties, however, perhaps because of the impact on me of what she had been saying, I had not been able to think clearly to ask follow up questions about her mother or her family. What was also very different in the second interview was how Janet started referring to the children she had worked with by name:

> *You know, and Charmaine was a very difficult girl. She was, you know, a tiny little thing, but she was so verbally evil at times.*

> *On the morning the kids come in, I mean - Leanne who's still here now - will say to me, "I remember the first day I saw you, when I came in and you were ironing the curtains to put them up" and I said, "I know".*

Furthermore, the anger in the second interview was being expressed and not being projected.

> *Um, I worked my backside off and op… you know, set all the unit up, um, went for the interview, passed the interview, got the kids in, um, got Matthew, sort of, really… also which was the intention, in, sorted, out for family, that's what… you know, and then the little girl, Mary, that was always the, sort of, really challenging one, we'd said from the start really she shouldn't be here, she's too… she's not right, she can't live with other children, she's too emotionally mixed up, she can't function in this environment, but they kept, sort of, saying, "Gosh, she's 9, ooh how bad can it be", you know, that, sort of, um.*

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The image we are left with is of an individual who is disappointed with the responses from their family as well as from the work that they do. Furthermore, someone, when feeling contained and less anxious, is able to offer reality-based reparation. Although Janet found the work difficult she was determined to stay, almost no matter what they threw at her, possibly because the work was not mundane and allowed her to make reparation although even this was not wholly gratifying.

Unlike Janet, Jack seemed to have very little input from his parents in terms of guidance. However, like Janet he too wanted to be a better parent than he felt his were. On leaving school Jack drifted in and out of a number of varied jobs but the one that seems to have stayed with him is working on the fairground. He was not able to settle to any particular work and this led me to wonder whether this was linked to the continued pleasure seeking of his youth or that he had not found something that he could engage in? Reminiscent of the time Jack asked to stay on at school there was an aspect of him that recognised he was underachieving and couldn't continue in this vein. On this occasion he asked for help and went to see an Occupational Therapist: '[He] *said to me, the problem that you will always face in life, is that you are always going to be under-employed in jobs that aren't challenging to you*.' Jack found something to challenge him by taking evening classes and completing a degree at university not only as a mature student but in his own mind still as a member of the working class. Jack described both his grandfather and mother as being very clever people. However, he gave his grandfather a rather backhanded compliment when saying that he was reading to better himself he then added that this was also with large amounts of alcohol. However, it was his mother that had an impact on him; particularly her *good social skills* which he felt had helped him in his work. This could denote a means of staying connected to his family:

> *I mean, my grandfather was a great reader. He was a very, very clever man. He was an undercover bookies runner when it was all illegal and he had a shop as a front and he made his money out of illegal betting. But he was a very, very educated man. He used to subscribe to Readers Digest. Read it conscientiously before he used to have his eight pints of Guinness down the Pub. Um… he was a real character. He was very, very bright and me Mum was as well. Me Mum was very, very good in the Pub*

working with people. She had tremendous social skills and she actually took the trouble to introduce herself to all walks of life.

It could also indicate Jack's contempt for his family as they had no connection with the new almost alien field he moved into when he went to university. His description of his first experience of university alludes to his disappointment with his early education:

I was a lad from comprehensive school … I didn't know what a seminar was. I didn't even know what universities were about. I applied to go but I didn't really have a clue what they were about and I remember sitting, probably from the first three seminars thinking, I really don't understand what these people are talking about here. They are talking a different language. They are talking in multi-syllable words that I just didn't have a clue what they meant, and I was thinking well do they practise this. You know, do they practise this to stop other people knowing what they are on about. I just sat there and I just thought well what am I doing here but I wouldn't give up.

However, his disappointment did not stop him wanting to achieve either at university or when he became a residential worker. After training as a social worker Jack initially worked in a secure unit and it was there that he discovered what the work meant for him:

Every day was different. Every day was challenging and it was almost a personal challenge itself. And, believe it or not, even though you are dealing with all the challenging behaviour, there is a lot of job satisfaction if you keep it in the right context.

Not only was the work allowing him to be creative as an individual but it also allowed him to work as part of a team: '*… very rarely would you say one worker is going to make a massive difference,…*' Jack was able to feel good about himself in a way that no previous work had: '*It is a personal challenge and that's why I find it so fulfilling. You're constantly taxing yourself. It's a challenge to yourself*.' It was the personal challenge that allowed Jack to think creatively.

Jack enjoyed dealing with challenging behaviour because he was putting things in order*: 'And I still enjoy walking into challenging behaviour when the whole Unit's upside down and I'm walking in and saying "No, this isn't happening" and putting the boundaries in.*' Although saying he needs professional help, the sense of positive feelings he got from this would indicate that it was when he

had put things right that he felt most satisfied. Jack joked that, as a manager he was still dealing with challenging behaviour: '… *as opposed to working with youngsters with challenging behaviours, you're working with staff with challenging behaviour.*' In addition to his need to put things right was his need to be the, '…*best I can be,*' whether this was talking about himself as a residential child care worker or as a manager. However, through all this the most satisfying time was when he got a chance to show that he could be a good father by spending quality time with the young people:

> *And I had one of the kids sitting with me for hours and I loved it. Because, why I come into the work, that's what made me want to start with the work and I've drifted along and I've drifted into management and progressed to where I am, but I still get a real kick out of individual work with kids and working with groups of kids.*

One imagines that in his position that such an occurrence is likely to be quite rare, which may explain the significance of it and its slightly romanticised presentation. Jack was describing an event that was missing from his own life because his own father never spent time with him, '... *both my mother and father were working a lot of hours behind the bar.*'

Ann's presents differently to the preceding four participants in that no criticism of her family was made through her narrative. Also, one would not consider that she was defended as she seemed relaxed, smiled a lot and laughed during the interview. She started by saying she was brought up in a happy family home with both her parents. However, any time she alluded to something that was not quite perfect she veered away from it leaving unfinished words. She hinted at tensions between her sisters and her father not being happy with her work but these were swept away so as not to damage the happy family image, '*I was a bit like the negotiator between the two because they didn't particularly get on that well sometimes um, but I always… and we are very close now.*' It was only in the return interview that it transpired that her marriage was not everything she had hoped it would be as it ended shortly after the first visit.

Ann idealised her mother presenting a 'super-mum', always there for her, although she was working at night. There was a Peter Pan like quality when talking about Father Christmas. By re-enacting the making of the Christmas

sack for her daughter she was keeping the story of magic going: 'In the child's unconscious the mother is imbued with magic powers, for all the goodness springs from her breast.' (Klein, 1998, p.413) Ann tried to replicate this in her work and was very disappointed when the young people didn't respond as she wished:

> *And that's the one thing that I found difficult working with young people because they already knew, you know, 'well this is what I want, and, you know, not about, "this is what I'd like Father Christmas to buy me."*

Ann tried imitating her mother by going in at weekend to spend more time with the young people, as talking to them in her role as caterer was not enough. However, she had explained these visits as spending time with her mother:

> *.. I used to come over as I say, like the odd weekend or whatever to see me mum and pop in and whatever and um, and I know there's, you know, you get more chance really to have a chat with them because you're not, you're out of that sort of kitchen area, sort of thing.*

There was a naivety in her thinking about why the young people were in care, '… *mostly because of the way that they'd been brought up and their parents, really, had had a lot to do with why they were there…*' as she compares them to herself and her own childhood. At no point in the narrative did Ann think about the emotional problems of the children and young people she had worked with. She addressed the behavioural difficulties and the violence she had experienced but there was no thinking about the emotional content of the work. Her lack of training or the organizational wish not to take into account the emotional problems of the young people was very evident when she talked about the young people not wanting to take on the goodness that she has given:

> *… but there are other young people that don't want to succeed. And whatever you do and however much time and effort and whatever you put in, I think they'll always, you know, they just want to fail.*

This seemed to be considered as an attack on her abilities rather than as any thought about the level of damage that these young people may have experienced.

When considering why Ann had left her chosen career in catering she was not sure if she left because she was disappointed with the reality of the work or because she wanted to return home:

It was always something I wanted to do, um, so I studied hard for three years and went on all the work experiences.

Um, it was in Brighton I went off to work and then I came back home. Whether it was because I just wanted to be back home, I don't know, but I came back home.

Ann described being frustrated after she had worked hard to assist a young woman who doesn't follow through:

I mean, the sad thing was, was that when she did leave, she left, um, she became sixteen and she left and the sad thing was that she didn't really take that on board. Um, I think she just went back to where she came from.

There was no thought about the parallels to her own life, only frustration and anger because of all the work she had done for her. Ann's father is said to ask why she does it when she complains about the stress, paralleling her own feelings about this young woman.

Seeing that she makes a difference seemed to be very important to Ann and the idea that the difference may not appear till later on was not considered. She repeatedly talked about young people not wanting to succeed. She believed that they consciously chose to fail and found this frustrating. This could indicate that Ann was projecting her own sense of failure on to the young people because she can't seem to motivate them hence she is unable to achieve the act of reparation. There was a sense that failure and difficulties are intolerable for Ann to think about, even though she acknowledged them, which could indicate that her sense of failure was somehow positively identified with the young people:

Um, and there were some really positive times and there were also some really terrible times. I can always remember the positive experience there, um, of working with young people there and thinking, well, I've made a difference.

Throughout the interview there was no sense that she connected to the young people except for their names and the positive feelings she could get from the work. The young people were kept at a distance almost as if there was a fear

that if they get too close they would intrude on her life and shatter the happy family she had.

During the interview with Ann I found that I was far more interactive with her whilst at the same time I was uneasy about what she was saying. After the interview I wondered why I had interacted with her far more than with the other two participants. Whilst I had a sense that it was all too good to be true I had been swept along into this magical wonder world where all is well and there are Christmases that are perfect. I had to believe this picture I was being painted and yet I was uneasy. It was so strong that I hadn't even followed up when she had talked about the young people not wanting to succeed and yet this would have been very interesting to ask what she had meant.

Ann talked about giving a little something to the young people. She stated she enjoyed the work and when questioning herself as to why she does it, when it is stressful, she reminded herself it was to give something that they didn't have. However, her disappointment within herself seemed to get in the way of the children feeling that they were getting enough from her and hence she didn't get enough back. As we know reparation is based on the feelings of guilt that some damage has been done and the wish to make restitution to the loved object. The need to make reparation seemed to be enacted at home as well as at work, with the family continuing to create something that is about being together. There was a hint in her return interview that this may be something that she did to make it all alright with her mother as she admitted that she had a better relationship with her father than with her mother. So it would seem that for Ann there is also a disappointed internal parental figure, one that does not seem to be satisfied by her continued attempts to be or do good.

Summary

In the previous chapter the application of Bourdieusian theory enabled the understanding of how the familial attitudes and social space occupied by the participants' families limited the choices for their employment. However, through the examination of their disappointment we have been able to get an impression of the inner worlds of these participants and the internal parental figures that occupy them, which seem to be disappointed or disapproving. Tina

was able to find a place where she could be creative and fit in with the women in her family as well as being of service. Tom found himself strong male figures to replace the fragile males until he could himself become strong. For Jack there was an absent father but an able mother so he became even more able and he himself became the present father figure. Janet though, still was dealing with the disappointed mother but had hope that gaining a university degree would appease her. Ann is unlike all the others in that she had created a world where bad things were denied thus protecting her from having to address them. Denial is one of the most primitive defences that is employed when feeling persecuted in phantasy at which point the persecutory object may be idealized, much in the way that Ann has idealized her mother. (Segal, 1988, p.27)

Teasing out the interrelationship between the sociological and psychological characteristics of disappointment for each participant is complicated and identifying which aspects should be given more weight difficult. However, what has been evident is that all the participants had the capacity to take positive action in making changes to their lives rather than merely drifting or becoming depressed. These actions led them into the work, which then provided them with the possibility of satisfaction.

Thinking psychoanalytically about the idea of disappointment has led to some additional understanding of why these participants remained in this work, to which the above narrative material relates. Chapter 12 will develop the discussion further through exploring how the combination of psychosocial factors, identified here and in the previous chapter, continue to impact on their attitudes towards and feelings for the work as they continue their careers in the residential field.

Chapter 11: Why do people become residential child care workers? Relating to absent parents

The previous two chapters, though starting with the participants' disappointment, identified how the individuals' upbringing limited the choices they had initially made. This discussion shows that in order for the participants to take up opportunities not generally acceptable they had to either identify a different source of self-worth, different from that which was acceptable within the family background, or they had to add capital (for example that of educational achievement) that wasn't already present in their background formation. Furthermore, by utilising psychoanalytical theory I was able to identify that for the participants there were either disappointed or disapproving real or internal parental figures that impacted on their ability to be satisfied with their lives.

Although the participants presented in this chapter were also disappointed with aspects of their lives or work situations this was not the stimulus which had led to them entering the work. The common theme for these participants was linked to absent or unavailable parent/s and how these past experiences impacted on their relationships in the present and their views of themselves.

Interpreting the narratives through the perspectives of Bourdieusian and psychoanalytic theory enables one to understand those circumstances and dispositions of the participants that were most significant in determining their entry to this work.

Looking for something to do

There were four participants who started working in the sector at a time when they were looking for something to do. These were Jack, Helen, James and Gopal. Jack and Helen have very different backgrounds, Jack's, is very working class and from what Helen says about her schooling, '*I went to a day girls' school in Worcester,*' she seems likely to be middle class. The similarity is that both returned to education as mature students and joined the residential sector on graduating. After finishing university Jack had wanted to go into advertising

'*I would like to work in advertising. For no other reason than it was big money.*'
And for Helen it was a chance meeting that gave her a direction:

> *As I was coming to my final year in university, I met somebody who knew somebody at (Home 3), and we met up, talked one evening, and I thought, I so badly want to go and work there.*

From after the death of her father, when Helen was seven years old, she seems to have had a fairly turbulent experience of adult males in her life. The first of these males was her step-father whom she describes as, violent: '*My mother re-married when we were nine and that was an extremely difficult relationship. There was some violence and massive rows, and um he left eventually when I was fifteen.*'

At the age of 18 she left home and went to live with the man she married in her early twenties. Helen was emotionally bullied in this relationship and decided she needed to leave before she '*became nothing.*' She left with only the items that were important to her, her clothes and her car and in her words, '*I started all over again.*' Two years later she re-married and had two children. Helen's first husband was of the same social class as her and had a career but was abusive. Her second husband was from a working class background:

> *I switched, I think, in my choice of men, from somebody who on the surface was very intelligent, good career, good salary, to somebody who was, um, working class, very predictable, to the point of being boring*

She was raised to be, '*…incredibly independent…*' so it is not surprising that when she married outside of her social class that she became, '*…the person who initiated any changes, anything that happened.*' It is also likely that she was better educated than someone from a working class background. When her eldest child was three she left her husband and took on a pub, as she needed a job with accommodation. She remained there for five years until she went bankrupt and had to start over for the third time. At this point she decided that she needed some stability so found a house to rent and got a job. The loss of income did not impact on Helen's educational achievements or her middle class upbringing. Bourdieu (1984) explains that the downward movement from one trajectory to another will not necessitate the loss of inherited capital. It is

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likely that due to this inherited habitus and capital an individual from the middle class will find a way to once again move back up. (Bourdieu, 1984, p.109-110) Helen does this when she returns to university and gains employment.

On completing her degree Helen had no idea what she wanted to do. She met someone who had a contact at Home 3 and she liked the sound of what they were doing. She got in touch via a board member and asked to look around. She instantly liked the place and was offered 20 hours per week which she accepted. When a permeant post become available she applied and was successful, enabling her to have financial security: '*So yeah, being able to go out and buy clothes and perfume, and go and have my hair cut in a proper hairdressers, have my nails done.*'

During Helen's first interview I had the feeling of 'holding back', not wanting to get involved and there was something that was not being said. In the second interview it became clear that the sadness of her life was just below the surface and unresolved. Once she started to cry about the loss of her father she opened up and talked more freely. However, her story was about survival and there seemed to be little joy. It was surprising that I had not picked up on the pain she was still in over her father's death, but then realised that this was what had been suppressed by her. I had probably unconsciously registered her deep reluctance to talk about it. Within two years of this death her mother marries into an abusive relationship and she is separated from her twin brother. She recalled being ill in her early teens and believed this was really so she could stay at home and look after her mother. However, one imagines that the step-father would have been out at work during the day therefore, this could also have been a way of Helen seeking nurture for herself.

Helen did not mention any memories of her birth father, only his death in mid-December. She did however talk about her mother's grief preventing her taking care of Helen and her brother. When talking of her and her brother's exclusion from the funeral she suggests it was because, '… *children didn't have feelings like that.*' Soon after, her brother was also sent away to boarding school. Helen still doesn't really celebrate Christmas, even after the birth of her own children.

From her narrative and the emotional nearness of these past events it appeared that Helen carried the painful impact of these early experiences of childhood and being parented.

Helen's partnership relationships were also difficult. Her first partner was abusive and her second was '*only*' the father of her two children. Consequently, Helen was fearful of being damaged if she remained in a relationship, even though she said she thought she would remain married. Her ambivalence towards relationships is reflected in her relationship with her mother, which had been protective or antagonistic from her teens onward. The antagonism initially directed to her step-father is then directed to her mother when he leaves '… *my mother and I started falling out quite badly*.' Helen suggested that her poor relationship with her mother is because of a clash, '*I think most of it was down to two very strong women living together*.' The relationship improved only when she herself became a mother. It was when she talked of coming from a line of single mothers that she mentioned that her mother had died two years previously. She had no doubt about her capacity as a single mother, '*I come from a long line of single mums*.' However, she was angry that she had to carry the responsibility of parenting on her own.

The job met a number of needs, regular payment, doing something she enjoyed and there was a sense that she was being looked after. Helen believed that her life-experiences made her very suited to the work and enabled her to, in some way, empathise with the children she worked with. However, it is clear that she had not come to terms with some of her own losses. As there is no evidence of her actual work in the interview, one wonders whether there was an emotional connection to the children she worked with or if this was too painful for her as she would have to be connected to her own emotional state. Helen left her job one year after the interview and though talking about her sons I am left wondering if the work was too much for her; '*You know that's part of what you do, but it was just like, you went to bed with responsibility, you woke up with it, and it never left you*.'

Like Helen, James was raised by a single mother but in contrast he may have internalised a positive sense of two parents, mother and father, who worked together as a parental couple. The key influence for him appeared to be his grandparents, with whom he lived. James was disappointed with his work life because it gave him little time to spend at home. It was this that led to him beings at a crossroads in his life, as he wanted a career that would fit in with his expectations of being financially comfortable but gave him some time with his young family. James linked an experience of looking after a friend's child to his thoughts of becoming a residential child care worker:

We'd recently had a friend of ours' son whom was slightly delinquent, um, from Buckinghamshire where we used to live, had come up and stayed with us, um, and it was supposed to be for a period of about two weeks, which ended up to be about four months. Um, and I saw a huge difference in him whilst he was living with us. Um, I mean when he first came, he was… because he lived with his mother on his own, he couldn't really relate to men, he was quite unboundaried, um, quite aggressive, err, verbally and physically.

James then describes in some detail a turning point in his relationship with the boy that had an impact on both of them:

I mean it came to a head one day where he hadn't done what he was supposed to have done and he came out with me to go to the cash-and-carry and I started having a go at him in the car, gently but just niggling him, nagging him. Err, we got to the cash and carry, did what we had to do and we were driving back and I continued niggling and nagging him, nipping him basically, um, and when we got back to my pub, he stormed out the car, slamming the doors and I followed him, "You're not to do that, you're not to slam doors."

He then went into the pub and slammed the door and I went, "This is my pub, and you don't slam my doors." And I followed him all the way up into the flat, um, really pushing him, goading him, and he just suddenly broke and had floods of tears and he just sat there and held me. You know, the full hug and I mean I could actually feel my shirt getting wetter and wetter on my shoulder and it was not only just my shoulder, it was going down my back, there was so much coming out. And he just wept and wept for about an hour and a half. And when we were talking about it later, after he'd calmed himself down, and he went to sleep for about three hours and then later on he came and found me, and he was very upset and he thought he'd spoilt our friendship and everything else. And we sat down and we talked about it for about two hours and it turned out it… that a lot of the tears wasn't about what I'd done to him, it was just I had allowed

him to get rid of everything that had been going on for him since he was a little boy and he had just poured it all out in one hit and he hadn't ever done that before.

He… you know, he went… he talks to us about stuff that had happened to him, about the amount of violence that his mother used to suffer from his father, um, the amount of violence that he had suffered from when he was small. Um, you know, he just went on and on and on and on, and I just saw a totally different person afterwards and it was incredible the change in him afterwards, after he had expunged all this pain.

James demonstrated his understanding of holding the boundary so that the boy felt safe. He then linked his own experience of when his own boundary was impinged:

Um, and I suppose so that was partly it, um, and then I mean my own life experience was that I was brought up by my mother, I was a… I mean I come from very, sort of, middle class background. Um, my grandfather was quite a large fish in a very small pond in, you know, his home town. Um, I went to boarding school. I've always been a, sort of, more of a… I'm a big softy, I mean I'm soft hearted twit sometimes but, you know, I'm a fool to myself.

Um, but I'd also suffered a form, a very mild form of abuse, when I was younger, um, when I was about 8 or 9, which took me some time to get through myself, um, and work it through.

In his narrative above James seems to be so moved by this boy because he too was raised by a single mother and he also makes the connection with the abuse being experienced. It is possible that this incident was so significant for him, it was the one he choose to relate, because this is where he first makes the emotional connection between the children in care's experiences and his own, which is then one of the things that motivates or inspires his work. James applied and though not offered a full-time post, as he lacked experience, he was invited to join their locum pool. He was still selling the pub and wasn't sure if he was capable of doing the work:

... in actual fact that suited me down to the ground, because you're just going to give me an experience of something I don't know without a huge commitment, um, but also at the time, I was in the pub.

After working as a locum for 18 months the then Director asked him to come in for a formal interview as they wanted to offer him a permanent job. Initially it was part-time permanent plus the shifts he was covering till he pointed out that;

I said, "And for the twenty five hours that you're paying me over the part time, you're going to be paying me a huge rate of money", because the locum rate's obviously much higher than.

He got the position on a regular salary and has worked there ever since. This would suggest there must have been something else that he got from the work as he enabled them to pay him less.

There was a level of anxiety in the interview which I posit was connected to being good enough. He was very clear that he came into the work with no experience and though he recognised that he had developed and learnt a lot there was still a wish for affirmation. James told me in detail the numbers of hours he worked and the different roles he had adopted as a locum:

I think I was putting more hours in than full time staff at times, some times through the year,

I'd started like a cooking club for the lads, one of the evenings, so they could experience cooking and eating different food from different cultures and… which was proving to be very popular

James also told me about the training he had received via the Tavistock Clinic, wanting me to know he held it in high regard, '…*we still talk about it at meetings now.*' He then skirted over the training provided by the psychotherapist working with the team as I did not know her. I was left wondering if this was because he knew that I was studying there and he was then connected to me in some way and I would then find it difficult to tell him he wasn't good enough.

His anxiety about being good enough also came across in the final statement of the first interview when he described that the Director was unsure of him at first he is much happier with him now;

And, you know, I think I've also built up, you know, a lot of trust from the team members that I work with and, you know, the Director, I know he had concerns when I first started, err, but over a period of time, he's seen how I'm doing and, um… and he again confirms that what I'm doing is the right way.

Although the anxiety had not stopped him from continuing to develop but it still concerned him as he then ran out of anything to say, '*I can't think of anything more to say.*'

James was generally very open, talking about his childhood, even telling me about his experience of having been molested as a boy, as described above. It was more significant, in relation to James and his work, than his early family life although he tried to diminish it. James felt that he had, '…*a fantastic mother and had a fantastic grandfather who was my role model if you like.*', but he clearly missed having a father or alternatively an adult male acting as a father-figure in whom he could confide, especially as he was sent off to boarding school. He came into the work when he was looking for a change in his life so he could be more present for his own children as the previous work had meant long hours away from them. The experience of looking after the friend's son made him feel good about his abilities as a parent, enabling him to consider that he could do this work. Possibly this experience was an opportunity for making reparation, ' … *um, and after this experience with Will, I thought hmm yeah, it sounds… it feels good and it felt nice, I liked that, I enjoyed that. Feels good gives me a feeling of doing something.*'

James was quite clear that he wanted to be a father figure for the young people, '... *there was a feeling that I wanted to be, um, I've always said… the way I put it is to be the person that I never had.*' Having connected his own early experiences, initially with Tim and later with the young people he worked with, James was able to provide the care and a possible father-son relationship that he wished he had had by making use of the good-enough internal objects and the parental capacity he has inside of him.

It is not just Helen and James who talked about their own absent fathers, Gopal also mentioned them. In the next chapter we will see if the work enabled James and Gopal to be present father figures for the young people, physically and emotionally; has it provided them with the emotional holding space that they both wanted?

Gopal also comes from a middle class background and although he qualified as a social worker, like James and Tina he had not pursued additional academic qualifications. Like Helen and James he thought about absent fathers as his father was not home much; '*Um and the fact that my dad err wasn't around a*

lot' and later, '*But I suppose it.... I mean it's all.... it's also um absence in terms of being present err in terms of feeling emotionally held or whatever.'* They are of course working with children separated from their families added to the fact that their own fathers were physically absent.

Gopal explains that he had been raised in what he terms a '… *quite well off…'* family enabling his mother to stay at home and raise him and his siblings until he was 16:

> *Um so I had a.... quite a sheltered, you know.... my dad became, we became quite well off, because of my dad's, you know, um successful career in accounts, money or whatever. He was a sort of financial director for quite a big company in Oxford, when he retired. And he retired early because he was quite wealthy.*

Even though there is no information about his father's life before coming to England one can assume that the family were fairly well off as he went to England when he was, '*... doing a year out.'* Furthermore, when Gopal describes his experience of visiting his father's family in India their primary concerns for his life were based around success, '*... lots of connotations about ladders and graphs about how to get to the top of things, you know, academically or um work wise or whatever.'* Kumar (1985) explains the importance of education and success within the Indian society, 'Indeed, competitiveness is a salient feature of Indian education, and one way to measure the success of the competitive ethic in education is to apply it in the context of elite roles.' (Kumar,1985, p.1280) Success and being the best were part of Gopal's family culture but he later kicks against this with a period of being delinquent and success had a lesser value:

> *… and had a bit of a kind of delinquent time, meeting some sort of bad lads in the village where we moved down to, which is up near Huntingdon, just north of here. And sort of smoking and all but.... and err drinking and things. But never really getting caught and all this, you know, and putting enough to like sort of schoolwork type things, to.... to do alright. Um and kind of breezed through O Levels and stuff, I did really well at all that stuff.*

> *Um and then I think err maybe hit my…. a bit of my adolescence, sticking my fingers up.... and I got into the sixth form thinking I was probably, you know, God's gift to education or whatever and then I could sort of put the brakes on a little bit and got into wine and women and [laughter] so maybe not so much into my studies in..*

This could have been due to his parents move leading him to leave the grammar school and attend a comprehensive one, plus the loss of his friends or as a reaction to his mother, whom he describes as rather strict:

And my mum was the authoritarian, I think quite harsh. Her.... her family were um salv.... her parents were salvation army, and I don't know much about that um strand of religion, but I know they're quite disciplinarian. And I think, you know.... I don't.... I don't think I was sort of in any way err kind of physically over chastised or anything like that, but I think there was.... there was a harshness sometimes in our family that.... that um.... and combined with err maybe a lack of talking at times, um it left some spaces in my um.... in my make up as a.... as I became an adult.

Although he talked about his adolescent rebellion, or one could say destructive/aggressive and potentially self-destructive behaviour, he was embarrassed by it and often laughed through his embarrassment.

Gopal: *And I'd drive past this field and we were.... we were in.... in the summer evenings, inside a haystack, smoking. A massive hay.. smoking fags.*
Lydia: *Inside it??'*
Gopal: *Yeah literally kind of get down in.... I mean what [laughter] and pushing cows over as well. Well cows.... cows fall.... when cows sleep, it's like you can push them and they go over. And they kind of wake up just as they're about to hit the ground. It's called cow poking [laughter].*

Gopal was also disappointed with his life with the turning point for him being when he failed his second year at university and he had to decide what he was going to do with his life:

And when I got umm.... when I had to leave the college course for failing, because I failed my exams, I actually said to the err tutor, I'll go back.... because I live in Oxford, I was at Birmingham at college, I'll go back to Oxford or near Oxford and get a job as a computer programmer or something, because there's lots of little computer companies.

Gopal stopped perusing his academic life and a career involving mathematics, by not re-sitting his exams, not because he was not capable but rather he was not enjoying it;

I think I kind of had decided that being an academic mathematician or certainly doing maths at that standard, there was nothing in here, I didn't enjoy it at all. I didn't like the people on the course. I didn't go to the library, I just went to the bar.

He applied for a job related to computing but didn't get it, however, during the previous '*four or five*' summers he had worked on a summer play scheme and enjoyed this work so returned. That summer a friend showed him the in-house magazine, '*And it had a temporary part time residential child care officer position at a place that was um an all year round respite centre, joined on to a special needs school in Oxford.*' Gopal got the post and has since trained as a social worker. Although both he and his mother are social workers he differentiates his work from his mother's, '*... although she did field social work, so it's quite different from the sort of stuff we do here.*'

The theme of absent male adults that he could have talked to about his feelings is quite strong as he repeated it; '*But I guessed I missed.... from that, I missed out on some contact with an adult male figure.*' Gopal's father even when physically present is described as being emotionally absent and then Gopal too becomes a physically absent father. Through his work though, he may have been able to be more physically present, '*I do try and do things just with him, just as dad and son*', and an emotionally containing parent by making time for his first son. He recognised that he makes use of his own experiences in his work. He connected this to the work they do with the young men, all of whom were experiencing absent fathers as they were away from home. Gopal verbalises this about the service:

> *You know, there are lots of sons here that have absent fathers, I mean, absent fathers for our resident group are quite, you know, is a significant thing, especially for a few of them.*

And then later on about himself; '*I've talked a bit about my experience of being parented, where I had um a dad that was very absent.... he was absent because of his work.*' He clearly enjoyed being a parent and was proud of the fact that he had worked hard to maintain contact with his first son even though they never lived together. Gopal had a strong wish to be a good enough parent at home, even being a stay at home father, and to offer good enough care to the young people;

> *And um err I suppose.... and in the joy of having a, you know, a young baby that is attaching to me and me with him, the other.... you know the joy and all that kind of stuff, and me being available and that kind of stuff. I would.... if we could afford it, I'd wanna be a househusband.*

Gopal has had time and support to think about his own childhood and how this had influence his remaining in the work. He talked about the importance of supervision and of the staff support group in helping him think. He was honest about his shortcomings and the benefits he had gained from working within a therapeutic environment. He was happy to talk about himself as an intelligent and academic individual but didn't mention his work with the young people in any detail. However, he did verbalise that he was still not that confident in his ability to work with these young people:

I think I'm getting more comfortable with it and getting better at it, and perhaps better at talking to young people about what's going on. But I think that's.... it's always been a challenge and it will always.... it's always a challenge. Um I think I'm becoming more articulate and so on, but it's something that I didn't have that much access to myself as a young person.

Although not confident his capacity to remain indicates an inner strength to keep trying. Connecting this with the fact that this was something he had little access to as a young person and I am left wondering if there was some envy of the talk treatment available for the young people.

I always had this thing about um err therapists sort of.... and it wasn't.... it wasn't so much of this stuff like you get in America, that everyone's got therapists. That wasn't about so much but I did have a sense of um, you know, people that could talk about things that were difficult, rather than solving a really difficult maths problem.

He makes what could be seen as a throw away comment, '*If only I'd been a great talker about feelings when I was younger, I could be a shit hot computer programmer, but there.*' As this follows him talking about how difficult he finds the talking side of the work there is a sense that maybe he is resentful of having to get the 'therapy' he needed through his work. Gopal gained satisfaction from the work but mentioned that the pay was not good and he was in debt due to buying a home for his family. This ambivalence would indicate that at times he felt he lost out not having a big job like his father, all because there had been unsatisfactory communication within his family. Yet his second choice of profession, one based on talking, would indicate a wish to do better both for himself and his own children. He recognised that he was in some way trying to be different from his parents, '*But I think I may have sought to over compensate*

it for by getting into this sort of work.' However, his lack of confidence in his abilities to communicate with the young people at work was not reflected in his capacity as a father. One then wonders whether being a father himself had made reparation at work less important. However, he stated that he would remain working at Home 2 for the foreseeable future.

Both Gopal and Tina talked of experiencing racial discrimination in their past. Tina's being a personal attack when she worked in the housing department, '*I think that's the biggest, biggest or the hardest racial attack I've ever had on me.*' and Gopal talked a little about his parents' experience of racial discrimination and of how he was initially treated as, '… *this slightly 'poshly' spoken slightly brown boy ..*', when he first moved into Oxfordshire but nothing else. I would suggest that the different experiences were down to their social class and work situations with Tina working directly with members of the public. However, neither spoke about what it is like for them now living and working in a rural community. When asked directly Tina stated, '*Well my husband is white and I am just so bossy it is not a problem.*'

Summary

Gopal is the only member of this group that had any connection with the work before he joined but once there the work gave them all something that was missing in their lives. Helen, Gopal and James talked about absent fathers and as they work with children separated from their families one has to consider if it is not simply their own lives but also the nature of their work that has brought these thoughts to the forefront for them. Jack could also be considered as having an absent father as he was busy working behind the bar. The three men took on roles as father figures and all identified the wish to be the sort of fathers they never had. Helen had to work in a partnership situation so was not a single parent, at least at work. The next chapter will explore if they were able to do this or if the work was a constant reminder of their own absent fathers when we look to see if they remain in the work.

Wanted to work in residential child care

Bill is the only participant that went directly into working in residential child care. Whilst looking after his sister's children he decided that this was what he wanted to do so, on returning he applied for a post to work in what was termed a therapeutic home; '*Um, I think that possibly triggered my thinking about being alongside children, wanting children, working with children, um, and I did come back to the UK.*' However, this was not wholly acceptable to his family as it was permissible for the women to go into the caring professions, his sister was a trained nurse, but the men were expected to go to university with a career following their studies: '*I then went to university at 18, um, and did a degree…started a degree in computer science, which I very quickly dropped out of.*' Bill's father was a civil engineer for a Local Authority. Bill's parents were very keen that he went to university at the age of 18, which he did. He went even though he hadn't really wanted to do this, '… *for all the wrong reasons… all my peers went to university and I don't think that I knew I had any other options.*' He dropped out and went to help his eldest sister, then living in Jordan, with her children.

Bill gave only the very basic information about his family background:

> *I have three older siblings, um, and what…was…was brought in a…a family environment with my parents, lots of animals and my three siblings. My oldest sister, who's twelve years older than me, um, was quite an influential person in my early life and she was…she helped…she helped my mum a lot with me when I was, um, 0 to 5. Um, and I think when my mum was at work was quite a key carer for me.*

However, we can ascertain that Bill comes from a middle class background, with his father holding a senior position in Local Government until he retired. His mother stayed at home until he was five when she returned to work as a part-time receptionist at the local hospital. Bill stated that he has no knowledge of his grandparents so we have to assume that his father being well educated is an historical family expectation. The acquired values of professional successes and continued education are of importance to his family. Even though Bill dropped out of university he returned to education to get his Diploma in Social Work and a Masters later on:

Um, I saw many faults with the residential places that I worked in and visited and wanted to have greater input as a professional. Um, hence I…I went to [college] *to study my diploma in social work.*

Like Tom, Bill initially had the opportunities to choose what career path he followed. In fact Tom and Bill come from a similar social class and both had pressure to go to university. Bill's dropping out of university and rejection of his parent's wishes could be considered a rejection of familial expectations but this was short lived. Even though it was Bill's wish to care for children he did not choose to work in a standard children's home. This could be considered as being too far removed from what was acceptable to his family or outside the range of his trajectory of choices. Although working within the residential child care sector Bill chose to work only in establishments that had a high standing within the field. He had only worked in residential schools, the first describing itself as a therapeutic community and ran by '…*quite an eminent psychologist…'* and the second specialising in working with children with autism particularly Asperger's. Once he qualified he quickly progressed up the career structure ensuring that he gained status from the work.

Interestingly there was a sense that he had edited the information, supplying only that which he had come to understand had a bearing on his work-life, '*I think it's led me to have a greater understanding of my own relationships with my family… the dynamics that I'm involved in outside of work and that links within my family.*' He filled me up with insightful thinking about his early life, with little mention of the work with the young people except to say he felt that they should work with them at a younger age, '*Um, lots of the kids we get we get at 9/10, um, and I think ideally we should have at 3 or 4.*' He had stumbled through telling me a lot about himself and his time before he started working at Home 3. It is almost as if after having said it would be a, '*cathartic experience',* he had to think before each sentence. He started to speak in one direction and then changed, almost as if the original thought would be too painful to verbalise or of feeling guilty that he was again getting more from the process then he is able to give; '*Um, and so I think for…for a long time I got an awful lot out of the work, I didn't realise for the first two years what I got out of the work.*'

He later described his placement in a therapeutic adults' prison emphasising the prisoners' wish to have been placed in somewhere like Home 3. I was left wondering if there was something about a lack of value placed on the work that led to this adult affirmation being important:

> *… because working with adults, many of whom spoke about their early childhood in very similar ways to the children we have at the Home 3, um, that really reinforced the importance of early intervention for…for the children,*

Furthermore, having acknowledged how much he had personally got from working at Home 3 was this in some way compensating for his feelings about what he was giving to the children he worked with?

Initially stating that he was raised in a family home with both parents, they were absent in his narrative except when later on when they tried to pull him away from his eldest sister. His perception was that he was raised mainly by this sister who left home when he was aged five. Coincidently his mother returned to work at the same time. However, it is his sister's departure that he associated with his feelings of abandonment, '*I think I experienced it as a loss of, um, of a primary care giver. I can acknowledge that she wasn't my primary care giver but I think she partly fulfilled that role.*' He also linked her departure with the death of her pet rabbits:

> *I'm not sure it's an accurate image but the image in my head was the day before she left home she gave me her rabbits to look after. And I wanted to see if the rabbits liked to play and the next morning she the rabbit was dead. In my head they died the day she left home, I don't think this is the reality but this is the image I had in my head.*

Even though he knew this was not true he held on to this image, suggesting that his feelings of abandonment continued:

> *Actually I know it isn't true as I have spoken to her and she said that isn't what happened but it was very much the image in my head. It took me years to tell her about it.*

> *Well, I told her once, I was either living with her or I'd gone to visit her and I think we just sat and laughed about it and then she told me it isn't actually the timescale in which it had happened, but it was and I think still is the timescale that's in my head. I can justify that it's actually not but that is the image that is left, and that is my association of when she left home.*

When he was 18 he went in search of this missing primary care giver and helped to look after her children, '*Um, and actually moved abroad to live with my sister.*' His parents tried to make him return and go back to university but he stayed with her for 18 months. After talking about his time with his sister abroad and the change in the relationship with his family he got a bit lost.

> *I think recognising a degree of resentment, um, that someone who had been an important person in my early years had left or abandoned me. Um, it sounds pretty melodramatic but, um, I guess that was the sort of feelings that were left. Um… Can you just read the question and start again.*

He carried on talking about his difficulties in making relationships although he wanted to be a parent. He acknowledged how much he initially got from the work, almost as if he was being provided with the children he feared he would not have. However, one of his concerns was that he would struggle with the emotional side once he had his own children. Soon after he had his own child he was promoted to a position where he no longer worked directly with the children, '*I'm glad not to be experiencing the difficulties of the work, not to be in touch with all that emotional work.*'

Bill had made use of the support structures to think about himself and his family, but he didn't seem to have considered why he was in this type of work:

> *Um, I think it also opened a huge number of emotional doors for me, um, using the…our consultant therapist, having reflective spaces, um, having supervision that was based on me more than based on work with children, um, and the impact on myself.*

> *Um, I…I think…yeah, I…I think that that sort of opened a huge numbers of doors for me. Um, I never did go and practice as a social worker…as a statutory social worker, um, and probably never will. Um, I think that the learning about myself, the learning of my life and developing greater understanding of how I'd reached where I am in my life and how I'd reached this point in my career, um, were real challenges for me.*

> *Um, and I think one of the key things that came out of my time at the Home 3, and in particular the MA in Child Care, was assessing the relationship that I'd had with my sister, um, very early on in my life, a lot of which I didn't and still don't particularly remember. Um, but through…through the nature of the work and through the nature of the training that's associated with the work I…I pieced together an awful lot,*

um, and have…I think it's led me to have a greater understanding of my own relationships with my family and with other people, um, the dynamics that I'm involved in outside of work and that links within my family.

Whilst studying for his MA in *Therapeutic Child Care* Bill had a conversation with his mother when he came to realise that his good memories were not accurate; '*And sharing a lot of vivid memories and realising a lot of those good memories weren't accurate, weren't true, didn't happen that time, in that place, with that person.*' Later on in the conversation his mother was worried and distressed that he had told others that she had not been a good enough mother. This anxiety about being 'good enough' seems to be shared by him in his work. When asked to take on the role of team leader he uses the support of fellow students: '*I can remember coming away and thinking, Christ, where do I start with -- great, feedback -- but where do I start with all of this?*'

He remained in the work because: '*I like challenges. Um, I like to be…I like to be pushed and the work certainly emotionally pushed me.*' However, having stated that his mother was not in his mind his primary care giver raises the question of what this meant for how he thought about himself in relation to her. Was he not good enough to be cared for, had he damaged her in some way? As previously stated, his parents were fairly absent from the narrative and he did say that, '*I've become far closer to my parents who traditionally I didn't think I was particularly close to.*' This way of speaking brings to mind the idea of a fairly Victorian attitude with the child being raised by a nanny, although it is his sister that he thinks of as his primary care giver. I suggest that reparation is being made through his work with children. However, this too seems to be quite difficult for Bill. Bill chose to work in establishments where the contact time with the children or young people was limited due to all of them being residential schools. Furthermore, he identified that the work with the children was emotionally draining and he removed himself to more distant positions fairly quickly. He also said that since becoming more senior and moving into managing the training side of the organization he no longer had contact with the children. When asked if he missed the contact he replied:

I miss the relationships but not the intensity. When I see staff playing with the children I wish I could do that but when I think about the emotional intensity of the work I don't miss it.

Summary

Bill was the only participant that actively chose this field from a young age. However, the similarity with the other participants discussed in this chapter is that he too had in his mind an absent parent. Although he initially started down the road acceptable to his family he quickly left and in some ways ran away. He had no experience of the work until he took his first position, but he understood that it would meet his wish to be a parent. His wish to be a father seems to have been a driving force, so has having his own children reduced his need to have contact with the children? Once at Home 3 he appears to greatly benefit from the support systems to reflect on and work through his personal experiences and it would seem enable him to feel good enough to become a parent in his own right. However, he doesn't seem to have enough inside to give both to his own family and to the needy children he worked with so removed himself from the direct work.

Overall summary of this chapter

The themes discussed in this chapter have some similarities with those highlighted in the previous two chapters. In this chapter the focus has been on how these participants relate to their childhood experiences of absent, fragile or demanding parental figures. These experiences had important consequences for the present and a conclusion is the suggestion that these participants have thus internalised parental figures that are absent, fragile, disappointed or disapproving. Furthermore, the exploration of these issues in this chapter shows how even though their entry into the work may have been complex or circuitous, they have arrived in a work role that has provided them with opportunities to make reparation for harm that they may have caused or had been done to them. Through their work these participants have been able to meet an internal need to take on the role of parent thus demonstrating what good parenting is; in contrast to the parenting they feel they received. Thus, whilst helping the children or young people it appears that they are at the same

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time repairing their own internal parental figures. In some cases the motivation to make reparation has been clear but in others it has come to the surface only through what has not been said or what has been alluded to.

Residential child care was not a first choice made that had to be worked towards but rather something some participants came upon at the right time in their lives or as in the case of Bill was identified as meeting a need. Using the work of Bourdieu it was possible to identify that there were familial or societal pressures to take up a route which would confer social and economic status which meant that their initial failures of career left them with feelings of disappointment. For some like James, Bill and Gopal their habitus of origin could have been a hurdle as the status of the work is lowly both in terms of pay and status. However, they became satisfied by the work as it met their emotional and relational needs, this may in fact be considered a form of capital in its own right. Additionally, for those working within Homes 2 and 3 psychoanalytical theory is one of the resources that the participants had access to, which they were able to use to make sense of their own lives. This then became one aspect of what could be thought of as *emotional capital*. Gaining emotional capital and its consequences, a better understanding of oneself, is likely to have compensated them for the lack of economic gain and status. Furthermore, working within the therapeutic milieu they will have also gained cultural and moral capital. For Helen there was a gain in income and stability.

All the participants identified enjoying the work, but is this enough? There are many quotes that praise the act of giving from Mother Teresa to Bill Gates but one that reflects the importance of giving over the importance of financial gain is from Kahlil Gibran 'You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give'. (Gibran, 1991, p.26) From my own experience of the work and comments from some of the participants it is being part of a process of change that has its rewards.

Although in some cases the reasons the participants have remained in the sector have been addressed, the next chapter will examine this in more detail. It will examine whether the work offers opportunities for the emotional

authenticity that had previously been missing thus enabling reparation to be made. It will also examine whether working in a low status, low paid field enabled participants to gain new or in some way regain some of the capital they lost by entering the work.

Chapter 12: Staying or leaving?

The previous four chapters have presented how and why people became residential child care workers. It was possible to identify that for many of the participants there was someone who introduced them to the work. However, it became clear that rather than simply follow the routes they took into the work, it is more illuminating to explore how the work connects with the individuals' dispositions. Furthermore, prior to entering the work the participants of the LS group had experienced disappointments in their work or personal development leading them to look for something that would be more satisfying. The use of both Bourdieu's and psychoanalytical theories explain both the social and psychological reasons for their disappointments. Having then entered the work of residential child care this chapter will examine why people have remained in the work. As three have left the field since this study started it will consider the possible reasons for their departure and make comparisons with those who have remained. Both conscious and unconscious reasons why people have remained will be explored whilst examining the connections between the individuals' habitus and those of the organizations. It will look at what senior managers of Homes 1, 2 and 3 have said about their approach to staff support and supervision to see how this relates to the responses of the participants. It will also examine the participants' place within the field and to what extent their positions have enabled them to gain social or cultural capital.
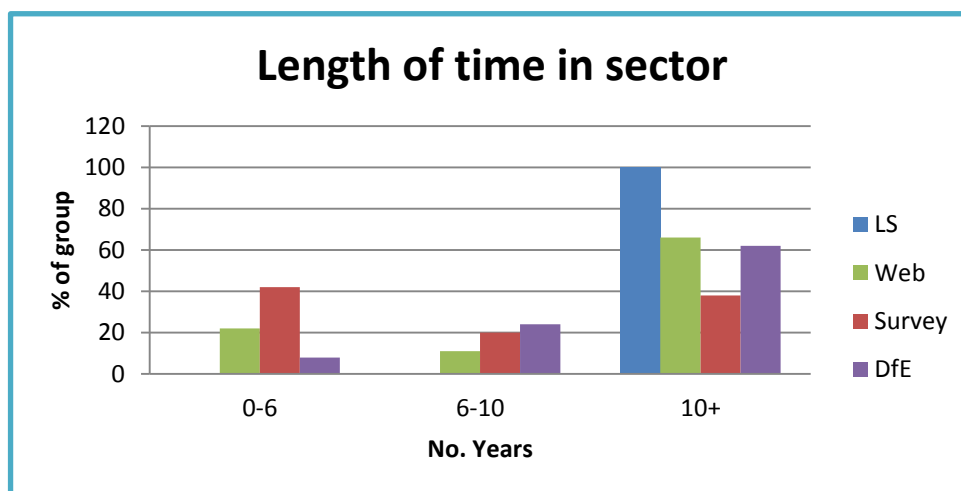
Length of service

Figure 3 (Copy)[1]

Figure 3 in Chapter 4, identifies that the length of service of the LS participants is longer than both the Web group and the National Survey of Care Workers (Skills for Care, 2007) however it is comparable with the findings of Berridge et al (2012). The findings concurs with both Sinclair and Gibbs' (1998) book and the Berridge et al (2012) report for the DfE in that a greater percentage of staff had been working in residential child care for six years. However, there is concern regarding high turn-over of staff. A number of authors including: Colton and Roberts (2007); Eborall (2005); Brannen et al (2007) and Government reports from the DfE (2012) have written about these concerns. The Children's Workforce Development Council report of 2010 reported that there were problems of staff recruitment and retention with rates rising from the 2001 figures. The statutory sector reported a much bigger problem in both areas than either the private or voluntary sector. (CWDC, 2010, p.29-30) One has to then ask why this group of staff have remained for as long as they have, particularly as the shortest time in their current establishment is six years.

In Figure 14, below, one can see that within the LS group the range of years of service is between James's 12 years and Jack's 26 years. Jack had the longest period of service across both groups. Figure 15 demonstrates that the longest serving worker in the Web group was Mike with 25 years, who started when he was 18 years old but took some time away from the sector.
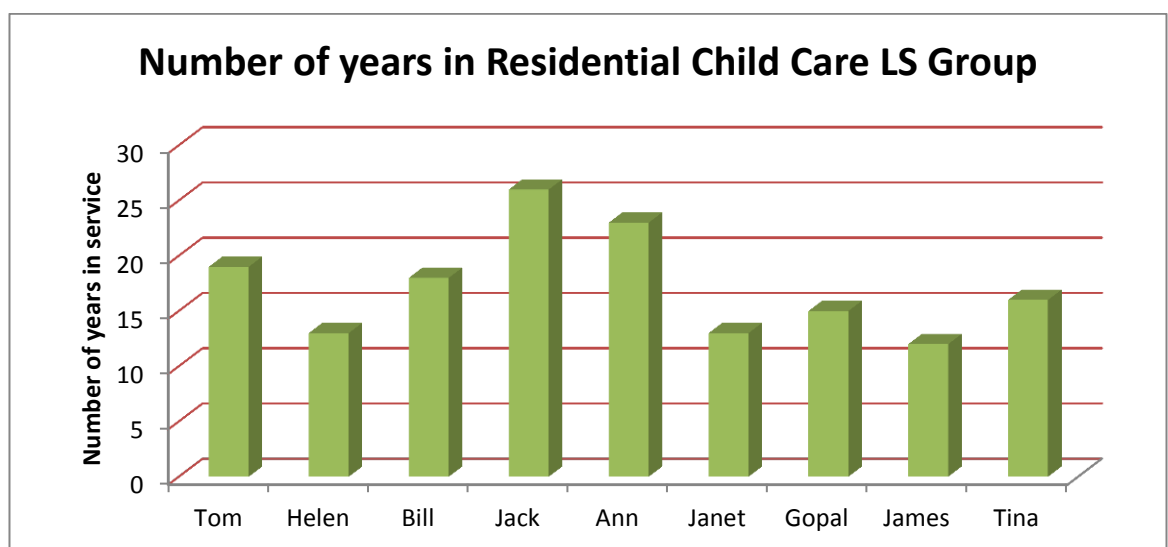

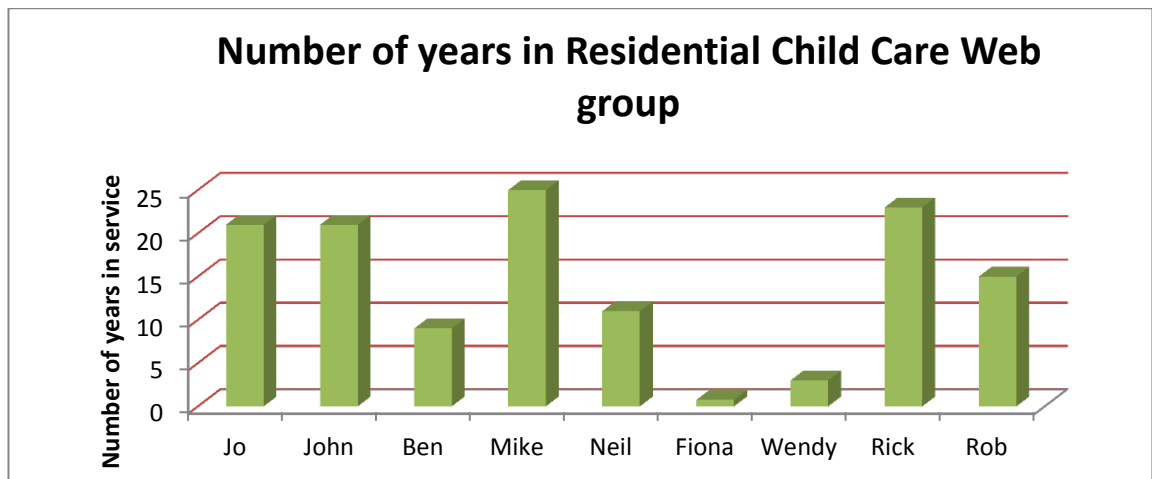**Figure 14: Number of years in residential child care LS Group**

Figure 15: Number of years in residential child care Web group

Both groups of participants state they enjoy their work and generally seem to be supported in their work. In the LS group seven out of the nine participants talked of being supported by the structures in their organizations. Only Janet talked of her experience of being unsupported and Jack only talked of how he supports the staff that he manages. All but one of the Web participants received regular supervision. Furthermore, we can assume that the participants are connected to their work hence their wish to participate in this research.

Why have they remained?

To discover why they remain the Web group were asked a specific question[61] about remaining in their current work place. For the LS group I was able identify a number of themes from their narratives. Some of the themes, such as 'Enjoying the work' and 'Working with young people' apply to both groups however some themes such as 'Feel good about self' only really came out in the LS group's narratives. Figures 16 and 17 set out the themes identified for the two groups.

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[61] There were two questions related to this chapter: These were numbers, 7 "Why do you remain now where you are now?" and 9 "What have you found most enjoyable?"
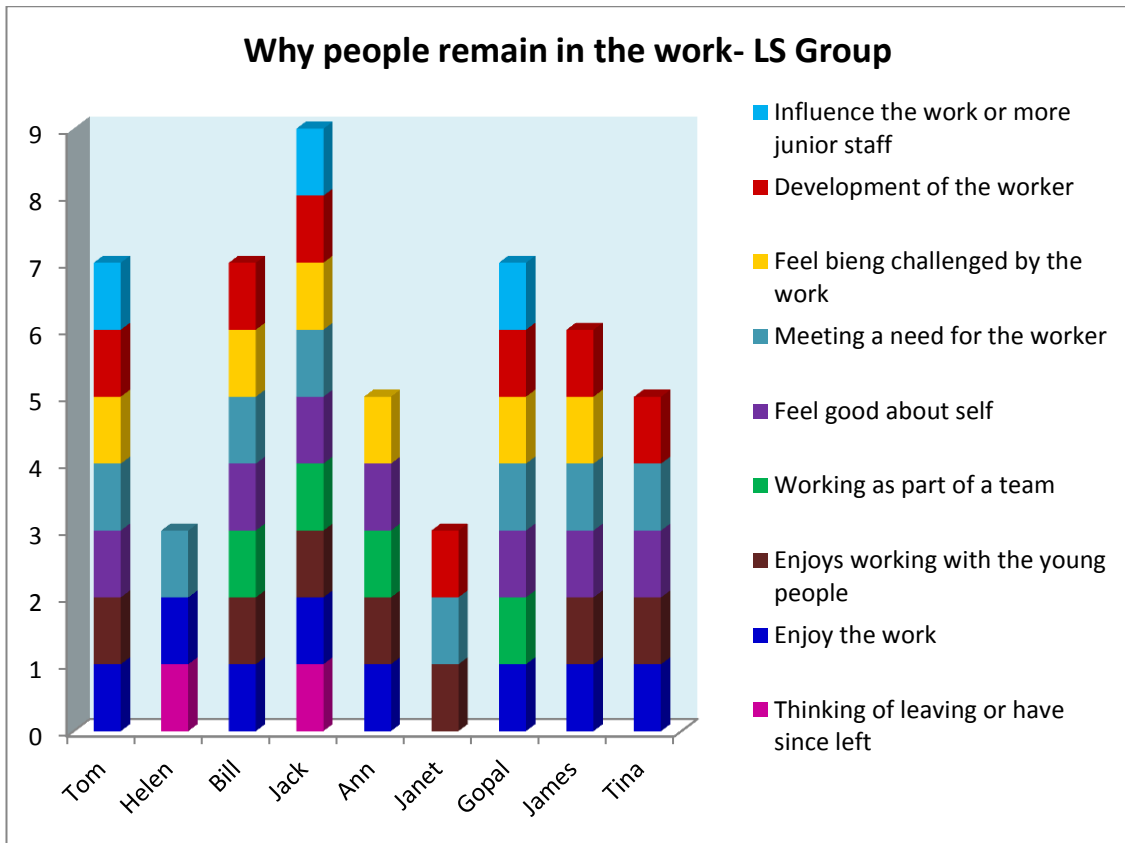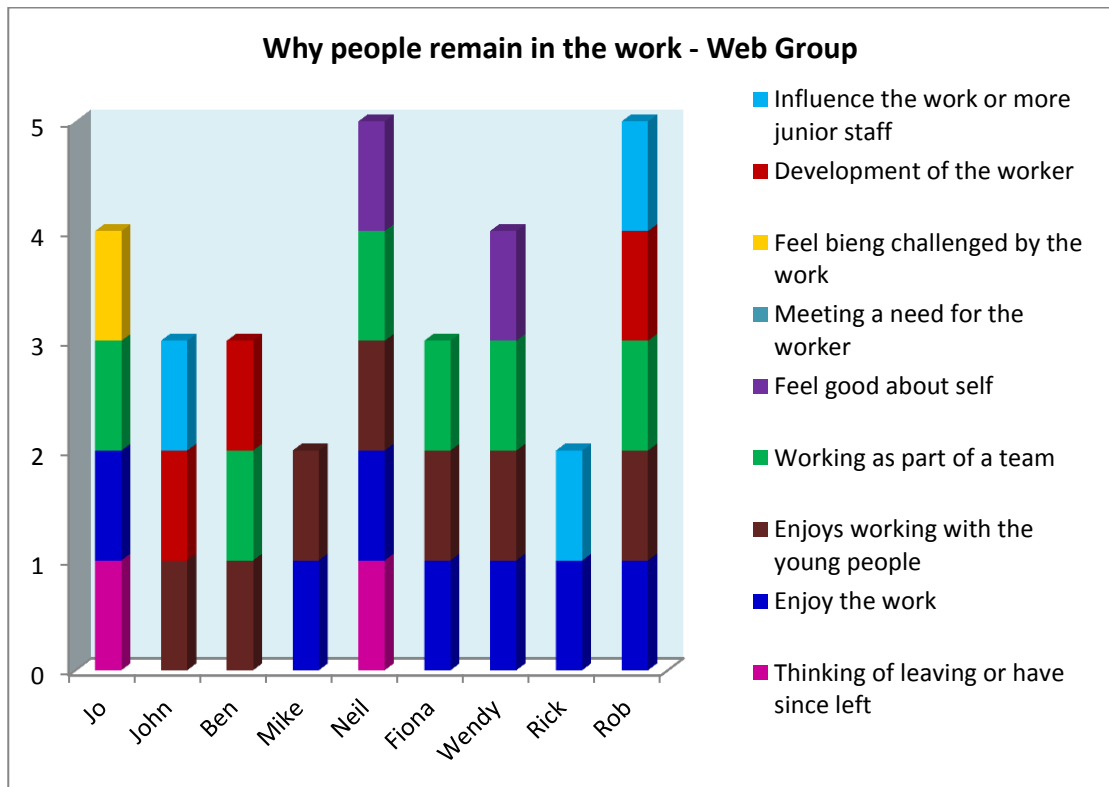
Figure 16: Why people remain - LS Group

Figure 17: Why people remain - Web Group

Although eight different reasons were identified, on further consideration it transpired that they fell into three themes: 'Enjoyment' being one, whether this is the enjoyment of the work generally or the work with the young people. I suggest that 'Working as part of a team' also impacts on the enjoyment of the work and will set out why I believe this to be the case below. The next theme related to 'Development' whether of oneself or others. This theme consists of, 'Development of the worker' and 'Influence the work or more junior staff'. The final theme, specific mainly to the LS group, due to the in-depth nature of the material, related to 'Psychological well-being'; consisting of 'Feeling good about oneself' and 'Meeting one's needs'[62].

Enjoyment

All the participants indicated that they enjoyed the work though some differentiated between 'Enjoy the work' and 'Enjoy working with the children/young people', such as Tina who was very clear that she enjoys the work with the young people:

> *It's just, but I just love working with them (the young people), they're just great. (Pause) And that's what I get up in the mornings for, that's it, that's, you know I don't get up in the morning and think, 'Oh God another day at work,' I love it, I love work.*

Gaining enjoyment from one's work not only makes going to work easier but also makes working with the young people less stressful. People are not paid to enjoy their work and yet the idea of enjoying one's work has been written about, both from the perspectives of workers and the employers, by many human resource consultants, in motivational' self-help books and videos, too numerous to mention, as well as philosophers:

> Work is love made visible. And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy. (Gibran, 1991 pp.38-9)

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[62] Two members of the Web group stated this in responses to either the support they got or to significant people within the work setting that have had an impact on their work.

Some responses from the Web group's to question 7 and 9:

Mike says, '*Being paid to play*', and he remains because: '*This is the job I wanted, that I now have and that satisfies me tremendously.*'

Neil says, '*Watching a severely abused child wake up in the morning with a smile on her face.*'

For these participants the rewards from the work are related to being part of something nurturing and healing or therapeutic.   For others it was being part of the totality of the work, of the direct work and of being part of an organizational process.

Rob says, '*Training development, building relationships with young people, team work, being part of the inspiring progress being made by some of the young people. The diversity of the work.*'

All but Janet in the LS group stated that they enjoyed the work:

Ann describes different aspects of the work within the organization and the support, through the training she has had. This and the work with the young people has been what she had enjoyed: '*So it was just a mixture really and I really enjoyed it and felt really supported by my Manager. Um, the team there, we all worked well together. I really enjoyed the experience.*'

Jack's statement includes the more painful side of the work, the daily challenges of the young people. But he also alludes to gaining some reflected glory, one could say, as he was working with 'high profile' cases, '*Because I really enjoyed it. I found it a challenge. I actually enjoy dealing with challenging behaviour. I've really enjoyed working in the secure unit with some of the most high profile cases.*'

James acknowledges that at times the work is also difficult, '*And I love the job, I absolutely adore it. It's, you know… there's nothing better, you know… you get days when you think oh God, um, but, you know.*' He goes on to describe working with a very challenging young man that caused him to question his abilities. But he got support to understand what this was about:

I talked to the therapist about my feelings and we tried to understand what it was about. I reminded the boy of his abusive grandfather which is why I was getting so many bad feelings from him.

The work of residential child care is low paid, has little positive regard, is challenging and often stressful therefore it clearly helps people stay in their work when they enjoy and feel supported in what they are doing. Gopal talked about the importance of supervision and of the staff support group in helping him '*think*'. He was able to be honest about his shortcomings and the benefits he had gained from working within a therapeutic environment; '*And.... and um contained, educated, trained, all those kind of things um and that I do think there's something about um working in.*'

Bill described how the consultant provided him with support: '… *our consultant therapist, having reflective spaces, um, having supervision that was based on me more than based on work with children, um, and the impact on myself.*'

In order to enjoy the work one must feel sufficiently contained. This necessitates that there are clear boundaries around one's role and for there to exist what Winnicott terms a 'holding environment', 'The term "holding" is used here to denote not only the actual physical holding of the infant, but also the total environmental provision prior to the concept of *living with.*' (Winnicott, 1990 p.44) [63] The idea of a 'holding environment' has been part of the concept of therapeutic communities as it provides for the containment of anxieties so that the work with the children and young people can be carried out. Ward (2003) states that in order to provide a holding environment for the children both individually and as a group there must be a holding environment for the staff, also as individuals and as a group: 'Providing an appropriate holding environment for staff can therefore be seen as the overall framework within which therapeutic care is provided.' (Ward, 2003, pp.30-31) It is for this reason that I have included 'Working as part of a team'. James and Huffington (2004)

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[63] Author's own italics

state that the holding environment contains the anxieties of the children and includes spaces within the work structure for the staff to think. These spaces generate a sense of containment, of being held, for the staff thus they are more able to enjoy the work:

> The notion of a 'holding environment' (Winnicott, 1965), metaphorically akin to the physical cradling offered by the mother to her child, has been used as the basis for creating a transitional space in which anxieties are contained such that a space is created for 'maternal reverie' or reflection and processing emotions to allow development. (James and Huffington, 2004, p.230)

I therefore posit that those participants stating that they enjoy the work are working in organizations that provide some form of holding so that they are able to experience the pleasure related to the work as well as the pain.

Sinclair and Gibbs (1998) identified that staff were satisfied with their work when there were: 'clear and feasible roles, good support from their colleagues and management, adequate money, security and job prospects, and that their work did not interfere too much with their family and social lives.' (Sinclair and Gibbs, 1998, p.148) They also found that staff felt better about their work when they were able to see the young people making progress and that the provision of training and good supervision are important to the satisfaction of staff.

Supervision

When revisiting Homes 1, 2 and 3 senior managers were asked a question regarding looking after the staff. All three Homes reported that the structures existed for individual supervision. Homes 2 and 3 were very clear that individual supervisions occurred regularly and had systems that monitored this. Home 1 reported that this was mixed:

> *Supervision of the individual can be anything up to good, it is not consistent across the board. I believe the organization is only as good as the weakest so we are weak. It is not consistently given so if it got missed no action is taken and it is not linked to people's development plans. We need to maximise this.*

Recognising the problems was their first step in working towards putting in systems to amend this. Paul noted there were high levels of sickness and he put this down to the work:

The bad I would say is because we have complex kids who put a lot of pressure on staff and some go off sick. This means they miss out on the opportunity to articulate what has happened and then can't learn good approaches to the situation.

Home 1 is also the only one where no group support system existed. Paul had come into the organization two years earlier as the Training Manager and identified that there needed to be systems that allowed the staff to talk about their feelings related to the work. He had started offering these on a voluntary basis, to get the idea across within the organization, but they were poorly attended. There was not a culture of talking about the emotional impact of the work with colleagues nor was there management support. Both Home 2 and 3 had group meetings facilitated by an external psychotherapist who had the function of: '…*reflecting on the impact of the work*' and '*thinking together about the work*'. Group meetings/supervisions, often omitted in residential child care, are considered an important aspect of therapeutic residential care:

> Consultation and supervision play complementary but separate roles in any organization: in therapeutic communities, they are vital in working together to constitute a working base for the ongoing management and containment if the anxieties of those, both staff and young people, who are residents. (Wilson, 2003, p.231)

The use of both individual supervision and group spaces, whatever name they are given, is about providing for the young people a process Bion (1996) termed as 'container-contained', whereby the young people project their unprocessed emotions onto the worker and the worker takes them in process them and gives them back in a manageable format. However, it is necessary that the staff themselves feel contained for this process to occur. (Bion, 1996, p.90) These thinking spaces ensure that the workers themselves feel sufficiently contained to take on this role. The mental wellbeing of the staff is a necessary component of the wellbeing and development of the children/young people.

Training

All three Homes had comprehensive training programmes for the staff, over and above the Government's minimum requirements as set out in the *National Minimum Standards* (DfE, 2011). All three senior managers commented on the importance of having a skilled staff group and the need for theoretical input in

addition to the needs of achieving the NVQ/Diploma. Two of the Homes have an individual whose main employment is to develop training and the third has this as part of a senior manager's portfolio. Home 3 has gone as far as developing its own foundation degree which all staff undertake in place of the Diploma:

> *No longer is the NVQ3 considered to be the course of choice as there is now the new diploma. Not that we undertook the NVQ previously however there may be some issues for the school as we are investing in our staff in undertaking the foundation degree that we provide.*

The responsibility for the provision of training being given to a senior manager by these three organizations would indicate that investing in one's staff team is a priority.

The participants also reported that there has been a price to pay for being in the work. From the LS group there were comments about the anti-social nature of the work and that it is hard to leave the work behind, Ann said:

> *… although we do work unsociable hours and weekends still – you are there for them to give you a ring if they want support and that. So it doesn't, it's not, you do switch off, but you're also conscious that if you do get, you know, a telephone call or whatever, that those people are asking you for support.*

The Web group were asked: '*What have you found most difficult about the work?*' In response all stated that it was the impact on their personal lives whether it is the hours they worked or due to the emotional strain on them.

John: '*Impact on family life whilst children were younger. Impact on wider social life of residential hours.*'

The second was the impact from within the organization or from external pressures. Jo: '*Meeting the requirements/regulations and keeping up with the paperwork without compromising caring for the residents*'.

Wendy wrote:

> *The work is hard, the hours are long and anti-social. Sometimes I have done 4 days straight. This makes it very difficult to have/ maintain*

relationships outside of work. Also it can be very emotionally challenging when you have a very difficult and damaged young person to look after. The worst is when a young person's behaviour upsets the other young people.

Clearly the work is challenging and has at times taken its toll on workers however, for this group the benefits have outweighed the costs. One can surmise that this is not always the case based on the concerns about the high turnover of staff mentioned above.

Development

Development covers both individuals involved in developing others and their own development in their roles. James remains in the work because he really enjoys the work with the young people and the opportunities for development that he has had at Home 2. He feels that at Home 2, '[Y]*ou find your own, sort of, little niche and then you start to expand that, rather than giving you specific roles to do, you, sort of, expand upon what they find.'* He started with fairly minor roles and had grown into taking on more responsibility. John remained because he had, '*The opportunity to develop a therapeutic model of care and to influence a wider organization.*'

Bourdieu's concept of 'field' will be most useful when considering the benefits to the individuals and in turn the organizations they work in:

> A field is, in the first instance, a structured space of positions, *a force field* that imposes its specific determinations upon all those who enter it. Thus she who wants to succeed as a scientist has no choice but to acquire the minimal '*scientific capital*[64] required and to abide by the mores and regulations enforced by the scientific milieu of that time and place. (Wacquant, 2006, pp.7-8)

Therefore residential child care is a field within its own right which the participants occupy. However, it can also be considered to be part of the social work field, a much larger field where residential child care is seen to be fairly

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[64] Authors own italics

inferior by social workers. The educational capital which the individual must gain to remain in the field is currently a Diploma as a minimum. However, of significance is the second aspect of a field:

> In the second instance, a field is an arena of struggle through which agents and institutions seek to preserve or overturn the existing distribution of capital (manifested, in the scientific field, by the ranking of institutions, disciplines, theories, methods, topics, journals, prizes, etc.): it is a *battlefield*[65] wherein the bases of identity and hierarchy are endlessly disputed over. (Wacquant, 2006, p.8)

From the Web group, John's statement highlights the position he has taken as a person who participates in the struggle within the organization he works to improve his capital by being able to influence its development and subsequently improve his and the organization's position within the field.

Furthermore, consideration is to be given for the position that the individual homes occupy within the field of residential child care:

> .. a third critical property of any field is its *degree of autonomy*, i.e., the capacity it has gained, in the course of its development, to insulate itself from external influences and to uphold its own criteria of evaluation over and against those of neighboring or intruding fields… (Wacquant, 2006, p.8) [66]

When considering the LS participants and the organizations they work for, what is notable is that those participants coming from a middle class background have senior positions within their organizations and have at the same time settled in organizations that are highly regarded within the field. A case comparison will be presented to exemplify how someone's habitus and social position motivates them to remain within the residential sector.

Case Comparison

The two participants to be compared are Tom, coming from a middle class background, and Jack, coming from a working class background. Both their early histories and disappointments are as a consequence of parental pressure

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[65] Authors own italics and errors
[66] Authors own spelling

or lack of support and educational opportunities. Neither found satisfaction from following these paths and both were introduced to the work through connections but this is where the similarity ends until they join the field of residential child care.

Tom's story:

> *my mum who as I said was a school nurse, she's … was a marriage guidance counsellor and supervisor. And one of her colleagues knew the director of the school here at the time.*

> *And then um I got put in touch with the Director and I came to see him here and came to work at the Home 3 as a volunteer.*

This connection with the most senior person in the organization had enabled Tom to enter the sector as an influential volunteer. Once there he then got a position on the staff team.

Jack's story:

> *I'd been involved with my girlfriend in … for quite a long period of time at that point. Her mother was working, was a cleaner at a children's home. I had no concept or understanding what a children's home was, what it was about. It was just totally alien to me because I'd never had any sort of contact with it… I never give it another thought and she said, "While you are waiting for a reply, they are absolutely desperate for help. Do you want to do some volunteer work" and I said "Yes, no worries, I'll go and do some voluntary work up there."*

Tom's career moved quite rapidly as he went from a residential worker to Deputy Director in 12 years. During these twelve years he had also been supported in continuing with his education and learning. Tom's upbringing gave him the confidence to fight for more promotion and qualifications although he didn't necessarily meet the criteria:

> *Then I, like, with my sort of growing confidence I applied to the … child care at … and was turned down, and challenged the decision in my arrogance and um was accepted on the course.*

Jack was also a confident man and through his acquired education, in the form of his first degree and additional qualifications in social work, he too rises

through the ranks rapidly. Like Tom, Jack also challenged authority to get what he wanted:

In the meantime I'd done Post Graduate Diploma in Social Administration. That was at … Polytechnic because that was going to support my um application to do a CQSW at … University, because they needed me to take a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Administration to support my Degree so I could go through the training properly. [The authority] had stopped secondments. So I wrote a project report to the Assistant Director of [The authority] … Social Services telling them that they were very, very short-sighted and why they should consider re-introducing it and investing in staff. Then went on to produce three or four different ways that that could be funded or part-funded and considerations that they needed to make and sent it directly to the Assistant Director. Got called up to the Council House ... They actually went through the plans with me and said that they were going to adapt some of them and offered me one of the first places on the secondment again.

The challenges made by both Jack and Tom are directly linked in their wish to add to their status enabling them to progress. Both Jack and Tom were fully engaged in the *battlefield* within their own respective fields, and both rose through the 'ranks'. Both also added to their status by representing their organizations at national levels.

Where then are the differences between these two people's *practice*? Jack's initial rapid rise to seniority stopped and he remained in the same post for over ten years and then had one more career move where he remained for a further nine years. Jack never achieved the same level of seniority as had Tom even though he was working in the sector for a much longer period of time. The second difference is in the arenas of influence that they were engaged in within the wider field. Jack's was very specific to the work of the unit he managed whereas Tom's had been within the wider field. Bourdieu (2002) was able to demonstrate in his research that those individuals that come into a field with a greater amount of *embodied capital* are more likely to be able to succeed because they are more able to get higher rewards from their educational attainments:

From the very beginning, a definition of human capital, despite its humanistic connotations, does not move beyond economism and ignores, *inter alia*, the fact that the scholastic yield from educational action

depends on the cultural capital previously invested by the family. Moreover, the economic and social yield of the educational qualification depends on the social capital, again inherited, which can be used to back it up. (Bourdieu, 2002, p.48)

Tom's upbringing and education gave him the confidence to apply for roles he was actually not well qualified to do:

I think I must have been a nightmarish arrogant person to work with when I was team-leading here and I think… I look back and wonder how I ever had that sort of confidence to do some of the things that I did, I think I must have been a real nightmare person to work with.

Tom reflected back to what it was like when he got the first senior management post:

And being appointed I was very sort of relieved really that it was actually a less complex appointment for me than the team leader one, it seemed it was far more difficult in terms of my relationships in the organization and, you know, I think at that time I was still seen as sort of young and inexperienced and… well I was sort of young and inexperienced and um, sort of leaping levels in some ways…

Jack described his ability to work with very challenging young people and it is possible that this facilitated the initial promotion as he was working in secure units.   Jack was constantly drawn back to working directly with the young people as this was what gave him the most satisfaction and where he was able to be the kind of father figure he never had. He described, on a couple of occasions, the pleasure he got from going in and sorting things out and working in the units with the young people:

You are in more of a position to make change or get change made. You've got a voice.

The frustrating thing is that I still love going on the unit and it was only a couple of weeks ago that I went fishing with the kids.   And I had one of the kids sitting with me for hours and I loved it. Because, why I come into the work, that's what made me want to start with the work and I've drifted along and I've drifted into management and progressed to where I am, but I still get a real kick out of individual work with kids and working with groups of kids.

Whereas Jack talked about his satisfaction of supporting the staff Tom talked at a more strategic level about the staff and his wish for them to perform. Jack had climbed, probably higher than he ever thought, but was still more comfortable when he took on the role of direct worker, as can be seen above, whereas Tom was very comfortable in his senior management position.

These two participants demonstrate how *capital* can be acquired in this field; Tom coming from a middle class background initially had to convert capital, which I have earlier posited was moral capital, due to the lowly status of the work, but has been able to compete within the field of residential child care and gain status as well as additional qualifications. He gained a senior management position entailing representing the organization at an external level and participating in the broader field as an expert. Through the acquisition of capital he found himself in a job which not only gave him the satisfaction he had wanted but which was also acceptable to his parents as a '*proper job in an office*'. On the other hand Jack remained because he enjoyed the work and had exceeded his family's expectations. He too has acquired qualifications and status and was very proud of this:

> *But as say, for me, it's about my own, my own self, knowing myself that I've actually done it and achieved it and, irrespective of what happens now, I've got there. So I'm quite pleased with that.*

Even though his venture into ownership has initially been successful Jack expressed some doubt as to the home's long-term success and his continued involvement in it.

> *Our venture may well not work but for me, it was about proving something to myself that I could do it. With no-one managing me at all. With me at the front. That I could actually lead it and take it through and open it, which I did, so I was very pleased with that. Even if it fails, I've done my part.*

Jack's venture could be thought of almost as if he is acting out a form of adolescent omnipotence, especially as he left the field completely within a year of this comment to travel around the world.

Both Tom and Jack have been involved in developing the staff they managed and in having some influence within the organizations in which they work. The

big difference is in how they describe this; Jack states that as a manager he had been involved in the decision making process, whereas Tom was clear that he had enabled changes and had influenced the organization's direction. Other participants coming from a middle class background, such as Bill and Gopal, have also increased their cultural capital through continued education and achieving senior positions within the field. Interestingly both Bill and Gopal had positions in their respective organizations that are related to developing workers and liaising with educational establishments so their area of influence is both internal and external.

One can see that the *practice* of participants has included the acquisition of capital, however it is noticeable that for Jack this has not influenced his outlook; as he still holds on to being working class. All four participants coming from the middle class are highly qualified and could have moved into fields that possess a higher status but the combination of enjoying the work and their ability to gain status, qualifications and a reasonable income are likely to have influenced their decisions to remain.

Psychological well-being

The theme of psychological well-being has to some extent been addressed in the three preceding chapters as it proved rather complex to separate out some of the issues when examining why people came into the work. I will therefore comment on what happened once people were in post as well as address how the participants have benefited psychologically.

Some participants, such as Bill, talked directly of the benefits they had experienced through the support systems in their work place:

> *I don't know how it came up but I can remember it coming up in a discussion with our consultant, um, psychotherapist and for many years I struggled or refused to make connections between my family life and any of the work here.*

Whereas for others the benefits were given in a more indirect way: James spoke about not having a father in his life even though his mother and grandfather were important to him. Later he described the staff team as a

family. He informed me that he had gained the approval of the staff team and in particular the Director of the home:

And, you know, I think I've also built up, you know, a lot of trust from the team members that I work with and, you know, the director, I know he had concerns when I first started, err, but over a period of time, he's seen how I'm doing and, um… and he again confirms that what I'm doing is the right way.

Being part of something that has become an important aspect to James's life has enabled him to stay. James had adopted a whole family for himself where he was no longer the only child. He noted that his own wife was on the fringes of his work which, at times caused some tension due to the intimate relationships between the staff:

I mean, um, my wife, who's not part of the group, sort of thing, but she's on the fringes. She was quite jealous for a long time, um, because, you know, she… she said, "You just… you just have such an intimate relationship with all these people, you know. If I didn't know better, I would think you were all having affairs with each other left, right and centre, but I know better than that, but it's just you are so intimate with each other, it's incredible."

Gopal also describes the team as a family where there are people he can talk to other than about his career:

And.... and um contained, educated, trained, all those kind of things um and that I do think there's something about um working in.... at Home 2 that is about being part of a wider family. But.... and boundaried. Um and um, you know, there's.... in terms of the reflection on the work, even though it is a place where staff tend to stay, it is always forward thinking and developing the service.

He acknowledged that the talking side of the work was challenging for him but that over time he had got better at it. However, of particular importance for him had been the opportunity to create a niche for himself using his skills:

There's something about Home 2 that is about you can find.... you can build yourself a position here, that there's this balance between kind of taking on responsibility and being accountable for things, and developing your own interests and pursuits and so on.

And err I do um, you know, I've built up the practice teaching side of things. I made a.... I made a comment in the form that you sent out, about that it's quite.... because I'm only diploma qualified and I've got.... I'm

teaching degree students and all like, you know, should I be doing that? But I am and I've got.... I know how well resourced I feel and how much I've learned from working here um.

Therefore for Gopal, he had found somewhere that felt safe, where he could use his intelligence, in a creative way, and be part of helping others develop, unlike his own childhood experience of being allocated a role. Like Tom and Bill he met his wife through the work and enjoyed being a parent. He felt that his experiences in the work are making him a better one.

Although Janet remained single and described the work as one of the reasons why her relationship broke down, she commented that the relationships between workers can be very intense due to the long hours they spend on shift together.   A second consideration is that workers' roles are those of parenting the children/young people.   This sense of intimacy clearly engages these participants and a number of the participants met their partners where they currently or originally worked. Where this has occurred there was management input to ensure that these relationships didn't interfere with the work, such as couples not working together.   For some the benefits of having a healthy relationship enabled them to have a healthy work life balance:

So yeah, my family are hugely important to me and I think that sort of work/life balance has changed a lot for me over time, I think it's far more appropriate now than it was when I first came into this line of work, when it was my life, but I think that's true for a lot of people who go into this sort of work.

This description reflects Tom's own development;   initially describing himself as a '*nightmare of a child*' whereas by the end of the interview he explained the importance of his own family and his role as a parent:

I now have three kids who are hugely important to me. And I think having children has opened my eyes to the work of therapeutic child care and I think until then… and I think it still is true of this place that a lot goes on here which is incredibly normal and people don't realise it.

Both his training and the support structures in Home 3 had given Bill the opportunities to consider his relationships with his family:

Um, I've become far closer to my parents who traditionally I didn't think I was particularly close to. How much of that is just about my growing up

and getting a bit older I don't know. Um, I think inevitably the impact of working here, working in this environment, studying and sort of having a greater understanding of family dynamics and the influence of families on, um, the primary years I'm fair clearly that they had a fairly big impact on me.

One of the driving forces leading Bill into the work was a feeling he had had that he didn't think he would marry and become a parent. However, this occurred and after becoming a parent Bill became the Head of Training changing his role in two ways. Firstly, he was no longer directly parenting the children but as a senior manager was responsible for the welfare of workers. And secondly, he was no longer the youngest child.

Tina's wellbeing was being met through her work in two main ways: Firstly, wanting to '*help people*' was achieved as she experienced her input as being really helpful to the young people. Secondly, she had felt undervalued at school and in her work as a housing officer, whereas at Home 2, though tested by the young people, she felt supported by the management. Furthermore, she felt that her opinions mattered and was encouraged to say what she thought. After having her own son she returned to work, although in a different capacity. She remained passionate about the work and because her new role was working nights she negotiated one day shift per month to work directly with the young people. This became her protected time with them to the point where she would stay late to ensure that day's project was completed. Tina had not wanted a management position as the direct work with the young people was what she most enjoyed about the work. There was a noticeable change during the return interview in that she was able to be critical about some of the structures and practices that she did not enjoy, though she recognised that they enabled the wellbeing of the establishment as a whole.

For Ann, moving from nourishing the young people to nurturing them had brought about many changes in her life. In the first interview she presented a very rosy picture of her childhood and life whereas, in the return interview she felt able to comment on the difficulties within her familial relationships and that she had become divorced. Her move to supporting the foster families, one step removed from the children, seemed to be the change she needed to

enable her to see things more clearly. One wonders if she was at times overwhelmed by what the children and young people projected so that she had to remain in denial to protect herself from the awfulness of their inner worlds.

Working directly with the children and young people can be overwhelming because of the trauma they have experienced and therefore, the projections of their emotions are in an unprocessed form. Clearly some workers are left without the support to work through these thus the work itself can lead to workers behaving in ways one would not expect. One should not be surprised when there is news about high turnovers of staff or incidents in homes when we consider that, so many of the homes have poor support structures and poor theoretical training for the workers to understand what it is they are expected to deal with.

The benefits of making reparation

As previously stated, the psychological journey taken when making reparation for one's aggression and phantasised harm done to (m)other enables the infant to move into the depressive position. This is due to its recognition that it has attacked not only the hated object but at the same time the loved object and hence its reparative acts aim to repair this damage. Thus, the infant experiences guilt because of the attacks and therefore develops its capacity to mourn the loss of the loved object and survive this loss. When exploring how becoming a residential child care worker satisfied these participants I wanted to understand more fully the reparative nature of the work. The level of disappointment experienced by the participants can be considered as similar to feelings of mourning, a loss of doing something of value, 'That is to say, any pain caused by unhappy experiences, whatever their nature, has something in common with mourning.' (Klein, 1940, p.143) Mourning in its earliest form occurs during the 'depressive position' when the infant experiences the loss of the breast and all the good things it represents, particularly during the weaning process. The infant links this loss to its own greedy and destructive behaviour which is alleviated through the positive responses of the carer, demonstrating that the infant it is loved. The infant recognises this love because its reparative acts, for the phantasised damage that it has done, are rewarded by the love it is

shown and its confidence in its own goodness grows.   In almost all the narratives there was an individual that took an interest in the participants, one could call them 'facilitators or agents of change': For Tina there was the customer at the post office who gave her the application for an administrator's post at the hospital and then later on one of the nurses comments on her ability to work with the patients: '*And one of the nurses said to me you're great you're really good at this, have you thought about becoming a care worker?*' For Jack it was the occupational therapist who told him: '…*the problem that you will always face in life is that you are always going to be under-employed in jobs that aren't challenging to you. You need to sort yourself out and get some qualifications.*'

However, where this does not occur the infant is left with feelings of: '… increased ambivalence, diminish trust and hope and confirm anxieties about inner annihilation and external persecution:' (Klein, 1940, p.128). I posit that when Janet felt that she was unsupported by her managers it must have been an awful time for her as her acts of reparation were not producing the wished for outcomes and hence she kept on trying and asking to be supported but nothing came back.

> *I'd been to directors and said, um, you know, "You need to help me, I'm not getting any support, you need to help me" and they were just like, "Well you need to go through the correct channels, you need to speak to your manager about it." I'd spoken to my manager about it, "You need to help me." "Well you need to go…", you know, and they just kept, "Go away, shut up, go away, shut up, go away, shut up" and, of course, it kept getting worse and worse and I started shouting louder.*

It is therefore not surprising that she went off sick for some time. However she did return to work and found someone who would support and recognise her.

During mourning there is a feeling of the loss of a loved object and that the internal bad objects '… predominate and his inner world is in danger of disruption.' (Klein, 1940, p.135)   The mourner, by developing trust in the external objects, is once again able to trust in its internal objects and a sense of balance is gained through the recognition that the lost object was both good and bad.   The mourning for the lost object allows for the process of making

reparation so that the good object can be preserved. This is a creative process as it is based on the love for the good object. Klein (1940) notes that this is a normal process and that it is the response of the external objects that dictate the healthy development of the infant. Furthermore, with each experienced loss and positive response the infant gains confidence in its inner objects and therefore in its internal world. Moreover, this process generates creativity and growth:

> We know that painful experiences of all kinds sometimes stimulate sublimations, or even bring out quite new gifts in some people, who may take to painting, writing or other productive activities under the stress of frustrations and hardships. Others become more productive in a different way—more capable of appreciating people and things, more tolerant in their relation to others—they become wiser. (Klein, 1940, p.143,)

It is this process that has enabled the participants to develop in their places of work. When reading Tom's narrative it is as if we can map the progress of his wish to make reparation for being this '*nightmare*' child to the point where the opportunities for making reparation have led to him moving through the depressive position where he has been able to see that he was a '*nightmare*' of a child.

> *So I feel older and wiser and I suppose when I look back and I think how could I, you know, I think I must have been a nightmarish arrogant person to work with when I was team-leading here and I think… I look back and wonder how I ever had that sort of confidence to do some of the things that I did, I think I must have been a real nightmare person to work with.*

Considering that he himself felt that he was treated like a '*favoured child*' it is understandable that he was confident. However, it is clearly not just Tom that experienced confidence in their work as all the participants enjoy their work and only two out of the 18 participants was thinking of leaving at the time of the initial interviews.

Leaving

Only Jo from the Web-group stated she wished to leave her current employer as she was no longer happy working there, Jo stated, '*Lack of opportunity to leave at present, but I am looking for opportunities to leave my current*

job/company.' Jo informed me that she left soon after completing the interview to go and work with young adults in a specialist service.

Also from the Web-group, Neil has since identified that he has is planning on leaving the field stating, '*I am due to change careers as I no longer seem to have the energy to work in a residential child care setting.*' It would seem that both these participants are no longer happy in the work. Although it is not possible to be sure, the idea of not having the energy suggests that the reparative work has been done therefore there is no longer any need to utilise the reparative energy to sustain him in the work.

People who have left

From the LS group two participants have left: Helen has left Home 3 and as far as I am aware the field entirely. Jack has also left and went travelling around the world. When reflecting on Jack's comments about the new venture I wondered whether he had been contemplating leaving, '…*irrespective of what happens now*,' and shortly thereafter, '*Even if it fails, I've done my part.*'

Summary

This chapter has identified that the work does offer rewards despite being challenging, requiring working anti-social hours and offering a low professional status. Participants had found enjoyment in playing a part in the development of the children and young people they worked with. For those participants coming from a middle class or high social background, whose families may not have been happy that they entered what may seem a lowly position, or for those wishing to develop themselves, there have been opportunities to gain qualifications, promotion and status, increasing their ability to compete within the field including influencing decision makers at a national level.

Although emotionally stressful and at times physically challenging we have also seen that there are psychological benefits to being in this work. This is due to there being opportunities for participants to make reparation for real or phantazised wrongs enabling their development and growth in confidence. The fact that these participants came from good quality organizations that had

support structures in place and therefore environments that contain, gave workers a feeling of wellbeing and the drive to face the daily challenges of the work. Additionally the participants have on the whole remained for fairly long periods of time within the same organizations.   We have seen that there is a 'fit' between the participants and the organizations at both a psychological and sociological level.

Chapter 13: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

In this chapter I will present how I have been able to meet the aims of the research using a small sample of participants and undertaking an in-depth interview based study. I will comment on how using a narrative based method of research has enabled me to meet these aims. Central to this study has been the application of both Bourdieu's theory of society, hence a more sociological perspective, and psychoanalytical models of human development, creating a truly psychosocial model; I will discuss the ways in which they inform one another. Moreover, I will critically evaluate how using a method which combines both models has contributed to and informed the findings. I will also assess and discuss implications for practice, policy and future research.

Meeting the aims

These are the questions to which I wished to find answers:

1. How do people initially get into the work?
2. Once in the work, why do they remain?
3. Are workers aware of the emotional meaning of the work for themselves, including the possibility for making reparation for real or imagined wrongs?
4. Are there any particular characteristics common amongst workers, and is there a single type or more than one?
5. Are people working in therapeutic organization more reflective than those working in regular homes?

During the analysis it became evident that the aims fell into three main themes; the first theme, encompassing aims 1 and 2, was to explore why it is that people had gone into this work and once there, knowing that it is poorly paid, has a low status and can cause them harm, both physically and psychologically, why they choose to remain. The second, covering aims 3 and 4, was to identify whether there was a conscious awareness of the reparative nature of the work and whether they recognised the personal benefits of this for themselves. Furthermore, I wanted to discover whether there were any personal costs for

the participants and if so, were the participants able to acknowledge the nature and impact of such personal costs. Finally, aim 5, was to identify if there was a difference in the way people thought and talked, about the work and themselves, between workers based in organizations that make use of psychodynamic theory and those that don't.

The main data has come from the narratives of the LS group therefore my main finding are based on the detailed analysis of these. In the telling of one's life-story participants are enabled to make their own connections between events, experiences and people which had significance for them. Although for some the reliability of the stories might be questioned, it is recognised that in the telling of one's story the recollection of an event is altered by the impression a teller wants to create for the listener. However, the application of psychoanalytical theory to both the interview process and the data takes this into account and enables an understanding of the participants within the context of this research.   As the, '… focus of [my] analysis is the people who tell the stories about their lives: the stories themselves are a means to understand [my] subjects better.' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2003, p.32) Therefore, by applying both psychoanalytical and Bourdieusian theory I have been able to understand underlying aspects of motives and factors that influenced the participants. I have drawn on the previous studies, with established methodologies, of Hollway and Jefferson (2003) and Chamberlayne et al. (2002) The data from the Web group has given a second dimension but does not have the same level of depth as it was based on responses to a questionnaire.

Method of analysis

The application of psychoanalytical theory enabled me to consider information about the inner worlds of the participants in relation to the work and helped me to organise my thinking.   However, it did not help gain an understanding of the participants from a sociological perspective as a way of answering the 'Who comes into the work?', and their social context question. This was only possible once Bourdieu's theory was applied to the narratives.   Both Bourdieu's theory and the aspects of psychoanalytical theory that have been applied are set out in detail in the Chapter 3: *Theoretical Frameworks.*

Psychoanalytical theory

The use of psychoanalytical theory has been particularly useful in thinking about the process of gathering the data as well as its analysis. I was able to consider why I was being told certain information and question why some topics were alluded to but not discussed fully or even omitted from the narratives. To ensure that the findings were grounded in the data the details of the narratives were examined at both a macro and micro level. Hollway and Jefferson's (2003) concept of the *Defended subject*, which relates to the use of early defence mechanisms when dealing with difficult emotional areas, including splitting and getting rid of painful feelings (projection), was applied to both the interview situation as well as the data. It was by considering the participants as defended subjects that I was able to explore the significance of my feelings recorded in my field notes as well as what and how certain subjects were presented. My notes of Helen holding back (page 146) meant I went back to the data to identify why I had these feelings.

During the initial reading of the data I identified that all the participants mentioned to some extent their parents. Whether talking of their conflicts with their parents or, like Jack, who surpassed his family and yet wanted to remain connected, (pages 121-122) I was able to examine more closely the data about parents. This was possible by applying the theory of the oedipal situation, more particularly the concept of oedipal triangulation; as it relates to an individual's ability to recognise the third person within the relationship and take the position of being observed or of observing and includes competing with or surpassing parents. Furthermore, it enabled me to identify that for some, such as James (page 123) or Janet (page 136-137), there was a wish to be a good parent even though this was not directly articulated. Therefore I was able to identify one of the motivational factors that initially led people into looking for a different job or the initial impetus for remaining.

Although I have suggested that all work has a reparative quality I have been able to identify that it is very significant when considering why the participants have remained and why some may have left. I was also able to identify that for

some participants the lack of such opportunities in their previous work was a motivational factor for looking for another type of employment. In Chapter 12 (pages 185-187) I have been able to identify that whilst caring for the children/young people the participants were making reparation for real or imagined harm that they had done to others or had been done to them. Furthermore, I have been able to identify why some participants have felt able to take on more senior roles such as Bill, who has progressed to a senior position as well as having himself become a father (page 159-160) or Neil (page 188) who no longer has a need to make reparation although he states that he no longer has the energy to do the 'work'.

Although making reparation has been significant in why people have remained in the work, also of importance is the organization they work for and the relationship they have with it. Armstrong's (2005) idea of the *organization in the mind* (pages 50-52) has enabled an understanding of the relationship between the worker and the organization. Furthermore, it has enabled me to identify why some people have remained working in the same establishment for a long time such as James, who has adopted a whole family for himself in the workplace (pages 182-183).

Although I was able to identify some motivational factors that led to the participants looking for a different type of work and some psychological reasons why they have remained, there were limitations of using only these concepts. There was no consideration of the more sociological factors that had influenced or been barriers to the participants, nor how they had overcome these in order to remain in the work.

Using a Bourdieusian perspective

The application of Bourdieu's theory of society has been useful in considering the participants' backgrounds, more especially their family histories, their attitudes and values, their class position and their habitus, as it impacts on their work choices. Understanding the impact of an individual's habitus has been of particular use in understanding the motivational factors that led up to the participants looking for different work prior to joining the sector. Furthermore,

we saw how Jack, Janet and Tina coming from working class backgrounds did not have the same opportunities as Tom, Gopal and Bill, who come from the middle class backgrounds. Therefore we were able to see the way society limits opportunities for educational qualifications, being one form of *capital*, for some participants and the value that education is given by those who had to struggle to gain higher education.

The concept of *capital* in its various forms has enabled a more complete understanding of how some of the participants have been able to remain in the work, especially for those who have come from middle class backgrounds and whose families had expectation of higher status employment for the participants. I have also been able to show how gaining education or qualifications, as forms of capital, has not meant that an individual's attitudes change as their habitus has remained a limiting factor, as in the case of Jack still thinking of himself as working class (pages 176-181).

I identified that there was in some cases a connection between the class and educational background of the participants and the type of organization they worked in. Bourdieu's concept of *field* has enabled me to think about the status of the homes within the sector and how value is added to the worker when working in a home that is considered to be of good quality therefore making it more acceptable to their families.

Making use of Bourdieu's concepts brought to light a number of factors about people's backgrounds that I had not originally been able to identify which led the study to consider class, education, people's attitudes and their career progression. However, it has been the combination of both theories that has been illuminating, particularly the combination of habitus in conjunction with psychoanalytical theory that enabled me to examine both environmental and psychological aspects of the participants.

Applying the two theories together

The use of both psychoanalytical and sociological theory to understand a particular phenomenon is not new. Bourdieu himself, though deriding of Lacan

and having an ambivalent attitude towards psychoanalysis, did so; 'Bourdieu gestured repeatedly towards such a merger through his own reliance on psychoanalytical terminology, ideas, and, arguments, through his embrace of the idea of socioanalysis.' Steinmetz (2013, p.108) Going one step further Steinmetz (2013) posits that,

> Bourdieu's theory cannot do without psychoanalysis, whose concepts go to the very heart of the sociologist's main concerns. Psychoanalytical theory is not so much an influence on Bourdieu as an essential component of his theory or, rather, of a reconstruction of his theory? (Steinmetz, 2013, p.111)

Fourny and Emery (2000) state that, '… psychoanalysis has always had a place in his texts despite an initial degree of hostility or serious reservations on Bourdieu's part.' (Fourny and Emery, 2000, p.103) In *The Weight of the World* Bourdieu (2012) makes use of a number of psychoanalytical ideas, going as far as to say that sociology and psychoanalytical theory should be made use of to gain the greatest understanding of habitus as they share common interests. 'Sociology does not claim to substitute its mode of explanation for that of psychoanalysis; it is concerned only to construct different certain givens that psychoanalysis also takes as its objects.' (Bourdieu, 2012, p.512) Bourdieu's theory has been useful in explaining the participants' positions within social structures by linking the interaction between individuals and the social constituents of habitus and field. But as Bourdieu's theory relates to action and a theory of practice, there is value in explaining the inner motivations which led individuals to choose and take up their initial role, and then sought to leave them. It is in understanding these inner motivations, in what needs to be a psycho-social, by combining a sociological and psychological, form of study that psychoanalytic perspectives are relevant; as Bourdieu himself makes evident in his analysis of his own intellectual and professional development.

Other researchers have suggested the potential for making use of both theoretical frameworks to identify a range of phenomena. Briggs and Hingley-Jones (2013) identified the benefits of linking habitus with unconscious process in their research of adolescents. (Briggs and Hingley-Jones, 2013, p.65) Voronov and Vince (2010, p.1) use both frameworks to examine, '… the role of

emotions and domination in the context of institutional work.' (Voronov and Vince, 2010, p.1)

The key theme that emerged when applying both theories was that all LS participants had experienced disappointment prior to entering the work. In chapters 9 to 11 I showed that their disappointment was due to their initial employment being the consequence of the participants acting on the expectations or limitations of either familial or societal pressure, whilst at the same time they experienced disappointed internal parental figures. For some the sense of disappointment propelled them into actively looking for work in a new field and for others a chance encounter or experience led them to coming into contact with a home. Even those looking for new work did not necessarily look to working in residential child care but took a variety of routes into the work. For some it was friends, family or people in their network that directed them to the work, for others like James and Tina it was a personal experience that encouraged them to apply for a post.

Disappointment can lead to destructive wishes which if contained produce the capacity for reparation. In Chapter 10 we can see this cycle in the case of Bill who was disappointed in his childhood and again when following his parents' wish he went to university, but after one year he left and went in search of the person he considered was his primary carer. His experience of being reunited with this primary care giver facilitated his decision to work in the sector. Disappointment had prompted them to look for something more meaningful however, some aspect of the participants' dispositions meant that their experience of the work led them to wanting to remain. Hence residential child care, though not actively sought, then became a profession of choice, having experienced that it gave them opportunities for making reparation and finding satisfaction.

Making the connections between the habitus of the individual and what I identified as a need to make reparation enabled me to understand not necessarily why or how they got into the work but about once there what they got from the work. It was through the combined understanding of the

participants from a psychoanalytical perspective and taking into account their familial background and social position that led me to examine why they remained.

Using Bourdieu's definition of *capital* I was then able to examine the progression of the participants. It could be argued that *capital*, and more particularly acquiring *cultural capital*, has been the driving force for some of the participants to achieve senior positions. On the other hand it could also be argued that it is an oedipal impulse, the wish to surpass one's parents, which has been the driving force. A further consideration is Bourdieu's own application of psychoanalytical ideas when attending to the contradiction that comes out of the limiting factors of the habitus and the external drives for social improvement. We saw that some of the participants improved their status by becoming upwardly mobile, such as Jack, Bourdieu (2012) posits that parents can "project" their desires to achieve more than they had on their children even though they themselves did not reach the potential they had wished for. When their children succeed, this then counts as a success by proxy for the parents. (Bourdieu, 2012, p.508)

Overall the participants who came from a middle class background and had easier access to higher, and in some cases better quality, education were those who achieved more senior positions within the organizations in which they worked. Jack, from a working class background, had to start up his own company to get higher than Group Manager, even though he had many years of experience and there were more senior positions within the organization in which he worked, almost as if he had come up to the limitations of a glass ceiling.

It is not simply the positions within the organizations that were different, it was also that the organizations occupied different positions within the *field* of residential child care. Home 3 stands out more than the other two because of the cultural capital held not only by the senior managers but because of their position within the field.   Furthermore, this higher status within the field also added to the social capital of its members.

When thinking about the organization that the participants came from, by using Bourdieu's theory I was able to identify the *practice* within each organization. Academic achievement has a high value within Home 3 as they provide their own Foundation Degree for all their staff. Whereas in Home 2, where there was a real mix of staff, responsibility for one's own growth and independent development had a high value. This has since changed with a change of Director whose attitude is very different from the previous one.

Whilst at the same time using psychoanalytical theory I was able to identify different characteristics within the organization in terms of whether it 'contained' its staff, and as such enabled the staff to themselves become containers for the children and young people they work with. I was also able to understand in which of Bion's categories of group functioning the organization operated at the time I was involved with them, i.e. was it operating as a *work group* or a *basic assumption group*? (page 52). It is by bringing these two concepts together that I was able to think about why people remain in this field of work.

It has become clear to me that making use of the two theoretical frameworks has enriched this study. It has enabled me to take into account aspects of the participants that would have been missed had only one of the two theories been used. These theories, working together, made sense of the key questions I asked about the participants; how and why they came in the work, and why they remained.

The participants

I have shown in Chapter 7 that the participants from both the LS and Web group had somewhat different characteristics than is usually reported in studies of residential child care workers and those samples on which current policy is based, given recent statements made by Government ministers and officials following inquiries. The main areas where the participants in this study diverged were that they had higher/more qualifications, had undertaken more training, and they had been in service longer.

Getting into the work

Entry into the work was mainly through one of three routes which were: 'Applied for a position directly', 'Came to it by accident' and 'Someone gave them an introduction.'   Of the sample only one third had applied directly for a post in the sector without an introduction, as can be seen in Chapter 8, whilst the other two thirds found out about the sector because someone in their network told them about voluntary or paid work opportunities. However, the route into the work seems to have made little difference to progression within the field. It is difficult to say if this is the norm across the sector, as there are many agencies advertising positions and therefore many routes into it. However, if it is the norm there are implications for recruitment as it is likely to be friends or relatives that get to know about the work, which could prove to be both positive and negative.

Managers from the three homes explained that they are active in offering student social workers placements. The reason given was generally that the students get first-hand knowledge of the complexities and challenges of the work culminating in improved attitudes towards the sector from the field of social work. A secondary benefit was that it increased the recruitment pool. As two of the LS group were working in homes where they undertook their placements and a further two participants that entered the work following placements there is logic to this outlook.

When examining the reasons why the Web group had entered the work there is a difference between them and the LS group. The main difference being that a majority of this group had previously planned to work in one of the caring professions before they became residential child care workers.   An encounter with a service or people working in the sector seems to be the drive that initially gets them into the work.

Why do people stay?

Chapter 12 identified that the participants have remained in the work due to both conscious and unconscious factors. It was clear that at a conscious level the participants enjoyed the work, be it the direct work with the children or

young people or aspects of the work they have moved into during their tenure. The participants also felt there was an overall gain for them whether this was because they were doing something they enjoyed or because they recognised their own personal growth. The LS group found themselves working in organizations where there was what we could call a 'fit' between individuals' own background and psychological needs and the organizations they worked for. For example Gopal, himself an absent father, and James, who was raised by a single mum, made connections to the theme of absent fathers. Bill and Tom both coming from middle class backgrounds settled in a highly regarded organization situated in a middle class area.

It was discovered that the work gave the participants opportunities to make reparation. It is through making reparation that they were able to accept their capacity to restore the real or phantasised damage they had caused or had been done to them. This became possible through their identification with the needy aspects of the children and young people through projective identification. Furthermore, by doing well in this work they may in turn be making reparation to their parents for having 'failed' to meet their parents' expectations of them. In turn this has allowed them to become sufficiently independent, hence they could then take on what may be considered as parental roles. Bill is a good example of this when he states that he has a much better relationship with his parents whilst at the same time was promoted to the role of team leader, also improving his status. However, for this process to take place one has to be in a 'holding environment'. (Winnicott, 1990, p.47)

Good enough institutions good enough care

In Chapter 5 I explained that although I had contacted a number of organizations in the private, voluntary and statutory sector there was no representation from the statutory sector therefore it was not possible to compare workers' experiences across the three sectors as Home 1 is in the private sector and Homes 2 and 3 are in the voluntary sector, with Homes 2 and 3 identifying themselves as therapeutic establishments.

In Chapter 4 it was identified that all the Homes regularly achieve 'Outstanding' in Ofsted inspections. Senior managers from all three Homes identified that training and support for the staff is important and that they have structures in place for these aspects of the work (pages 172-174). Of the 18 participants 16 had received support through the structures within the organization. Whether it is the structure or individuals within the organization I suggest that there is a system which corresponds with Bion's (1996) idea of 'container is contained', thus enabling these participants to remain in and enjoy the work.

One of the aims was to find out if participants working in Homes practising psychosocial care or known as therapeutic homes were more reflective, particularly about themselves in the work, than those working in other homes. In Chapter 12 I have identified the importance of support structures in maintaining the participants in their work. Homes 2 and 3 incorporate thinking spaces, such as sensitivity meetings, in their routine and most found these spaces useful as in the case of Gopal, Tom and Bill, who acknowledges that they had gained a lot from them. Tina did not enjoy them at all but recognized their value. The most noticeable difference between the participants from Home 1 and those from Homes 2 and 3 was the way they spoke of their own childhood and made connections between themselves and the work.   Such as when Gopal linked his own experiences with those of the young people he worked with when he talked about the theme of 'absent fathers'. I cannot say if this is generally the case but it was a connection which stood out in this study.

It was one of the Web participants that summed up the importance of the support structures: '*1-1 supervision, staff meetings, excellent training and on-going discussions with colleagues.*' Clearly Neil was getting this input in his work place and one would assume that these are the minimum requirements for a *good enough* home that can provide '*good enough*' care.

Recommendations

Noting that this is a small sample study and that the participants work in homes that are from the top tier there are a number of recommendations that I would like to make following on from the findings.

Firstly, the reasons why the participants entered the work came from both conscious and unconscious motivations. The reasons they have remained were overall because they became satisfied with their lives as they enjoyed the work and they had opportunities for making reparation for real or imagined harm done. Furthermore, the majority of the participants felt they were contained by the structures provided by their employer and there had been opportunities for career progression. Recruitment models which recognise these factors and take sensitive account of people's motivations would be beneficial for the sector. Additionally, developing or enhancing models of practice that attend to staff support and development could address work related stress and hence retention problems.

Finally, there is currently research into the models of care that work well both in terms of the quality of care and the training of staff. Of the four research priorities announced by the Government in March 2014 two are related to the quality of care and residential child care workers:

Improving children's residential care

• What are the factors that underpin better assessment, placement and provision for children in residential care homes?

• How far do existing qualifications; in particular foundation degrees in therapeutic child care, for staff working in children's homes meet the needs of staff, providers and ultimately children in care? (DfE, 2014, p.18)

However, although recognising that the work is complex as the young people being placed in residential care are more vulnerable and hence challenging than other Looked After Children, I was unable to find any announcement of Government sponsored research into understanding the nature and complexity of the work. Hopefully this will occur as part of the process of clarifying training needs. Furthermore, I would hope that the models of training explore the use of not only theoretical input but the use of case studies, practical experience, and alternative learning methods which have been used within therapeutic training, such as work discussion, observation, and practice based supervision as in courses provided by The Tavistock and Portman. (Tavistock and Portman,

2014) Whatever, training model is developed it surely needs to lead to a more respected qualification and ensure that it delivers skilled, thoughtful and confident workers who are supported so that they can work effectively with this group of vulnerable children and young people.

It was a real honour to meet all those that participated in this project and to visit their services. Their dedication to the task was inspiring and I feel I owe it to them to ask this one last question: "Why are we surprised when we hear of things going wrong when the sector is seen in such poor light, there is no requirement for a professional qualification and the people who, from my experience are truly committed and hardworking, are not even recognised as professionals?"

Appendix 1: Copy of approval letter from UREC

Dr Stephen Briggs
School of Social Sciences, Media and Cultural Studies
Docklands

ETH/04/93/0

15 November 2005

Dear Dr Briggs

Research Ethics Committee: Application for the approval of an experimental programme involving human subjects: Professional Doctorate in Social Work. (L Beckler)

I advise that Members of the Research Ethics Committee have now approved the above application on the terms previously advised to you.

The Research Ethics Committee should be informed of any significant changes in the programme that take place after approval has been given. Examples of such changes include any change to the location, number of participants, scope, methodology or composition of investigative team. These examples are not exclusive and the person responsible for the programme must exercise proper judgement in determining what should be brought to the attention of the Committee.

Appended to this letter is the Interim Report form for which to report the progress of an approved programme involving human participants. I would be grateful if you could return this report to me before the end of your programme and use it to indicate any changes that may occur throughout. In accepting the terms previously advised to you I would be grateful if you could return the declaration form below, duly signed and dated, confirming that you will inform the committee of any changes to your approved programme.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Dada
Direct Line: 0208 223 2976
E-mail: d.dada@uel.ac.uk
Administrative Officer for Research

Research Ethics Committee: ETH/04/93/0

I hereby agree to inform the Research Ethics Committee of any changes to be made to the above approved programme and any adverse incidents that arise during the conduct of the programme.

Signed:..Date: ....
Please Print Name:

Appendix 2, Letter to head of institution and participants/

<div style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: right;">
Correspondence address and contact details at the time the letter was sent
</div>

Dear

RE: Doctoral Research project, 'Who wants to be a residential social worker'

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral research project, 'Who wants to be a residential child care worker?' The project's aim is to gain a deeper insight into why people chose to become and remain residential social workers/project workers and managers.

The process will be in two stages. The first stage in this process will be the completion of a written questionnaire. This is attached and once completed I would be grateful if you could return it to me along with the consent form. From these I will select three or four people from your establishment with whom to carry out recorded life-story interviews.

To enable me to do this I require your permission to use the information from the questionnaire and the interview transcripts. All recorded information will be destroyed once my thesis has been assessed. However, I will retain the written questionnaires and transcripts so I make reference to them in any further writing arising from the thesis. I will ensure confidentiality of yourself and any persons you mention by changing names in the completed thesis, and by ensuring that no other identifying details, of place etc., are given. At any point during the research you may read a transcription of the interview material and if you wish I can let you read my completed thesis.

The interview material will be entirely confidential to myself, and not shared with any employing institutions that have agreed to the research taking place. Your employer has assured me that the choice of individuals to participate in the research will have no implications in any direction for their position in their organisation.

I would be grateful if you would sign the consent form to show that you have given consent to participate in the research process and return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

Yours sincerely

Lydia Beckler

Consent Form.

Name of participant:_____(Please print.)

1. I give consent that Lydia Beckler can use the material from the written questionnaire and/or recorded interviews with me for her Doctoral research project and other written works.

2. I understand that confidentiality of myself will be maintained as will that of any other person I mention.

3. I understand that I can have access of transcribed interviews at any time during the research process and read a copy of the completed thesis on request.

4. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form on completion of both signatures.

Signed...Date:..............................
(Participant)

Signed:...Date:...................................
(Researcher)

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