

A psychosocial study exploring children's experience of their parents' divorce or separation.

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Professional Doctorate in Child, Community and
Educational Psychology

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May 2019

Abstract

According to the Office of National Statistics (2018) an estimated 42% of marriages in England and Wales now end in divorce, with half involving children under the age of 16. Despite growing evidence of the impact of divorce and separation on children's happiness, self-esteem and behaviour there has been a paucity of research within the UK, which looks at children's experience of their parents' divorce or separation. This psychosocial study aimed to explore the experiences of children and young people whose parents have divorced or separated.

Four children and young people who had experienced the separation of their parents' (three males, one female) aged between 8 and 13 years old were interviewed twice about their experience using two psychoanalytically informed, free associative methods; the Grid Elaboration Method (GEM) and the Free-Association Narrative Interview (FANI). Data was analysed using Thematic Analysis. A subsequent psychosocial layer of analysis was then applied, using researcher field notes, to support an exploration of the dynamic, intersubjective and unconscious processes present during the interviews. Five themes emerged from the data and these are discussed alongside existing research and psychological theory. Unconscious processes observed through the interview process are also explored. Implications for Educational Psychologists (EPs), as well as schools and other professionals, when working with similar populations of children and young people are considered. The studies limitations and thoughts about future research are presented.

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the children who agreed to take part. My thanks goes to them and their parents who allowed me into their worlds to hear their stories. The experiences you shared will have a lasting impact on me and I hope your voices will be heard and your experiences better understood.

A big thank you to Cat for her enthusiasm and support for the study and for her support in identifying two of the families who took part in the research. Without you identifying these young people may not have been possible.

I would like to thank Rachael my research supervisor for her guidance and encouragement to follow my heart and do the research I found most valuable.

A very special thank you to my Mum and Dad who have provided me with the opportunities to achieve what I have, who always see the best in me, and have taught me the importance of perseverance and hard work.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my husband to be, David, without you this would not have been possible. Thank you for doing for me what I inspire to do for those that I work with; containing my anxieties, giving me hope and inspiring me to be the best version of myself.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The National Context

Divorce and parental separation transcends race, ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status (Amato & Cheadle, 2008). It is a recognised life event for children across the globe and its prevalence and nature has been studied in countries including the United States, Australia, and Ireland. (Campbell, 2008; Halpenny, Greene, & Hogan, 2008; Hans & Fine, 2001). This study focuses on the experience of children and young people who have experienced the divorce or separation of their parents in the UK. When considering prevalence, policy frameworks, impact and implications, the UK context is the primary field of study.

1.1.1 The Prevalence of Divorce and Separation in the UK

An estimated 42% of marriages in England and Wales now end in divorce (Office of National Statistics (ONS), 2018). Out of the over 11 million children in England, it is thought that 3 million will experience the separation of their parents during the course of their childhood (Bailey, Thoburn, & Timms, 2011), meaning one in three will experience divorce before the age of 16 (Maclean, 2004). There is no formal registration of cohabitation, or separation of unmarried parents, therefore, we cannot be precise about the number of children who experience the separation of their unmarried parents (Hawthorne, Jessop, Pryor, & Richards, 2003). However, it is thought that the figure is probably not too dissimilar to those who experience divorce, suggesting the number of children who experience divorce or separation is considerable.

1.2 The Impact and Effects of Divorce on Children

A growing volume of research has commented on the potential impact on children of living through their parents' separation. These highlight a complex range of emotional, economic, educational and social problems which may be experienced by children before, during, and after the breakdown of their parents' relationship (Bailey et al., 2011). Data from the Mental Health of Children and Young People Survey (2004) found a significant association between children living with a divorced or separated lone parent and associated mental health needs. Children were 75% more likely to experience a mental health disorder than children living with their married parents (Green, McGinnity, Meltzer, Ford, & Goodman, 2005). Studies indicate that there are immediate and long term effects for children who experience parental divorce with growing evidence to suggest the impact of divorce and separation on children's unhappiness, low self-esteem and behaviour (Maclean, 2004). The stress of parental divorce can impact negatively on the child's academic and psychological development and they are more likely to have emotional and behavioural challenges as well as increases in anxiety and depression (Huurre, Junkkari, & Aro, 2006; Molepo, Sodi, Maunganidze, & Mudhovozi, 2012; O'Connor, Thorpe, Dunn, & Golding, 1999; Pagani, Boulterice, Tremblay, & Vitaro, 1997).

Most children who experience the breakdown of their parents' relationship go through a period of unhappiness and many experience low self-esteem and loss of contact with family members (Rodgers & Pryor, 1998). However, most do settle back into a normal pattern of development (Rodgers & Pryor, 1998). Rodgers and Pryor (1998) and Hawthorne, et al., (2003) reviewed the impact of divorce and separation on children. They found that these children have twice the probability of experiencing poor outcomes compared with those in intact families, with the possibility of these being observed years after separation, even in adulthood. The reviews summarised that these children have higher probability of low family income, behavioural

problems, negative performance in school, depressive symptoms and substance misuse. Several factors were found to contribute to these outcomes including family conflict, quality of parenting, parental ability to recover from distress of separation, multiple changes in family structure and the child's ability to manage stress.

Parental separation can be a significant upheaval and catalyst of change in many children and young people's lives, with many experiencing diminished or no contact with one parent, reduced parental availability, the management of two households and routines, and the possibility of ongoing inter-parental conflict and anger (Halpenny et al., 2008). Research suggests that children from separated families when compared with children who have experienced the death of a parent experience greater risks of poorer educational attainment, lower socio-economic status and poorer mental health. Although both share the impact of parental loss, bereaved children are not as adversely affected across the same range of outcomes as children whose parents have separated (Rodgers & Pryor, 1998). However, it is thought that most children grow up and function within normal or average limits and it is only a minority who experience long term adjustment problems (Fawcett, 2000). It is important here to acknowledge the heterogeneity of divorce and separation. The variety of familial, contextual, psychological and social circumstances surrounding individual experiences of divorce and separation contribute to its many forms and, therefore, it is likely that experiences and impact will vary significantly between families and individuals. This is something hoping to be addressed in this study, which focuses on the individuality of experience. In order to know how to help to support children it is important to understand their experiences. The following section explores the current picture around hearing the voice of the child in relation to their experience.

1.3 National Policy and Legislation for Hearing the Voice of the Child

There has been growing interest and legislation that reflects the importance of children and young people sharing their views and participating in decisions about themselves. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child, ratified by British government in 1991, ensures that children have a right to express an opinion and have that opinion considered in any matters affecting themselves. This has become an established tenet of many UK policies and legislation (Bailey et al., 2011). In the UK, the main legislation covering arrangements for children when their parents' divorce or separate is the Children Act 1989, which has been amended in relevant sections by the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Children and Adoption Act 2006, and the Children and Families Act 2014. These provide for residence and contact orders relating to children to be made, to promote and safeguard the welfare of the child if there are disputes about parental responsibility within post-separation arrangements (Bailey et al., 2011).

Government initiatives (DCA & DfES, 2004; DfES, 2005) have proposed changes to divorce legislation, with the aim to improve outcomes for children and make fundamental changes to the way in which private law disputes are dealt with by the courts (Timms, Bailey, & Thoburn, 2007). In September 2018, the government put forward for consultation a reform of the legal requirements for divorce, to shift the focus from blame, towards supporting adults to focus on making better arrangements for their own futures and their children, with focus on improving outcomes for children, by minimising conflict, and strengthening family responsibility (Ministry of Justice, 2018).

Considering this legislation, research that focuses on children's experience of their parents' separation would arguably provide a more comprehensive understanding of what children think

and feel about this event. Previous research shows that children's responses to family change are diverse and varied, however, a focus on group related outcomes disguises the diversity and individuality of each child's experience and outcome (Hawthorne et al., 2003). What stands out is that children have views and perspectives that they want heard and it is in their best interest to be listened to, as decisions made have considerable impact on their lives (Hawthorne et al., 2003). Weidberg (2017) references that if children are given a voice it can impact on educational reform and lead to progress with policies and practice. Research that gathers children's views and allows them to be the experts in their own worlds not only provides a richness to data gathered but can enhance professionals' understanding of how a child experiences and makes sense of an event, such as divorce.

1.4 Divorce Research and Children's Views

"Among the shouting there are voices that are not being heard: the children's"
(Chen & George, 2005, p. 452)

The voice of the child can often be missed in the parental divorce process, however, given children's responses to divorce and separation are varied, research which considers the perspectives of children can contribute to the establishment of appropriate support and interventions (Hawthorne et al., 2003; Hogan & O'Reilly, 2007). Hawthorne et al., (2003) suggest that services that are set up to support children and young people who are experiencing, or have experienced divorce or separation, may be more effective, if those establishing them first consult the children. Children's views and experiences are slowly becoming acknowledged and researchers have come to recognise the advantages of talking to children directly about their experiences rather than relying on adult mediated accounts (Brand, Howcroft & Hoelson, 2017; Hogan, Halpenny & Greene, 2003). Several studies contribute to the current understanding of

children's experiences of parental divorce in different areas. Past research has explored children's views on their involvement in court proceedings (Timms et al., 2007), capturing the views of children whose parents were married and seeking a divorce. Other research has sought children's views on the mechanisms through which they can best be supported in the context of family transition (Halpenny et al., 2008; Hawthorne et al., 2003; Wade & Smart, 2002), their perceptions of contact arrangements (Trinder, Beek, & Connolly, 2002) and relationships with family members post-divorce (Abbey & Dallos, 2004; Bridges, Roe, Dunn, & O'Connor, 2007). Campbell (2008) in his research about children's views on decision making following parental separation strongly advises that it is increasingly important to hear directly from children to ensure we focus on their best interests and meet their needs.

1.5 Educational Psychology and Children of Divorce

Parental separation is most helpfully viewed as a process, which begins before divorce or separation of parents, and continues throughout the person's life. Children or young people might require support or intervention at any stage in this process (Maclean, 2004; Rodgers & Pryor, 1998). The development of intervention programmes and policies can be better informed through understanding the experiences and perceptions of children regarding parental divorce and should be of value to professionals such as psychologists, teachers and social workers (Brand et al., 2017).

Current legislation (Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, 2015; Every Child Matters (ECM), 2003) emphasises the importance of a family and person-centred system which works in partnership with parents, and involves children in discussions and decisions about themselves, to ensure best outcomes for children (DfES, 2003; DfE & DoH, 2015). EPs are well placed to help support and promote positive outcomes for young people by focusing on their needs and well-

being. Mercieca and Mercieca (2014) posit that listening to young people is an integral part of the role of the EP. Furthermore, EPs have the skills and opportunities to naturally elicit children's views and communicate with those around them to formulate a holistic and psychologically informed understanding of their complex individual and social needs (Maclean, 2004; Weidberg, 2017; BPS, 2002).

In recent years, there has been a growing focus on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. A greater understanding of how children experience parental divorce or separation can assist the provision of social, emotional support through the education system, which, ECM (DfES, 2003) highlights, has a pivotal role in offering support to all children who experience a variety of stressors throughout childhood. Research into the impact of divorce or separation on children has highlighted both immediate and long term effects on children's social and emotional wellbeing, happiness and mental health, which is recognised as being directly linked to their capacity to learn and academic standards (Ubha & Cahill, 2014). The recent Government green paper '*Transforming children and young people's mental health provision*' (DoE & DoHS, 2017) promotes the importance of 'a whole school approach that embeds the promotion of wellbeing throughout the culture of the school and curriculum, as well as in staff training and continuing professional development'. EPs work with the child, their family and other adults who teach and care for them in their support of children with SEMH needs (BPS, 2002), and are well placed to take a holistic view of a child's needs, considering the range of different social and environmental contexts within which they operate (Billington, 2006). The knowledge EPs bring of dynamic processes in relationships, the functioning of systems (including the family system) and their understanding of theories of development can put them in a crucial role in supporting others to understand the experiences of children who are in the process of or have experienced their parents' divorce or separation. Through the provision of

training or consultation, EPs can promote awareness and understanding of children's experiences and needs, and have the potential to improve outcomes and promote positive change for these children and young people.

1.6 Position of the Researcher

This psychosocial research aims to explore children and young people's experience of their parents' divorce or separation and hopes to illuminate and enable further understanding of their experiences from a psychoanalytic perspective. A psychosocial stance allows both the psychological and social to be considered together when interpreting data and conceptualizes participants as both products of a shared social world and their unique psychic worlds (Gadd & Jefferson, 2007). A psychosocial approach considers the interrelatedness of individual psychological and social experiences of research participants and also allows me, the researcher, to consciously consider my role, relation and presence throughout the research process, and its impact on myself, the participants, the data produced and the conclusions drawn. I will now address the four overarching influences that have led me to adopt a psychosocial stance and address the research topic in this way.

My academic and working background in psychology, psychotherapy and socio-cultural phenomena has influenced the lens through which I attempt to understand and gain insight into an individual's experience. This includes considering societal, cultural and psychological factors on the impact of phenomena on individuals. My EP training, which has exposed me to psychoanalytic and systems theories as frameworks for understanding phenomena, further contributes to how I view and interpret the world and the application of psychology in my practice. I believe through employing a psychosocial lens, I can gain an understanding of unconscious processes that shape an individual's narrative about an experience, and that

children's narratives related to experiences of divorce or separation, are shaped by an interplay of influences.

Two further influences have encouraged my interest in this research area. Firstly, my experiences as a behaviour mentor in a pupil referral unit for children with social, emotional and behavioural needs and as a Trainee EP exposed me to a number of children who have experienced the divorce or separation of their parents. Each individual child presented a unique story, with an individual response and individual social experience. This contributed to my curiosity as to what impacted on these experiences and the children's response to them. It is also important to note my own individual experience of divorce. My parents are divorced and with three siblings, our own experience and response to this event has been unique and individual, sparking my own curiosity further about the individuality of our psychological and social realities. Clarke & Hogget (2009) recognise the importance of a researcher acknowledging these "inner dynamics" that may spark professional interest. Reflection and reflexivity are key tenets of psychosocial research and allow researchers to reflect on their own subjective responses and the unconscious intersubjective dynamics in field encounters (Hollway, 2015).

Psychosocial influences shape and construct a researcher's world view as well as each individual's uniquely constructed narrative of their experience. This is true also for any interpretation of the meanings behind an individual's articulation of their experience. Psychoanalysis provides a framework to help researchers make meaning throughout the research process, with focus on the unconscious intersubjective communications between the researcher and researched in that context, making the encounter a co-constructed reality (Hollway, 2015). This interaction can be understood further using a psychosocial lens, and helps to consider what the researcher attends to, how they attend to it and why, as well as what is communicated and

how, and how this is influenced through the context of the interview. Paying attention to these phenomena can support the researcher to reflexively consider their role in this dynamic research encounter (Hollway, 2015).

Smart (2006) found some children were unable to provide full accounts when asked about their experience of divorce. This psychosocial research is of the premise that both the researcher and researched may engage in unconscious defences against anxiety, motivating the positions they take up and the accounts they portray (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Therefore, it is thought that when speaking about their parents' separation or divorce, children may have difficulty expressing their experiences entirely through verbal accounts and their narratives may be influenced by unconscious processes, impacting on how they articulate their experience. Through paying attention to unconscious processes within the interview context, it may be possible to gain a deeper understanding of both their conscious and unconscious communications of their experience.

1.6.1 Psychoanalytic Frameworks in EP Practice

In the context of this research, psychoanalysis focuses on the possible unconscious dynamics and defences that can present themselves when speaking with children about their parents' separation or divorce. Psychoanalytic frameworks are one way EPs can inform their understanding of their work with individuals and within groups or systems, however there is little research evidence to suggest that EPs use psychoanalytic frameworks in their practice (Eloquin, 2016). EPs are applied psychologists and the use of psychodynamic ideas elevate the central place of emotion in human experience and the significance of development in how the "there and then" may play out in the "here and now" (Kennedy, Keaney, Shaldon, & Canagaratnam, 2018). It allows for a more

reflective view of relational dynamics, encouraging awareness of inter-subjectivity and the emotions that can pass between people. Knowledge and awareness of the presence of transference and counter-transference in interactions can provide containment and support avoidance of acting out what is being transferred. Noticing and paying attention to these defensive manoeuvres, can allow them to be thought about and better understood in service of the individuals and systems in which EPs work (Kennedy et al., 2018).

1.6.2 Terminology

Separation and divorce, for the purposes of this research, have been interpreted to mean when children's biological parents no longer identify as being in a relationship with each other. The study honors the heterogeneity of experience and, therefore, these terms will be used interchangeably throughout this paper.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This research aims to explore the experiences of children and young people whose parents have separated or divorced. The national picture of divorce and separation is hard to be determined given the number of parents who choose to cohabit, rather than marry. However, it is thought that the number of children who experience this event is significant. Divorce impacts on a range of outcomes for children including their academic, psychological and socioeconomic development. Outcomes for children continue to be a focus nationally regarding their mental health and wellbeing and recently children's views are considered important in understanding their perceptions of specific life events. However, there is still little research that explores their views in relation to divorce or separation of their parents. The role of the EP, with regards to their involvement in eliciting children's views and working with families and systems, has been

highlighted; ensuring this research poses relevance. The position of the researcher has also been introduced. Having introduced the topic being studied, a critical literature review will now situate the study in existing UK-based literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter describes the systematic and comprehensive approach taken to reviewing the range and quality of the literature in relation to children and young people's experience of their parents' divorce or separation. The aims were to:

- Establish what is already known and enhance understanding of children and young people's experiences of divorce by describing the findings of previous research.
- Critically appraise relevant research; and
- Justify the aims, rationale, and research questions of the present study.

The findings are synthesised and reported in relation to addressing two literature review questions:

- 1) What does existing research tell us about children and young people's experience of their parents' divorce or separation?
- 2) How have children's experience of their parents' divorce or separation in the UK been explored in existing research?

2.2 Search Strategy

A search of databases PsycINFO, SocINDEX and PEP Archive was carried out on 21/04/2018. It was felt that these databases were appropriate and useful for this psychosocial study, as they contained reputable British psychological and educational journals; key psychoanalytic and

sociology journals and were felt to meet the focus of this study by transcending the split that often exists between psychology and sociology in research.

A second search was carried out on 16/08/2018 using the same search terms to identify any additional studies. At this point SocINDEX database had been discontinued and was unable to be included in this search. No additional studies were found. Education Source database was searched in addition to the above databases, to ensure all possible relevant literature was included in the final review. No new returns resulted from this database search.

A manual search of the two reputable Educational Psychology journals in the UK – 1) Educational and Child Psychology and 2) Educational Psychology in Practice was carried out on 02/08/2018 from available issues published between 1991-2018. No relevant studies were acquired from this. This is an interesting discovery considering the number of children and young people affected by the divorce or separation of their parents' and the role of EPs in working with these children and their families.

Finally, considering the limitations of databases and aiming to get as broad a scope of the literature on divorce and separation as possible, a search of papers published by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation was carried out. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is a reputable research organisation that focuses on social change.

2.2.1 Search Terms

Pilot searches were carried out using the above databases to refine search terms and to ensure the most useful terms were used in the final search to capture relevant literature. The thesaurus

function was used to identify relevant terms. The following terms were used to identify literature, Boolean operators “AND” and “OR” truncations were used as necessary:

Children, young people, teenager, adolescent, young adult, youth, school children
Divorce, children of divorce, marriage breakdown, marriage dissolution, marital separation, children of divorced parents, relationship termination
Experience, views, voice, lived experience

The above databases were searched individually using the above search terms. To identify papers related to relevant populations age was used as a limiter; Age: childhood (birth-12 years), school age (6-12 years) and adolescence (13-17 years).

Initial searches identified that the subject term ‘parental separation’ resulted in hits associated with parental attachment and parent-child separation so it was decided to remove this from the final search, having checked subject terms with the database thesaurus.

2.2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established in advance of conducting the searches to ensure that the research selected was relevant and appropriate to the study (Table 1).

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
Language: published in English	Position papers, editorials, book reviews
Empirical papers	Papers with a focus on a specific population e.g. SEN
Peer reviewed	Papers that focus on others views or experiences e.g. parent, teachers.
Research conducted in the UK	Papers looking to measure or evaluate the efficacy of interventions e.g. court interventions, mediation services
Literature that focuses on children and young people's experiences and views of divorce	Papers that focus on children's experience of the court process specifically e.g. children's experience of mediation or intervention
Literature that focuses on children of school age 4-18	Papers with a focus on outcome, correlational or mediating factors of the impacts of divorce
	Literature where the focus is a subject other than divorce or separation
	Research published before January 1991

UK papers were selected for relevance to the UK education system, in which Educational Psychologists conduct their training and work, also due to the population and national divorce statistics that have been commented upon in relation to this research. Research published after January 1991 were included as this is when Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child was ratified by British government.

2.2.3 Search Returns

An initial search using the subject term ‘children of divorce’ was conducted using the above databases and applying the chosen limiters, resulting in 28 papers. 18 papers were eliminated based on the titles and abstracts (see Appendix 1 for excluded articles) and 2 were duplicates. At this stage 7 articles were included.

Combined searches carried out on 21/04/2018 and 16/08/2018 resulted in 108 hits after eliminating studies from outside of the UK. 96 papers were eliminated from reading titles and abstracts and applying them to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. A further 11 studies were duplicates. One additional study was included from this search. Two papers were also returned from The Joseph Rowntree Foundation search. These final 10 papers were then read in full and checked for quality (Appendix 2).

2.2.4 Critical appraisal

Papers were screened for quality using Walsh and Downe’s (2006) appraisal tool for qualitative research (Appendix 3 & 4). This tool was selected for its suitability to appraising qualitative research and its inclusion of reflexivity in the appraisal criteria, an important component of psychosocial research.

2.3 Review of Literature

There is a dearth of research within the UK which looks at children’s experiences of their parents’ divorce or separation. There were also no identified articles in two key UK EP journals

that looked at children's experiences of divorce. The systematic literature review highlighted that there has been an increase in research over the past 15-20 years looking at children's perspectives around the topic of divorce, in many western countries. However, a large proportion of this research focuses on the court process linked with divorce and evaluations of mediating interventions. Of the papers returned, sociologists and social workers authored eight of the papers. Only one was authored by a psychologist indicating most divorce literature appears to be carried out within the area of sociology and social care. This is not unexpected considering the nature of social change associated with divorce and its focus on the family. However, it is surprising that the presence of psychologists, especially EPs, within this domain appears to be slim, considering their assumed regular contact with families and children who have or are experiencing divorce or separation. Five of the papers found were based on research undertaken through the same research centre, which may impact on the way the subject is addressed in the literature, and the range of ontological and epistemological positions adopted.

The literature review revealed that children, parents and professionals have all participated, to varying degrees in research around divorce and separation. This research intends to focus on children's experiences of divorce or separation, therefore, only papers with this focus have been included. The papers including both child and parental experiences have been included; however, priority is given to the findings that focus on children's experiences. The next section will present the identified papers in line with the literature review questions.

2.4 Researching Children's Views of Divorce and Separation

Broadly speaking, the research reviewed here can be broken into two overarching themes; change and transition, linked closely to contact arrangements; and support and coping. Linking

these themes together is the theme of relationships. Whilst some of the papers focused primarily on one of these areas, others reported on both.

The reviewed literature demonstrates a number of examples which explore the views of children and young people who have experienced divorce or separation and feel they are best placed to further understand the diversity of their experience of this process (Davies, 2015; Dowling & Gorell-Barnes, 1999; Fawcett, 2000; Flowerdew & Neale, 2003; Neale, 2002; Neale & Flowerdew, 2007; Smart, 2006; Wade & Smart, 2002). Dowling & Gorell-Barnes (1999), acknowledge that it can be difficult for children to be heard when parents decide to divorce or separate. It is reasoned that through children talking about how they perceive and experience divorce that it is possible to detect what positions children themselves actively adopt (Smart, 2006). Several of the reviewed papers come from a sociological perspective whereby child participation is considered alongside perspectives of welfare and citizenship (Fawcett, 2000; Neale, 2002; Neale & Flowerdew, 2007; Wade & Smart, 2002). Changes in sociological perspectives of children has promoted children as social agents, who are capable of thinking for themselves and who are considered young citizens in their own right, entitled to recognition, respect and participation (Neale & Flowerdew, 2007; Wade & Smart, 2002). These papers propose a view of moving beyond seeing children as in need of care and protection, as suggested by welfare paradigms, and instead integrating welfare and citizenship balancing ‘care with respect, and protection with participation’ (Neale & Flowerdew, 2007, p. 27). By incorporating children’s voices into research they have the possibility to be transformed from ‘invisible objects of research inquiry to active research subjects with legitimate voices of their own’ (Neale & Flowerdew, 2007, p. 27).

2.5 What does existing research say about children's experiences of divorce?

2.5.1 Change and Transition

Five papers centered their research around the aspect of change that occurs for children and young people who experience divorce. Change and transition is conceptualised in different ways by the authors and considers aspects of shared parenting, contact arrangements, contextual changes, time and pace of change and management of change.

Flowerdew & Neale (2003) contest the notion of 'multiple transitions', suggesting that literature in this area is limited to changes associated with parental re-partnering twice or several times over. They aim to refine the notion of 'multiple transitions' and provide new insights into the way young people manage change, through exploring young people's perceptions and understandings of the impact of changes, the pace and nature of change and the different contexts in which changes occur (Flowerdew & Neale, 2003). Sixty young people aged 11-17, from the north of England, living in post-divorce families, were contacted 3-4 years after their involvement in two linked projects. The sample was balanced in terms of age, gender and social background and they recruited from a variety of routes to avoid an exclusively legal or therapeutic sample. Authors organised their discussion into four themes: 'getting used to' family change; the management, pace and cumulative nature of change; the quality of relationships; and divorce as an 'everyday' challenge. However, the limited information on the design and analysis involved in the study makes it difficult to determine the quality of the analysis and recruitment methods. Encouragingly, the authors mention paying attention to ethics of conducting research with children. Findings suggested that stepfamily life brought economic benefits and that largely positive experiences were reported by the participants. The study recognises some of the difficulties children face when adjusting to stepfamily life including, moving home, dealing with

new stepparents, adapting to family routines and finances, coping with stepsiblings, and learning to ‘share’ parents and domestic spaces.

Other findings from children’s experiences highlight a sense of loss at the transition from a lone parent family back to a two-parent family, which authors suggest is afforded less recognition in the literature. Children appeared to manage change and transition more positively when only one parent re-partnered at any one time and found it harder when the pace of change was accelerated and multiple transitions occurred in a short space of time. Conclusions suggest that divorce is an everyday problem for some children, however, others continue to be preoccupied and perplexed by experiences, suggesting the individuality and specifics of experience and its impact on coping with change. It was noted that the management, timing and pace of change emerged as a critical factor in how young people cope (Flowerdew & Neale, 2003). This study helpfully highlights children’s experiences and uses extensive interview quotes to present children’s voices in relation to coping with change and transition. However, in a bid to ‘decenter divorce’ and highlight other potential important challenges in the lives of young people it fails to fully acknowledge the full breadth of young people’s experiences. The researchers do not mention any influence from researcher involvement and acknowledgment of reflexivity is missing considerably in this study.

Dowling & Gorell-Barnes’s (1999) project aimed to support children to find a way to describe their experience of divorce. The authors set out to determine the protective conditions which were likely to make it possible for children to cope with the transition of divorce and separation. They interviewed 10 families and children aged 5-14 years attending family therapy. The study takes the form of individual case studies and a comprehensive description of data gathering is provided, however, there is no discussion of how the data was managed or analysed. The study

does not select a homogenous sample, respecting the individuality of experience. However, it is not clear how the researchers decided upon these 10 families other than they were referred for family therapy. Surprisingly, given the therapeutic sample there is no mention of reflexivity from the researchers. Children's experiences involved changes to contact with the out of house parent and contextual changes including moving to a new house, school, sharing a room, and adapting to stepfamily life. A key narrative, was children having to manage and mediate relationships with and between parents, often having to negotiate transition from one parent to another amid quarrelling and discord. Children at times found themselves in 'loyalty binds', wanting to maintain positive relationships with both parents and unsure or unable to share that they are enjoying their time with the other parent. Dowling & Gorell-Barnes (1999) suggest that some children do not have a coherent story of the marital breakup, leading to confusion and anger. There were also reported developmental and gender differences; younger children may become clingy and fear the other parent leaving, whereas older children may express their anxieties through acting out or failing at school. Girls were more likely to suggest that parents should talk to their children about what is going on whereas boys felt the children should just grin and bear it. The paper concludes by highlighting the different clinical considerations that arise from children who experience divorce and goals for a specific model in working with families going through divorce. Due to the clinical nature, the generalisation to non-clinical samples is tentative. Unlike Morrison (2015) and Trinder et al. (2002), where parents were also involved in the study, Dowling & Gorrell-Barnes (1999) have chosen only to report on the children's experience, prioritising their subjective experiences.

Fawcett (2000) found findings consistent with above regarding the changes and transition that children experience. Fawcett (2000) reported on the individual, unique and complex shifting process, affecting children's lives, which usually began before parents separated and continued

months and years after the marriage breakdown. This included emotional reactions; upset and distress (anger, sadness, confusion and relief) and widespread practical and social changes such as, house moves, school moves, living with different people, extra responsibilities and less money. Fawcett interpreted a sense of both resilience and lingering sadness present for children after the separation.

2.5.1.1 Shared Parenting

Children's experience of shared parenting and contact arrangements were explored by four of the studies (Davies, 2015; Morrison, 2015; Neale & Flowerdew, 2007; Trinder et al., 2002). The studies present changes children face with regards to contact with their parents and associated contextual changes, which may take several forms depending on the relationship between parents.

Davies (2015) used a case study to present three siblings (aged 8-10) experiencing post-divorce shared parenting arrangements. She explored whether the term 'shared care families' may better conceptualise 'shared parenting' as it enables understanding of resources and different individuals necessary to support 'shared parenting' arrangements. Children's accounts were generated from a school-based field study investigating their constructions and experiences of family and close relationships, over 18 months. The study involved participant observation, children's drawings, family books, visits to children's homes and two sets of paired interviews. The family of children were recruited to take part based on their successful and consensual shared parenting arrangements and their relatively well resourced financial circumstances. The sample strategy for the original field study is not described and the reasons for selecting a relatively well financially resourced family over the other shared parenting children is not explained. The study provided a thorough description of its abductive approach to analysis and

how themes were derived. Themes generated were developed alongside existing themes from research in family life and parenting, and combined with themes that emerged from the data. Themes were ‘sibling relationships in shared family arrangements’; shared parenting: ‘fairness for parents’; reciprocity of care; and equal share and equal care. Davies (2015) interpreted that attributes of successful shared parenting arrangements were underpinned by shared cooperative relationships and were socially and materially well resourced. The need for space was emotionally important for children and this was highlighted as a difficulty to obtain when families re-partner and introduce step- and half-siblings, limiting children’s opportunities for peace, quiet and private space. Children’s views portrayed a principle of fairness and spending equal time with both parents. Although, the children attached value to sharing equal time, it was implicit in the children’s words that it was more important for parents. Additional factors were parents living close enough to each other so children could attend the same school and the involvement of grandparents and kin in the care of the children. Davies (2015) recommends that shared parenting should be re-conceptualised as ‘Shared Care’. This is considered with recognition to lower income families who are not materially or socially well-resourced. The financial burden of shared care is noted and considered as reasons why fewer lower income families go into consensual shared care arrangements. This study helpfully highlights some of the factors which support shared parenting through the eyes of children. It applies this to socio-economic status and places an argument for reconceptualisation of terminology to support those without the means to adopt a parenting arrangement of this kind. However, the study could have included the lower income families as means to demonstrate what works for them and therefore the assumptions made regarding how this arrangement wouldn’t work for lower income families is difficult to give much weight to.

Morrison (2015) focused on children's and mothers' experiences of contact when there has been a history of domestic abuse. Morrison (2015) used participative research activities with 18 children aged 8-14, which included a 'Storyboard', a pictorial vignette, and a 'My Story' activity which encouraged children to map their experiences of contact onto paper. Sixteen mothers who had experienced domestic abuse in Scotland were also interviewed and recruited from domestic abuse support services in the voluntary and statutory sectors. The study reported that continued abuse of women and children following parental separation was linked to contact arrangements. Children's contact with non-resident fathers often took place amongst an absence of parental communication and cooperation. These left children responsible for navigating the complex and charged dynamic of their parents' relationship. Children reported finding their fathers reactions to their mothers a fraught and frightening experience. They reported being in positions where they were unable to speak about their mothers or they were used as messengers, having to pass on information about changes to future contact arrangements or their mothers lives. Children were often pulled into an adult role, mediating and negotiating between parents, and the quality of relationship between parents affected the children's contact arrangements. The study uses previous research to support findings and provides clear details of the sample and research design, which are suitable for the aims and purpose of the study. It also acknowledges the difficulties of the research interview for children and employs visual prompts and activities to make the interviews more engaging, with a view to diluting its intensity. However, despite aims to include views of the children alongside their mothers, it focuses predominantly on stories and events from the mothers' accounts, demonstrating a dominance of the adult narrative over the child's narratives. This is acknowledged in other divorce literature, where adult views tend to take precedence (Brand et al., 2017). The study highlights, like Flowerdew & Neale (2003), that the quality of the relationship between parents is an important factor with regards to impact on the child. This study also adds an alternative argument to the view that contact with both parents

may mediate the negative impacts of parental separation, acknowledging the ongoing relational consequences of domestic abuse when considering children's contact arrangements.

Trinder et al., (2002), looked at contact arrangements from the perspective of parents and children. They aimed to examine how adults and children negotiate and experience contact, and what makes contact work and not work. The authors, although not explicitly, allude to their ontology by wanting to identify how each family member experienced the same arrangement and were not intent on illuminating a 'true' account. Trinder et al., (2002) interviewed 140 individuals from 61 families, 57 of which were children. The sample aimed to include both 'contested' and 'uncontested' contact where half of the families recruited were private ordered contact arrangements and the other half had a varying degree of involvement from lawyers and courts. Like other studies in this review the sample included a predominantly white sample, with an underrepresentation of different ethnicities and ethnic-minorities. Quality and quantity of contact varied tremendously, with nine different types of contact arrangements being identified, grouped into three themes; *Consensual committed* families were committed to regular contact with low conflict; *Faltering* families had irregular or ceased contact; and *Conflicted* families had disputes about the amount and form of contact.

Trinder et al., (2002) found that contact places significant demands on both adults and children. Problems identified by children were parental conflict, relationships with step parents, establishing meaningful relationships with the contact parent and not being consulted about contact. The authors show consideration of ethical issues, seeking informed consent, addressing issues of confidentiality and employing a specialist interviewer to conduct the interviews with children. However, like Morrison (2015), where adult perspectives have been sought alongside children, adult voices and perspectives appear to dominate, meaning that children's voices are

not fully heard in the study. The study helpfully addresses practical implications for families and court services, highlighting the need for a wider range of services (e.g. therapeutic), to be developed, as well as practical and realistic strategies for managing contact.

Neale and Flowerdew (2007) conducted a long-term study of children's lives after divorce by interviewing children at two points in time. The study focused on what it meant for children to sustain a shared parenting arrangement over a period of time. The focus was on the mechanics and structure of relationships as well as the quality of them. Neale and Flowerdew (2007) wanted to move beyond the snapshot approach, to discern how children's lives were unfolding and to determine the amount and nature of changes. The study used the same cohort of participants that were used in Flowerdew & Neale's (2003) study, following up 60 participants aged 11-17 from an original study. A new sample of children were also included, who were living in shared residence arrangements. It is difficult to determine the process by which this study selected its participants as the sampling strategy is not made clear. The final analysis focuses on 4 participants and again it is not alluded to how this decision was made. Therefore, despite the in-depth representation of children's experience it could be questioned why this sample size was selected. The study takes on a sociological perspective and views children as young citizens who are entitled to respect and participation. Children were divided between those based in one home with their residential parent, with varying levels of contact with their non-residential parent and those living across two homes, i.e. being shared between their parents. The authors wished to chart what has come to be seen as a relatively conventional arrangement with a more novel and experimental arrangement that necessitates packing up and moving back and forth every few days. The study acknowledges that some children may not view themselves as having one home even though they would be categorized that way for this study and therefore re-categorizes children in a way that may not fit their subjective experience. This aim appears to be

disconnected with the views of the study where the authors see children through the lens of their citizenship, recognising their need for recognition, respect and participation and respecting their experiences and agency. Neale & Flowerdew (2007) reported that shared arrangements were sometimes found to be inflexible and challenging for young people, where young people were sometimes under emotional pressure to maintain high levels of contact and keep things fair for their parents. This could lead to the children finding it difficult to exercise their autonomy or choice. It was discussed that shared residence could work well when it was based on consensus and good quality relationships and where the needs of the children were a priority and the arrangement was viewed flexibly. Children in ‘one home’ arrangements demonstrated that relationships with the out of home parent were sustained when the relationship was valued and enriching for the young people. When the relationship was challenging contact was likely to diminish. The study concludes from the four case studies that it is the importance of the relationship not the mechanics of the relationship that matter when it comes to sustaining contact in separated families. Good contact is not based on quantity but on good quality relationships.

Inter-parental conflict was found to impact young people’s lives in Fawcett’s (2000) study, before and after separation. Few adults were able to establish cooperative parenting and contact was found to not always reflect a quality relationship, as reported by the other studies in this review (Trinder et al., 2002; Flowerdew & Neale, 2003; Neale & Flowerdew, 2007; Morrison, 2015).

Overall, these studies present the perspectives of children experiencing shared parenting arrangements and comment that children experience several changes both with their contact with parents and contextually when their parents separate or divorce. Several different post-divorce or separation configurations may form, however, it is the general view that it is the quality of the

relationships that matter to children and enable a more fluid transition, than the quantity of contact.

2.5.2 Children's Narratives and Positioning

Smart (2006) explores children's narratives of post-divorce family life to show how children position themselves in relation to family change, their abilities to be reflexive and the extent they can generalise from their experience to broader ethical evaluations of family life. The study recruited 60 participants from an earlier study and appears to use the same cohort of participants as Neale and Flowerdew (2007) and Flowerdew and Neale (2003). This suggests that the breadth of experience portrayed in this review is limited and participant views may have been influenced through their involvement in other studies. All participants were ethnically white and lived in the north of England and the experience of children from different cultures and background is missed. The reflexivity of participants is acknowledged by the author who shares that this level of reflexivity may not have occurred on its own and may have impacted the participants' positioning and presentation of their narratives. This study also notes the role of the researcher in the co-production of narratives, acknowledging how the use of questions and vignettes would have encouraged the children to produce accounts. This mention of reflexivity is brief and the nature of the study suggests further reflexivity from the researcher could be warranted, including how the study impacts on the researcher. The study grouped the stories according to the different structures families took post-divorce and their emotional content. Detail is given of how these organising principles are arrived at, however, not much else is provided about the methodology. It was found that children's stories of post-divorce family life included stories of coping, surviving and personal growth, through to stories of blame, victimisation, loneliness, unspeakable pain, confusion and withdrawal. The author suggests that the narratives chosen are part of constructing a past which helps to shape the kind of person they believe themselves to be.

Smart (2006) highlights that these narratives are multilayered, revealing ambivalence and contradictions. The study also describes how some participants with unhappy accounts were unable to provide full accounts and had difficulty explaining or elaborating on events, whereas children who gave contented accounts were able to stand back from their ‘experience of divorce and position themselves as survivors’. Furthermore, the study found that many of the children had well developed ethical dispositions on how parents should treat each other, and how they should behave towards their children indicating they were generalising from their own experience and connecting their accounts into potentially socially relevant ethical dispositions. The study is one of a few pieces of research that attempts to capture children’s stories around their parents’ divorce and speaks to the complexity of their multi-layered accounts, however the lack of information regarding the methodology and participants makes it difficult to draw valid conclusions from this research.

2.5.3 Decision Making and Autonomy

One paper addresses children’s agency within their families and how they influence and actively contribute to family life (Neale, 2002). Neale (2002) in her study on children’s experiences, agency and reflections on support, carried out in-depth interviews with a sample of 117 young people, living in a variety of post-divorce/separation arrangements. This included focusing on children’s participation and choice within their families and their reflections on different sources of support or advocacy. This sample also appears similar to that used in other studies presented in this review (Flowerdew & Neale, 2003; Neale & Flowerdew, 2007; Smart, 2006), however, due to limited information on the sample and methodology, it is difficult to be certain about the nature of the participants and draw conclusions on the quality of this research. The young people in the study regarded meaningful conversation as a crucial ingredient of family life. Being part of

a ‘proper family meant being able to talk to others and be listened to, trust and be trusted and be treated as a person in one’s own right’. Similarly, to Dowling & Gorrell-Barnes (1999), Morrison (2015), and Neale and Flowerdew (2007), children wanted their parents to manage their relationships in ways that did not implicate them or force them to take sides. Relationship quality was deemed, by some, to be supported by open communication and shared understanding. Older children in the study attached more importance to their autonomy when it came to decisions about their personal lives. However, where decisions affected other family members, such as contact and residence, young people valued a more democratic process of decision making. Unfortunately, the study doesn’t demonstrate any sensitivity towards ethical concerns within the recruitment or management of the study. However, the core considerations of the study highlight consideration of equality and children’s rights and welfare when it comes to participating in family law, and promoting children’s voices rather than marginalising them.

2.5.4 Support and Coping

Four of the studies reviewed, consider children’s experiences of formal and informal support they received during the divorce process, what they found to be the most useful, and coping strategies that they employed. Coping strategies included remaining informed, maintaining contact with parents and opportunities to express their emotions.

Wade & Smart (2002), explored children’s, aged 4-10, preferred means of support. They used a combination of focus groups and individual interviews and considered the complexity and variety of experience, which is apparent in the way the data is collected. Children from four schools, from a variety of social backgrounds were included in the study. Focus groups included children with separated parents and those who had not experienced separation or divorce.

Children who had experienced separation or divorce were then interviewed separately. Although the study considers the variation of family structure by not limiting to ‘divorced’ parents and including those who are ‘separated’, it is unclear why children who had not experienced this family transition were included in focus groups. It is possible that their inclusion in the group may have influenced what the children of divorce or separation may have spoken about.

Findings indicate that there are many similarities in what children find helpful when parents separate. Children wish to maintain as much normality as possible but value having someone whom they can trust and confide in. Children are discriminating in the help they accept, with family members and friends being children’s most accessible sources of support when parents are not available to help. Children’s acceptance of support is based highly on the trustworthiness, empathy, kindness and cheerfulness of their informal confidant, and similar qualities are valued when children encounter outside agencies. Despite rich description of the data collected and the inferences drawn there is no description of data analysis methods. However, there is evidence of time spent drawing similarities and differences together. Interview methods included the use of drawings and example vignettes of typical dilemmas, to help children move away from their own experiences. This may have served as a protective factor against some of the more difficult experiences, but equally may mean that the in-depth experiences of the children may have been missed. The paper provides rich detail on the areas of divorce, including coping and support, relevant through the children's eyes and increases understanding of children's perspectives around this phenomenon, demonstrating the importance of understanding children's perspectives and using this to develop interventions and policies. This is one of two qualitative studies which mentions the role of the researcher and demonstrates some reflexivity about the subjectivity of interpretation of the data. However, this is not alluded to in the presentation of findings. Ethical complexities around children who want to participate but are not given consent from their parents is also addressed.

Fawcett (2000) explored 37 young people's, aged 12-18, experiences of the divorce process and help provided by family, friends and professionals. The sample were recruited from a counselling service, youth leaders, teachers and church groups in Northern Ireland. Although the sample reflected many characteristics of the population from which it was drawn, like other studies in the review, it had no participants from ethnic minority backgrounds. Fawcett (2000) describes some of the methodology and approach to analysis and it is clear how coding systems were arrived at. There appeared to be both an inductive and deductive approach to analysis, with some categories emerging directly from the data and others being led by concepts apparent in the literature. The study does not acknowledge the influence of prior interests of the researcher or previous literature in the analysis of the data and how this may contribute to the themes derived. The study presented some of its findings using a case study for one of the participants, other extracts used were not clear about which participant they were from. Although findings were supported well by other literature, individual participant experience is lost through being grouped into themes. Findings from children express that the separation process was a lengthy one, frequently underpinned by narratives of acrimony and violence. Extended family and peers were found to be important sources of support; however, there was little evidence of productive alliances with siblings. Those who had received specialist counselling services were positive about their experience, however, experiences of other services including school and social workers were more mixed. Aspects of what was helpful from siblings and extended family members was being reassured, being given advice, emotional support, talking and being comforted. Loyalty to parents reportedly prevented some young people from seeking support outside the family, however a large proportion of the participants reported talking to friends as a means of support. Age, gender, social attitudes towards speaking about divorce outside the family, and shifts in extended family networks, were all found to be factors that influenced the

availability of social support from siblings, relatives and friends. Children identified a range of problems they were experiencing including emotional, behavioural, family and school related difficulties, however they were not aware of any support available for them. If children were to talk to someone outside of the family, they needed someone helpful, who would listen, understand and keep things confidential. The key factor in whether the young person made use of the help offered was the quality of the relationship. The study also concluded with what young people need following separation, which included opportunities to talk about the separation and express their feelings and opinions, and reassurance that their experiences and feelings are normal. They also needed the right not to be caught in the middle of parental conflict and more information about available services and support, as well as the right to choose and say no to outside agencies. Young people made suggestions for practice, which were in line with others identified in previous research, emphasising the need for a service ethos that is non-stigmatising and gives young people respect and choice.

Several clinical considerations were identified by Dowling & Gorell-Barnes (1999) which stipulate what children need to cope with their parent's divorce. They summarised children need a coherent story, help to find an explanation of what happened, contact with both parents, clarity about their contact arrangements and to be free of guilt about spending and enjoying their time with each parent, and opportunity and support to express difficult feelings.

Neale (2002) also report on children's preferred sources of support, adding further to our understanding of what children need and want after the breakdown of their parents' relationship. Children preferred to keep family problems within the family or use informal sources of support such as kin or friends and peer support schemes. Professional involvement, where the child has been referred without choice, were seen as interventions rather than support and therapeutic and

legal services were seen as less than complementary. Neale (2002) argued that what is right for one child is not necessarily right for another and services should consider their different circumstances, rather than adopting a blanket welfare approach.

Overall these studies demonstrated that when seeking support around their parents' divorce or separation children want someone they can trust and confide in. This predominantly appears to come from friends and extended family, with other sources of formal support being less likely due to loyalty to parents and uncertainty about taking this outside the family. If children were to talk to someone outside of the family, they needed someone helpful, who would listen, understand and keep things confidential. Ultimately it is the relationships with these people that establishes the likeliness children will turn to them for support and whether they are capable of being non-judgmental and able to respond with empathy and kindness.

2.5.5 Importance of Relationships

Most of the young people reported on the quality and importance of relationships with their parents and between their parents. Children and young people reported more positive experiences when conflict between their parents was kept to a minimum. Contact between children and their parents was influenced by the quality of the relationship, e.g. good lines of communication, rather than the amount of time spent in contact. A key indicator of a child engaging in both formal and informal support was also influenced by the quality of the relationship between the child and the other individual.

Flowerdew & Neale (2003) reported that the quality of relationships, including good lines of communication and non-conflictual relationships between parents, led children to have more

resources to cope with change. However, high levels of conflict both pre-and post-divorce posed challenges for children's abilities to cope with change. Similarly, Morrison (2015) highlighted how acrimonious relationships between parents and absence of communication, left children to navigate the emotionally charged dynamics of their parents' relationships.

Like Flowerdew and Neale (2003), Trinder et al., (2003) found that it is the quality of relationships over the amount of contact that was important in making contact work. Quality and quantity of contact were determined by a range of factors, with high quality contact requiring ongoing dedicated efforts to make it work, not just the absence of major problems between parents. Neale and Flowerdew (2007) also conclude that it is the importance of the relationship not the mechanics of the relationship that matter when it comes to sustaining contact in separated families. They summarised that good contact is not based on quantity but on good quality relationships.

Neale (2002) identified that relationship quality was deemed to be supported by open communication and shared understanding. This was extended beyond the parent-parent and parent-child relationship by Fawcett (2000) to include the relationships with those who are offering support, for example, siblings, extended family, friends and professionals. They found that children needed someone helpful, who would listen, understand and keep things confidential. The key factor in whether the young person made use of the help offered was the quality of the relationship.

Overall, the studies that reported on the importance of relationships for children going through the process of divorce focused on relationships between parents, relationship between parent and child and relationship between child and support giver. The quality of the relationship between a

child and their parent impacted on the amount and sustainability of contact they had after divorce. Where there were good lines of communication and shared understanding, the quality and quantity of contact remained high. When relationships between parents were acrimonious and testing, this influenced the children's ability to cope with post-divorce challenges and transitions, and they sometimes found themselves as mediators between parents. Furthermore, relationships with siblings, extended family, friends or professionals were found to be supportive based on the quality of the relationship and the level in which children found that person helpful and understanding.

2.5.6 The Role of School

Only two of the studies in the review reported about the role, impact or importance of school for children when experiencing the divorce or separation of their parents (Dowling & Gorell-Barnes, 1999; Fawcett, 2000). Fawcett (2000) reports verbatim interview extracts of a boy plagued by thoughts, who found it difficult to concentrate and regulate his attention in school. All the young people interviewed in this study reported school related difficulties. However, there was no evidence of specialist school-based interventions targeting young people affected by divorce, even though 70% of the sample indicated that separation had a negative impact on their school work and behaviour. Young people had mixed views of support offered from school staff, with 52% reporting negative engagement and views of mistrust and insensitive or punitive responses. Those who reported teacher support in a positive light reported that the teachers were liked and respected and they offered support with problems they experienced with class work.

Dowling & Gorell-Barnes (1999) refer to one child in their case studies who was referred for difficulties adjusting to school and conclude with how her relationship with school improved

post therapy. They also report that school can be a safe place which provides a continuity at time of change. They share that it is important for school staff to remain connected with both parents. However, like Fawcett (2000) they found that students found it difficult to confide in teachers, in relation to their parents' separation. Teachers can be helpful in normalising the situation but they depend on information being shared with them about issues that impact on the children's daily lives e.g. contact arrangements.

Cox and Desforges (1987) suggested that in order to teach children effectively, attention must be paid to what is happening in their lives outside of school. They postulate that schools are in a unique position to help children when their parents separate. They propose a range of specific strategies schools and teachers can employ to support children when their parents separate. These include developing a policy, sensitive consideration of the school organisation, keeping records, counselling, involving both parents, providing practical help and providing relevant reading material.

Cox and Desforges (1987) suggest that developing a school policy for divorce sensitises the school to the importance of divorce and legitimises this as an area of activity for them. They suggest staff need to acquaint themselves with the school policy for dealing with separation or divorce and know what is expected of them. Parents should be informed at the outset of contact that the school would like to be informed if the child experiences major disruption to their home life, including parental separation. It is suggested that schools consider their organisation in order to ensure it does not add to pupils' distress, for example, providing children with opportunities to build supportive, trusting relationships with teachers and peers, through minimising the amount of transitions within a school day. Teachers are also advised to use their pastoral capacity to provide children with extra care and support during these times. The range

of family compositions are also considered and it is suggested that schools make attempts to meet the needs of both parents, who may be available at different times. Schools are advised to consider their practices and procedures for record keeping and they should ensure that all relevant facts about a pupil's family life are recorded and updated as necessary, for example, the names and addresses of both parents, step-parents and access and custody arrangements. Cox and Desforges (1987) also suggest that teachers require basic counselling skills which they can use to support parents and children who are experiencing divorce or separation. This includes providing space for the child to share, employing active listening skills and being non-judgemental. Cox and Desforges (1987) suggest teachers should also receive personal group or individual support in these cases and that Educational Psychologists can provide a supportive and consultative role at these times. Both parents should be given opportunities to remain involved in the development and education of their children. Schools can support this by continuing to involve the absent parent and making parental involvement easier, for example, by inviting both parents to parents' evenings and sending letters, reports and other information to both parents. Finally, schools can provide practical help to children and parents going through divorce or separation. School staff may be in a position where they can make considerations for the child whose parents are experiencing their own distress by offering some extra attention and reassurance or ensuring that spare equipment for timetabled and extracurricular activities is available for children whose homes may be in physical or mental turmoil. Additionally, providing a space for children to leave overnight bags or to do homework in a calm environment so they can continue to achieve in their school work, can support children who have to move between their parent's homes. Schools are also advised to ensure they have access to reading material that features families who are separated or divorced in order to demonstrate their acceptance of this family arrangement and provide opportunities for discussion and further understanding (Cox & Desforges, 1987).

2.5.7 Summary of Literature Review Question: What does existing research tell us about children's experiences of divorce?

The review of existing literature demonstrated that children's experiences of divorce are varied and individual, with some children demonstrating resilience and coping, and other children reporting lingering sadness, continual preoccupation and stories of blame, victimisation and extreme pain. Some of the difficulties reported by children included emotional, behavioural and school related problems. Other studies found children to report predominantly positive experiences including economic benefits.

Children experienced several changes as a consequence of divorce including practical and social changes e.g. moving to a new house, introduction of step families and changes to contact with their parents, however, coping with these changes appeared to be impacted upon by the pace, timing and management of these changes.

The quality of relationships was found to be the most reported factor by children that minimised upset and supported contact relationships, both between parents and parent and child. Children sometimes found themselves having to manage and mediate relationships between parents and in fear of upsetting one parent over another. The quality of relationships and amount of contact was found to vary significantly across families, however it worked better when children remained the priority, and it was supported by open communication and shared understanding.

Children were happy to adopt control over decision making regarding their personal lives, however, with decisions which affected the family, children preferred a more diplomatic process

of decision making. Children found friends and extended family were the most accessible forms of support and they valued someone they could trust and confide in. Children tended to rely on external sources of support less, however a key factor determining whether young people made use of the external support was the relationship. To cope, children needed opportunities to talk about the separation and express their feelings, support to normalise what they were experiencing and the right to not be caught in the middle of parental conflict. As well as the right to know about and choose whether they wanted involvement from outside agencies.

School was found to provide some continuity in a time of change; however, children did not use or did not value support that was offered by teachers, despite many children reporting school related difficulties as a consequence of divorce. This was also an under reported area in the research. Educational psychologists are well placed to support schools with helping children who are going through divorce or separation as well as working with parents and children who may be experiencing difficulties in this area.

2.6 How have children's experiences of their parents' divorce or separation in the UK been explored in existing research?

To situate this current research in the existing body of research, I will now explore how children's experiences of divorce have been gathered in previous research. I will draw on the methodologies used and focus on any evidence of reflexivity or reference to psychosocial processes e.g. the acknowledgment of unconscious dynamics.

The UK studies identified in this review were all qualitative designs and they all incorporated interviews of some kind into their approach to gathering data. However, the quality of the reporting of these methods varied, with some studies only partially describing their approach to

sampling, data collection and analysis. Several of the studies recruited legal or clinical samples, which is something the present study wishes to broaden by recruiting from parent and child interest through schools.

A thorough search of the UK literature only identified 10 UK studies exploring children's experiences of divorce. None of these studies were carried out by Educational Psychologists, highlighting a dearth of practitioner research in this area. Subsequently, four of the studies identified utilised the same sample of children for their research. This questions the diversity of experience that is presented and suggests the need for further research utilising different children and young people. Only one study (Smart, 2006) appears to elicit children's narratives not using preconceived agendas and questions, however this was difficult to determine due to the lack of information provided regarding the methodology. There was limited reflexivity expressed by the researchers in these studies with a brief mention of co-production of narratives and researcher influence on the interpretation of themes. This situates the present research well within the existing research to address unconscious processes present in the subjects of the research and in the researcher, when exploring children's experiences of divorce.

Participants ranged from 4-22 years, with many papers focusing on the older, adolescent age range, although a significant proportion also interview primary age children. However, due to the numbers of participants involved in each study, in depth emotional experience of these children tends to be missed. All studies recruited predominantly white British participants, one paper included one family of Asian heritage and one from Chinese heritage, two reported including families from a range of cultures, ethnicities and religions and another include 3 non-white families alongside 52 white families. Three did not mention the ethnicities of their participants. This suggests that the experiences of children from different ethnicities and cultures are

underrepresented in this body of research and suggests further research with this group of children is warranted. The views of this group of children are equally valid and necessary in order to inform our understanding of their experiences of this event.

Interestingly, the papers reviewed here focused predominantly on the procedural events associated with divorce. There appeared to be a limited focus on the emotional aspects of divorce or why children chose to talk about what they did. This present study hopes to address this by moving beyond the conscious reported experience by focusing as well on the unconscious, individual and social processes involved in the way children talk about and respond to their experience.

It is important to note that even by reviewing the literature involving children's experience we risk marginalising their voices further by reporting on the findings of adult researchers, who interpret their voices with their own lens, influenced by both conscious and unconscious processes, which in turn influence their selection and presentation of participant voices.

This study hopes to address this by acknowledging the role of the researcher and unconscious dynamics that influence the interview dynamic. Through applying a psychoanalytic lens to the data, it will aim to present findings with consideration of what has been attended to and why.

2.6.1 Psychosocial perspectives

The aim of this section is to explore evidence of psychosocial processes, within the identified literature, as defined by Hollway & Jefferson (2013). This perspective argues that research subject's inner worlds cannot be fully understood without knowledge of their experiences in the

world and whose experiences in the world cannot be fully understood without knowledge of the way their inner worlds allow them to experience the outer world (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Both subjects and researchers are seen as defended and influenced by prior experiences, which influence the subject's motivations and beliefs as well as the researcher's choice of method, questions and approach to analysis.

Only two studies in this review included reference to researcher reflexivity, referring to the role of the researcher in eliciting narratives (Smart, 2006) and in their interpretation of the data (Wade & Smart, 2002). No studies directly analyse or refer to unconscious processes, however attention to the language of some of the studies indicate that some researchers may be aware of unconscious processes surrounding children's narratives of divorce. For example, Dowling & Gorell-Barnes (1999), give consideration that time alone with children does not mean they will share everything, '*seeing children on their own does not mean that this context sets them free to speak about the most worrying aspects of their life*' p. 43, assuming that inner processes may influence the motivations of children in these contexts. Dowling and Gorrell (1999) also make allusions to children adopting Klein's (1975) depressive and paranoid-schizoid positions, as defined in her Object Relations theory, in their abilities to hold onto good parts of their fathers or view their mothers as all good and their fathers as all bad, suggesting that unconscious defences may be present in children's narratives of divorce.

Smart (2006) suggests narratives chosen are part of building a past which helps to shape the kind of person participants believe themselves to be and Neale and Flowerdew (2007) comment that children's pasts and projected futures play a significant part in shaping their lives in the here and now. Here the authors appear to be acknowledging the individual's biographies and their investments in divorce discourses i.e. their individual '*desires and anxieties, probably not*

conscious or intentional, which motivate the specific positions they take up and the selection of accounts through which they portray themselves' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p.14).

Smart (2006) further alludes to unconscious dynamics by referring to the narratives as multilayered, revealing ambivalence and contradictions. She also describes how some participants with unhappy accounts were unable to provide full accounts and had difficulty explaining or elaborating on events, whereas those who provided contented accounts were able to stand back from their experience. Smart (2006) appears to allude to the possibility of a defended subject whereby participants are unable to put themselves in an objective position and how anxieties are defended against, through avoiding reflection on experience, protecting the internal self.

Recognition of psychosocial processes or unconscious dynamics are not explicitly alluded to in any of the reviewed literature. However, some of the language used in three of the papers suggests that children's presentation of their experiences is not a simple, conscious process. Employing a psychosocial critique, it can be suggested that individual and social factors can affect and influence the way individuals (children, professionals, researchers) talk about and respond to divorce and separation. The research currently available has not appeared to allow for a full exploration of these processes and paves the way for the present study.

2.7 Rationale

EPs are well positioned to engage in practitioner research into experiences of divorce and separation drawing on their familiarity with both research design and evidence informed practice. Further research in this area is likely to be relevant and useful, due to the prevalence of divorce and number of children who are likely to experience the breakdown of their parent's

relationships, suggesting many EPs will be engaged in casework where divorce or separation has occurred, either directly or indirectly influenced by divorce or separation.

The literature review also shows that children's experiences of divorce are multi-faceted and diverse, however the current research has not allowed for a full exploration of the individual psychological and social factors that affect the way children talk about their experiences of divorce. This current study intends to use a psychosocial methodology to explore children's experience of their parents' divorce or separation that acknowledges the interaction of social and psychological processes affecting how participants respond. It will explore the conscious and unconscious processes which may influence what participants say, how the researcher responds and the relational dynamics inherent in the interview process. It aims to adopt an approach that honors what children choose to talk about and follows their narratives around divorce, rather than imposing a conscious predetermined agenda on the data that is elicited.

3. Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter starts with defining the research question, aims and purpose before outlining the ontological and epistemological position of this psychosocial research. The research design and methods are described, detailing the procedures used to recruit participants and methods of data collection. The method of data analysis is presented followed by a discussion of trustworthiness, reliability and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Question

This study aims to address the following questions:

- How do children experience their parents' divorce or separation?
- What can be understood about participants experience of divorce or separation from a psychosocial perspective?

The research questions for this study have been kept broad to allow for an exploration of what children choose to talk about in interviews using free associative methods and with the intention of trying to understand children's experiences 'through their own meaning frame' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013). A more specific question may have contributed to shaping what children talk about or induced me to apply my own biases or assumptions about experiences of divorce or separation.

3.3 Research Purpose

3.3.1 Exploratory

This study has an exploratory purpose. As discussed in Chapter 2, at present there is a dearth of research that privileges child voice, from a psychological perspective, on the topic of divorce or separation. The purpose of this research was to explore in depth what children and young people talk about in relation to their parents' divorce or separation. The exploratory purpose is appropriate for this research as I do not hold any specific hypotheses about what themes or narratives may emerge. The hypothesis rests on the belief that there are psychosocial processes related to children and young people's experience of divorce or separation that can be illuminated through the research process.

3.4 Research Aim

This research aims to contribute to the research around divorce in a way that considers the child's social and individual history by focusing on their experience, from a psychosocial perspective. This research aims to build on previous research into children's experiences of divorce by enhancing understanding of children's subjective experience through the research process, with a view that knowledge and insight generated by the study may then inform EP practice and intervention as well as other professionals supporting these children and families. It is hoped that increased awareness and understanding could be used by EPs in their approach to working with children or young people who have experienced the separation of their parents, through informing their assessment, formulation and hypothesis generation.

3.5 Ontology and Epistemology

How a researcher views the status of truth and knowledge in the real world determines their ontological position. Epistemology is how the researcher plans to find out about that world. A researcher's ontological and epistemological positions are linked, where acknowledgement of a view about the nature of reality ultimately influences views on how that nature of reality can be known (Moore, 2005). Application of theoretical lenses can also allow the information to be viewed according to a theory or framework (Creswell, 2009).

3.5.1 Psychosocial Ontology

This research is based on a psychosocial ontology. The postmodern psychosocial perspective poses a radical challenge to the positivist idea of scientific knowledge which views true reality as perceivable and independent of the observer. A psychosocial ontology is considerate of a reflective process and a co-created social reality that is in relatedness to other agents (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). This is suggestive of both an individual psychic and social reality, which are interdependent and as such have an influence on the other, shaping an individual's psychological and social reality. This interactive and intersubjective process is unique to each individual and their social and cultural context. Therefore, espousing a reality that is a unique product of an individual psychological and social world and shared social world.

Furthermore, this ontological stance pays particular attention to the role of the researcher and their influence on both the generation of research data and construction of the research environment and the interpretations of data (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). This research takes into consideration my own unique psychic reality, social reality, and embodiment of these and how these influence the different stages of the research process including the research topic, the

research encounter with participants, what I attend to or miss, and the interpretations and analysis of the data.

3.5.2 Psychosocial Epistemology

Psychosocial ontology lends itself to a psychosocial epistemology, which is applied in this research. This epistemology enhances and extends the dimension of knowledge production with a focus on the projective dynamics of the researcher-researched relationship with the intent to provide a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Psychosocial research adopts the assumption that, through interacting with participants and empathically listening to their expression of experience, an increased understanding can be achieved (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Hollway (2015) acknowledges the unison between methodology and epistemology of the psychosocial approach. When a researcher chooses to learn or ‘know’ about a participant’s experience, they come to ‘know’ through their interaction/relation with the participant in their own world, which provides the means through which meaning is made (Hollway, 2015). Psychoanalysis is the theoretical basis which aids the psychosocial approach, complementing understanding of a participant’s experience through attention on the affect or emotion in uncognised knowing.

This form of ‘knowing’ provides an important means through which to make sense of data elicited and signals the importance of the role of the dynamic unconscious, which Bion postulates as knowledge in its earliest form. In the earliest form of communication between mother and infant, the mother is able to contain her infants indigestible emotional experience, process it and return it to the infant in a digestible form. These non-lexical and pre-symbolic

forms of communication, thought to continue beyond the mother-infant dyad, inform researcher knowing and require awareness and deciphering of our affective and embodied responses.

The psychosocial epistemological stance taken in this research goes beyond a view of a cognitive, conscious and rational process of meaning production, requiring attention to non-lexical and embodied forms of communication. Psychosocial approaches provide a model for noticing and thinking about the dynamic research encounter and the impact of the researcher on the participants and the participants on the researcher, and how this influences the data that is produced. Given divorce is a social phenomenon, with different cultural influences, through which children experience significant changes and transitions, this affect based way of knowing is a suitable means to exploring and obtaining insight into the lived experiences of divorce from the child's perspective. Furthermore, EP practice relates to gaining a holistic understanding of how something comes to be so, focusing on both individual and systemic strengths and barriers, which is in line with the individual/psychological and social/cultural emphasis in psychosocial research.

3.6 Methodology

3.6.1 Qualitative Methodology

This research aims to gain rich, detailed information about children's experience of their parents' separation. Qualitative methods which allow participants to make sense of their lives through their own words can provide in-depth insight into complex psychological and interpersonal processes (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative approaches are suitable for an exploratory approach, employing methods which can capture lived experiences of research participants (Creswell, 2009; Povee & Roberts, 2014).

The existing studies in chapter 2, which explore children's experience of divorce in the UK have also applied qualitative designs. However, these were the only retrievable studies that focused on children's experience of divorce in the UK, suggesting the scarcity of research in this area. Furthermore, the studies presented were limited in their diversity of recruitment procedures and some were lacking in quality, rigour and focus. These studies focused predominantly on procedural aspects of divorce and many did not capture the affect or emotional experience of the participants through key events or experiences. Therefore, employing a qualitative methodology which utilises psychoanalytic methods presents possibilities for exploring processes that include both the inner and outer worlds of the participant and the contribution of unconscious feelings, desires and affects (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Qualitative methodology is therefore appropriate for my purpose to explore in depth what participants talk about when asked about their experience of their parents' divorce or separation, including individual, relational, and social aspects of their stories. I will now describe the suitability of the psychosocial method used for data collection.

3.6.2 Psychosocial Research

The emergent field of psychosocial research is becoming more established and acknowledged as a viable approach within social sciences and has marked a change in social science research. Previously, there was a shared assumption that there existed an objective separation between observer and observed (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Hollway (2015) proposed that the psychosocial approach attempts to overcome the split between the "individual" and "society" by utilising psychoanalytic theory and thinking to address both what is accessible through discourses and those residing in unthought modes, that which is unconscious, preconscious and embodied. Clarke & Hoggett (2009) argue that the psychosocial approach towards social

research can be viewed as a cluster of methodologies which position the subject(s) of study in a particular way, namely '*considering the unconscious communications, dynamics and defences that exist in the research environment*' (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009, p 2-3).

Psychosocial approaches are informed by psychoanalytic theory. I believe that by employing a psychosocial approach to understanding children's experience of divorce, rich, in-depth data may be gained which offers the possibility for illuminating some of the dynamic interplay between the inner world of the participant and their social world resulting in further understanding of how that participant's external world is represented and internalised. Psychosocial research aims to attend to the interpretations of subjectivity expressed both consciously and unconsciously in the interview process, analysis and interpretation of data. Hollway & Jefferson (2000) suggest that research subjectivity should be used as a vehicle for data capture, whereby self-reflection on methods, practice, emotional involvement, and the affective relations between the researcher and the researched can provide further information on the dynamic interplay, within a co-constructed research environment.

3.6.3 Psychoanalysis in Psychosocial Research

Psychoanalysis is the body of theory that complements understanding of the subjective experiences of both the researcher and participant in psychosocial research (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) and provides a framework for attending to the unconscious communications that permeate interactions (Klein, 1957). Psychoanalytic theory in psychosocial research informs our understanding of the context of research interactions and emphasises the importance of the unconscious communications that are negotiated within the research encounter. These

unconscious communications ‘affect empathy and report... [and] therefore play a role in the materials that subjects reveal and researchers grasp’ (Hunt, 1989, p. 27).

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) employ the view that psychoanalytic epistemology, using subjectivity as an instrument of knowing, goes beyond the conscious analytic knowing seen in other qualitative approaches. I too adopt this view that ideas and techniques from psychoanalytic theory, including the likes of unconscious defences, free association, transference and countertransference and projective identification are applicable to relational interactions beyond those seen in a clinical setting. Drawing on knowledge of my own subjectivity throughout the research process I am able to use this to gain a sense of my participants’ narratives. I have ensured important ethical and trustworthiness issues have been considered as a result. This includes additional psychoanalytically informed supervision, a reflective research diary and field notes, and peer checking during data analysis.

3.6.4 Anxiety, the Defended subject and Defended Researcher

Anxiety is viewed as being inherent in the human condition. When threats are made to the self, defences against anxiety are employed influencing people’s actions, lives and relations. This operates largely at an unconscious level and is a key element considered by psychoanalytic schools of thought (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). This argument postulates that conflict, suffering and threats to the self, create anxiety. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) consider the ‘defended subject’ who is motivated by unconscious investments and defences against anxiety and invests in certain discourses over others to provide protection against anxiety and support identity. The ‘defended subject’ bridges the psychic and social domain, with personal identity emerging between a constant interplay between the environment and the inner world of the subject.

Through using subjectivity as a way for knowing I hope to access not only the spoken accounts of children but also those residing in unthought modes; those that are unconscious, preconscious and embodied (Hollway, 2015).

Klein also dismissed the idea of the self as a single unit, separated from the external world. She suggested defended subjects are forged through unconscious defenses against anxiety, which are intersubjective and come into play between people (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Klein (1975) emphasized the role of anxiety in early infant life and its impact upon later development and relating. Klein's Object Relations Theory refers to how an infant experiences polarised emotions of 'good' and 'bad' in relation to its mother who has the capacity to both fulfil and frustrate in times of hunger. Defensively, to protect the good from the bad, they are kept mentally separate. This splitting of objects is termed the 'paranoid-schizoid position' which we can all adopt in times of threat to the self, permitting us to believe in a good object, uncontaminated by 'bad' threats, which have been split off from the object and located elsewhere. Klein also emphasised the splitting of the ego where bad parts of the self are split off and projected outside of the self, located elsewhere in another person or object (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The position a person adopts is context and content specific and sometimes an individual is able to adopt the depressive position, where acknowledgement that good and bad can be contained in the same object. When there are external or internal threats to the self this can be a hard position to sustain and the 'good' needs to be preserved even at the cost of reality resulting in the 'bad' being split off (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

I wish to explore the reality of a dynamic unconscious, at play within and between the defended subject and defended researcher, that can be used as data. Children are exposed to several changes during and after parental separation, which, impact on them in different ways, and

suggests children may engage in defences against anxiety to protect themselves from the threats of anxiety experienced as a result of their parents' divorce. The mind can unconsciously create defences in the context of anxiety provoking experiences. This research aims to consider how these children's social worlds interact with their psychological internal world and how these impact on their narratives and the stories they tell.

The psychosocial approach also considers acknowledgment of the 'defended researcher' who brings with them their own history, biography and unconscious investments and how this might interact with that of the 'defended subject'. There is a dynamic unconscious at play between 'defended subject' and 'defended researcher' which suggests that subjects are 'constituted relationally and engage continuously in processes of identification, projection and introjection' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013). This encourages open sensitivity and reflection from the researcher on their subjectivity about the impact of their role in the process, and as Hollway and Jefferson (2013) suggest, provides valuable and usable data.

A psychosocial approach employs psychoanalytic theory as a framework in which to make sense of unconscious communications and interpret emotional data. Further to anxious defences of 'splitting' other affective ways of knowing can be experienced through the dynamic relational processes of the transference-countertransference (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Freud termed transference as the repetition of an earlier experience transferred onto a new person. Countertransference refers to the therapist's responses to these transferences as well as their own transferring of emotionally significant relationships on to the patient (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

3.7 Research Design

3.7.1 Participants

A purposive sample of 4 children, who had experienced the divorce or separation of their parents, were recruited from three schools. Due to the depth of analysis required for psychosocial research, small sample sizes are common. This research, acknowledging the heterogeneity of experience from a psychological and social perspective, was not limiting in its selection of participants. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants are presented in Table 2. Table 3. shows the studies participants.

Table 2. Participant Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
Aged 7-14 years.	Children older than 14, younger than 7.	For a breadth of experience two key stages were selected. A broader age range was not selected due to pragmatic considerations of the study. Children younger than 7 were not considered due to the level of detail and language skills required for the interviews.
Parents have been divorced/separated 6 months or more.	Divorced or separated less than 6 months.	Due to sensitivity of the subject children will have had some time to understand and adapt to any changes.
Children not accessing other support services or involved in court proceedings related to the divorce/separation.	Children accessing services for support in relation to the divorce/separation or involved in court proceedings for the divorce.	To avoid adding to emotional distress.
Children aged 5 or over at time of divorce/separation.	Children under the age of 5 at time of divorce/separation.	This was chosen so children and young people were likely to retain some memories of the event. It's also compulsory school age where school staff and EPs are more likely to become involved for individual needs related to the family context.
Parents identify as being no longer in a relationship. Formal divorce not a requirement.	Parents identify as currently being in a relationship.	To identify children whose parents are currently separated and not limit to only those who have formally divorced.

Table 3. Participants.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>School</i>
1	Male	8	Mainstream Primary
2	Male	10	Pupil Referral Unit.
3	Female	11	Mainstream Secondary
4	Male	13	Mainstream Secondary.

3.7.2 Sampling and Recruitment Procedures

Participants were sought from within the local authority (LA) where I was a Trainee Educational Psychologist. Participants were children who had experienced their parents' separation or divorce. Initially, one primary and one secondary school were approached from my allocation. Conversations with colleagues highlighted that there were likely to be potential participants for the study, however, initial scoping letters asking for expressions of interest sent to parents, resulted in only one return. This was subsequently misplaced by the school. After several follow up calls no participants could be identified.

In a second wave of recruitment, EPs in my service, were asked to identify schools for the research. An additional seven schools were put forward and the head teacher and SENDCo were contacted to seek permission to conduct research in the school, after introductions from the school EP. They were fully informed of the purpose of the research and the demands that would be made of the school, parents and children who agreed to participate. In five of the schools the head teachers, despite agreement from the SENDCo's, were unwilling to accommodate the research, expressing concerns about the topic and the vulnerability of their families. Two further schools, one mainstream primary and a school for children with social, emotional and

behavioural needs were keen to help me recruit participants, expressing invested interest in the topic. Scoping letters were sent to all key stage 2 children in these two schools. Due to timeframe restraints, the SENDCo of the primary school and a family support worker within the specialist provision, also followed up with phone calls to families they felt might meet the criteria and might be willing to take part. Parents who expressed interest were then contacted by myself, consideration was given to potential power imbalance and it was reiterated to parents the voluntary nature of participation.

The parents, who expressed interest in their children taking part, were offered a meeting with me to go through the information sheet and ask any questions. They were then able to take this away to read through in full, to ensure they were giving fully informed consent for their children's participation. Once parental consent was received, I met with children to go through the information sheet. They were given this to take away and invited to speak with their parents and anyone they wished about taking part. A few days later they met with the SENDCo to sign the assent form, if they were happy to agree. This approach, allowing children to make their decision with a known and trusted member of staff, was to ensure that children were fully informed before consent and that they did not experience any pressure to agree. Four participants were identified by this process. Two children were identified by their mother, a member of staff in one of the schools; therefore, she completed the assent forms with her own children.

3.7.3 Data Collection

Children were interviewed twice, 1-4 weeks between each interview. This was to provide an opportunity to build rapport with the children and to follow up any narratives elicited in the Grid Elaboration Method (GEM) interview. Two participants were interviewed at the school they

attended and two were interviewed in their family home. There was no specified length of interview. Interviews ended when children felt they had no more to say and all avenues of possible stories had been explored.

Participant's parents were also given the opportunity to meet with me to discuss their perception of events and provide contextual information. This was not a formal interview and was not included in the data analysis. This was to gather background information about the nature of the parents' separation or divorce as the free associative nature of the interviews with the children did not specify what stories or experiences would be shared or require children to recall contextual information. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed.

Production of knowledge is grossly influenced by the methods taken to generate data. Psychosocial research offers a methodological framework for which an exploration of participant's experience can be achieved without the reliance on the protocol of questions (Hollway, 2015, p.43). Two free association psychosocial methods of data collection were used in the present study, the GEM (Joffe & Elsey, 2014) and the Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). These methods were chosen to provide participants the opportunity to share their narratives in an accessible way, whilst also eliciting in-depth data. These approaches can be differentiated from other qualitative approaches and will be explored further below.

3.7.4 The GEM

The GEM is a free associative method for eliciting how people think and feel about social and personal issues (Joffe & Elsey, 2014). It rests on the principle, like other methods influenced by

psychoanalytic theory, that aspects of our thoughts, feelings and behaviour may be primary ‘emotionally laden nonconscious processes’ (Joffe & Elsey, 2014, p.173). Free association techniques invite data to come from participants and honor their narratives whilst considering them as meaning-making and defended (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013). The GEM interview aimed to ease participants into the interviewing process as well as provide participants with choices in how they might depict their experience. This is an appropriate method for the age range of participants and allows for differences in development, eliciting initial responses in a less demanding way. The GEM involved presenting participants with a “grid containing four empty boxes” and asking, “tell me, write or draw the first four things that come into your head” when you think of your parents’ divorce or separation (Joffe and Elsey, 2014). Participants were asked to keep to one association per box. See Appendix 5 for completed and anonymised GEM grids. It was hoped, as Joffe and Elsey (2014) explain, that material subjectively relevant to participants experience of divorce would be elicited and is directly related to the ‘emotional underpinning’ of their unique experiences (Hollway, 2015, p.44). Once participants had completed the grid, they were asked to elaborate further, using open questions, on the first four things that came to their mind, following their order. This started with ‘can you tell me more about this?’ to elicit these elaborations. Summarising, paraphrasing and reflecting, using the participants own words were used to encourage further detail until participants indicated that they had no more to add about their association (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013; Joffe & Elsey, 2014). This aimed to empower participants and facilitate exploration of participants’ subjective experiences that were personally meaningful.

Detailed reflexive field notes and a research diary were kept to reflect on first impressions and unconscious dynamics experienced in each interview. I recorded my feelings about the interview and reflections on pertinent and salient points. I tried to be aware and conscious of any emotional

response I had in the interview and those present during my reflections. I reflected on why I followed up with one aspect of the child's narrative and not another and why I asked a particular question. This enabled me to reflect on my impact on the data produced. This approach is based upon Hollway and Jefferson's understanding of 'emotional experience' and 'researcher subjectivity' as an 'instrument of psychoanalytically informed knowing' (Hollway, 2011, p. 95).

3.7.5 The FANI

A second interview used the FANI method (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013), designed to elicit participant's narratives by using their ordering and phrasing in follow up questions. The FANI method is based on the idea of free association integrated with a narrative emphasis (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). This involves focusing on eliciting stories and actual events. The FANI used open ended questions related to associations that emerged in the GEM. GEM transcripts were read between interviews to draw out associations that had been made. Questions aimed to explore themes, elicit further narratives and explore areas that may have been avoided. Participants were reminded of some extracts from the GEM interview and asked to elaborate further about the story using such questions as 'tell me more about this' or 'can you tell me about a time when that happened' or 'what did you do/think/feel when that happened?'. The interviews ensured stories told were finished and uninterrupted and identified themes were returned to in order of appearance, going with respondents meaning frames, even if not directly relevant to the research question (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The intention of the second interview was that it was assumed a rapport would have been established with participants, enabling them to share more freely and openly their experiences.

This method assumes both the researcher and researched as defended, engaging intersubjectively, defending against their anxieties, which may be seen in the form of avoidances, contradictions and inconsistencies (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Therefore, reflexive field notes were made, consistent with the GEM, and were shared and explored in supervision.

3.7.6 Data Capture

Interviews were held either at the children's schools or homes wherever they felt most comfortable. Interviews were recorded using a voice capture Dictaphone. The completed interviews were then transcribed by myself in an attempt to familiarise and immerse myself in the data. The typed transcripts were then read. The GEM interview was transcribed and read before the FANI interview to identify pertinent psychological and social experiences that could be further explored in the FANI interview.

3.8 Data Analysis

A two-stage approach to data analysis was adopted for the present study. To complement the psychosocial method of data collection and the ontological and epistemological positioning of this study, a data analysis method that enabled the researcher to transcend what is consciously accessible and considered the dynamic, unconscious and intersubjective experience of the participant and the researcher, during the interviews, around the investigation of a social phenomenon, was needed.

Therefore, data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) as it is compatible with psychosocial methods, small data sets and applicable across a range of theoretical frameworks (Joffe and Elsey, 2014). Thematic Analysis not only allows for pertinent themes of

participants' experience to be explored at a semantic level but also enables the researcher apply a latent interpretation; that is to go beyond what is consciously accessible to the participant through attending to the unconscious, dynamic and intersubjective processes during the interviews. Thematic Analysis was deemed the most appropriate method to allow an exploration of the participants' experience at both a conscious and unconscious level. Other methods of analysis, such as Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), were decided not to offer the same level of exploration. For example, participant samples in IPA are usually considered homogenous and it is acknowledged that interpretations are bounded by participants' abilities to articulate their thoughts and experiences adequately (Brocki & Warden, 2006; Harper & Thompson, 2011). This study considers the experience of divorce as heterogeneous, with children experiencing the divorce or separation of their parents in a multitude of ways. Furthermore, this study honors the possibility that children may not articulate their thoughts and experiences adequately and that a further in depth understanding of experience can be gathered through attention to the non-lexical, embodied and unconscious dynamics present within the research encounter. This can be gathered through a further psychosocial latent level of analysis.

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) emphasise the importance of understanding a person's whole; their *gestalt*. A person's whole is merely more than just a sum of its parts and consideration of unconscious dynamics, a person's anxieties and attempts to defend them, give rise to the key of a person's *gestalt*. Therefore, a second theoretically driven layer of analysis was applied to the data using a psychosocial lens to gain a sense of what pervaded an individual's transcript and maintain a holistic analysis of participant's subjective experience of their parents' divorce or separation. Further description of these approaches will now be explored.

3.8.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was the method chosen for analysing the data set. This was an inductive approach to analysis at the semantic level. Its epistemologically free and theoretically flexible position makes it an appropriate approach for use with the qualitative data produced in psychosocial methods (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis allows for a systematic and transparent analysis which enables the identification and analysis of the most prevalent patterns of meaning in the dataset (Joffe, 2012). Psychosocial approaches seek to attend to the gestalt of participants. Thematic analysis complements this by enabling an understanding of the individual narrative of each participant. Furthermore, Braun & Clarke (2006) acknowledge the active influence of the researcher in the identification of themes and patterns. This supports the ontological and epistemological approach in this research whereby my own subjectivity can be used as a tool in the data analysis phases and consideration of psychosocial influences that impact upon me both consciously and unconsciously, shaping the identification, selection and naming of codes and themes.

The analysis process was carried out by Braun & Clarke's (2006) proposed stages:

- Recorded interviews were transcribed with the aim to immerse and familiarise myself in the data. This involved repeated listening and reading of audio recordings and transcripts.
- Notes were made of patterns of meaning in the data and ideas around how participants made sense of their experiences including assumptions and points of interest. Reflexive field notes were kept throughout the process, regarding my emotional and psychological experience.
- Secondly the program MAX-QDA version 12.0 was used to support thematic analysis of interview transcripts. This involved drawing out inductive codes from the raw data set.

This required further reading and re-reading of the transcripts to ensure the raw transcript drove the interpretations made.

- Emerging codes were then grouped into subthemes and themes through an iterative process of cross code-checking. The research question helped to determine the relevance of themes. The frequency of themes was considered, however, was not deterministic of whether a theme was included or not.

3.8.2 Psychosocial Analysis

Thematic analysis pays attention to the emergence of themes and the individual narratives of participants. However, the inherent purpose of thematic analysis, to separate into themes, doesn't honor Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) advocacy of gaining a holistic sense of the psychosocial influence on participants' experiences, which is proposed in this research. Just thematically coding themes has the potential to lose meaningful data and lose sight of a participant's individual story. This can be preserved by a further latent and interpretive theoretically driven layer of analysis.

Stage two of the analysis applied a psychosocial lens to make sense of an individual's experience by thinking about the interrelatedness of the psychological and the social. This employed interpretations based on theories around unconscious processes and defended subjects. In line with the theoretical starting point and ontological and epistemological positioning of the researcher, it 'intends to construe both researcher and researched as anxious, defended subjects, whose mental boundaries are porous where unconscious material is concerned' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013, p. 42). A psychoanalytically informed analysis was applied to the data to allow for an in-depth exploration of the affect generated by dynamic, intersubjective and unconscious processes present during the interview process. This included reflecting on the initial research

encounter and how I was emotionally affected by it to gain a sense of the participants' anxieties, defences and ways of relating.

3.9 Credibility and Trustworthiness

Hollway And Jefferson (2013) propose that trustworthiness of qualitative research depends greatly upon its credibility. They suggest credibility refers to the extent that analysis of the data reflects what the participants had to say. This contrasts with quantitative and mixed method designs which seek to obtain objectivity or generalisability. Like Hollway & Jefferson (2013) and Yardley's (2008) principles of validity of qualitative research I sought to demonstrate robustness and credibility in order to achieve trustworthiness. Hollway & Jefferson (2013) acknowledge researcher subjectivity and transparency in the process of data interpretation to ensure interpretations are robust and supported by evidence. Likewise, it is hoped in this research that by acknowledging the use of researcher subjectivity at each stage of the research process it will support the overall transparency and credibility of the analysis. How credibility and trustworthiness have been addressed will now be outlined in line with Yardley's (2008) principles.

3.9.1 Sensitivity to Context

Sensitivity to context was approached through a systematic approach to an exploration of relevant, empirical literature around divorce and separation. The decision to only include research that focused on children's perspectives was guided by an aim to honour the unique contexts of children amid a predominantly adult focused phenomenon. Furthermore, choosing to situate this search to only include research from the UK was to recognise the unique social context surrounding participants.

Careful thought was given to the circumstances and context in which I would meet with participants to ensure sensitivity to their circumstances and socio-cultural context. Interviews took place in the participant's school or home, an environment in which they were familiar and felt comfortable and safe in. I also wanted to ensure they felt comfortable meeting with me and were able to engage and access the two interviews.

The design of the research hoped to remain sensitive to the needs of the participants, through employing open ended questions which actively encouraged free association and aimed to avoid imposing researcher bias through closed or leading questions. This intended to allow participants to speak about what was most pertinent to them in relation to their experiences and not be led by researcher assumptions and bias. The use of prompting and active listening hoped to encourage participants to explore their narratives in greater depth. Furthermore, the use of the GEM alongside the FANI was chosen to be sensitive to how participants wished to express their views and make it accessible for them.

Through the second theoretically driven layer of analysis I hoped to pay attention to what participants emphasised in their narratives including contradictions and inconsistencies that were present. Sensitivity to the data was demonstrated by considering the relevant psychosocial contexts of participants' experiences.

3.9.2 Commitment & Rigour

This principle was attended to through the planning and systematic approach to data collection and analysis, outlined earlier in this chapter. Guidelines and principles for the GEM and FANI,

were consulted thoroughly when planning for interviews, including the use and avoidance of particular types of questions, for example, ‘avoiding why questions’ (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Analysis and interpretation of the data was undertaken with consideration of the research question and in a way, that honored and preserved the richness and complexity of what participants shared.

Data was collected and analysed in ways that endeavored to provide new insights into what is known about children’s experiences of their parents’ divorce or separation, given the dearth of identified psychological research into children’s experiences of divorce and separation and that psychosocial methods are also relatively new to EP research. The dual layer of analysis allowed both the individual and sociocultural contexts to be considered and interpreted using psychological theory. Both semantic and latent analyses were triangulated with peers and researcher supervisors to protect against ‘wild analysis’ (Elliott, Ryan, & Hollway, 2012) and ensure a systematic and rigorous approach to the research.

3.9.3 Coherence & Transparency

Coherence and transparency has been considered at each stage of the research process by applying and considering the psychosocial approach at each stage. This includes consideration of psychosocial literature in the systematic review, employing appropriate and suitable methods of data collection for the participants and the research question. Methods of analysis suited to psychosocial approaches were also considered at this stage.

Reflexivity is central to the psychosocial approach and essential if researcher subjectivity is to be used as an instrument of knowing (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Therefore, I sought reflexivity in

considering my influence and contribution in the research encounter, namely my impact on participants and their impact on me as well as my contribution to the co-constructed narratives during data collection and analysis. My acknowledgment of both defended subject and researcher, meant that I was mindful throughout the process that the way we act and respond is not always at a conscious level. Therefore, considerations of my affective responses, from the decisions to carry out research in this area to how this might influence and impact on the research encounter, were points of reflection throughout the process. Therefore, I kept a reflective research diary and field notes after each interview and added to these as I experienced thoughts and emotions. My responses to participants and the data were used to track its influence on my interpretations. Alongside research supervision I also engaged in regular additional individual and group supervision to focus on the emotional and psychological experiences of the research encounter and the interview material during the analysis stage. Alongside reflexivity this supported a triangulation of my interpretations to prevent against wild analysis (Elliott et al., 2012).

3.9.4 Impact & Importance

The prevalence of separation in children under sixteen highlights a need to further our understanding of these individuals' experiences. This psychosocial research does not seek to be generalisable as it considers individuals unique narratives developed both before and during the research encounter and acknowledges the uniqueness of the interaction between researcher and subject on a given day, in a given context. Willig's (2001) view is endorsed that once experience has been identified through qualitative research, it is considered as existing in society, suggesting the relevance of findings without the need for generalisability. Furthermore, Bell (2001) suggests that if by publication of findings, boundaries of existing knowledge are extended, then it

demonstrates validity of the research. By drawing upon the cultural and social relationships relevant to this phenomenon and context it was hoped that the importance of the findings from this research could be demonstrated. I collected contextual data through speaking with participant's parents in order that the psychosocial interpretations I made were in consideration of each participant's unique context and narrative.

I hoped through the richness of the data gathered that some of the findings would have transferable value. Lincoln & Guba (1985) refer to transferability as whether findings can be applied to other contexts. Therefore, I hoped that findings may be considered relevant and valuable in similar contexts. For example, most education settings in the UK have children who have experienced the divorce or separation of their parents in some way and most EPs come across children of divorced parents in their work at some point. I therefore hoped to provide theoretically relevant findings that can be of use to the EP profession in their theoretical understanding of how children experience and make sense of the divorce or separation of their parents.

Insights that arise directly from participants' experience of their parents' divorce or separation may have practical implications, especially considering the current climate that emphasises the importance of listening to young people and gaining their views on matters that affect themselves.

Through illuminating voices within this population, the epistemological and methodological approach to the research might allow for the development of fresh and innovative ways to integrate psychological and social theories to support understanding of psychosocial processes present in the experience of divorce or separation. Furthermore, it is worth considering the

potential value for multidisciplinary professionals working with children and young people experiencing divorce or separation and the consideration they could give to the psychosocial processes around the narratives of these young people when in engagement with them and how these insights may inform hypothesis generation and intervention design.

3.9.5 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an important aspect of psychosocial research and is used increasingly to understand ‘data that [is] embodied, unspoken or unavailable to consciousness’ (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Elliott et al., 2012, p. 1). Having had prior experience both personally and professionally of children experiencing divorce or separation, it was imperative in this research that I engaged in a number of tasks which supported reflexivity and reflection on subjective and unconscious responses.

I kept reflective field and supervision notes throughout the research process to reflect on my thinking and emotional responses to different parts of the research process, including, reading the literature, meeting with participants and during analysis of the data. Elliot et al., (2012) report the use of field notes to engage with researcher subjectivity, enhance the productive use of reflexivity and to address emotional work of the research. It is also possible that reflective notes act as a vehicle for reflection on the co-constructed accounts and our own insights and blind spots (Elliott, 2011; Hollway, 2015). These enabled me to reflect on my subjective responses to the data and influenced what I learnt about participants, including how I impacted on the participants and vice versa.

I also engaged in supervision throughout the entirety of the process which provided a space to explore my thinking and emotional responses to the material. Through acknowledging my position as a defended researcher, I am aware that I cannot be entirely objective, despite attempts to minimise contamination of the research data and reported findings. However, this awareness can help mitigate this by serving to highlight what emotional data belongs to me and what is that of the participants. To aid in this process further I sought additional psychoanalytically informed individual and group supervision. This was provided both prior to data collection, following the first interviews and prior to the second and during data analysis stages. Methods of this supervision involved the psychoanalytic skill of maintaining a curious and reflective stance and allowing oneself to be affected by the material. This supervision provided a means through which I could engage with my own subjectivity and enhance reflexivity, which enabled a way of understanding data that are unavailable to consciousness. Furthermore, psychoanalytically informed group supervision with other psychosocial field researchers allowed the unconscious dynamics of the interview encounter to be explored from perspectives other than my own.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

There are important ethical considerations for this piece of research due to the potential vulnerabilities of my participants and the personal experiences I intended to explore. These were considered alongside the ethical principles outlined by the British Psychological Society (2018) and Health & Care Professions Council (2016). The care for the subject throughout the process of psychosocial research is the primary ethical challenge from the research design to analysis and interpretation of data. Ethical approval was obtained from the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trusts Research Ethics Committee (Appendix 6) and from the LA ethics committee (Appendix 7). Permission was also sought from the SENDCos and head teachers of the schools in which I wished to carry out my interviews.

Parents of the participants and participants themselves were clearly informed about what the interviews would entail and what was required of them if they agreed to take part and were provided with information sheets and consent/assent forms (Appendix 8 & 9). Scoping letters (Appendix 10) were sent to parents to determine expressions of interest. Parents were offered to meet with me before they consented to any involvement, to ask any questions regarding the research. It was intended that during this meeting, the purpose of the research would be shared and the method of obtaining the data made clear. One of the parents felt a conversation over the phone was sufficient to obtain this information, another parent did not wish to meet with me but met with the school SENDCo to discuss her child's involvement. Once consent was provided by parents, I met with the children to go through the information sheet and clearly explained requirements of their involvement. To ensure children were happy to take part and had time to consider their involvement, and withdraw if they wished, they completed their assent forms with a trusted member of staff. Information sheets and consent forms were designed to be accessible and clearly outline the study and what would be required from participants. The information sheets also explained how data would be recorded, handled and kept securely. I also explained when meeting with participants and in the information sheet how I sought to protect their identity by the use of pseudonyms. This was explained in an accessible way to all participants. I expressed clearly to participants that their involvement in the research was entirely voluntary, making clear their right to withdraw at any given time, without reason, was clearly outlined in the information sheets and in person, and how their involvement or withdrawal would come with no consequences.

Signposting to contact details of support agencies for both parents and children was also provided within initial letters to all parents, regardless of involvement in the research, in case the topic highlighted need for further access to support.

When meeting with the children prior to interviews taking place, I explained clearly the parameters of confidentiality. Participants were made aware that what they chose to share would remain confidential, unless I had concerns that either themselves or others were at risk, at which point I might need to break confidentiality and share that information with relevant, appropriate people. I was clear that if this were to be the case, I would inform them of my intentions and involve them in decisions wherever possible.

Acknowledging the potential impact that involvement in the research might have on children's emotional wellbeing, I allocated time after each interview to debrief participants, to contain any anxieties or distress, which may have been evoked by the process. Further opportunities to talk with me were also offered if considered helpful. A key member of staff (or parent) within the setting, who was familiar to the child, was also identified before commencing, who had the role of supporting the child if any anxieties or distress arose after I left. Both schools, in which the research was conducted, had an Emotional Literacy support assistant (ELSA) employed by the school, whom children could access should they wish to, even after the research had ended, to discuss or work through any worries or concerns. Participants were made aware that this person was available should they want to see them. During the interview itself, I established with the child a signal word or object they could use to indicate if the interview became too distressing, giving them the option to stop if they wanted to.

It was also recognised that for the parents, the participation of their child in this research may cause some distress. When a parent expressed an interest in their child participating in the research, they were offered an opportunity to meet with me prior to any possible consent to involvement, to discuss the study and offer the opportunity to ask any questions or talk about any concerns.

As part of the ethical consideration for this research I was mindful of my own emotional wellbeing and safety. I followed the LA procedure for ensuring others were informed about where I would be and when. I was also mindful of my own emotional responses to the participants' stories. It was important to recognise that I may also have found some of the things the participants discussed difficult or painful. One way of managing this was to ensure I had time at the end of each interview to make detailed field notes around the experiences of the interviews, which functioned as a self-debrief.

4. Analysis

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the themes identified, across participants, through a thematic analysis using MAXQDA software. Each theme is presented using a thematic map (MAXMaps) to illustrate the relationship between themes, their subthemes and codes. Themes and subthemes are described in depth, supported by extracts from the participants' accounts. The full analysis has been provided electronically in Appendix 11. Appendix 12 contains a participant transcript (see USB for other participant transcripts).

Finally, each participant's story is presented in the form of a pen portrait. This psychoanalytically informed psychosocial layer of analysis aims to provide a holistic analysis of each participant's narrative. In this section data elicited in the transference and counter transference will be attended to using reflexive field notes to further understand the data gathered.

4.2 Approach to Data Collection and Analysis

The psychosocial method of this research meant that a great deal of data was amassed through the interviews and process of analysis. The nature of free associative methods of data collection meant that participants chose to speak about their experiences in different ways and prompted individual and unique responses in myself, the researcher, to support elicitation of their experiences. This meant that some of the raw data was not directly related to the first research question. Therefore, I chose to handle the data in the following manner; firstly, by coding

transcripts in line with the first research question, and collating data extracts into themes directly related to participants experience of their parents' separation. Secondly, data was subjected to a latent theoretically driven analysis to gain a sense of what pervaded each participant's interview and transcript. The FANI and GEM methods provided a mechanism through which to consider not only the semantic content of the research data, but also what might underlie it, in the transference and counter transference of the interview context.

I have acknowledged throughout the integrated role of the researcher within the research and I have attempted to integrate my interpretations and emotional experiences into the analysis. One way I achieved this was by noting down my emotional experiences in response to the data and participants at the point of transcription, reading of transcripts, coding and analysis. I used the memo function in MAXQDA to incorporate some of these notes into the data set when coding. It should be acknowledged how the researcher plays an active role in identifying patterns and themes that emerge (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.3 Themes

When describing their experience related to their parents' divorce or separation, participants' responses can be grouped into five overarching themes, highlighted through the thematic analysis. Table 2 provides an overview of the relationship between themes and subthemes.

It should be noted that Sienna, James and King's narratives dominate because of the length of their interviews and the rich detail the children were able to articulate. However, throughout I was mindful of giving equitable voice to Ben, which I hope will be portrayed throughout chapters 4 and 5.

Table 4. The Relationship between Themes & Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme
Response to Separation	Past & Present Feelings Processing & Understanding Resilience Remembering Experiences
Relationship between Parents	Feelings Parental Interaction
Contact with Out of House Parent	Shared Parenting Contact & Communication Fragility of Contact
When Parents' Re-partner	Additional family members Subsequent Separations Children's perspectives on parents' new partners Parent's New Relationships
Change and Continuity	Parents Living Separately Negative Changes Positive Changes Continuity

Theme 1: Response to Separation

This theme encapsulates participant's reflections on their response to their parents' separation, including their attempts to process and understand their parents' relationship and grapple with the feelings and levels of uncertainty associated with this. This also included remaining positive and weighing up the significance of the separation on their lives, mitigating against the changes and disruption of the separation and illuminating resilience.

Theme 2: Relationship Between Parents

This theme is about the relationship and interaction between the children's biological parents, both past and present, and both participant's and parents' feelings about the separation and the changes that occurred.

Theme 3: Contact with Out of House Parent

This theme captures children's current or future contact arrangements with their out of house parent. It includes when and how they might see the out of house parent and what they do together. It also includes how they remain in contact with the out of house parent, the consequences and anxiety linked to the possibility of no contact and sharing contact time between each parent.

Theme 4: When Parents Re-partner

This theme encompasses participant's reflections on their parents re-partnering within new relationships and the associated families or change that comes with this. It also included participant's response to their parents' new relationships and their own relationships with the new partners.

Theme 5: Change & Continuity

This theme captures the changes, both positive and negative, associated with the separation of parents including moving home and when parents live separately. This includes contact with extended family, differences in parenting approaches and having two homes. It also includes expressions of things that have remained the same and what children would like to continue after changes have occurred.

4.4 Theme 1: Response to Separation

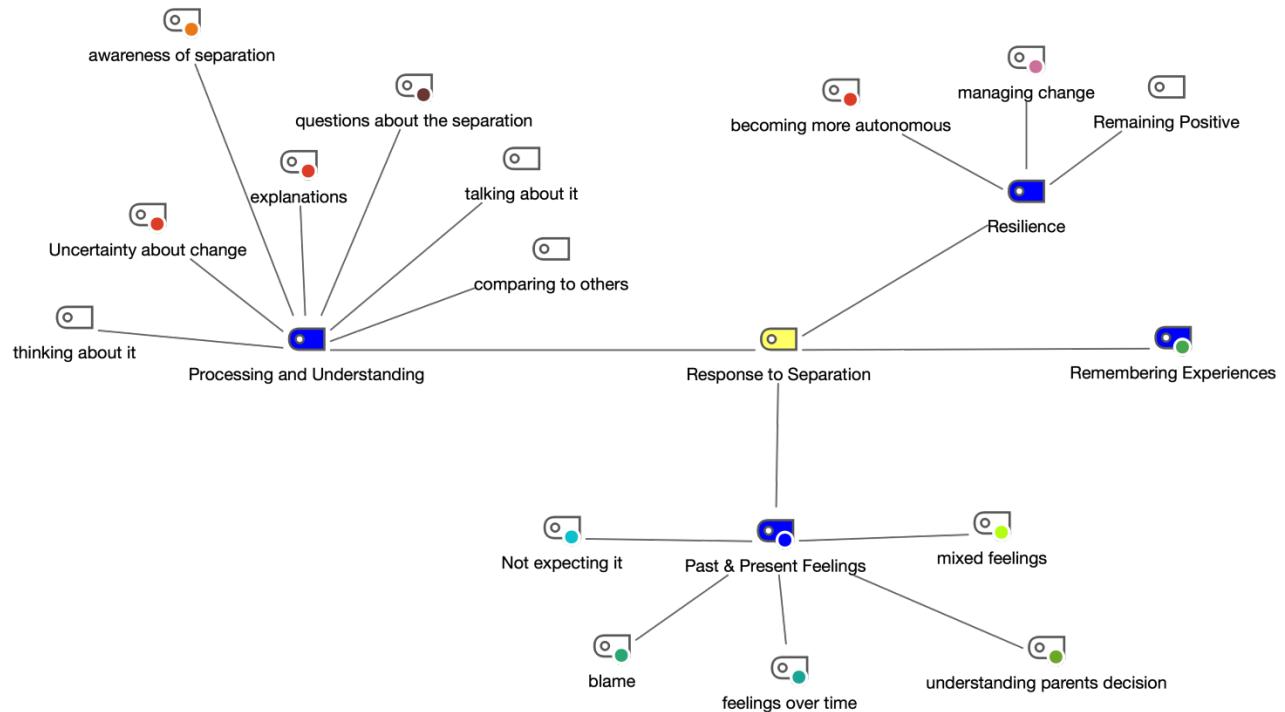


Figure 1. Thematic map for the theme: 'Response to Separation'

4.4.1 Past & Present Feelings

Participants reflected on the different feelings they experienced in relation to learning about their parents' separation and their initial reaction when their parents told them they were separating:

"Sort of shocked...out the blue urm, I was like why? like I didn't understand like why I think." (James, 231-234)

"Like oh so you're gonna get a new boyfriend, you're gonna get a new house...it's a bit much in one go" (Sienna, line 125)

There was a sense that the pace and exposure to significant changes helped Sienna come to terms with her parents' separation more easily:

“Urm, my mum and dad were together...and then they said well like that they don’t love each other anymore...but nothing big is gonna change and stuff...but then urm, like, I think it was years later even maybe, urm my mum told us one by one like, that she had a new partner...Urm, but that was fine for me because it’s kind of like it wasn’t like...that big of a deal because we don’t actually know that much about it or who he really is and stuff” (Sienna, line 649-658)

Participants also acknowledged how their feelings about the separation have changed and developed over time:

“Urm when it first happened, when she first told me, I said I was okay but like I was a bit unsure about what was gonna happen in the situation of the home...but then she talked to me a bit more about it and now I’m okay” (Sienna, line 117-127)

“Umm most of the time I feel sad but I don’t feel angry anymore” (King, 110)

For some of the participants it was apparent that they had mixed feelings regarding their parents' separation and associated changes, such as one parent moving home or going out socialising more often. There was a sense of a continual processing of these feelings as they were being expressed resulting in contradictions and re-evaluating how they felt as they spoke:

Jordan: How do you feel that’s going to be when things things move on?

Sienna: That’s gonna be a bit um like annoying...because now that I’m older...and I’ve got my own phone and I live closer to the school like I can go out with my friends later...and stuff, er as long as it’s in the area anyway, urm so that’s gonna be okay I guess, because if my mums not here to like go out with me anywhere, I still now have that like independence to do it myself (Sienna, line 704-710)

“I don’t know because you might feel a bit sadder that you’re not with the other one...or something but if its half half its fine...” (Sienna, line 952-954)

“I don’t urm mind it like she can go out whatever, but sometimes it’s like annoying” (James, line 54)

Sienna felt that some of her feelings were a result of expectations that she should feel negatively about the fact her parents aren't together:

"Just maybe in your mind you might just think oh is it okay?...like you might contradict yourself...like trying to actually put bad thoughts in your mind, in a way (Sienna, line 636-640)

King expressed a mixture of feelings; anger and sadness, which were expressed through his own word, "sangry", anxiety and blame at the time of his father leaving the family home and because of the impact it had on his mother:

"I felt angry because urm, I feel angry because when my dad left I thought I couldn't see him again and then I thought it was all his fault." (King, 112)

James expressed how his feelings about his parents' decision to separate were linked to how his parents felt and what was important to them:

"I mean if they don't wanna be with each other then I'm fine with it" (James, line 723)

4.4.2 Processing & Understanding

Throughout, participants gave a strong sense that they had to process and manage a whole range of changes associated with their parents' separation. For James and Sienna, whose parents still lived together, it was felt that this was an occurrence that required further understanding and working out:

"Like really small things like...my friend comes over on Thursdays (voice wavering), to watch a TV show that we both really like, so now I'm thinking in the long run, different

homes, um different like, how far away from school it is, so just small things that my friend might not be able to come over, like like just by walking... (Sienna, Lines 535-539)

"and er like I g..don't go, dr-drive to school anymore but like when I did like my drav..my dad drives my little brother,...but say we're at my dad's house...and the car is at my mum's house... then how's that gonna work ?(James, Lines 595-601)

For James, there was a possibility that he might have to give up some of his hobbies once his parents lived separately and a shared parenting arrangement was established:

"if we're here Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and stuff, then we can do Kung Fu, but Friday, Saturday, Sunday and stuff then we can't do archery. I think if we're gonna give up one of them we we we'd give up Kung Fu and then do archery but I don't think we're gonna (James, Lines 463-467)

Sienna, appeared to battle with some anxiety about how her parents' separation would impact on her and what kind of person she might become. She appeared to place significant weighting on the outcomes of 'others' as a means of processing events and understanding the possible impact:

"because um what I see in the movies, it helps me process it more, watching kids, maybe famous kids [laughs] going through the same thing" (Sienna, Line 447)

"like it's like it was a joke in a movie but loads of criminals they're saying that like they're parents like split up and it was like really traumatising for them and then that's like one of the reasons why they put out their anger into like crimes" (Sienna, Line 529)

There were elements in Sienna's narrative that suggested she was battling with conflicting feelings of resistance to her mother re-partnering and attempts to understand and be accepting of it. There was a sense that she was trying to refute her negative feelings by likening her situation to her mother's partner's daughter:

"because in like for example movies, when they..your parents have a new partner, you're like really mean to them or like push them away but I think but because they have a

family, and they're going through the same thing it's like if their child thought my mum was really bad just because she's with the dad" (Sienna, line 367)

She drew further upon comparisons with others and what they were like, which in some way offered her a sense of reassurance:

"oh, my friend Olivia...from my old school...her parents lived in different houses...but I don't think it really changed her that much...she was always one of the happiest girls I knew so I think that didn't make me put any bad thoughts on the situation...yeah and she's really nice and stuff so I know like it's not gonna change us as a person" (Sienna, lines 936-946)

As the interview progressed Sienna asked me about my interest in the topic which served as further evidence that she might turn out okay:

"So, its saying like even if you get a bit sad sometimes it's not gonna make a major like make you change into a person that maybe is more depressed or a bit sadder because now including you, people's whose parents are separated are like really nice and stuff" (Sienna, Line 960)

She expressed a sense of feeling lucky, helping her to process her situation:

"but I'm saying like that's not exactly realistic but seeing that loads of people all over the world have the same situation as me, (voice wavering) but also worse, so it kind of gets me through that a bit better" (Sienna, Line 531-533)

Participants also reflected on talking about their parents' separation with them and others and how they felt about it:

"urm you don't really tell people um" (Ben, Line 545)

"yeah and every time like she [mum] brings it up she asks if she needs to talk to us or if we have any questions so it's okay" (Sienna, Line 131)

The process of thinking about the separation was for some of the participants a contributor to making them more upset and something they avoided to protect themselves:

Jordan:...what do you think that's about, not want..wanting to think about it?

*James: urm just the thought like not being urm together and stuff
(James, line 171-172)*

*"yeah but I think why I got upset is because I mostly do the thinking less than talking"
(Sienna, line 551)*

Sienna also reflected on how talking about her parents' separation through the interview process, even though at times was difficult, had helped her to feel better. It seemed that she was able to process and evaluate her own personal circumstances more clearly through having a space to reflect:

"whereas like more maybe talking about it maybe make me more understanding of the situation" (Sienna, line 371)

"I think talking about this has helped me a lot...because like I said, the little down stuff but when I'm talking more about the positives and like... it makes me more like feel a bit better...and like be like oh these little things aren't as important but you can still talk to them about people..to people" (Sienna, line 573-579)

The interview process also seemed to serve James's understanding of the reason why his father no longer came on family holidays to visit his mother's family:

Jordan: ...and is that changed since they have separated ...?

*James: I guess that might have actually! I just kind of realised. Maybe that's why?
[laughs] cos he has..hasn't gone there for like years (James, line 272-273)*

There was a sense of a dawning realisation of what the separation might hold:

“so, my mum said that when she leaves I’m gonna get my own room...so, I’m really happy about that but then I realised that she’s not going to be here all the time which is gonna be bit different” (Sienna, line 23-25)

but also, how it might not be all that different:

“I think, I think they got separated and they didn’t I like I didn’t even notice... and that happened like before Christmas and we already had I think..a Christmas or two. I only noticed like I only..I only found out about it in like a year ago, from what I can remember, so I don’t r..remember anything different” (James, line 40-42)

For King, there was also a wish to know more about his parents’ separation as represented by his associations in the GEM interview:

King: urm I don’t know what the next one is that’s why it’s a question

Jordan: so, it says why did they split up...

King: I don’t know don’t know why (King, line 192-194)

4.4.3 Resilience

Although participants described feelings of anxiety or being worried, to varying extents, some also described a positive and resilient mind-set when it came to their parents’ separation:

“urm I was saying because urm although I’m gonna have to move around a bit, but that’s like something not so big in my life when I think of everything else” (Sienna, line 195)

“urm just because, like just like realising there’s more things in the world to worry about and that like there little things but at the same time it’s actually can be a really good change as well” (Sienna, line 622)

“Makes you feel a bit negative about it... but at the same time like they weren’t together for like a whole year before I was actually aware of it so...” (James, line 190)

There was an understanding that ultimately the separation was in fact for the best for parents and children and meant they were treated better:

“so, I think like in the long run it’s a lot better for us as well that they’re not gonna be together because if they’re really aggressive and arguing it could affect how they like they also talk to us and stuff” (Sienna, line 325)

For King, the frequency of his father being late meant that he had become accustomed to it which seemed to mitigate against any potentially harmful feelings:

Jordan: ...do you wanna tell me more about how you feel when he’s late?

*King: I’m used to it now so I don’t really care
(King, line 439-440)*

His ability to overcome certain rules in order to provide comfort to his mother when she was sad, enabled them both to feel better:

*“urm I was in my room, cos I know not to go into the room when my mum’s sad or angry. But sometimes it’s okay cause I give her a hug when she’s sad and when she’s angry.”
(King, line 140)*

Sienna outlined strategies, practical and emotional, to help her manage the changes and anxieties associated with her parents’ separation:

“but it’s okay because my mum says for Christmas I can get a planner...because you get them in school...to help you with homework remembering so urm I wanted one for the new year so I can remember where everything is and stuff” (Sienna, line 183-187)

"and then I think that was fine because they were still like, they looked like a couple so in um my imagination oh everything's fine they just said that" (Sienna, line 275)

Participants referenced a life separate from their parents and with age appeared to come a growing independence and sense of autonomy which served as a helpful protective factor against any impending change:

"yeah, but now like were getting older so don't always like..like when we like used to go to like urm out, like I don't know where, now we just don't really, cos none of us are bothered" (James, line 307-309)

"because like now that I'm in high school we've got homework every day or you want to see your friends or you wanna just watch TV before bed or something it's like it takes up so much of your time you don't really think about the bad stuff really" (Sienna, line 976-978)

4.4.4 Remembering Experiences

For some of the participants there was difficulty accessing multiple experiences or providing narratives due to factors such as the length of time or the ongoing processing of events. It is possible that this suggests an unconscious defence against the more painful feelings and experiences which will be explored further in the second layer of analysis.

"I think and then we started talking about something and then she like said that they're not together or something, it was like a conversation that led to it I guess...don't really remember, it was like ages ago" (James, line 667-669)

Jordan: and have there been an-any other times where they've had arguments like that?

King: yeah but I can't re-really remember. (King, line 470-471)

Jordan: Not sure? Do you wanna try and think of one..the first thing that comes to your mind?

Ben: There's nothing (Ben, line 36-37)

4.5 Theme 2: Relationship Between Parents

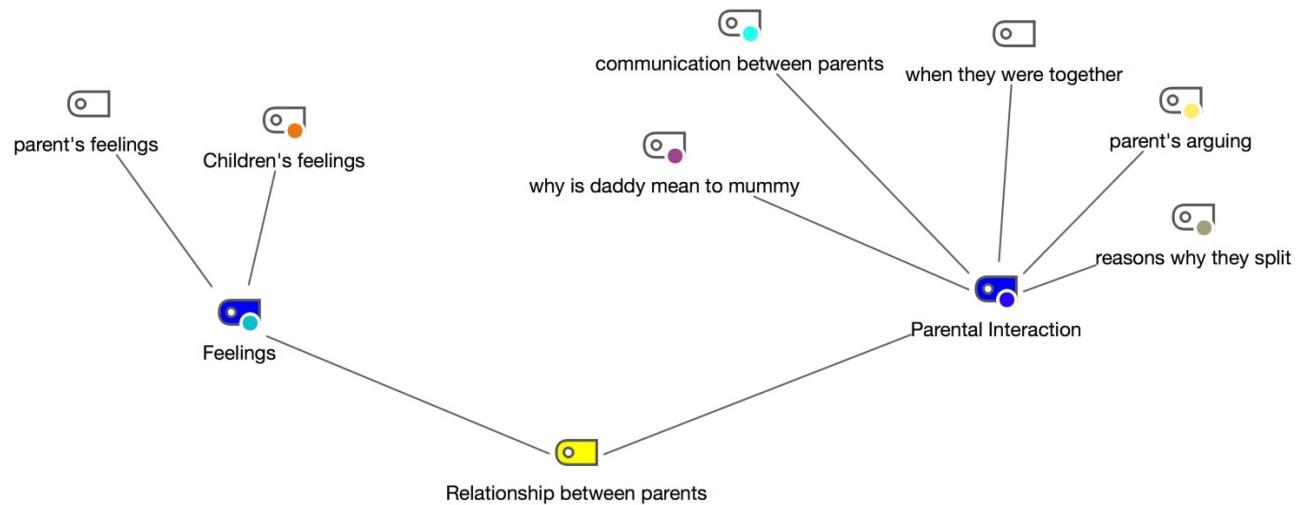


Figure 2. Thematic map for the theme 'Relationship between parents'

4.5.1 Feelings

Participants reflected on theirs and their parents' feelings and responses when speaking about their parents' relationship. Participants expressed how parents' interactions with each other had left their parents feeling sad and annoyed:

"and then she got really mad um and just said um she said that's it um you can't see him until he's um older because err you're too er irresponsible and he said you're always late she said you're always late and then the time before that um he um made my mum really really sad and said um you don't do anything for King the only..the..the only thing you use your money on is for um drugs and alcohol and and stuff" (King, line 122)

"yeah, it's a bit better because they argue on just like silly things, like not important...but I think it makes them a bit annoyed, ya know" (Sienna, line 233-235)

This also impacted on how the participants' felt:

Jordan: ... what's that like when they argue how do you feel?

King: scared

(King, line 482-483)

Participants expressed their own feelings about the change in their parents' relationship and there was a sense from Sienna's narrative that her feelings were linked to her parents' consideration of her and her siblings throughout the separation:

"but the fact that they're doing that all for us and making it so much easier for us, like makes me more understanding of the situation and that I shouldn't like um like push it away as much" (Sienna, line 423)

There was a sense of participants being reluctant to share their true feelings or having reservations about doing so, as it may have certain implications, such as parents deciding to put their child's needs before their own:

"because like I said they put us first...so it might make them think twice about it, which I don't want" (Sienna, line 559-561)

"yeah, I went urm..not that I'd prefer them to be together sort of thing if they're, ya know clearly they don't want to, but urm change urm not really as good, like you don't want it" (James, line 185)

"no, I try not to yawn when I'm talking about my parents cos my eyes water and it's not because I'm sad, and then the people think I'm sad by talking about it...and that's why I keep rubbing my eyes" (King, line 222-224)

Sienna found some comfort in the fact that, for her, the formal separation, where a parent leaves the family home, was some way off:

“so, there’s no need to be scared like when it actually happens cos my mums not sure when she will actually get a house” (Sienna, line 624)

King found comfort in wondering about what life might be like if his parents were still together:

King: because if they was together...then we’d be doing different stuff on days that he’s free... umm something like if it was a really cringey relationship something like going to [names park] onto the boats...

Jordan: and how would you feel if you got to do that

*King: I would feel really happy
(King, line 791-80)*

Ben expressed feelings of indifference about his parents’ separation:

“I really don’t mind...um that they’re not together”

(Ben, line 438-443)

4.5.2 Parental Interaction

Participants reflected on the interaction between their parents before and after they separated and pondered the reasons why they may have decided to separate:

“but I think they just like drifted apart and only stayed together for us” (Sienna, line 335)

“er I mean I think it’s probably cos you know they do a lot of stuff differently. Like she likes to go out and then he likes to stay in, erm she likes to go on holiday he likes to stay here, stuff like that” (James, line 727-731)

“it was probably because of the ch-kids he had” (King, line 288)

For Sienna and James their parents’ separation was first noted when their parents began to sleep separately:

"urm so my parents used to sleep in the same bed...and then now my dad, like he had this, we call it the office...urm but then we made a bed in there for him...so now that's like his area and my mum has the room downstairs" (Sienna, line 245-251)

Sienna expressed that the departure of one parent from the family home indicated a positive and beneficial change in their interactions:

"so, I think it's a bit better that they're moving out and having separate rooms and stuff, because it kind of has a bit of boundaries...so it's gonna be less arguing and yeah"
(Sienna, line 299-301)

For others, even though there had been some improvement in relationship between parents, there were still signs of acrimony:

"that next question, why is my daddy so mean to my mummy? because urm they always get into arguments cause he's late or he didn't pick up the phone or its just they just get in arguments a lot of the time. But it's gotten better now, now they barely have a argument but sometimes they might just have urm urm an aggressive debate but it doesn't turn into a argument" (King, line 198)

4.6 Theme 3: Contact with Out of House Parent

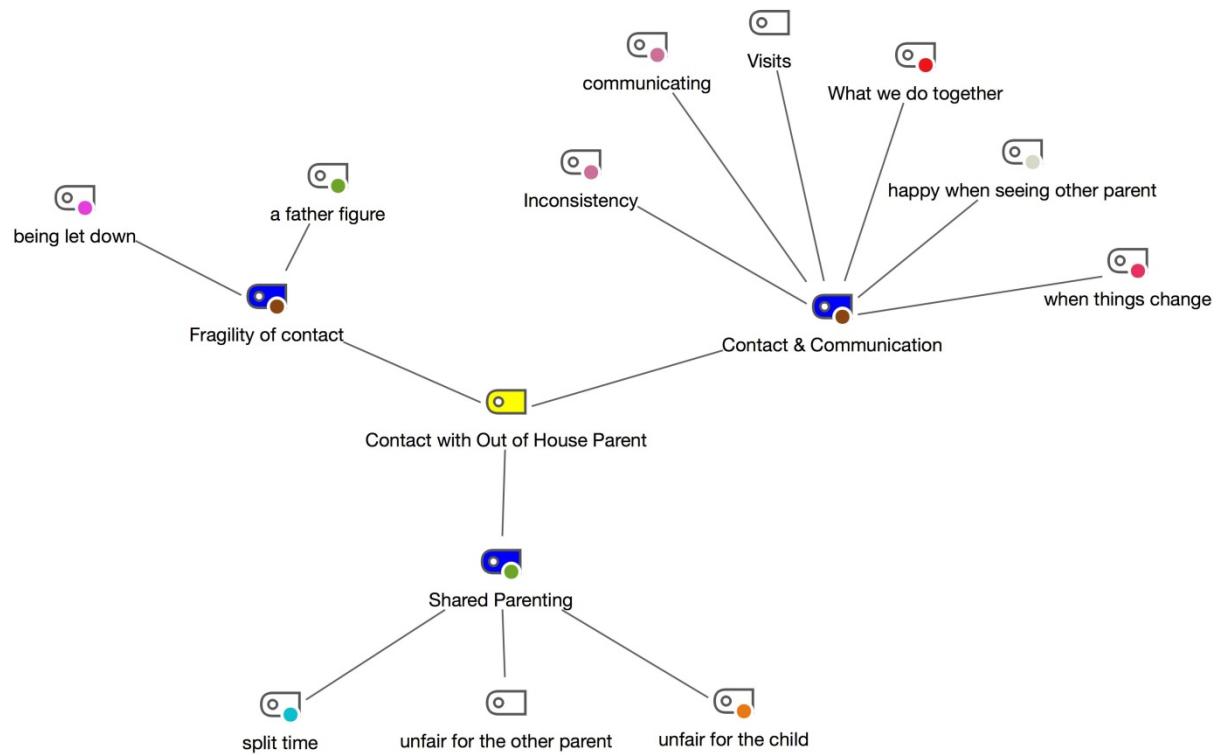


Figure 3. Thematic map for the theme: 'Contact with Out of House Parent'

4.6.1 Shared Parenting

For the participants who were yet to enter into a shared parenting arrangement, Sienna and James, there was some consideration and wondering about how contact time might be shared:

"I-I think it's..it's going to be like half half...so I come here half the week and then then..." (James, line 130-132)

There had been discussions with parents about how the time might be shared once their mother moved into a new home:

"but also, like it's a bit weird because, you're with them for five days and the other one for five days and then the weekends switch over...so you have most of the time with one of them and then the other person will have the weekend and then it switches" (Sienna, line 439-443)

It felt important to Sienna that the amount of time spent with each parent was equal and that it was fair for both children and parents:

"because like the parents for example if one's richer, or has a better house, they get more like time with the children but I find that really unfair for the other other parent and for the child...and so, I think that it's good that it's going to be split in half so I'm gonna see one for a certain amount of time and the next one for the same amount of time" (Sienna, line 449-453)

James reflected on possibly wanting to do more activities with his parents once time together became more limited:

"maybe if like we don't like see her for like half a week and then we go and like let's go out, something like that" (James, line 316-317)

James considered how activities he did with his dad might be impacted upon if he was to spend half the week with dad and the other half with mum:

"if we're here Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and stuff, then we can do kung Fu... but Friday, Saturday, Sunday and stuff then we can't do archery. I think if we're gonna give up one of them we we'd give up kung Fu and then do archery but I don't think we're gonna" (James, line 463-467)

4.6.2 Contact and Communication

For the other participants, there were elements of flexibility and inconsistency in their contact with their out of house parent. Ben generally saw his father on the weekends, although this did not seem consistent:

"I see dad on the weekends, sometimes, some weekends" (Ben, line 40)

King's time with his father was sometimes shorter or spent differently than expected as he was regularly late to collect him:

"we were supposed to go ice skating...and we couldn't because he came late...but we went to my my nn..other gran his his mum" (King, line 430-432)

Participants saw having contact with the out of house parent as a positive event and something they would look forward to and potentially attempt to set up to see them more regularly:

"or we would have to get a new one[car], but that's not as likely because it costs a lot so we will probably have to like...like but that's also quite a good thing though because you get to visit the other one more often...like even if it's just like oh yeah can we use the car or oh yeah I forgot my school books here...so it's like just to see them again its quite nice" (Sienna, line 830-834)

Jordan: ...tell me about the times when you stay at your dad's house?

Ben: it's fun..a brother though [fiddling with toy microphone] our brother that's come over [fiddling with toy microphone]
(Ben, line 45-46)

There was a hope that contact schedules would be somewhat flexible to suit the participants practical and emotional needs:

"it will probably be flexible...so like, not like er so at..if it's like our time at our mum's house...maybe...and we have like the kung fu...and our dad was like, pick us up from there, take us there and drop us back off." (James, line 533-539)

no, I'd like it to be flexible...like if I'm here...and I'm annoyed like at my dad or whatever...then maybe I can like just go to her house...or something." (James, line 849-857)

James and Sienna managed to remain in contact with their mother when she went away on weekends with her new partner or went out for the evening:

"but now I've got a phone, every time that she goes away like we call each other so it's alright" (Sienna, line 676)

4.6.3 Fragility of contact

King gave an overwhelmingly painful recollection of his relationship and contact with his father and how this made him question the longevity of their relationship especially how that might look in the future when he is grown up:

"probably in a pub somewhere...he always does it he just says he's doing work...and and that he'll like this week we were supposed to do stuff on my birthday again because we didn't do much on Saturday...we didn't even do anything urm yeah and he didn't come round...this week at all"
(King, line 845-853)

"er I just think he should try harder"
(King, line 857)

"not just because of he won't be able to take me to the pub that's sounds a little bit bad...he won't be around to ask me if he wants to go see a football match with me...or...or meet my my girlfriend or my boyfriend whichever I-I choose"
(King, line 912-916)

Jordan: what makes you think dad won't be there?

King: because he lets me down a lot
(King, line 923-924)

The lack of a consistent father figure for King meant he felt he would miss out on opportunities to bond with his father when he's older. King used the gender ratio in his family as explanations for how his interests have developed as a result of not having a father around:

"one of the bad things...it's not really bad but urm my mum I because I'm not around my dad a lot...there isn't really like a man there so and I have lots of girl cousins... and not not girlfriends girlfriends but friends that are girls... because I grew up around girls most of my family are girls...er he's not there to when I'm older he might not be there to say urm do you wanna go round to the pub to have a drink or something...cos I'll be doing something else because he won't be there with me"
(King, line 892-906)

4.7 Theme 4: When Parents Re-partner

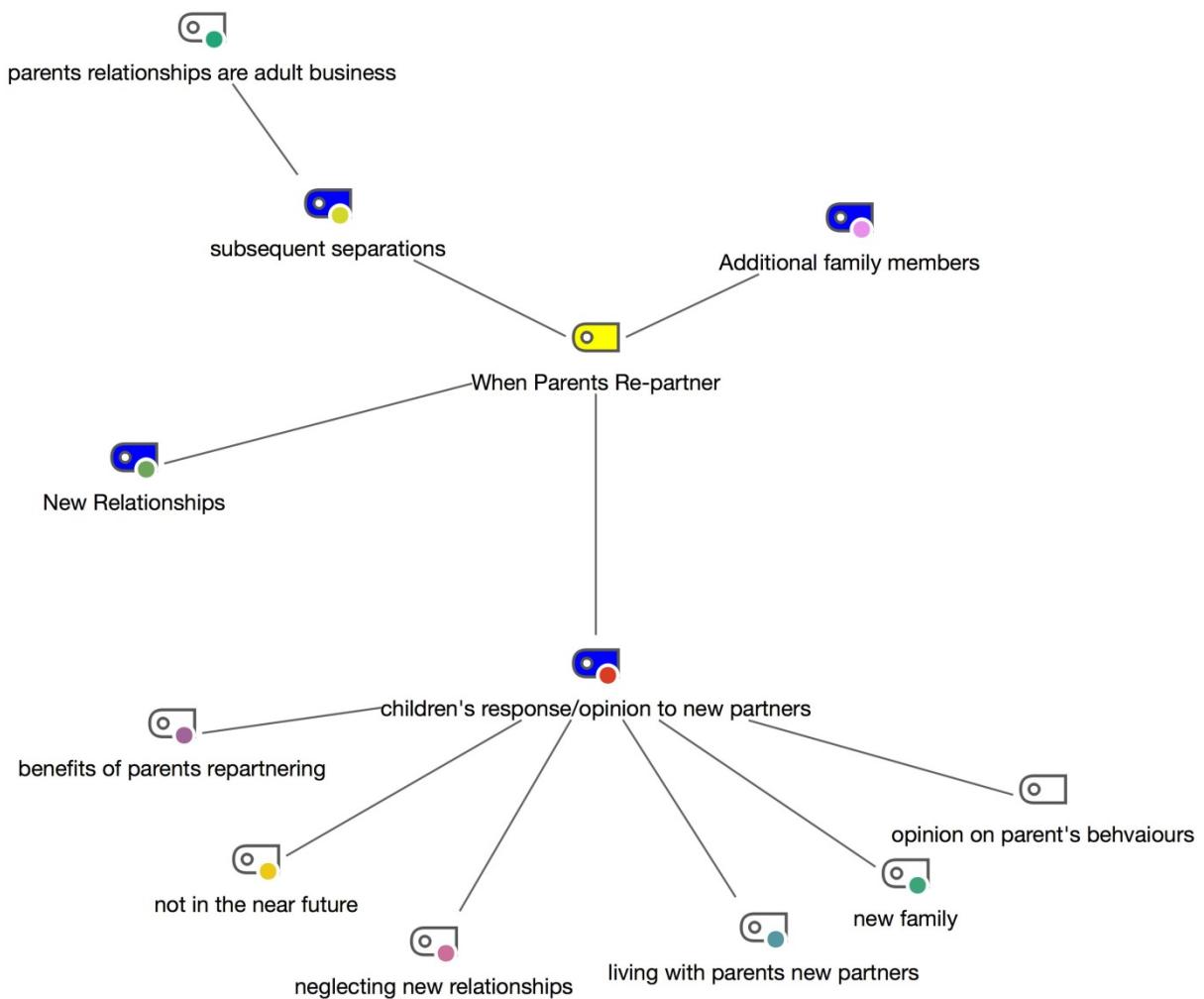


Figure 4. Thematic map for the theme: 'When Parents Re-Partner'

4.7.1 Parents' New Relationships

Three out of the four participant's associations were about parents' new partners and relationships. For some this was relatively new and there were some uncertainties about what it might be like welcoming a new parental figure and for others this was an experience they had a few times:

"I met nice people with some of the r-relationships my mum was in" (King, line 51)

"erm to be honest I don't mind that much erm because like my mum I think she's already seeing someone ...but urm he's never round or anything so she goes out on weekends to see him" (Sienna, line 65-67)

"errr like my mum goes out erm with like er I guess a boyfriend, I don't know, like a friend out for like weekends and stuff. That's kinda different" (James, line 48-50)

Sienna compared 'others' responses in movies against her mother's partner's family situation which enabled her to feel this might be okay:

"because in like for example movies, when they..your parents have a new partner, you're like really mean to them or like push them away but I think but because they have a family, and they're going through the same thing it's like if their child thought my mum was really bad just because she's with the dad" (Sienna, line 367)

4.7.2 Additional Family Members

In talking about their parents' separation participants spoke about meeting and having contact with step and half siblings. There was a sense that relationships were sometimes difficult to establish with these family members due to the amount they saw each other:

"noo, yeah when he picks me up to do stuff with me...I might see a brother, one of my brothers called [names brother] ...he's really fun...urm I haven't..we haven't seen each other in ages so we don't really know what to talk about so I just brought up the subject about fortnight" (King, line 309-315)

"urm I haven't even met all of them so..."
(King, line 815)

Jordan: ... so how often do you get to see them?

Ben: urm...not very lot now

(Ben, line 194-195)

James expressed more resistance at the thought of a new family and additional family members and thought it was unlikely to happen, despite being aware that his mother had a new partner who also had a child:

“er not that like a new like family sort of thing cos I don’t really see that happening”
(James, line 351)

4.7.3 Children’s Perspectives on Parents’ New Partners

Participants discussed their perspectives on parents’ new relationships. For James, it was okay that his mother was engaging in a new relationship because she shared her time equally between him and her children:

“I mean I don’t mind cos she can have friends but urm I mean it’s not like er like she spends like more time with him than us, so its balanced I guess” (James, line 895-897)

There were some expressions of mixed feelings about parents re-partnering:

“I don’t urm mind it like she can go out whatever, but sometimes it’s like annoying”
(James, line 54)

“but the fact that they’re doing that all for us and making it so much easier for us, like makes me more understanding of the situation and that I shouldn’t like um like push it away as much” (Sienna, line 423)

Sienna spoke about developing a relationship with parents’ new partners and how anxieties around this might be mitigated by trust in their parent to select someone who they will like and who will like them:

"which is gonna be a bit weird if they do because, yeah they're like a stranger in a way...because like you kind of have to get used to them...and then that's gonna be a bit like...weird because you don't know anything about them but your parents like them so you still like this when you..if it makes them happy it feels better for you. (Sienna, line 47-51)

"so, like that will be okay as well so if I lived with them I'll know they are a good person at least" (Sienna, line 1038)

Knowing they had a similar situation was comfort and reassurance for Sienna and made it possible that he might understand how a child might feel:

"and the fact he already had a child, like I said last week, it's like kind of the same situation we have...so like he can't be like that bad or anything" (Sienna, line 1042-1044)

There was a reluctance from some to want to meet parent's new partners and there was a sense that delaying the introduction of them into their lives provided them with a greater sense of security and protected them from acknowledging the impending change:

"but urm he's never round or anything, so she goes out on weekends to see him ...which is fine because like we don't like interact with him, like we don't know much about him, which is fine I guess" (Sienna, line 67-69)

"er she said like do you do you wanna like, I've I've met him before like like before they were partners and she said oh do you wanna like meet him and like go out and stuff, I was like I don't really care...no, it might be kinda awkward, cos like, oh you're with my mum now" (James, line 371-373)

"I mean er urm I don't have any plans to like actually go and see them" (James, line 875)

As well as minimising the chance of developing a relationship with their mother's partner, James and Sienna similarly expressed their opinions on how they thought it was unlikely that their mother's relationship would develop quickly. My interpretation was that the new relationship

might be easier to accept once they were older and they had developed more independence from their parents:

"not really because I'm not sure if they're ever even gonna move into together and if they do I think we'll be like a lot older anyways...and then they only see each other a few nights a week anyways so even if they are really close and they see each other a lot I think it's gonna be quite a few years before they do that" (Sienna, line 1012-1020)

"yeah, I mean I-I-I don't think I'll meet any of them in the near future or in general urm, just I think they're like in Birmingham or something like that" (James, line 395)

King reflected on one of his mother's past relationships:

"there's a man called [names mother's ex-boyfriend] ...urm he had er we stayed there for quite a while he was a really really nice man." (King, line 237-240)

4.7.4 Subsequent Separations

King spoke about the experience of his mother separating from subsequent relationships. His age was a factor in what he was told about reasons for them separating. One of these seemed a significant relationship for King, and one he spoke about at different times during the interview. There was a sense that not only did King's mother's relationship end but King's relationship with them did too, indicated by the personal pronoun used:

"I met nice people with some of the r-relationships my mum was in but then I had to finish for some reason, but I couldn't get told because urm, she said it was adult business ...and...and I'm a child. (King, line 51)

However, King on other occasions was informed about the reasons for the ending of a relationship:

"he he he had lots of expensive things but my mum figured out that was because he was selling drugs and stuff so she ended that relationship quickly" (King, line 657)

4.8 Theme 5: Change and Continuity

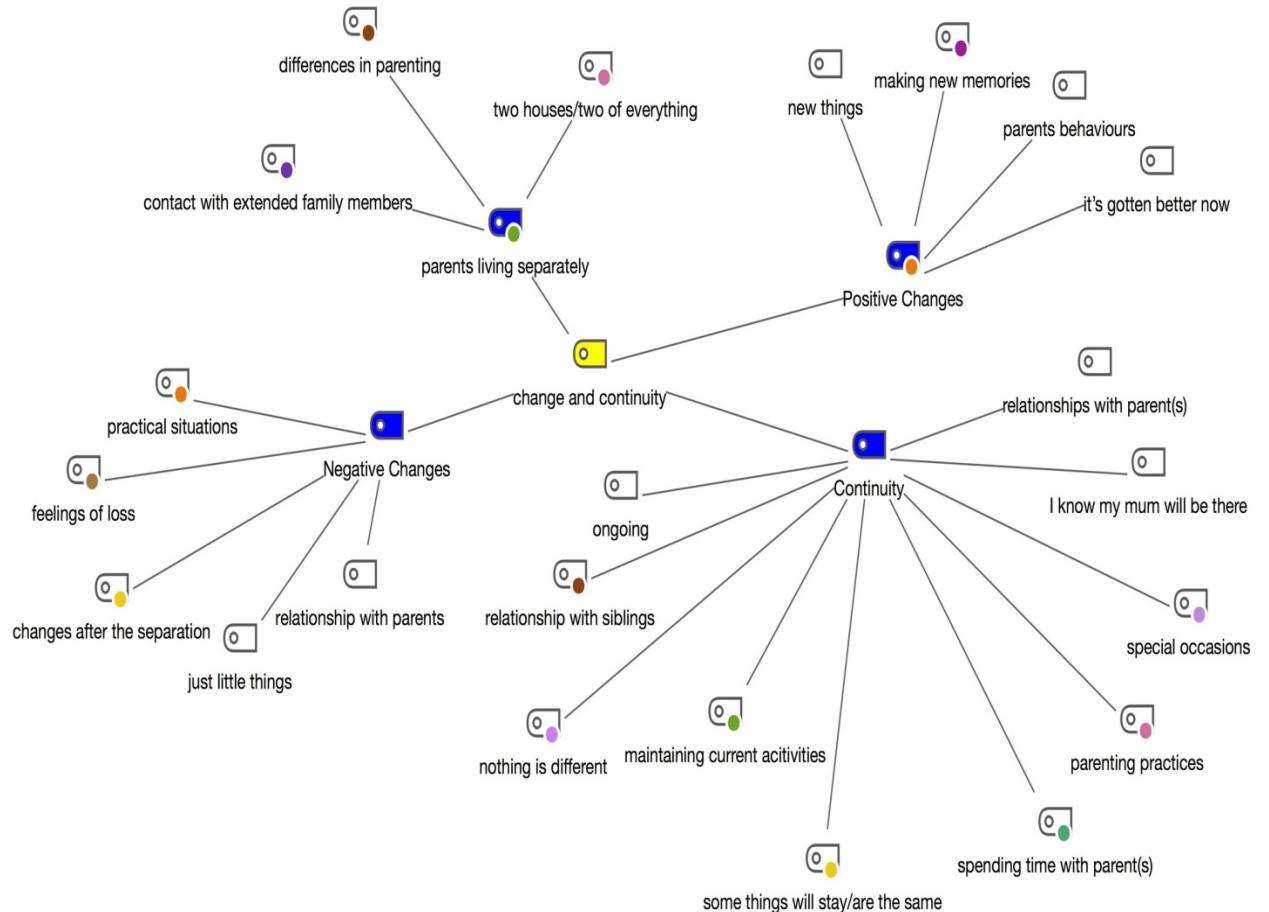


Figure 5. Thematic map for the theme: 'Change & Continuity'

4.8.1. Parents Living Separately

Unsurprisingly, participants gave a strong sense that they had to deal with and manage a number of changes associated with their parents' separation. One parent moving out of the shared home was a particularly significant change for participants. For James and Sienna, who currently still lived at home with both parents, this change brought several uncertainties and anxieties as well as something to look forward to:

"about like getting a new room and redecorating because I like that, but it's a bit weird not having one of them near you all the time" (Sienna, line 33-35)

For Sienna, her parent's living separately seemed like a necessary step to ensure that her and her parents were happy. Sienna's optimism was reliant upon her parent's happiness and this helped to reassure her of any anxiety she had about them moving out:

"urrrm well I don't know because it's like I said before like, if it makes them happier, which kind of makes me more positive about it, because if like they were staying together and they didn't progress over time, like separated, and they stayed together on the same path... and it made them a bit more like impatient or a bit upset about it...I think in the long run that would make us more unhappy...because it affects our home life more than them moving apart...them more arguing in the house" (Sienna, line 289-297)

King expressed how his father leaving the family home suggested the possibility of an abrupt and permanent end:

"I felt angry because urm I feel angry because when my dad left I thought I couldn't see him again and then I thought it was all his fault." (King, line 112)

Participants wondered about practicalities of their parents living separately and how current arrangements might be managed:

"and now we only have one and technically it's my dad's car, but we..he taught he taught our mum to drive it...but if they're not together where is our car gonna be?" (James, line 587-589)

"to watch a TV show that we both really like so now I'm thinking in the long run, different homes, urm different like, how far away from school it is, so just small things that my friend might not be able to come over, like like just by walking" (Sienna, line 539)

An inherent part of parents living in different houses was the aspect of having to move between two homes, packing and moving belongings. James and Sienna wondered about the possibility of this and how they might manage it:

"so, I'm really happy about that [having own room] but then I realised that she's not going to be here all the time which is gonna be bit different...and then always having to go back and forth...gonna be a bit..." (Sienna, line 25-29)

"I can't go back and get all my stuff for the next day say if I forget my homework so that's...gonna be a bit of a change to like be more prioritised with all my stuff" (Sienna, line 177)

James: cos I have to, see I'll..I like..I like I'll have my console here or something like that and...then I'll go there and I'll have to bring it or just leave it...it's gonna be annoying. (James, line 134-140)

There was a sense of a dawning realisation that once their parents moved home one of them wouldn't always be available when they needed them.

"yeah cos I have to stay home with like my other siblings, three and just my dad and sometimes when they're like annoying me and like my dad won't help then my mums not there." (James, line 56-64)

"yeah, I think first it's gonna be really weird because like not seeing one of them all the time...like say if you wanted one in a situation, like even something simple for like homework...that the other one may not be able to understand as much it's gonna be really weird like just calling them" (Sienna, line 339-343)

There was a hope, that wherever their mother moved to, it would be in close range so they could easily see her in times of need:

"that it's good that she's in a close range...so if somethings gone wrong at home or something happened I can go to my mum for help" (Sienna, line 465-467)

"like if I'm here and I'm annoyed like at my dad or whatever then maybe I can like just go to her house or something" (James, line 851-857)

Parents living separately also brought differences in parenting and adapting to individual parent's rules:

"she did say that like in her house it's not er like less like electrics and technologies cos she doesn't like any of it" (James, line 319)

"so, if I'm at my dad's house half the week I'll [clears throat] I'll probably be eating like oven food or like half the week I'll be eating my mum's food" (James, line 553-555)

4.8.2 Negative Changes

Overall participants tried to remain positive about changes associated with their parents' separation, however laced between these positive narratives were expressions of the emotional and practical challenges that came with their parents choosing to separate and the powerful emotional turmoil that participants seemed to battle with:

"gonna be like really weird for me not seeing the other one all the time (voice wavering) and that's gonna be a bit harder" (Sienna, line 495-497)

"yeah, I went urm..not that I'd prefer them to be together sort of thing if they're, ya know clearly, they don't want to... but urm change urm not really as good, like you don't want it" (James, line 185)

"yeah because now that I thought of, whilst we're talking like when I get upset I'm thinking of all the down stuff" (Sienna, line 563)

There was also an underlying tone of losing out on an established family routine when it came to living apart:

"er like we watch films with our dad...more than with our mum... so like later we're gonna watch one and I don't think, maybe my mum will watch it I don't know, but like maybe like if we're at her house then we will watch less with him" (James, line 689-693)

Participants also reflected on the practical challenges of living in two homes and how it would impact not only on themselves but also their parents and siblings:

"there's one aspect that will probably kind of annoying cos I have to, see I'll..I like..I like I'll have my console here or something like that and then I'll go there and I'll have to bring it or just leave it" (James, line 132-136)

"or if we're at..if were at like if were at our mum's house and we wanna go out and then we can't cos we don't have a car" (James, line 607-609)

"so, like I think it will be a bigger dist..even though it's quite a small thing to walk to school, it would be a bit weird cos you have to wake up earlier and he might have to go to breakfast club, which I know he hates" (Sienna, line 866)

4.8.3 Positive changes

Participants expressed feelings of excitement and positivity over changes that had occurred or were yet to take place:

"so, my mum said that when she leaves I'm gonna get my own room, so, I'm really happy about that" (Sienna, line 23-25)

"because she's in a better mood and stuff and the other day we went to ikea to help a friend with some new stuff...and it was quite fun to look around to see if we wanted anything for a new house" (Sienna, line 95-97)

"it's..like it's a change but like I..I think it will be kind of fun like a new house, like new place and stuff... cos it's, it's a long...process I guess, but I-I'm excited for it" (James, line 114-126)

The fact that parents were also excited for the change and it benefitted them made it a more positive experience:

"cos she's excited, so it's quite good" (Sienna, line 111)

Having a more balanced view of the positives and negatives enabled Sienna to maintain a more positive outlook on her parents' separation:

"because like I said the little down stuff but when I'm talking more about the positives and like and it makes me more like feel a bit better" (Sienna, line 575-577)

King reported changes in his parents' interaction with each other to be a positive development:

"but it's gotten better now, now they barely have a argument but sometimes they might just have urm urm an aggressive debate but it doesn't turn into a argument" (King, line 198)

4.8.4 Continuity

In opposition to the prospective changes, participants also spoke about how some things remained the same, so much so that nothing had changed or they hadn't noticed that their parents had separated:

Jordan: what's different?

Ben: urrm nothing really.

(Ben, line 446-447)

"surprised I didn't notice, but urm other than that I don't think like like there was any...like er cos they still do like the same stuff together like urm, packing like my lunch" (James, line 198)

Sienna shared how her relationship with her siblings hadn't been impacted upon by her parents' separation:

"I think everything's' the same cos it's kind of always been like that like you have them moments when it's really fun and you have loads of laughs, and then there's times when you absolutely hate them and stuff, but I think it's' always just up and down" (Sienna, line 772)

There was also a wish for some established practices to remain the same. James was concerned how he would eat at his dads so wanted his mother to provide food for both households:

"yeah, I mean, I think it'll probably like my mum could like make extra food and then we'd just freeze it and then take it to dads" (James, line 573)

James and Sienna were yet to know what life might be like once their parents lived separately and there was a wish for times like Christmas to remain as it currently was:

"I think she said that like Christmas stuff, even if she does move, it'll still be, like, here" (James, line 34)

"urm like one Christmas, cos then it would just be like annoying...I can't like having to go from house to house on one day"
(James, line 156)

For King, sadly what had remained the same was his father's continual lateness to collect him, leading him to expect it:

King: I'm used to it now so I don't really care

Jordan: and has that always been the same him sort of being late to come and get you

KING: ummhmm
(King, line 440-442)

Touchingly, Sienna chose to focus on the present and enjoy the time she still had living as a family, postponing her worries for her mother moved out:

"so, when the time comes then we can worry if..if you need but for the time being just like enjoy the time we have with our whole family together" (Sienna, line 626)

The participant data emerging through thematic analysis has been presented. The following section presents psychoanalytically informed analysis drawing upon data gathered through the transference, counter transference and reflexive notes.

4.9 Psychosocial Analysis

4.9.1. Ben, aged 8

I struggled to gather a sense of Ben's past experiences prior to and after meeting with him, and whilst Ben's mother consented to his participation in the interviews, she chose not to meet with me. For a long time after the interviews took place, I felt real concern that Ben's participation in this research would not be represented fully as a result of his reluctance to share during the interview process and his mother's reluctance to meet with me. It struck me that for all involved, including Ben, his experience seemed difficult to make sense of. After following up with Ben's mum and school regarding her consent for Ben to take part, she expressed that I could use a recent EP report to help contextualise Ben's experience.

Ben's parents separated when he was five and his parents reported his behaviour deteriorated at home and school after the separation. Ben has difficulties focusing his attention and regulating his emotional responses. His parents have an acrimonious relationship. Ben's mother feels that his behaviour is affected by his relationship with his father and missing him. He is reported to not talk about how he feels but will sometimes burst into tears. Ben has a younger brother who lives with him and his mother. He also has two older siblings whom he sees at his grandmother's

house. He visits his father at his maternal grandmother's house and stays over the weekends. He also has telephone contact with his father although his father is not consistent in his contact.

Reflecting on my experience of Ben I am surprised by the difference in the description of his difficult behaviour and emotional responses and the relatively calm and softly spoken boy I met with. I noted that I was also surprised by the difference I noticed in Ben when meeting with him to gain his assent and when we met for the interview. I was shocked at how the chatty engaging little boy seemed to have disappeared when we met to discuss his parents' separation. Despite Ben apparently wanting to take part, he was reluctant to share his experiences and appeared to find the interview process a challenge. He chose a toy microphone as his safe object and fiddled with this throughout the interview, eventually breaking it from repeatedly dropping it on the table. I wondered about Ben expressing his anger and frustration through his play with the toy microphone.

Ben shared very little about his experience of his parents' separation. He told me he saw his dad on some weekends and that he found it fun to spend time with him and his brothers. The events he shared were somewhat unclear and I noted in my reflections how I spoke a lot in an attempt to elicit a narrative from Ben. I wondered if I was experiencing the anxiety of being a novice researcher, aware of needing something I could work with. In the transference, I experienced unbearable anxiety and intense psychic pain, which felt like a projection of loneliness and hostility. I likened it to the feeling of concrete in my chest, stuck for words and grappling to make sense of Ben's experience. When I tried to find out more about his parents' separation, Ben would close down giving brief one word answers and would turn to fiddling with the toy microphone more ferociously. I was struck by listening back to the audio tape by how much I spoke and how desperate my enquires seemed. I noticed how I almost completely avoided open

questions and avoided feelings talk, instead asking direct and closed questions that Ben might find easier to respond to. The feelings of shame, embarrassment and hostility communicated in the transference I found to be unbearable, which can be seen by my stuttering and struggling for words.

From listening to the recording, reading the transcript and my reflexive field notes it is evident that Ben became more engaged when asked problem free questions such as what he did for fun and talking about his siblings. It seemed thinking about his parents' separation was so difficult for Ben he projected all his unbearable feelings into me. The internal turmoil I felt of loss and rejection were so intense that I burst into tears when I left the school. I was struck by how similar my emotional reaction seemed to Ben's mother's description of him.

Ben demonstrated how projected feelings of loss and rejection were almost impossible to stay in touch with, evidenced by his verbal expressions whilst playing with the microphone "*make an earthquake*" and "*push it through the wall*". I wondered whether these were metaphors for how Ben was feeling, surrounded by destruction and disaster and the physical act of pushing the pain away from him. Interestingly an earthquake was similar to how I was responding in the countertransference, lost, broken and struggling to stay on my feet. I attempt to share with Ben how it might be difficult for him to talk about his experience. However, in reality, what I communicate is "*this is difficult*", for me and him.

I wondered about the presence of an internal object who could help Ben to think about and digest his experiences providing him with some order and understanding. As the interview came to a close, Ben expressed sadness at this being the last time we meet. As difficult as it was to contain

the projected feelings I wondered about my ability to sit with the communications of hostility and attack, and the possible, however small, containment this may have provided Ben.

4.9.2 James, aged 13

James's parents separated a year before the interview took place. James is Sienna's older brother and is the second oldest of four children. He is one of three boys. James generally keeps to himself at home and likes to play on his computer. He feels he is easily irritated by his younger siblings and that he and his siblings are not treated equitably by their father. When James's parents separated, they began sleeping in separate bedrooms but did not move homes. His mother informed each of the children separately. This is still the current arrangement. 5 years prior to this, James's parents split for the first time, his mother reported that James had a strong reaction to this news and was very emotional for a long time. Shortly after this, his parents tried to work at their relationship, getting back together until their final split last year. James's mother is now looking for a new home but has yet to find one. She is in a new relationship, which the children are aware of.

I interviewed James at his home. James was described as private and distant and his mother reported being surprised when he volunteered to take part in the research like his sister. Therefore, it surprised me how easy he was to talk with and how open he was to taking part in the research.

James, spoke more about the anticipated change of his parents' separation than the past. James's first association to his parents' separation was the possibility of having two houses and two of everything when his mother moves out. I sensed an air of anxiety about the impending future and

the number of uncertainties that were around. James shared that “*Christmas stuff, even if she does move, it'll still be like here*”. There was a sense that a considerable level of anxiety was being communicated in the transference and I wondered about James’s ability to stay with the painful feelings of uncertainty, reassuring himself through the fact that things have and will remain the same “*I think they got separated and they didn’t, I like didn’t even notice*”.

James shared many practical changes that may arise from his parents living separately, for example, moving his belongings back and forth, attending hobbies, and different parenting approaches. I was surprised by how calm he appeared with little to no visible affect as he spoke about what sounded like considerable upheaval clouded in uncertainty. I noticed a lump in my throat as he was speaking of these possible changes and was finding it hard to focus as though I was clouded by fog. When reading and listening to the transcript, I wondered on reflection about the painfulness and confusion I experienced in the transference and how this might reflect how he was feeling about the uncertainty and cloudiness of his future.

James shared that when his mother goes out with her new partner that this is sometimes “*annoying*” as her presence is beneficial to sorting out disputes between him and his siblings. It felt as though James’s choice of affect did not match the unconscious communications in the room, which were of loss and anxiety. I wondered about how his projection of loss, a seemingly defensive manoeuvre, supported him to process some of the more difficult feelings towards his parents’ separation and the unavailability of his mother.

When thinking about his mother moving into a new house James spoke about the excitement of a new home and change. This is later contradicted when James speaks about his feelings towards his parents not being together and his negative feelings towards it, “*change urm not really as*

good, like you don't want it". It seemed that by focusing on the positives of the move James was able to protect himself from the more difficult feelings associated with his parents' separation. When revisiting the interview during transcription I was struck by how James mainly speaks about the practicalities that the separation affects and noticed a tendency for him to follow an expression of more difficult feelings with a positive remark or reflection on how things have not been that different. I was also reminded of his avoidance of eye contact and scraping a pencil on the desk during this time. I noticed that I too appeared to follow this positive frame and reflected back his feelings of remaining positive, avoiding his expression of "*negative*" feelings. I wondered about how the feelings of loss and uncertainty I experienced in the transference possibly led me to respond in the countertransference by avoiding the negative feelings too. I found myself wanting to make James feel comfortable and reassure him that things were okay. Again, this seemingly defensive strategy appeared to enable James to take up more of a depressive position with regard to his experience, being able to maintain an idea of both the good and bad in what he was experiencing.

James expressed conflicting wishes of wanting to develop his independence and autonomy and a wish to revert to reinstating the close bond with his parents that comes with being a younger child. He reflected on how he would like to spend more time doing activities with his mum again after she moves and possibly go on holiday with his dad. I experienced overwhelming feelings of loss as James spoke about his changing relationships with his parents. I was struck by how this resonated with my own experience of losing out on time with parents and a drive to make up for potentially lost time.

When James spoke about his mother moving out or the possibility of meeting her new boyfriend these were positioned as things that were not going to happen "*in the near future*". The fact that

her boyfriend also lived in another city was further confirmation for James that these changes were unlikely to come into effect anytime soon. I wondered about the safety and comfort that was provided by splitting off these eventualities into the future and taking comfort in the good of the now, which remains safe and relatively unchanged. I felt that by taking up this position James was able to prepare himself for the more practical elements associated with his parents' separation, leaving the anxiety of possibly losing his mother firmly in the future.

4.9.3 Sienna, aged 11

Sienna's parents separated a year before the interview took place. Sienna is James's younger sister and is the second youngest of four children and the only girl. Her parent's separated when she was 9 years old, just over a year before the interview. Her parents currently live in the same house but sleep in separate bedrooms, there is an intention that her mother will eventually move into her own home. She was informed by her mother of her parents' separation. Her mother reported that she appears to have responded okay but says she doesn't speak about the separation with her. Sienna was initially the only child in her family to be put forward for the research by her mother. Sienna is described by her mother as confident and outspoken and she felt she would have a lot to say. Her mother shared that Sienna has not previously been given an opportunity to talk about her experience or feelings around the separation.

Sienna arrived at the room on her own. She had just returned from an after-school club and appeared in good spirits. She was articulate, polite and seemingly mature for her age. Sienna's first association to her parents' separation was 'living in two houses'. She began by speaking about the mixed feelings this brought, whereby she would have her own room once her mother moves out but this would also mean that her mother wouldn't be there. Sienna regularly

oscillated in the interview between a positive gain and then a subsequent loss when speaking about her mother leaving the family home. She moved onto speaking about her parents re-partnering and the possibility of that person living with them. I felt considerable physical and psychic pain during the transference and noticed the immediate return of these feelings when listening to the interviews. From the first few minutes of listening to her narrative I was transported back to the small room with this conscientious girl, putting extreme effort into being okay. Sienna was seemingly reassured by the fact that these changes would make her parents happier, which was her main priority. I felt unbearable pain and sadness in the transference and a propensity to project my own personal experience into the interview space. I recognised, when revisiting the transcripts and audio recording, that the sadness experienced, was partly my own response in my experience of the countertransference. Sienna resonated with me personally, in terms of her age and gender, and her need to ensure her parents happiness was all too familiar. I responded to her projections of painful feelings by following her narrative of feeling okay and missing her expression that this is '*gonna be a bit weird*' for her. I felt a sense of protectiveness that I needed her to feel 'okay'.

Sienna speaks about managing aspects of her parents' separation, such as moving back and forth and her mother not being there by focusing on finding ways to be organised through the use of a diary and being excited about decorating her new room. Sienna's narrative appeared to convey that she has been able to adopt an adaptive defence, in the form of sublimation by channeling her energies into decorating her room and finding ways to support her new living arrangement. She is able to show consideration and support of her parents' situation and their wish to live separately, putting their feelings above her own. She seems to be able to adopt a more depressive position of acknowledging both the good and bad, demonstrating a more realistic perception of the external world.

Sienna would at times move into a position where she spoke only about the positives of the separation describing her parents' separation as '*completely fine*'. As Sienna spoke I felt extreme feelings of sadness and fear in the transference which did not appear to match Sienna's positive façade. It appeared, however, that Sienna's true feelings seemed to peep at the surface, her voice wavering and tears forming in her eyes. There was a heaviness in the room and I felt the immense pressure that she was putting on herself to feel okay. As Sienna began to acknowledge both the ups and downs of the situation and moved back into considering both the positives and negatives she was brought to tears. The intense feelings I felt in the transference seemed to dissipate as Sienna adopted an ability to be in touch with the external world and adopt a more depressive position. Her acknowledgment that "*I kinda want to have a new room and like stuff but it's gonna be like really weird for me not seeing the other one all the time*" and being able to mourn her loss enabled her to remain in touch with an external reality, supported by the use of containing and reliable maternal and paternal figures shown in her description of her parents "*whereas our parents are like really understanding and like make sure we're first*". I recognised my own role in the interview process through reflective supervision. My ability to remain curious and stay with the painful feelings was made more possible when Sienna was able to acknowledge these feelings herself. I realised there was a need for me to engage in this reciprocal dance of moving to and away from acknowledging the painful feelings to support her 'working through' them.

Whilst there was evidence that Sienna was able to make use of containing and dependable objects and remain in touch with an external reality, there was still a sense of splitting others into good or bad. Sienna often referred to people who had experienced divorce as 'criminals' or 'bad people' who she had seen in movies who put "*their anger into crimes*". Sienna split off all her

bad feelings into these ‘others’ and reassured herself that her situation was better so she would be okay. Splitting the world into a binary state may have enabled Sienna to preserve the ‘good’ object in her mind.

Sienna moved to asking me about whether my parents had separated and I found myself stunned and curious about what I may have been projecting into the interview space. Her evaluation of me as “*a really nice person and that didn’t affect you as like a bad person*” seemed to develop her capacity and tolerance to engage with the possibility of a complete person embodying the good and bad together.

Sienna further engages in adaptive defence mechanisms through her focus on her developing autonomy and independence. Her ability to remain in contact with the out of house parent through her new phone and her age indicating she is growing up and spending less time with her parents is a helpful distraction for Sienna to avoid some of the ‘*little things*’ that make her feel ‘*down*’. Focusing on the time she has in the present with her family, and placing the change and anxiety in the future, she is reassured that by the time any further change occurs she will be older and therefore less likely to be affected by it “*I’m not sure if they’re ever going to move into together and if they do I think we’ll be a lot older anyways, cos I’m nearly 12*”.

4.9.4 King, aged 10

King is an amicable and friendly boy who currently attends a specialist provision. King’s parents separated when he was 5 years old and his contact with his father is not as consistent as his mother or King would like. The current contact arrangements are once a fortnight on a Saturday morning. King was easy to engage with and was excited to choose his own pseudonym when

meeting to explain about the research. King reports becoming angry in his primary school and that's why he now attends a different school. He spends one afternoon a week at his old school. His mother reported that King's behaviour deteriorated after going to live with his father for 5 weeks a few years back. King has a diagnosis of ADHD. King's mother has also suffered from her own mental health needs and substance abuse which she acknowledges she has put behind her. She shared that her relationship with King's father was unconventional and there is a history of domestic violence. King has fourteen siblings, 6 of these are younger than King and some were born whilst King's parents were still together. King is his mother's only child. King has not met some of his siblings and others he has a close relationship with. He has one sister, of a similar age, who was born when King's parents were still together, who he sees regularly. King often expresses the wish that his parents would get back together.

King was shown to the interview by his teacher. He had a youthful, friendly face and an air of innocence about him. I was instantly brought back to my days as a behaviour specialist in a PRU and reminded of the number of young unsuspecting children I worked with, finding it difficult to imagine the behaviour that would have led him to this provision. King completed his GEM using both drawings and writing and I felt an intense feeling of sadness in the transference as he shared his wonderings "*why is my daddy so mean to my mummy*" and his feelings "*sad plus angry equals sangry*". These feelings of sadness were noticeably absent in King. I noticed in myself that I wanted to take these feelings away from him, help him in some way to overcome them. Listening back to the audio recording I noticed how loss pervaded King's narrative, describing how he thought he would never see his father again, the ending of his mother's subsequent relationships and the moving of his dog to live with his nan. My reflexive field notes depict the sadness that engulfed me in the countertransference, an emotion predominantly absent in King.

King spoke about his mother's sadness in relation to their separation and through this identified his own feelings of sadness and anger. King's approach shifted and he appeared to be more solemn and thoughtful about what he had shared. I noticed that after an expression of something that was potentially painful, King would move to engaging in problem free talk about a game or something that interested him. This moving away appeared to enable King to navigate the potentially painful anxieties and emotions stimulated by the interview.

King spoke about his contact with his father and being let down by him. I was overcome with feelings of rejection and fear in the transference. His narrative suggested ambivalence about his paternal figure, someone that he wanted around but knew would not be. He demonstrated a capacity to be angry at his paternal object and his projection of rejection and fear appeared to enable King to express his anger about his father's efforts to see him and aggression towards his mother. King acknowledged that he knew his "*mum will always be there*", despite her own vulnerabilities and past health struggles, suggesting a capacity to hold on to a realistic perception of her as available and containing. There was sense however that King was at times splitting his mother and father into all good and all bad and I wondered if at present it is difficult for King to face any negative feelings about his mother (maternal object). Splitting his parents this way may enable him to preserve the good object so that he can develop the capacity to engage with external world in a more integrated way.

King's father let him down on a regular basis and King shared that he "*doesn't really care*" and that he was "*used to it*". I wondered about how this suggested a defence against feelings that may pose threat to his internal world. Later King seems to be able to acknowledge the painful feelings this stirs up for him and admits he would like his father "*to try harder*". He seems to be able to acknowledge and consider that his paternal figure is not 'good enough' (Winnicott,

1964), and mourn the father he wanted to have. He seems to get in touch with an external reality where even though his father may not be around he finds comfort in the consistency of his mother.

4.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an analysis of data amassed through interviews held with participants at both a semantic and interpretive level. The analysis showed five themes emerged through the thematic analysis. Further psychosocial analysis found each participant's narratives to have distinct emphases from each other. Chapter 5 will now explore these areas in further detail.

5. Discussion

5.1 Chapter Overview

This closing chapter starts by providing a summary of the findings and discusses these in terms of literature identified in chapter 2, wider literature and psychological theory. The implications of this research and its findings for the practice of EPs are discussed, including what the application of psychoanalytic ideas might offer the profession. Strengths and limitations of the study are then considered, including implications for future research. The chapter concludes with reflections of my experience of the research process.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This research sought to answer two research questions:

- How do children experience their parents' divorce or separation?
- What can be understood about participants' experience of divorce or separation from a psychosocial perspective?

Five themes emerged through a thematic analysis of participants' responses. Analysis revealed that children spoke about their emotional response to their parents' separation both now and at the time of learning about the separation. They made attempts to make sense of and process the event by thinking it through and talking about it, including within the interview process.

Children engaged in resilient mind-sets in their attempt to manage both their emotional response and the practical changes that come with parents' separation. Their reflections suggested that it was potentially difficult to remember some of their experiences and provide narratives. The

analysis highlighted aspects of when children's parents re-partner into new relationships. This included uncertainty about welcoming new partners into their lives and their relationships with new additional family members as well as the experience of subsequent parental separations. The children reflected on the changes they had experienced or were yet to experience, including the positive and negative aspects of change and more specifically the significant event of parents living separately. Encompassed within this was the reflection on what had remained the same and what children wished would continue after separation. The analysis of interview data showed that children spoke about the relationship between their parents and both theirs and their parents' feelings linked to this interaction. Narratives showed children spoke about their parents' interactions both before and after the separation. The children's reflections on their current and proposed contact arrangements with their out of house parent, illuminated their views on engaging in shared parenting arrangements and their present and prospective contact and communication with them. It also included the painful recollections of how contact with parents may not live up to expectations, highlighting its fragility for some.

5.3 A Process: Children's Response to Parents' Separation

Divorce and separation is now thought of as ongoing process that is played out in a complex variety of ways, with differential effects for those involved (Rodgers & Pryor, 1998). It is no longer seen as a 'one off event' which forever defines those involved (Neale & Flowerdew, 2007). The children in this study engaged in emotional and cognitive processing when trying to comprehend their parents' separation. This is generally consistent with what is known about young people's experiences of divorce (Fawcett, 2000). Children's accounts in this study showed this complex shifting process was unique for each individual, and the interview space was used consciously and unconsciously by all, in different ways, to work through and make sense of a range of aspects associated with their parents' separating. Other research in the area has also

shown that children's responses to their parents' separation are mixed, reflecting the variety and complexity of their circumstances (Hogan et al., 2003).

The children in this study demonstrated a continual processing of their feelings towards their parents' separation, both positive and negative, appearing to oscillate between sadness and loss, and excitement and acceptance. As described in chapter 4, Sienna, James and King at times oscillate between different states of mind when speaking about their feelings and response to their parents' separation, demonstrating possible defences against anxiety. This idea of ever-shifting mental states is considered by both Klein and Bion in an account of growth and development (Waddell, 2002). Both Klein and Bion suggest there are lifelong fluctuations between two states of mind, described by Klein as paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. The depressive position, which demonstrates the capacity to manage anxiety and introject both the 'good' and the 'bad' and adopt a somewhat balanced relationship to the other is sometimes countered by the need to protect the self and adopt the more primitive position termed "paranoid-schizoid". This state of mind is adopted in the face of pain and emotional distress and characterised by a focus on self-perseveration at all costs (Waddell, 2002). Sienna, James and King in this study appeared to move back and forth between these states of mind, adopting adaptive defence strategies, enabling them to comprehend and process a more balanced reality. James did this by splitting off and projecting feelings of loss and uncertainty, enabling him to process positive and negative feelings he held towards his mother moving home. Sienna, similarly engaged in adaptive defence mechanisms, by splitting off her bad feelings into 'criminals' and 'movie characters' to support her integration and tolerance of the 'good and bad together' in a person who had experienced the separation of their parents. Similarly, King drew upon a good internal object, which supported him to grieve for the loss of a consistent father figure, allowing him to acknowledge his true feelings towards him.

Divorce and separation is considered an experience of ‘loss’ in a child’s life. Dowling & Gorell-Barnes (1999) suggest that only if children are allowed to mourn the ‘loss of the complete family’ can they begin to come to terms with the new situation and begin to adapt to it. A sense of loss was communicated by all the children in the study, including what I picked up through unconscious communications during the interview process. King mourned the loss of a father figure, and Sienna and James mourned the possible loss of their life as they now knew it and the future loss of their mother from the family home. Although Ben had more difficulty expressing his experience he too alluded to the loss of sibling relationships and a regularity of contact with his father. Other research in the area reported that children experience both an economic and relational loss when their parents’ separate (Smart, 2006). Freud described the slow and painful work of mourning which involves internal struggles between polarised impulses, of attempts to accept a loss and to deny it. This can be seen and described by the fluctuations in James and Sienna’s narratives, between depressive and paranoid-schizoid positions, in denying painful feelings of their parents’ separation, and accepting both positive elements (e.g. having a new home) and negative elements (e.g. not having mum around all the time). Bowlby (1980) in his application of attachment theory to loss and bereavement described grief as a normal adaptive response when a loss has occurred. He observed that a child whose grief reaction has become prolonged may present in denial and have the inability to ‘give sorrow words’. This may explain Ben’s difficulty in expressing his experience of his parents’ separation and the intense affect communicated through his splitting and projection of feelings of loss and rejection. Waddell (2002) describes a lack of visible affect and movement as possible defences against pain, which may serve to describe Ben’s intense focus on the toy microphone and its subsequent destruction. Smart (2006) also reported participants, who like Ben, were unable or unwilling to provide full accounts of their family relationships and suggested that their fragmented stories may still be too

immediate and raw for them to stand back and reflect upon them. Winnicott (1996) suggests a child has a natural tendency to recover from loss if a supportive and holding environment is present, that acknowledges their grief and painful feelings and provides them with time to recover. Sienna, James and King all appear to be able to hold in mind an ‘internal good object’ which helps lessen the intensity of anxiety associated with their loss.

Participants’ explored the uncertainty of their situations in how their day to day life might transpire and how their parents’ separation might impact upon them in the future, in a personal and relational sense. Sienna and James explored how living across two homes might impact on their social and school lives and Sienna at times was fixated on the impact separation might have on her as a person. King spoke more about his relationship, or lack thereof, with his father, and how that might impact on him in the future. The papers reviewed in chapter 2 did not report any findings that suggested participants grappled with future uncertainty when thinking about their parents’ separation. However, findings from two studies in Ireland reported that children’s narratives demonstrated they had the ability to reflect upon and review their expectations for the future (Halpenny et al., 2008) and that they had mixed expectations about how their family would develop (Hogan et al., 2003). These findings resonate with some of the findings of this study. Bion (1962) suggested that the desire to know and acquire knowledge, along with love and hate, is the most important element in the growth and development of personality. Parental divorce and separation thrusts children into a position where they have little to no knowledge and control. This is evidenced by the children’s wonderings about reasons for their parents’ separation and the form their lives will take in the future. The children exert efforts to gain some control and manage the anxiety associated with not knowing through seeking knowledge through alternative means, such as Sienna’s attempts to understand through watching movies of children who have experienced divorce or through others that she knows of. King similarly imagines his

life in the future in attempt to ‘know’ about what the future might hold. These efforts to gain some control provided children with some reassurance, mitigating their experiences of helplessness and somewhat relieving their unmanageable feelings (Burgo, 2012).

5.4 Relationships, Contact and Shared Parenting

Children spoke about their contact and relationships with their parents, either currently or anticipated. They reflected on their current and proposed contact arrangements and explored their views on engaging in shared parenting arrangements. The children who were yet to engage in a shared parenting arrangement tried to understand how the parenting arrangement might be worked out and expressed they wanted a fair and equitable arrangement that was flexible to their needs. However, the two participants already in a shared parenting arrangement shared experiences of how contact with their out of house parent has been inconsistent and not as regular as they would have liked. Studies reviewed in chapter 2 identified good contact for children was based on a good quality relationship and not its quantity, and that children often experienced diminished contact when relationships with their out of house parent was poor (Neale & Flowerdew, 2007). This finding appears to align with King and Ben’s narratives and suggest that the inconsistency in their relationship with their fathers has contributed to the amount they see them and the affect that was communicated through unconscious intersubjective dynamics. Furthering this finding, although yet to engage in a shared parenting arrangement, James and Sienna’s good quality relationships with their parents, which featured heavily in their narratives, suggest that they may experience a more consistent shared parenting arrangement, for which plans are already underway. Hogan et al., (2003) found evidence that children generally had high levels of contact with non-resident parents, regulated arrangements and children had clear expectation of these. This was not found for two of the participants in this study, and James and Sienna, despite describing how they thought contact would be distributed, reported high

levels of uncertainty and anxiety about how this would be in practice. Similar to other findings in the literature, Sienna grappled with ensuring that contact was fair, more so for parents than herself (Neale & Flowerdew, 2007). Flexibility and workable arrangements were desired by children in Halpenny et al. (2008) study, particularly in the context of children getting older and adapting to their own needs and interests. This was a wish expressed by both Sienna and James in this study. Data collected through unconscious dynamics suggested that the participants managed their contact with their parents through employing unconscious defensive strategies. King, Sienna and James, however, were not in complete denial of their pain and oscillated between dis-integration and re-integration of their pain and anxiety. These responses suggest that they were engaging in adaptive defence mechanisms, indicative of suppression. Through suppression, the impact and reality of a situation are accepted, and in some ways minimised (Vaillant, 2000). For Ben, it seemed that his defence mechanisms and adoption of the paranoid-schizoid position served to protect his internal self from threats of anxiety, which at this point in time, were possibly too raw and painful to face. Bion (1962) saw the fragmentation and splitting of paranoid positions as a necessary aspect of human experience and associated this inner turbulence, experienced by the participants, as intrinsic to emotional growth.

Divorce and separation brings with it the possibility of new relationships and the introduction of new family members. In talking about their experience of their parents' separation children explored parents establishing new love relationships. James and Sienna explored the relevant uncertainty and anxieties around their mother's new relationship and King spoke about the experience of loss associated with subsequent parental separations. Freud's oedipal complex may explain some of the hostile feelings and anxieties present when a parent embarks on a new relationship. The oedipal situation brings into focus that the child does not have all of his mother all of the time, and there is another adult who has claim to her, who are in a relationship

independent of him, stirring up hostile feelings and phantasies (Youell, 2006). Youell (2006) suggests that separation, loss and change although painful are essential experiences that are linked to growth, development and internal strength. The beginnings and endings an individual goes through in infancy and early childhood, prepares for later losses and transitions. However, every ending (e.g. parent leaving home), involves a loss of some kind and every beginning (e.g. parent embarking on a new relationship) carries with it the anxiety of facing the unknown, stirring up affectual memories about other losses and earlier fearful beginnings (Youell, 2006). For some of the participants' safety was found in placing the possibility of this change in the future and denying any immediacy of developing their own relationship with their mother's new partner. Vaillant, (2000) describes the defence anticipation as one's capacity to bear the affective response to an unbearable future, reflecting the capacity to perceive future danger affectively as well as cognitively, and to master future conflict in small steps, regulating the children's perceptions of internal and external realities that they are powerless to change. James and Sienna's descriptions of staying in touch with their mother via phone and Sienna's comfort in now having her own personal mobile, is interesting in relation to the management of separation and transition linked to divorce and separation. It is possible that contact via phone enables the children to be in touch with their 'secure base' at any time and possibly serves to erase the experience of being separate, denying or eradicating anxiety associated with separation (Youell, 2006).

5.5 Resilience, Autonomy & Dependence

The children's narratives highlighted resilience and ability to cope with changes associated with their parents' separation. This included maintaining a positive mindset about future changes and evaluating the importance of these in comparison to other areas of their life. For King, it was about being able to offer support and comfort to his mother and for Sienna it also included

adopting practical strategies, such as a planner, to help her with the future transition between two homes. Flowerdew and Neale (2003) identified that an important factor in helping children with these transitions is the pace at which changes are managed. They suggest that Gidden's (1992) concept of 'psychological travelling time' is useful in understanding this for children of divorce, that is the length of time it takes to accept and come to terms with a major life transition. He suggests that travelling implies a destination, which is always one place, and we cannot be in two places at once. Therefore, coming to terms with each major life change is likely to require 'psychological travelling time' or a period of emotional recovery. It may be that the resilience and ability to cope displayed by James and Sienna may have been supported by the relative time that they have been given to process and come to terms with changes and transitions associated with their parents' separation.

Children spoke about growing up and developing independence and autonomy and this appeared to serve as a protective factor against the prospect of not seeing one of their parents regularly. The children's growing independence meant that they no longer needed to rely on their parents as much as they do now and were able to manage their contact with their parents more autonomously, for example, visiting one parent should they wish to or remaining in contact via phone. This appeared more apparent in James and Sienna's narratives who were at the early stages of adolescence. It may be the growing independence that comes with adolescence was a supportive factor in these children coping with their parents' separation and something that Ben and King were yet to draw upon in their more dependent latency phase.

The children in this study also appeared to navigate their parents' separation, associated change and feelings independently, without support or expression of their feelings to others. There was a sense that divorce and separation was something that you didn't speak about with others both

inside and outside the family. This finding is similar to the finding by Smart (2002) where children reported that they were without adult support as they navigated their own problems. However, this is in contrast to Hogan et al., (2003) and Fawcett (2000) who found that children were more likely to confide and accept support from those inside the family than seek support outside of the family. Therefore, it is interesting the benefits Sienna reported experiencing, having been given the opportunity to speak about and reflect on her parents' separation, "*I think talking about this has helped me a lot, because like I said the little down stuff but when I'm talking more about the positives and like it makes me more like feel a bit better*". For her, an opportunity to speak about both the positives and negatives of her parents' separation was "*important*" and "*helpful*". Bion's (1961) Container-Contained model may go some way in describing what Sienna references here regarding the benefit she felt speaking about her experiences. Bion's model describes a process of communication whereby one entity holds, manages, comprehends and influences another. Containment and holding environments may offer a reduction of the terror that can be brought about major transitions, such as divorce (Salzberger-Wittenberg, Henry, & Osborne, 1983).

The children also expressed wishes to revert to earlier levels of dependency including the prospect of spending more quality time with parents, something they did less of since they were older. Winnicott (1965) suggested that upon entering a new context and new set of relationships, as one is exposed to through separation or divorce, thrusts us back into positions of dependency. This may be helpfully explained by Bowlby's attachment theory and the idea of a secure base of which we can return even as we develop through life. Youell (2006) suggests that this pattern of returning to our secure base, initially developed in early infancy, does not change as one moves through childhood and towards adulthood, however, it becomes an increasingly internal phenomenon. When an individual has experiences of containment and well managed separations,

these are internalised and introjected providing the individual with a good internal object and secure, flexible inner world that can be relied upon in times of distress and anxiety. Here the children's narratives suggest they are drawing upon internal representations of their good internal objects as ways in which to manage the fear and anxiety evoked in thinking about their parents' separation. This enables them to move towards a more depressive position, through the experience of an external observing and containing mind, allowing the different parts of the self to remain in touch with one another (Waddell, 2002).

5.6 Relating in role: Individual Intersubjective Dynamics.

'Role is dynamic: it is never a fixed pattern of response or behaviour' (Reed, 2000, p.4)

A significant finding of this research comes from my experience in engaging with each participant. As described in chapter 4, different feelings were elicited through the unconscious intersubjective dynamics, through the transference and countertransference, which affect the research relationship. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) illustrate the idea that data is a co-production of the interview pair and suggest that the concepts of recognition and containment are useful in supporting understanding of what it is in the research (or other) relationship that helps trust to develop. The subject is understood as being dynamically produced in the intersubjective relationship and that the person who is produced in the interview is new but also recognisable (Ogden, 1994). This is data that I relied on within this study but I also propose has benefits beyond the researcher role, and is useful and relevant for the EP role.

Contextual factors like legislative influences and systemic and psychodynamic processes of expectation and personal drivers, consciously and unconsciously, impact upon EPs taking up their espoused role. The level of influence each of these have is dependent upon the EPs ability

to reflect on their practice and understand influences on their role with differing individuals in different systems. Psychodynamic theories are related to individual, unconscious processes (Waddell, 2002) and include the functions and processes that a person brings to their role. Different encounters within different systems can impact and obstruct effective, efficient and meaningful engagement (Eloquin, 2016). Acknowledging the influence of intersubjective dynamics, underlying psychodynamic processes and systemic pressures that influence our role when working with children and young people and associated others, through reflective practice, can serve to support a greater more holistic understanding of a child's world and experience within it.

5.7 Implications for the Educational Psychology Profession

It would now seem timely to consider the implications this research has for the EP profession and consider the place of psychoanalytic thinking in terms of how this may be applied, and what this might offer when working with or supporting children who have experienced the breakdown of their parents' relationship.

This research has highlighted that psychosocial methods enable us to know and learn through both conscious and unconscious modes, and that a holistic understanding of a child's experience can be gained through attention to not just what is communicated at a conscious verbal level but also what is communicated via affect at an unconscious level (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Psychoanalytic thinking therefore has a place in EP practice and can as Pellegrini (2010) suggests enrich the quality of reflection. The knowledge gained from this research can inform how EPs think about children's range of experiences and anxieties when parents separate.

Pellegrini (2010) demonstrates how EPs can benefit from an awareness of their own feelings in social interactions, by engaging in reflective practice, guided by psychoanalytic thinking, to help

them better understand and make sense of their own and others emotional responses. EPs also have a crucial role in helping and supporting others to understand emotionally complex and confusing situations (Pellegrini, 2010).

There is increasing evidence of the application of psychoanalytic ideas to EP practice. This includes psychoanalytically informed supervision for school staff (Hulusi & Maggs, 2015) and systems psychodynamic frameworks to support organisational level work in schools (Eloquin, 2016). It is nationally recognised that mental health needs for children and young people are increasing and poor mental health has an adverse impact on learning and achievement. Within this there is growing recognition of the role of teachers and schools in supporting the mental health needs of its pupils (DfE & DoHSC, 2017; DfE, 2018; House of Commons, 2018). However, Hulusi and Maggs (2015) reflect that unlike other professions who work with children and young people ‘teachers are not routinely provided with a safe space...to reflect on the experiences and emotions they are left with in their day-to-day work’. Given the prevalence of divorce in the UK, it is likely that teachers will have children or young people in their class who are processing the loss and possible trauma of their parents’ separation. EPs have the skills and psychological understanding to support other professionals who work with children who have experienced divorce or separation (HCPC, 2015, BPS, 2002) and are well placed to offer a reflective space, through supervision, to staff working with children and young people. Hulusi & Maggs (2015) assert that psychoanalytically informed supervision has the potential to contain teachers’ emotional responses to their work and help them to make sense of their ‘apparently irrational experiences’ and enable them to provide better containment to their pupils, and support effective engagement in learning. Supervision can provide a space in which staff can reflect on their relationship between themselves and another and support the professional and emotional dilemmas that work can evoke.

This research not only highlighted the role psychoanalytic concepts have in supervision of school staff but also reinforced the centrality of supervision in EP practice. Psychoanalytically informed supervision played a significant role in how I came to understand the participants in my study, my own emotional responses and the intersubjective space between me and participants. Supervision provides a platform from which learning takes place, and incorporation of ideas from psychoanalytic thinking can expand EPs knowledge of potential defences against anxiety that may be being employed within and beyond the supervisory space.

Youell (2006) considers the relevant importance and significance of beginnings and endings in relation to the context of schools and the learning relationship. She suggests that events in the family, such as divorce, may leave parents and children susceptible to extreme anxiety at times of change. She highlights the significance of change and transitions, for all of us, suggesting it is important for teachers to understand, notice and support those children for whom change is a major area of difficulty. EPs have a crucial role in sharing psychological knowledge and theory about the significance of these life events through consultation, training and supervision.

The Mental Health Green Paper released by the government in 2017 identified that 50% of mental health needs start before a child turns 15. Children who have experienced the separation or divorce of their parents are known to be at particularly high risk of poor mental health outcomes both in the long and short term. The House of Commons (2017) propose that teachers should receive mental health training and continuing professional development to ensure they are properly equipped to recognise the early signs of mental health problems in their pupils and have the confidence to signpost or refer to the right support. EPs have an important role in proactively raising awareness amongst schools of the risk factors present in this population and working

preventively with schools through the provision of training to meet the needs of children and young people experiencing their parents' separation or divorce.

Several of the SENDCos I approached about my research reported that they would be unable to host this within their schools. Further conversations with some revealed that they felt unequipped to potentially handle the emotional ramifications of bridging this conversation with parents and children. Although anecdotal, this suggests that school staff are potentially defended against the anxieties conversations of this kind stirs up. EPs are well placed at the interface between home and school and can provide support to the school to develop their own capacity to support a child or young person's needs. Given the potential impact these experiences can have on a child's wellbeing, EPs have a role in promoting these conversations within schools and providing support through raising awareness and providing supervision and training or direct work where this is indicated.

It is important for EPs to consider how they might raise this conversation with schools and the members of staff with which they work. As with other vulnerable populations in schools, such as Looked After Children, EPs might be curious about whether there are any children or young people who have experienced or who are currently experiencing their parents' separation and raise this with SENDCos during termly planning meetings. EPs have knowledge of the importance of children's emotional wellbeing and social, emotional and mental health needs and can highlight the potential impact divorce or separation can have on a child or young person's needs in these areas. EPs should remain open and curious to any possible defences against the topic and consider the possible reasons for this and the potential anxieties raised by divorce or separation and reflect on the potential for staffs own unprocessed losses and trauma in their autobiographies. Training, consultation and supervision for teachers and other members of the

school team can support school staff to understand how unconscious defences against painful feelings of anxiety may be adopted when working with this population of children and young people. It is important to consider that the ‘best conditions’ in which to hold these conversations with schools may be after EPs have been able to establish a rapport with the schools and develop trusting relationships, whereby these topics of sensitivity can be discussed, openly, curiously and honestly. EPs themselves may also find it difficult to address this topic and it may be helpful for those to bring this to their own supervision to unpick the anxieties that may underpin these feelings.

Through psychoeducation and highlighting the role of the school, it may be possible for EPs to support schools with the more practical elements of supporting pupils experiencing divorce or separation, even when there appear to be potential barriers or resistance. It may be helpful to highlight to schools how they might offer continuity and familiarity for children during times of change and transition as well as a safe and neutral place where children’s development and welfare is paramount (Cox & Desforges, 1987). EPs can support schools to think about their organisational structure and systemic processes in order to develop school policies and procedures for children who are experiencing their parents’ separation or divorce. For example, considering the practical adaptations highlighted by Cox & Desforges (1987), such as, record keeping, contact and access information, consideration of communication and contact with both parents and sensitivity of the different family structures within the school curriculum and resources, which is particularly relevant with regard to the new statutory guidance on Relationship, Sex and Health education (2019).

Other recent Government agendas have promoted the importance of the child’s voice in matters concerning themselves (DfE & DoH, 2015). Fawcett (2000) highlights that most support services

in the UK for divorce or separation have primarily been adult focused and child centered services are typically not prioritised unless for excesses of behaviour. Hawthorne et al., (2003) argue that despite growing focus on children's views and their right to be involved in decisions and matters concerning themselves, in practice few support services manage to successfully incorporate these ideas in current provision. They suggest that of importance are the needs to facilitate communication between children and parents and children's networks for support including school and community links. EPs are at the interface of the school and family systems, and have the necessary skills to facilitate or encourage discussions with children and young people about their views and experiences and advocate for their views to be heard in consultations with schools and parents. Surprisingly, there were no other examples identified in two leading UK EP journals of research into children's experiences of divorce. Findings suggest that talking about their experience was beneficial for some participants and highlights that EPs can have a role in gathering children's views and perspectives about this significant life event.

5.8 Strengths and Limitations

The psychosocial approach to this research allowed for an exploration at a conscious spoken level and unconscious level, of what children associated with when asked about their experience of their parents' divorce or separation. Allowing for an exploration of interrelated individual and social dynamics in children's experience. Although, the study has not set out to suggest that the experiences of these children are typical or generalisable to all children of divorce or separation, a limitation might be that the findings of this study cannot be said to be true of the experiences of other children and young people who have experienced their parents' divorce or separation. It is hoped, however, that the aim to give voice to this population of children and attempts to understand their experience of divorce or separation has been somewhat met. It is, however, important to consider that children's experiences are not considered to be homogenous,

suggesting the need for bespoke intervention and support. This study may provide some useful practice implications for EPs.

For me, a considerable strength in the study lies in its reflexivity and the use of psychoanalytic thinking to support making sense of the vast amount of affectual data amassed through the interviews. Combining this with children's narratives, psychosocial methods allowed for a richer and deeper approach to understanding these children's experience. I initially intended to explore further my research role and the impact of my own psychosocial experiences on the co-constructed interviews, however, pragmatic timeframes meant that participant data was prioritised and I was not able to explore this in as much depth as originally, I would have liked.

Using both the GEM and FANI methods prioritised the children's free associations and allowed for dominant narratives to emerge. Having two interviews also enabled participants to become familiar with the interview process and it is hoped, feel more comfortable. Prior research into divorce and the findings from this research suggest that divorce is better viewed as a process and not a one off occurrence or event (Rodgers & Pryor, 1998). Therefore, had there been the opportunity to conduct interviews over a longer time period, this may have enriched the data with respect to the relationships between myself and participants and their changing experiences.

The FANI approach encourages the use of questions that help secure participant's narratives in actual, specific events. For some of the participants in the study, recalling specific events was a challenge. This may be linked to their age and ability to provide structured reflective accounts. Hogan et al. (2003) report the use of semi-structured interviews to allow children to create a narrative about their experiences of parental separation and its meaning for them. It may be that

children in this study may have been better supported by more structured questions to aid their accounts.

The process of gaining access to children who had experienced their parents' divorce or separation was both complex and protracted and this has been something that has been reported by other studies (Fawcett, 2000; Hogan et al., 2003). Attempts to recruit participants was hindered by access at a school and parental level. Initially many schools were reluctant to participate and those that agreed, no expressions of interest were returned by parents. One parent also decided to withdraw her child from their study after providing her consent, as she feared that revisiting her feelings about the divorce may hinder her progress. Fawcett (1998) points out this may be a reflection of the complexity of relationships within separating and divorcing families. My experience would suggest that this complexity is not only felt by the families but also the schools in which these children attend. As pointed out above EPs have a role in facilitating these discussions with parents and teachers to ensure that children's perspectives and needs do not become overlooked during stressful and anxiety provoking transitions such as divorce. A further limitation of this study is that the children who did participate were eventually identified by family support workers and pastoral workers in the schools who knew the families well. This means that the children who took part were known to have experienced this event. This would suggest that the study does not include those families who may have been harder to reach or who have not shared their family circumstances with professionals.

Divorce and parental separation is said to transcend race, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic status (Amato & Cheadle, 2008). However, none of the participants recruited from this study were from the dominant culture in the LA in which the research was carried out, despite mine and my colleagues' knowledge of families within this culture who had experienced divorce or

separation. Furthermore, no data was collected on the socio-economic status of my participants despite this being identified as a risk factor of poor outcomes for children of divorce. Both elements may have provided further interesting context for my findings.

5.9 Dissemination

Through discussion with participants and their parents it was agreed I would contact them at the end of my research journey and offer them the opportunity to discuss findings over the phone or face-face, depending on their preference. Findings that will be shared with participants will include a summary of the themes, and is planned for summer 2019.

The research will also be presented through a team meeting to the team of EPs working in the LA as part of service development. This is planned for Summer 2019. In publishing the findings, it is hoped that the wider EP profession can benefit from the insight that has been gained.

5.10 Future Research

National statistics indicate half of the divorces in England and Wales involve children under the age of 16 (ONS, 2018). However, there are no current identified means which collects the number of children who experience the separation of their unmarried parents. Given the prevalence of divorce and separation of parents in the UK it was therefore surprising how few children were identified in this research as having experienced their parents' separation. One area for future research could be a careful audit of children's family circumstances in local authorities to obtain more accurate statistics in terms of how many co-habiting parents separate. Given the limited number of children identified, future research which seeks to explore the experiences of other children and young people who have experienced their parents' separation,

from different cultures and ethnicities or who may be difficult to reach, would be welcome in terms of adding to the EP knowledge base. This may include children who reside in lone-parent families or were under the age of 5 when their parents separated.

The free associative approach to data collection may be beneficial in future research and given the general agreement that divorce is a process, it may be useful to explore children's experiences of divorce or separation longitudinally, to develop a deeper understanding of children's experiences of this process and event.

Future research could also explore this event with others who work closely with these children. For example exploring school professional's experiences of working with children who have experienced the separation of their parents and how they feel about their ability to understand and support their needs.

5.11 Reflections

My research journey has been an incredibly challenging, emotional and illuminative experience. When I embarked on choosing a topic for my doctoral research I toyed with topics that had little relevance to my own subjective experience. I battled to find a topic that I felt warranted further exploration and one in which I was not connected to personally. My discovery of psychosocial research methods and the limited identified research of children's experiences of divorce from a psychological perspective ignited my desire to learn more about these children's experiences and ensure their voices were heard. A psychosocial methodology enabled me to acknowledge my influence on the research and meant I could remain open and honest about the role and influence of the researcher in the production of data. My experience of psychoanalytically informed supervision was invaluable in helping me to consider the relational and intersubjective dynamics

of the interview process. Psychosocial ontology and epistemology has allowed me to explore a topic in a way that fits with my practice and what I draw upon in my attempts to come to know about a child or young person's experience. They enabled me to think about the influence of the individual, time and context on what was experienced in each interview, especially when meeting with Ben who said so little but communicated so much through unconscious intersubjective dynamics.

Employing a psychoanalytic lens supported my curiosity about participants experiences and allowed me to transcend children's spoken narratives and think about how their perceptions and interactions with the social world were influenced by their psychological world as well as considering my own influence and responses to this. My final reflection is that my first experience as a novice researcher leaves me with a hope that I will continue to be curious and interested in understanding the psychosocial experiences of this population of children and young people, as well as others, and feel that a consideration of both one's internal and external world best equips me to do this.

5.12 Summary

This study explored children and young people's experience of their parents' divorce or separation aiming to further understand their subjective experiences using a psychosocial methodology and application of a psychoanalytic lens. It is hoped that the insight gained from this research will inform EP practice through highlighting this population of young people to the profession and supporting their hypothesis generation in casework with similar populations.

Four children, aged 8-13 were recruited to the study from an inner London authority. All had experienced their parents' separation at or after the age of 5. All participants' parents were

separated and none had undergone the legal process of divorce. Two free associative interview methods, the GEM and FANI, were used to interview participants on two separate occasions. This allowed children to speak freely about what mattered to them in consideration of their parents' separation, including a range of anxieties, hopes and concerns. The analysis involved two stages; an inductive thematic analysis identified five main themes; Response to separation, Relationship between parents, Contact with out of house parent, When parents' re-partner, and Change and continuity. A second interpretative layer of analysis made sense of participants' narratives as a whole, through applying a psychoanalytic lens. The psychosocial ontology and epistemology was integral to the research and allowed for consideration of unconscious dynamics and account for my role as researcher and the possibilities of defended subject and defended researcher. Reflexivity and psychosocial supervision informed data collection and analysis phases and supported the employment of psychoanalytic concepts to address intersubjective unconscious dynamics.

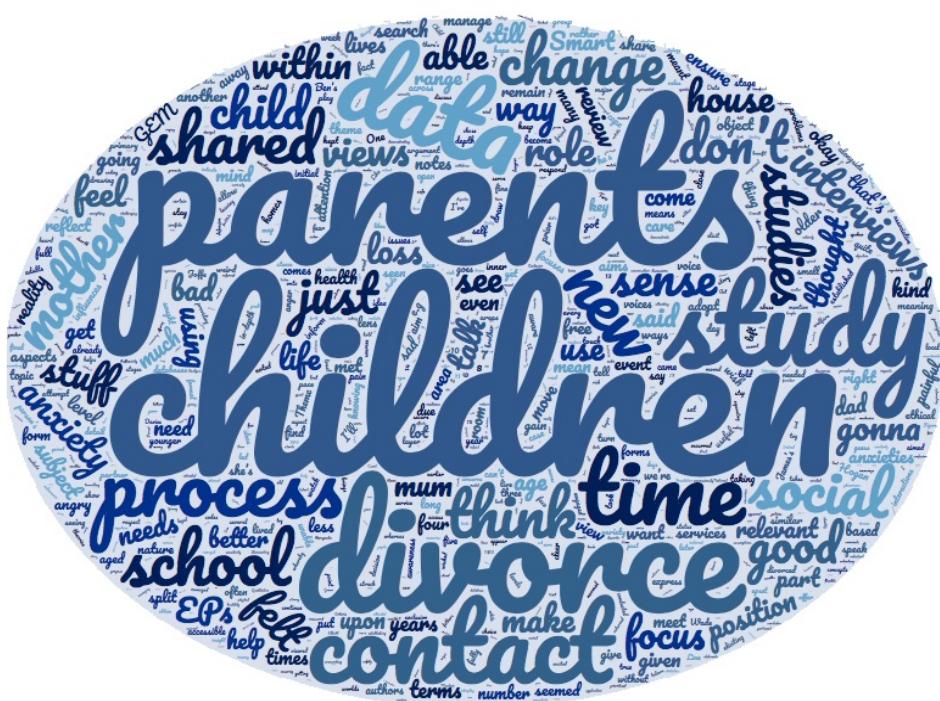
The discussion explored these themes in relation to existing and wider literature and psychological theory. Children's narratives were multi-dimensional and an exploration of unconscious dynamics provided a greater depth from which to understand their experience. A major strength of this study is the prioritisation of children's associations and the reflexivity allowing for an in-depth exploration of experience. The research may serve as useful to EPs in their supervisory roles and highlights the benefit of psychoanalytic concepts in enriching thinking and reflection in EP practice. It also highlights the importance of these frameworks in EP work with school staff and similar populations of children. The significance of facilitating conversations around divorce and separation and advocating the voice of the child has been suggested. Recommendations for future research are for similar studies to be carried out with other children of divorce or separation from a psychological perspective, possibly with those

who are harder to reach or from different cultures and ethnicities. Gathering school staff's views about working with and supporting children who have experienced their parents' divorce or separation would also be insightful.

5.13 Conclusions

This research demonstrates that children's experience of their parents' separation is diverse and unique, impacting on both their emotional and physical states. Findings suggest that although there were some similarities in what children chose to talk about, their experience of divorce was communicated differently through what was attended to and picked up on through the intersubjective dynamics present within the research encounter. This research demonstrates that through attending to unconscious dynamics and non-lexical, embodied and unconscious communications a more in depth understanding of a young person's experience of divorce can be gathered. My own role and reflections on the research encounters also highlight that these dynamics are unique to the context and to the individuals involved and suggest that data elicited is co-constructed and unique to those situations and contexts. This highlights the benefit of applying psychodynamic theories and frameworks to EP practice and how attention to these affectual communications in encounters with children and young people who have experienced their parents' divorce or separation, can support EPs understanding of a child or young persons' experience.

Separation and divorce brings with it the experience of separation, loss, and change and as Youell suggests, however minor, "every ending...involves a loss of some kind [and] every beginning... carries with it the anxiety of facing the unknown" (2006, p. 71). Perhaps this is something which should be held in mind as children face the end of their parents' relationships and embark on a new beginning.



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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Excluded Papers and reasons for exclusion – UK Only

A large number of papers were returned that were from overseas. This table serves to demonstrate which papers from the UK were excluded and does not list all papers returned in the search (non-UK).

Paper	Reason for exclusion
Williams, M. S. (2004). Review of Schools & family change: School-based support for children experiencing divorce and separation. <i>British Journal Of Guidance & Counselling</i> , 32(1), 126-127.	Book Review
McConnell, R. A., & Sim, A. J. (2000). Evaluating an innovative counselling service for children of divorce. <i>British Journal Of Guidance & Counselling</i> , 28(1), 75-86.	Intervention evaluation
Barnes, G. G. (1999). Divorce transitions: Identifying risk and promoting resilience for children and their parental relationships. <i>Journal Of Marital And Family Therapy</i> , 25(4), 425-441.	Outcome and impact study
McConnell, R. A., & Sim, A. J. (1999). Adjustment to parental divorce: An examination of the differences between counselled and non-counselled children. <i>British Journal Of Guidance & Counselling</i> , 27(2), 245-257.	Intervention Evaluation
Tasker, F. L., & Richards, M. M. (1994). Adolescents' attitudes toward marriage and marital prospects after parental divorce: A review. <i>Journal Of Adolescent Research</i> , 9(3), 340-362.	Outcome study
Das, C. (2009). Recognising Ecological Contexts of Diverse Ethnic Groups: Experiences of British-Indian Adult Children of Divorce. <i>International Journal Of Diversity In Organisations, Communities & Nations</i> , 9(5), 83.	Adult children's views
Trinder, L. (2008). Maternal gate closing and gate opening in post divorce families. <i>Journal Of Family Issues</i> , 29(10), 1298-1324.	Other's views.
Greg, M., Isabel, W., Jane, L., Sarah, P., & Ray, S. (2008). Beyond Assessment: Social Work Intervention in Family Court Enquiries. <i>The British Journal Of Social Work</i> , (3), 431.	Other's views

More over-50s getting divorced. (2008). <i>Working with Older People: Community Care Policy & Practice</i> , 12(1), 7.	Others views
George, R. H. (2007). Practitioners' approaches to child welfare after parental separation: an Anglo-French comparison. <i>Child & Family Law Quarterly</i> , 19(3), 337.	Others views.
Jean, C. (2004). Good to talk? Conversations with children after divorce. <i>Family Matters</i> , (69), 100.	Book review
Smart, C. (2003). Towards an understanding of family change: Gender conflict and children's citizenship. <i>Australian Journal Of Family Law</i> , 17(1), 20.	Position paper.
Bhrolcháin, M. N., Chappell, R., Diamond, I., & Jameson, C. (2000). Parental Divorce and Outcomes for Children: Evidence and Interpretation. <i>European Sociological Review</i> , 16(1), 67.	Outcome study
King, M. (1999). 'Being Sensible': Images and Practices of the New Family Lawyers. <i>Journal Of Social Policy</i> , 28(2), 249-273.	Others views.
Editorial.	Editorial
Introduction.	Editorial
Mayes, G. M., Wilson, G. B., MacDonald, R. R., & Gillies, J. B. (2003). Evaluation of an Information Programme for Divorced or Separated Parents. <i>Child & Family Law Quarterly</i> , 15(1), 85.	Evaluation of intervention.
Martindale, S. E., & Lacey, R. E. (2017). Parental separation in childhood and adult smoking in the 1958 British birth cohort. <i>European Journal Of Public Health</i> , 27(4), 723-728.	Correlational study
Astrup, A., Pedersen, C. B., Mok, P. L., Carr, M. J., & Webb, R. T. (2017). Self-harm risk between adolescence and midlife in people who experienced separation from one or both parents during childhood. <i>Journal Of Affective Disorders</i> , 208582-589.	Outcome study
Stansfeld, S. A., Clark, C., Smuk, M., Power, C., Davidson, T., & Rodgers, B. (2017). Childhood adversity and midlife suicidal ideation. <i>Psychological Medicine</i> , 47(2), 327-340.	Correlation study

Hertzmann, L., Target, M., Hewison, D., Casey, P., Fearon, P., & Lassri, D. (2016). Mentalization-based therapy for parents in entrenched conflict: A random allocation feasibility study. <i>Psychotherapy, 53</i> (4), 388-401.	Evaluation of intervention.
Lasgaard, M., Armour, C., Bramsen, R. H., & Goossens, L. (2016). Major life events as predictors of loneliness in adolescence. <i>Journal Of Child And Family Studies, 25</i> (2), 631-637.	Correlation study
Philip, G. (2014). Review of Family troubles? Exploring changes and challenges in the family lives of children and young people. <i>Child & Family Social Work, 19</i> (4), 511-512.	Book review
Kanji, S., & Schober, P. (2014). Are couples with young children more likely to split up when the mother is the main or an equal earner?. <i>Sociology, 48</i> (1), 38-58.	Outcome study
DeJong, M., & Davies, H. (2013). Contact refusal by children following acrimonious separation: Therapeutic approaches with children and parents. <i>Clinical Child Psychology And Psychiatry, 18</i> (2), 185-198.	Evaluation of intervention
Theobald, D., Farrington, D. P., & Piquero, A. R. (2013). Childhood broken homes and adult violence: An analysis of moderators and mediators. <i>Journal Of Criminal Justice, 41</i> (1), 44-52.	Mediation Study
Lee, W. E., Kwok, C. T., Hunter, E. M., Richards, M., & David, A. S. (2012). Prevalence and childhood antecedents of depersonalization syndrome in a UK birth cohort. <i>Social Psychiatry And Psychiatric Epidemiology, 47</i> (2), 253-261.	Other focus.
Pitcher, D. (2011). What Maisie Knew: A child's experience of divorce. <i>Journal Of Divorce & Remarriage, 52</i> (7), 519-528.	Position paper
Weir, K. (2011). High-conflict contact disputes: Evidence of the extreme unreliability of some children's ascertainable wishes and feelings. <i>Family Court Review, 49</i> (4), 788-800.	Others views.
Ronald, A., Pennell, C. E., & Whitehouse, A. O. (2011). Prenatal maternal stress associated with ADHD.	Other focus.

and autistic traits in early childhood. <i>Frontiers In Psychology, 1</i>	
Hatton, C., Emerson, E., Graham, H., Blacher, J., & Llewellyn, G. (2010). Changes in family composition and marital status in families with a young child with cognitive delay. <i>Journal Of Applied Research In Intellectual Disabilities, 23</i> (1), 14-26.	Correlational study
Skew, A., Evans, A., & Gray, E. (2009). Repartnering in the United Kingdom and Australia. <i>Journal Of Comparative Family Studies, 40</i> (4), 563-585.	Others views
Timms, J. E., Bailey, S., & Thoburn, J. (2008). Children's views of decisions made by the court: Policy and practice issues arising from the Your Shout Too! survey. <i>Child Care In Practice, 14</i> (3), 257-274.	Position paper
Bridges, L. J., Roe, A. C., Dunn, J., & O'Connor, T. G. (2007). Children's perspectives on their relationships with grandparents following parental separation: A longitudinal study. <i>Social Development, 16</i> (3), 539-554.	Other focus.
Lokugamage, A. U., Hotopf, M., Hardy, R., Mishra, G., Butterworth, S., Wadsworth, M. J., & Kuh, D. (2006). Breast cancer in relation to childhood parental divorce and early adult psychiatric disorder in a British birth cohort. <i>Psychological Medicine, 36</i> (9), 1307-1312.	Correlational study
Fawcett, M. (2006). Review of Divorcing children: Children's experience of their parent's divorce. <i>Child Care In Practice, 12</i> (1), 73-74.	Book review
Smith, P. K. (2005). Grandparents & grandchildren. <i>The Psychologist, 18</i> (11),	Other focus
Clarke, L., O'Brien, M., Day, R. D., Godwin, H., Connolly, J., Hemmings, J., & Van Leeson, T. (2005). Fathering behind bars in English prisons: Imprisoned fathers' identity and contact with their children. <i>Fathering: A Journal Of Theory, Research, And Practice About Men As Fathers, 3</i> (3), 221-241.	Other focus.
Pahl, R., & Pevalin, D. J. (2005). Between family and friends: A longitudinal study of friendship choice. <i>British Journal Of Sociology, 56</i> (3), 433-450.	Other focus

Dunn, J., O'Connor, T. G., & Cheng, H. (2005). Children's Responses to Conflict Between their Different Parents: Mothers, Stepfathers, Nonresident Fathers, and Nonresident Stepmothers. <i>Journal Of Clinical Child And Adolescent Psychology</i> , 34(2), 223-234.	Other focus.
Smart, C. (2004). Equal shares: Rights for fathers or recognition for children?. <i>Critical Social Policy</i> , 24(4), 484-503.	Position paper
Buchanan, A. (2004). Review of Divorcing Children: Children's Experience of Their Parents' Divorce. <i>Child & Family Social Work</i> , 9(3), 317-318.	Book review
Dunn, J. (2004). Understanding children's family worlds: Family transitions and children's outcome. <i>Merrill-Palmer Quarterly</i> , 50(3), 224-235.	Position paper
Abbey, C., & Dallos, R. (2004). The Experience of the Impact of Divorce on Sibling Relationships: A Qualitative Study. <i>Clinical Child Psychology And Psychiatry</i> , 9(2), 241-259.	Adult children
Clarke, L., & Jensen, A. (2004). Children's Risk of Parental Break-up Norway and England/Wales Compared. <i>Acta Sociologica</i> , 47(1), 51-69.	Comparison study/Others views.
Grainger, S. (2004). Family background and female sexual behavior: A test of the father-absence theory in Merseyside. <i>Human Nature</i> , 15(2), 133-145.	Correlational study
Best, R. (2003). Review of Mental Health Handbook for Schools. <i>British Journal Of Guidance & Counselling</i> , 31(4), 447-448.	Book review
O'Connor, T. G., Caspi, A., DeFries, J. C., & Plomin, R. (2003). Genotype-environment interaction in children's adjustment to parental separation. <i>Journal Of Child Psychology And Psychiatry</i> , 44(6), 849-856.	Other Focus
Steele, H. (2002). State of the art: Attachment theory. <i>The Psychologist</i> , 15(10), 518-522.	Other Focus
Lussier, G., Deater-Deckard, K., Dunn, J., & Davies, L. (2002). Support across two generations: Children's closeness to grandparents following parental divorce and remarriage. <i>Journal Of Family Psychology</i> , 16(3), 363-376.	Other focus

Smart, C. (2002). From Children's Shoes to Children's Voices. <i>Family Court Review</i> , 40(3), 307-319.	Positioning paper
Joseph, S., Mynard, H., & Mayall, M. (2000). Life-events and post-traumatic stress in a sample of English adolescents. <i>Journal Of Community & Applied Social Psychology</i> , 10(6), 475-482.	Correlational study
Dunn, J., Davies, L. C., O'Connor, T. G., & Sturgess, W. (2000). Parents' and partners' life course and family experiences: Links with parent-child relationships in different family settings. <i>Journal Of Child Psychology And Psychiatry</i> , 41(8), 955-968.	Other focus
O'Connor, T. G., Caspi, A., DeFries, J. C., & Plomin, R. (2000). Are associations between parental divorce and children's adjustment genetically mediated? An adoption study. <i>Developmental Psychology</i> , 36(4), 429-437.	Correlation/mediation study
O'Connor, T. G., Thorpe, K., Dunn, J., & Golding, J. (1999). Parental divorce and adjustment in adulthood: Findings from a community sample. <i>Journal Of Child Psychology And Psychiatry</i> , 40(5), 777-789.	Outcome/impact study
James, A. L., & James, A. (1999). Pump up the volume: Listening to children in separation and divorce. <i>Childhood: A Global Journal Of Child Research</i> , 6(2), 189-206.	Position paper
Tasker, F. (1999). Children in lesbian-led families: A review. <i>Clinical Child Psychology And Psychiatry</i> , 4(2), 153-166.	Not childrens views
Walton, L., Oliver, C., & Griffin, C. (1999). Divorce mediation: The impact of mediation on the psychological well-being of children and parents. <i>Journal Of Community & Applied Social Psychology</i> , 9(1), 35-46.	Evaluation of intervention
Sheerin, D. (1998). Dyads and triads of abuse, bereavement and separation: A survey in children attending a child and family centre. <i>Irish Journal Of Psychological Medicine</i> , 15(4), 131-134.	Correlation/outcome study

Kier, C., & Lewis, C. (1998). Preschool sibling interaction in separated and married families: Are same-sex pairs or older sisters more sociable?. <i>Journal Of Child Psychology And Psychiatry</i> , 39(2), 191-201.	Not child views
Humphreys, C. (1997). Child sexual abuse allegations in the context of divorce: Issues for mothers. <i>British Journal Of Social Work</i> , 27(4), 529-544.	Position paper
Riches, G., & Dawson, P. (1996). Making stories and taking stories: Methodological reflections on researching grief and marital tension following the death of a child. <i>British Journal Of Guidance & Counselling</i> , 24(3), 357-365.	Others views
Chase-Lansdale, P. L., Cherlin, A. J., & Kiernan, K. K. (1995). The long-term effects of parental divorce on the mental health of young adults: A developmental perspective. <i>Child Development</i> , 66(6), 1614-1634.	Impact/outcome study
Tasker, F. L., & Richards, M. M. (1994). Adolescents' attitudes toward marriage and marital prospects after parental divorce: A review. <i>Journal Of Adolescent Research</i> , 9(3), 340-362.	Impact/outcome study
Walker, J. (1993). Co-operative parenting post-divorce: Possibility or pipedream?. <i>Journal Of Family Therapy</i> , 15(3), 273-292.	Position paper
Goodyer, I. M. (1993). Recent stressful life events: Their long term effects. <i>European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry</i> , 2(1), 1-9.	Impact/outcome study
Garwood, F. (1992). Conciliation: A forum for children's views?. <i>Children & Society</i> , 6(4), 353-363.	Others views
Kruk, E. (1992). Child custody determination: An analysis of the litigation model, legal practices, and men's experiences in the process. <i>The Journal Of Men's Studies</i> , 1(2), 163-185.	Others views
Sharp, S., & Thompson, D. (1992). Sources of stress: A contrast between pupil perspective and pastoral teachers' perceptions. <i>School Psychology International</i> , 13(3), 229-242.	Other focus

Tasker, F. L. (1992). Anti-marriage attitudes and motivations to marry amongst adolescents with divorced parents. <i>Journal Of Divorce & Remarriage</i> , 18(3-4), 105-119.	Outcome study
Simpson, B. (1991). The Children Act 1989 and the voice of the child in family conciliation. <i>Family & Conciliation Courts Review</i> , 29(4), 385-397.	Position paper
Goodyer, I. M., & Altham, P. M. (1991). Lifetime exit events and recent social and family adversities in anxious and depressed school-age children and adolescents: I. <i>Journal Of Affective Disorders</i> , 21(4), 219-228.	Correlational study
Eiser, C. (1991). Psychological effects of chronic disease. <i>Annual Progress In Child Psychiatry & Child Development</i> , 434-450.	Other focus.
Honess, T. M., & Charman, E. E. (1998). Adolescent adjustment, social systems and parental separation. <i>European Journal Of Psychology Of Education</i> , 13(4), 557-567.	Other focus.
Timms, J. (2003). The Silent Majority--The Position of Children Involved in the Divorce and Separation of their Parents. <i>Child care in practice</i> , 9(2), 162-174.	Position paper
Halpenny, A. M., Greene, S., & Hogan, D. (2008). Children's perspectives on coping and support following parental separation. <i>Child Care In Practice</i> , 14(3), 311-325.	Not UK
Hogan, D. M., Halpenny, A. M., & Greene, S. (2003). Change and continuity after parental separation: Children's experiences of family transitions in Ireland. <i>Childhood: A Global Journal Of Child Research</i> , 10(2), 163-180.	Not UK
Holt, S. (2015). Post-separation Fathering and Domestic Abuse: Challenges and Contradictions. <i>Child Abuse Review</i> , 24(3), 210-222.	Not childrens views

Appendix 2 – Included Articles and reasons for inclusion

Paper	Reason for inclusion
Hogan, D. M., Halpenny, A. M., & Greene, S. (2003). Change and continuity after parental separation: Children's experiences of family transitions in Ireland. <i>Childhood: A Global Journal Of Child Research</i> , 10(2), 163-180.	Children's views UK
Dowling, E., & Gorell-Barnes, G. (1999). Children of divorcing families: A clinical perspective. <i>Clinical Child Psychology And Psychiatry</i> , 4(1), 39-50.	Children's views UK
Smart, C. (2006). Children's narratives of post-divorce family life: From individual experience to an ethical disposition. <i>The Sociological Review</i> , 54(1), 155-170.	Children's views UK
Neale, B., & Flowerdew, J. (2007). New Structures, New Agency: The Dynamics of Child-Parent Relationships after Divorce. <i>International Journal Of Children's Rights</i> , 15(1), 25-42	Children's views UK
Davies, H. (2015). Shared Parenting or Shared Care? Learning from Children's Experiences of a Post-Divorce Shared Care Arrangement. <i>Children & Society</i> , 29(1), 1-14.	Children's views UK
Morrison, F. (2015). 'All Over Now?' The Ongoing Relational Consequences of Domestic Abuse through Children's Contact Arrangements. <i>Child Abuse Review</i> , 24(4), 274-284.	Children's views UK
Neale, B. (2002). Dialogues with children: Children, divorce and citizenship. <i>Childhood: A Global Journal Of Child Research</i> , 9(4), 455-475.	Children's views UK
Flowerdew, J., & Neale, B. (2003). Trying to stay apace: Children with multiple challenges in their post-divorce family lives. <i>Childhood: A Global Journal Of Child Research</i> , 10(2), 147-161. doi:10.1177/0907568203010002003	Children's views UK
Trinder, L., Beek, M., & Connolly, J. (2002). <i>Making contact: How parents and children negotiate and experience contact after divorce</i> : Joseph Rowntree Foundation.	Children's views UK
Wade, A., & Smart, C. (2002). <i>Facing family change: Children's circumstances, strategies and</i>	Children's views UK

resources: York Pub. Services for Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Appendix 3. Walsh & Downe's (2006) Original Appraisal Tool for Qualitative Research

Table 4 Summary criteria for appraising qualitative research studies.

Stages	Essential criteria	Specific prompts
Scope and purpose	Clear statement of, and rationale for, research question/aims/purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of focus demonstrated • Explicit purpose given, such as descriptive/explanatory intent, theory building, hypothesis testing • Link between research and existing knowledge demonstrated
	Study thoroughly contextualised by existing literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of systematic approach to literature review, location of literature to contextualise the findings, or both
Design	Method/design apparent, and consistent with research intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale given for use of qualitative design • Discussion of epistemological/ontological grounding • Rationale explored for specific qualitative method (e.g. ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology) • Discussion of why particular method chosen is most appropriate/sensitive/relevant for research question/aims • Setting appropriate
	Data collection strategy apparent and appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were data collection methods appropriate for type of data required and for specific qualitative method? • Were they likely to capture the complexity/diversity of experience and illuminate context in sufficient detail? • Was triangulation of data sources used if appropriate?
Sampling strategy	Sample and sampling method appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection criteria detailed, and description of how sampling was undertaken • Justification for sampling strategy given • Thickness of description likely to be achieved from sampling • Any disparity between planned and actual sample explained
Analysis	Analytic approach appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach made explicit (e.g. Thematic distillation, constant comparative method, grounded theory) • Was it appropriate for the qualitative method chosen? • Was data managed by software package or by hand and why? • Discussion of how coding systems/conceptual frameworks evolved • How was context of data retained during analysis • Evidence that the subjective meanings of participants were portrayed • Evidence of more than one researcher involved in stages if appropriate to epistemological/theoretical stance • Did research participants have any involvement in analysis (e.g. member checking) • Evidence provided that data reached saturation or discussion/rationale if it did not • Evidence that deviant data was sought, or discussion/rationale if it was not
Interpretation	Context described and taken account of in interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of social/physical and interpersonal contexts of data collection • Evidence that researcher spent time 'dwelling with the data', interrogating it for competing/alternative explanations of phenomena
	Clear audit trail given	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient discussion of research processes such that others can follow 'decision trail'

Stages	Essential criteria	Specific prompts
	Data used to support interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive use of field notes entries/verbatim interview quotes in discussion of findings Clear exposition of how interpretation led to conclusions
Reflexivity	Researcher reflexivity demonstrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of relationship between researcher and participants during fieldwork Demonstration of researcher's influence on stages of research process Evidence of self-awareness/insight Documentation of effects of the research on researcher Evidence of how problems/complications met were dealt with
Ethical dimensions	Demonstration of sensitivity to ethical concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical committee approval granted Clear commitment to integrity, honesty, transparency, equality and mutual respect in relationships with participants Evidence of fair dealing with all research participants Recording of dilemmas met and how resolved in relation to ethical issues Documentation of how autonomy, consent, confidentiality, anonymity were managed
Relevance and transferability	Relevance and transferability evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient evidence for typicality specificity to be assessed Analysis interwoven with existing theories and other relevant explanatory literature drawn from similar settings and studies Discussion of how explanatory propositions/emergent theory may fit other contexts Limitations/weaknesses of study clearly outlined Clearly resonates with other knowledge and experience Results/conclusions obviously supported by evidence Interpretation plausible and 'makes sense' Provides new insights and increases understanding Significance for current policy and practice outlined Assessment of value/empowerment for participants Outlines further directions for investigation Comment on whether aims/purposes of research were achieved

Appendix 4. A critique of each paper included in the literature review

Paper 1: Dowling & Gorell-Barnes (1999) Children of Divorcing Families: A Clinical Perspective		
	Yes/No/Unclear	Comments
Design & Methodology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative - 10 family case studies/ semi-structured interviews - approach to data collection described - Specific method/ design of the study is not made clear or why it is most appropriate for the present study. - A broad number of issues explored in order to illuminate the difference and complexity of the individual's experiences in detail.
Sample & Sampling strategy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clinical sample carried out by family therapists in their work with families. - 10 families involved in this project. Children aged 5-14. <p>There is no description of how these families were selected to take part in the study</p> <p>The study does not appear to choose a homogenous sample and therefore a rich description of experience is obtained from the participants.</p>
World view & Theoretical positions		The study does not disclose its epistemological or ontological grounding.
Scope & Purpose		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - finding a way for children to describe their experience of divorce in the process and aftermath. - The study states that it is concerned with eliciting and establishing the protective factors and conditions which are likely to make it possible for children to cope with this particular life transition.
Approach to Analysis		The analytic approach undertaken in the research is not mentioned. The data appears to be organised into themes and specific areas such as gender differences and developmental differences.

Interpretation		<p>There is clear triangulation of interviews with children accompanied by interviews with parents and professional understanding of the context and situation.</p> <p>There is a consideration that time alone with children does not mean they will share everything.</p>
Key Findings/ Conclusions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some children have to negotiate transition from one parent to another amid quarrelling and discord. - Some children do not have a coherent story of the marital breakup leading to confusion and anger. -children wish to remain in a positive relationship with both parents and can find themselves at times in loyalty binds with new partners or enjoying time with both parents and sharing that with the other. <p>Changes in the children's context. Some children experience moving house, school, and another adult. sharing a room, space size, different routes to school by different modes.</p> <p>What do children need? a coherent story. They need to be helped to find an explanation of what has happened.</p> <p>Expression of feelings – children need support to express difficult feelings.</p> <p>It highlights the different clinical considerations that arise from children who experience divorce e.g. changes in the pattern of relationships, loyalty binds, and changes in children's context and contact with parents, school, and developmental differences.</p>
Reflexivity		<p>There is brief mention that the relationship of the researcher to the participants is through a clinical therapeutic relationship, however this is not explicitly stated. This does not extend any further and the influence of the researcher is not discussed in other stages of the research process either through self-awareness, effects on researcher or how problems or complications were dealt with.</p>

Ethical dimensions		No mention of ethical committee approval, mention of written consent from families, this is not explicitly extended to consent from children where this is the main focus of this paper. Similar approach is taken with all participants, no mention of ethical dilemmas. mention that some details have been changed to respect anonymity.
Relevance & transferability		There are some links to the analysis linking up with the Exeter family study through similar findings. Findings from all families are summarised into what children need in divorce. Conclusions are supported through present study findings but limited referral back to prior studies, although this is deemed a relatively new area of research. Increases understanding. Significant for practice of professionals by providing a model/framework in which to include children's views and work with families.

Paper 2: Neale (2002) Dialogues with children: Children, divorce and citizenship		
	Yes/No/Unclear	Comments
Design & Methodology		<p>-Qualitative - in depth, conversational interviews.</p> <p>No other information on data collection.</p> <p>Exploratory.</p> <p>No other information regarding the design or methodology. Rationale for qualitative is because children's views have rarely been considered in family law.</p> <p>Some information about methodology is reported in the findings.</p>
Sample & Sampling strategy		<p>117 young people living under a variety of post-divorce/separation arrangements.</p> <p>No other information of the sample other than age brackets next to quotes.</p>
World view & Theoretical positions		The study does not disclose its epistemological or ontological grounding.
Scope & Purpose		<p>There is a clear statement and purpose of the research to highlight the impact on the welfare principle on children's ability to have their views heard in family law. It links policy and practice to the issues around the exploration of children's discourses about being listened to. This is then linked to current debates about children's participation in family proceedings and reviewed in light of the children's evidence. The study states three clear aims with an exploratory intent.</p>

		<p>1 - to understand more about the day to day lives of these young people, to explore their experiences as children, rather than assessing long-term adjustments or outcomes. We sought to explore 'what matters' to children as a necessary precursor to understanding 'what works' (or doesn't work) for them in their families.</p> <p>2- We wanted to explore young people's agency within their families by focusing on how they influence and actively contribute to family life (rather than focus on how their families impact upon them).</p> <p>3- To bring children's voices centrally into policy debates around post-divorce family life and to explore, from the perspective of children what it means to 'ascertain the wishes and feelings of the child.</p>
Approach to Analysis		<p>The analytic approach undertaken in the research is not mentioned. The data appears to be organised into themes.</p> <p>The use of quotes is appropriate for the method. No discussion of how data was managed or organised. No other information regarding analysis.</p>
Interpretation		<p>Researcher uses data to highlight the differing experiences of what children valued and their opinions related to their social context. There is well used interview quotes in discussion of findings and how this has led to interpretive conclusions.</p>
Key Findings/ Conclusions		<p>Young people regarded meaningful conversation as a crucial ingredient of family life. Being part of a 'proper family meant being able to talk to others and be listened to, trust and be</p>

		<p>trusted and be treated as a person in one's own right.</p> <p>Children wanted their parents to manage their relationships in ways that did not implicate them or force them to take sides.</p> <p>They valued being part of a network of supportive relationships including both parents and could be extended to include new partners.</p> <p>Some children enjoyed good quality relationships with family members, based on open communications and shared understanding. Others did not enjoy relationships with one or both parents.</p> <p>Keeping family problems within the family or using informal sources of support, kin or friends and peer support schemes.</p> <p>Argues that what is right for one child is not necessarily right for another and should take into account their diverse circumstances. Rather than a blanket welfare approach.</p>
Reflexivity		<p>There is no demonstration of researcher reflexivity.</p>
Ethical dimensions		<p>There is no demonstration of sensitivity to ethical concerns within the recruitment or management of the study. However, the core considerations of the study highlight considerable consideration of equality and children's rights and welfare when it comes to participating family law. Giving children a voice in an otherwise adult dominated world, linking the contradictions of policy to its effect on marginalising children's voices rather than promoting them.</p>

Relevance & transferability		Analysis is well woven in with the argument of welfare policy and what this means for family law and policy. Provides new insights in how approaches to children's welfare should be managed. Significance for current policy and practice outlined. And value for participants. Aims of study appear to have been met.
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Paper 3: Flowerdew & Neale (2003) Trying to stay Apace: Children with multiple challenges in their post-divorce family lives.		
	Yes/No/Unclear	Comments
Design & Methodology		Follow up study from two linked projects. No information regarding method or design of the study or how data was collected. Clearly qualitative due to extracts from interviews used but no rationale other than a reference to hearing from children rather than adults.
Sample & Sampling strategy		60 young people living in post-divorce families contacted after 3-4 years after pilot study. From the north of England aged between 11-17 years. Balanced in terms of age, gender and social background. Original selection criteria are not mentioned nor is original study referred back to for this information. No justification given for why these 60 were contacted out of the original 117.
World view & Theoretical positions		Ecological, growth life perspectives. sociological studies of childhood. Focusing on children's agency in negotiating their childhoods and point to the

		<p>diversity and particularity of children's experiences of post-divorce family life.</p> <p>An understanding of divorce not as a discrete event signalling the rupture and breakdown of family life, but as a process, through which many relationships change yet endure, taking account of cumulative life experiences</p>
Scope & Purpose		<p>Purpose: re-examine and refine the notion of 'multiple transitions'.</p> <p>Seeks to provide new insights into the way that young people manage change, focusing on the pace and nature of change and the different contexts in which change occurs. Aims to shed light on the significance of parental divorce in relation to other pressing concerns in the lives of young people. A focus on what children find significant with regard to change and transition.</p> <p>How children felt supported through change by parents and others.</p>
Approach to Analysis		<p>The analytic approach undertaken in the research is not mentioned. The data appears to be organised into themes but not mentioned how these themes were arrived at.</p> <p>Subjective meaning frames of participants are presented in verbatim quotes.</p> <p>The use of quotes is appropriate for the method. No discussion of how data was managed or organised. No other information regarding analysis.</p>
Interpretation		Thorough use of verbatim interview quotes to support themes.

		<p>use of competing experiences to come to an understanding of post-divorce family life.</p> <p>A tendency to favour the positives within the story and appears to lose sight of some of the difficulties attached to the narratives.</p> <p>Divorce appears to be defined as a singular occurrence rather than a process bringing with it linked events.</p>
Key Findings/ Conclusions		<p>Stepfamily life bringing economic benefits. Focus on enhanced quality of life rather than on period of economic hardship. Some sweeping assumptions – interpreting that no financial hardship was experienced if not directly referenced in individual stories. Does not address the unsaid.</p> <p>Some children have difficulties adapting to stepfamily life, moving home, dealing with new stepparents, negotiating ground rules, share parents and domestic spaces, stepsiblings.</p> <p>Sense of loss at the transition from lone parent back to two parent family.</p> <p>Harder when the pace of change is accelerated or multiple transitions occur in a short space of time.</p> <p>The quality of relationships, good lines of communication and harmonious or non-conflictual relationships between parents led children to have more resources to cope with change and children were able to integrate a range of challenges and transitions into their biographies. High levels of conflict</p>

		<p>both pre-and post-divorce pose challenges for children abilities to cope with change.</p> <p>Some children were still preoccupied and perplexed by experiences directly related to divorce, separation and re-partnering. others had worked through the transitions and become accustomed to changes. the management, timing, and pace of change emerged as a critical factor in how young people cope.</p> <p>There is a useful conclusion that the specifics of experience matter and a move away from stereotypical assumptions.</p>
Reflexivity		<p>There is no demonstration of researcher reflexivity.</p>
Ethical dimensions		<p>Reference to paying attention to ethics of conducting research. Mentions informed choice about taking part and guaranteeing their confidentiality.</p>
Relevance & transferability		<p>There is regular referral back to other theories and research linking findings or challenging findings.</p> <p>Discusses how other social and contextual factors may take more precedence than divorce.</p> <p>Some of the conclusions drawn are supported by evidence others seem to be finely linked to and interpretations feel sweeping. Offers an alternative perspective on divorce as a negative phenomenon.</p>

Paper 4: Smart (2006) Children's narratives of post-divorce family life: from individual experience to an ethical disposition		
	Yes/No/Unclear	Comments
Design & Methodology		<p>Interviews focus on narrative accounts and positioning of children in narratives.</p> <p>No explicit mention of specific methods.</p>
Sample & Sampling strategy		<p>60 children and young people Lived post-divorce family life for at least 5 years up to 12/15 years.</p> <p>Recruited from two previous studies – on children's experiences of shared residence after divorce and how parents negotiate over residence and contact.</p> <p>Subsets of original 117 – all children have been interviewed twice with 4-year gap.</p> <p>All were ethnically white from north of England in urban settings.</p> <p>Range of residence and contact with non-resident parent (all fathers) – ceased contact to moving between two homes regularly. Range of parents still in conflict, some had abated and others relative harmony.</p>
World view & Theoretical positions		<p>Narrative understanding of interpreting past events and part of the structuring of future events.</p> <p>The role of the interview socialising children's experiences – recognising they are part of a group not alone in their experience.</p>

Scope & Purpose		<p>Explore how children and young people construct narrative accounts of post-divorce family life.</p> <p>Rather than seeking to describe children's experiences as simple factual accounts, the focus is on how children position themselves in their narratives and the way they construct their past experiences.</p> <p>Nature of the narratives given.</p> <p>1 – Identify types of accounts that children offer and relate to how reflexive children are – distance between their lives and their parents. 2- Extent children can generalise from context to broader ethical evaluations.</p>
Approach to Analysis		<p>Grouping along two conceptual axis – organising principle 'imposed' grouping according to different shape or structure that families took after divorce.</p> <p>emotional content: emotional contentment and ongoing emotional turmoil/distress. A clear description how these two axis came about and what they entail.</p> <p>Actual method of analysis is not alluded to or how it was managed. Use of quotes to portray subjective experience.</p>
Interpretation		<p>Acknowledgement that although the interview produced accounts that told their stories as if they were finished it was acknowledged by the author that further changes may happen and it should not be assumed that things will remain the same.</p>

		<p>There is a good use of the context to support the findings and contextualise interpretations made. Can follow the links between the social context and the children's reports and the researcher's interpretation.</p>
Key Findings/ Conclusions		<p>Argued that these narratives are multi layered, revealing ambivalence and contradictions.</p> <p>Whether individual accounts give rise to an ethical disposition where children's experiences inform a broader social ethos on how to divorce in the proper manner.</p> <p>Grouped themes:</p> <p>1 – uncomplicated structures and contented accounts</p> <p>not expected. periods of uncertainty, changes in living standards and context, some strained atmospheres between parents but a process of settling down. something that happened in the past and is now settling down. – gradual improvement – a sense of wellbeing, trust and contentment.</p> <p>2- complicated structures and contented accounts quality of relationships mention of unhappy times but not linked to the structure of family. Lots of people around who were positive resources. some future changes linked with some anxiety.</p> <p>3 – uncomplicated structures and unhappy accounts Blame narratives that are rehearsed and refreshed by extended family. – contradictory and ambivalent accounts.</p> <p>Differences for siblings as well.</p>

		<p>One able to distance oneself from emotional turbulence and another engaged in a struggle against mother's interpretation of events.</p> <p>4- Complicated structures and unhappy accounts. Blame narratives – parents responsible for making life hard Divorce as significant being superseded by other major events. Feelings of isolation and loneliness</p> <p>Some children unable to provide full accounts difficulty explaining or elaborating on events 'not bothered' evidence of the psychosocial element – painful raw experiences are too difficult to stand back and reflect on.</p> <p>Contented accounts were able to stand back from the epiphanal experience of divorce to depict it as hard but able to position themselves as survivors whose lives are contented even happy with the outcome.</p> <p>Important to consider only the use of one or two narratives to back up claims from 60 children.</p> <p>There is limited dwelling on specific experiences or stories/events. more divorce and current situations in general.</p>
Reflexivity		<p>Role of the interviewer acknowledged in the co-production of narratives – questions and vignettes encouraging accounts.</p> <p>May also have encouraged a degree of reflexiveness for the children which may not have occurred otherwise.</p> <p>Influence of researcher acknowledged and how this impact of narratives produced. Not how</p>

		this affects the researcher, just the researched.
Ethical dimensions		There appears to be a commitment to the integrity of the participants and true reflection of their accounts is given. Interpretation matches their subjective experience.
Relevance & transferability		<p>Some other studies are used to back up accounts and findings.</p> <p>Discusses how children's stories may inform social dispositions. Interpretation is plausible and makes sense.</p> <p>Feels predominantly unbiased and hears the accounts as they are presented.</p>

Paper 5: Neale and Flowerdew (2007) New Structures, New agency: The dynamics of child-parent relationships after divorce.		
	Yes/No/Unclear	Comments
Design & Methodology		<p>Long term study of children's lives after divorce.</p> <p>A prospective qualitative longitudinal design – insights into experience and motivation and hence causality, illuminating not only the destinations that people reach, but the varied routes they take along the way and why and how these journeys are undertaken.</p> <p>In real time as events unfold.</p> <p>Interviews in two points in time. Uses knowledge of wider family from interviews with parents in earlier study.</p>
Sample & Sampling strategy		117 children from two linked studies. parents recruited from solicitors, family law professionals, parent support groups, advertising in local media.

		<p>60 young children followed up and re-interviewed.</p> <p>No description of why the 4 participants are chosen for this study from the 60 follow up.</p>
World view & Theoretical positions		<p>Sociological perspective – children as young citizens who are entitled to respect and participation.</p> <p>A move from a focus on children becoming to children being.</p>
Scope & Purpose		<p>Intention to move beyond a snapshot approach to discern how their lives were unfolding, how much change there might have been, the nature of these changes and what the varied processes might mean for the young people.</p> <p>Looks at mechanics and structure of the relationships and the quality of them.</p>
Approach to Analysis		<p>Not mentioned – only that participants were divided by their residence and shared arrangement status. This was how information and interview quotes were organised.</p>
Interpretation		<p>Verbatim accounts and contextual date used to support the narratives of the young people and how these supported conclusions.</p>
Key Findings/ Conclusions		<p>Shared arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared arrangements found to be inflexible and challenging. - keeping things fair for parents. careful not to upset them. - emotional pressure to maintain high levels of contact - inability to exercise autonomy and choice. - a concern for fairness for each parent. - loyalty binds

		<p>Exercising one's agency is dependent on experience and levels of support</p> <p>Concludes the importance of the quality of the relationship not the mechanics of it meaning one participant was able to lay claim to his life in contrast to others with a set structural pattern.</p> <p>Good contact is not based on quantity but a good quality relationship. Poor contact is not diminished contact but poor quality.</p>
Reflexivity		No reflexivity of the researcher is mentioned however there is reflexiveness of the children's accounts in their interviews from different time frames.
Ethical dimensions		Fairness to children of divorce and equity is referenced through wanting an ordinary sample rather than clinical, therapeutic or legal.
Relevance & transferability		Findings are linked back to the studies aims and context. Gives us new understanding about contact arrangements and compares changes over time in a qualitative manor highlighting changing narratives or growing agency in young people and citizens.

Paper 6: Morrison (2015) 'All Over Now?' The ongoing relational consequences of domestic abuse through children's contact arrangements.		
	Yes/No/Unclear	Comments
Design & Methodology		<p>Qualitative study as topic concerned with sensitive and complex issues that changed and evolved over time.</p> <p>In depth interviews with children and resident mothers.</p> <p>Rationale given for qualitative design and why chosen.</p>

		Triangulation of data sources and appropriate to capture diversity of experience.
Sample & Sampling strategy		18 children 8-14 8 boys 10 girls Purposive sampling strategy 16 mothers who had experienced domestic abuse in Scotland. Recruited from domestic abuse support services in the voluntary and stator sectors.
World view & Theoretical positions		Not alluded to.
Scope & Purpose		Focuses on children's and mothers experiences of contact when there is domestic abuse.
Approach to Analysis		Interviews were transcribed and recorded, with an inductive analytic strategy. Interview transcripts were coded and analysed thematically. see Morrison 2014 for a fuller discussion about methodology and analytical strategy. Approach made explicit and appropriate for method. no description of how coding systems evolved. limited amount of subjective experience portrayed.
Interpretation		The study focuses more predominantly on mother verbatim accounts and there is limited expression of the child's view. It does link how the relationship between parent's impacts on the child but due to the nature of domestic abuse the primary focus is on continued abuse to mothers and children's actual experiences are lost or retold through the parent's words. this is not in line with the aim of exploring both mothers and children perspectives of contact.

Key Findings/ Conclusions		<p>Continued abuse of women and children following parental separation that was linked to contact arrangements. Children's contact with non-resident fathers often took place amongst an absence of parental communication and cooperation. Left children responsible for navigating the complex and charged dynamic of their parent's relationships.</p> <p>Children being de facto messengers passing on information about changes to future contact arrangements or as information givers about mothers lives</p>
Reflexivity		None mentioned
Ethical dimensions		<p>Reference to attention paid to ethical issues, informed consent, risk and child protection, confidentiality, distress and damages. Ethical approval mentioned.</p> <p>Thorough mention of ethical issues</p>
Relevance & transferability		<p>Study looks at limitations – including small sample Acknowledges where sample were recruited and that some of the population may have been missed.</p> <p>Consultations are supported by evidence but focus on children and mothers are limited with adult voices dominating. Highlights the controversy over contact being better for children but acknowledges domestic abuse as part of this.</p> <p>More directive and biased study.</p>

Paper 7: Davies (2015) Shared Parenting or Shared Care? Learning from Children's Experiences of a post-Divorce shared care arrangement		
	Yes/No/Unclear	Comments
Design & Methodology		<p>Accounts were generated from a school-based field study investigating constructions and experiences of girls and boys of family and close relationships over 18 months.</p> <p>Study involved participant observation, children's drawings, family books, visits to children's homes and two sets of paired interviews.</p> <p>Case study of shared care.</p> <p>Method and design apparent and why appropriate. Use of only one case study so although well suited to research design and aims – provides little cross reference of other families. lots of data sources.</p>
Sample & Sampling strategy		<p>Accounts from 3 children siblings.</p> <p>Reasons for selection chosen initial sample not described as to how selected. No justification as to why the family with better resources was chosen over the shared parenting arrangements of the other families referenced.</p>
World view & Theoretical positions		Focus on effects of successful shared parenting.
Scope & Purpose		In depth examination of three children's accounts of their consensual shared parenting arrangement. It explores whether shared care families maybe a better conceptualisation than shared parenting for understanding: the resources necessary to support these arrangements, who is key to these arrangements and who is carrying out this care.

		Important for parents considering self-organised shared arrangements, policy makers and implementation of legislations.
Approach to Analysis		<p>Analysis was driven from questioning how this complex family had created a seemingly successful and sustained shared parenting arrangement.</p> <p>Themes developed through abductive research strategy; themes generated were informed by and developed alongside existing themes from research n family life and shared parenting, and combined with themes that emerged from and were grounded in the date to advance knowledge in this area of shared parenting.</p> <p>Approach is explicit and appears appropriate for method. reference to how themes were chosen and how data fitted into these.</p>
Interpretation		<p>Context of family arrangements given clearly with siblings and house composition described.</p> <p>Findings are linked with dominant discourses and assumptions around shared parenting.</p>
Key Findings/ Conclusions		<p>Attributes of successful shared parenting arrangements.</p> <p>Shared cooperative relationships and were socially and materially well resourced.</p> <p>Need for space was emotionally important – new children born and partnering and the introduction of sibling's limit children's opportunities for peace, quiet and private space.</p> <p>Breakdown of relationships between parents and children</p>

		<p>affects not only them but the extended new family e.g. step siblings.</p> <p>Reconceptualising is considered in regard to political and policy – suggesting that shared parenting assumes a triadic relationship where the needs and resources of the parents and their biological children are isolated from other family and kin. Shared care families more fitting of who is involved. child care undertaken by a number of individuals and highly gendered.</p> <p>Reference to socioeconomic status and the financial burden of shared care with the need for two homes – partnering allows for combined resources. Fewer lower income families going into consensual shared care arrangements.</p>
Reflexivity		Not really mentioned.
Ethical dimensions		<p>Consideration of case study approach and confidentiality and anonymity. Reference to informed consent and its ongoing negotiating thought the research and different activates. Reference to ethical considerations in another paper.</p>
Relevance & transferability		<p>In depth discussion, around how findings link to policy and its conceptualisation. Linking to how changes need to be considered for lower socially and materially resourced families. Impacting their choice for consensual self-care and considerations needed for the actual development and maintenance of child care within shared parenting.</p> <p>Uses a well resourced family to highlight what works and what is important could go further by using other case studies to demonstrate the difference in the care. Doesn't</p>

		demonstrate the difficulties for low income with evidence.
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Paper 8: Fawcett (2000) The Changing family in northern Ireland young people and divorce		
	Yes/No/Unclear	Comments
Design & Methodology		<p>Qualitative Exploratory</p> <p>Semi-structured interview Standardised interview schedules were developed using a mix of closed and open ended questions.</p> <p>Took part between 1995-1996</p> <p>Detail on design and method given and data collection methods suitable . No discussion of ontology or epistemology. Collected parent and professional views but only reported on children which met with the papers aim of giving children a voice.</p>
Sample & Sampling strategy		<p>37 YP aged 12-18, northern Ireland/and their parents who had separated or divorced in the last 5 years.</p> <p>22 girls and 15 boys living in Belfast and its environs.</p> <p>Reflected many characteristics of the population from which it was drawn.</p> <p>Clearest information on selection and sample may have missed those whose situation had not been shared with external adults.</p>
World view & Theoretical positions		Not stated
Scope & Purpose		Explores young people's experiences of the divorce process and the help provided by family, friends and professionals.

		<p>Sought to explore and map key features of young people's family relationships and social networks during the divorce process. It also examined their experiences of help and support provided by teachers, counsellors and other professional's.</p> <p>Aims to explore the separation/divorce process primarily from a young person's perspective.</p> <p>To examine their experiences of help and support within the family, the school and the community.</p> <p>to ascertain the views of young people who had used counselling</p> <p>To gather information from parents and professionals on the needs of young people.</p> <p>Explicit purpose given and this is referred back both with existing knowledge and theory.</p>
Approach to Analysis		<p>Each interview was recorded, transcribed and then summarized onto a database.</p> <p>The cross case analysis that followed was organized around six topic areas consistent with the original aims of the project. The analysis of each topic area involved a search for significant patterns or themes. Some categories emerged directly from the data.</p> <p>At other times "sensitising concepts" from the literature provided a sense of direction in which to look. Reference to another paper for full methodology.</p> <p>Clear description of analysis and a reference to obtaining full descriptions appropriate for the</p>

		findings. Description of how coding systems were arrived at, although indicators these were led by prior interests and not what emerged from the data.
Interpretation		Use of a case study to give context to one of the participants however other than that only small extracts from verbatim interviews were used to support themes. These were supported well with other literature and findings but a closer insight to the individual participants and their experiences and how this could be interpreted rather than an overall fitting to a theme may have been warranted. Individual experience was acknowledged but experiences were predominantly grouped losing sight of some of the individuality in the stories.
Key Findings/ Conclusions		<p>Separation process was a lengthy one, frequently underpinned by a narrative of acrimony and violence.</p> <p>extended family and peers were important sources of support.</p> <p>little evidence of productive alliances with siblings.</p> <p>Findings consistent with what is already known.</p> <p>children had no information of support available for them</p> <p>Problems identified were emotional, behavioural, family and school related difficulties.</p> <p>Children reported the need to talk to someone outside the family, someone helpful, who would listen and understand and keep things confidential. relationship factor.</p> <p>The key factor in whether the young person made use of the help</p>

		<p>offered was the quality of the relationship.</p> <p>The right not to be caught in the middle of parental conflict.</p> <p>more information and better advertising about available services and support</p>
Reflexivity		Not referred to
Ethical dimensions		<p>Mentions changing of details to respect anonymity.</p> <p>Brief reference to ethics but not in detail.</p>
Relevance & transferability		<p>A thorough analysis which is intervened with existing theory and findings. And clear limitation and weaknesses defined however this draws upon a larger sample size which arguably would lose sight of the individuality of experience even more.</p> <p>Results are supported by verbatim extracts included in the conclusions drawn these are brief sentences and unclear who they come from. could be one participant or many.</p> <p>Acknowledges the importance of school and the impact. missed in other studies. thoroughly meets its aims and purpose.</p>

Paper 9: Smart and Wade (2002) Facing Family change, children's circumstances, strategies and resources		
	Yes/No/Unclear	Comments
Design & Methodology		<p>4 stages explored views of all children in year 2 (6-7) and year 5 (9-10) of the 4 schools irrespective of family circumstance. Focus group what they would think it would be like to live through parent separation. second stage individual interviews with some experience of divorce.</p>

		<p>Only study to define divorce or separation.</p> <p>rationale is given for qualitative research and child perspective. No discussion of grounding but can be assumed a more relativist approach was taken. Setting is appropriate chosen through schools where a range of children could be contacted. Data collection methods were appropriate using focus groups and individual interviews. A broad depth of data collection to address all aspects of the research and allow for the complexity not refining children's answers too much.</p>
Sample & Sampling strategy		<p>5-10 years justification of being under represented. Yorkshire. from 4 schools.</p> <p>Reflect difference in class, religion, ethnic mix and urban rural location.</p> <p>Sub sample of 8 children who had been referred for professional help or legal services.</p> <p>Reviewed support schemes.</p> <p>description of why the four schools were selected and how the children were recruited. Some description of the selection procedure using opt out consent. Contacted parents in the years of interest. Due to lack of research with this age group. Thickness of description adequately covered with the different demographics of the schools and age groups.</p>
World view & Theoretical positions		Not stated

Scope & Purpose		<p>Clear aims and rationale of listening to children's views on parental separation and to discover their preferred means of support during times of family change.</p> <p>Clear link to rationale and policy behind listening to children's voice.</p> <p>Contribution to developments of child voice. more detail of previous literature would benefit scope of the research.</p> <p>Looked at children's perceptions of family transitions and whether they wanted or received any help and looked at informal and formal support</p>
Approach to Analysis		<p>There is description of how data is collected but not how it is analysed. So despite rich description of the data collected and inferences drawn from that there is no description of analytic method. There is clear evidence of the subjective experience of participants. The conversational style of the interviews allows for a breadth of alternate experience which is discussed in the findings with different children finding different things helpful for coping and support. and differences in experience.</p> <p>Note given to the themes coming from the children's worldview even if not directly linked to what they were looking for.</p> <p>A use of case studies to reflect the differencing relationships and importance of those to the children. grounded in context.</p>
Interpretation		<p>There is extensive description of field notes used in the different aspects of the study. And how this had led to interpretation and conclusions. There is evidence of</p>

		<p>time spent drawing similarities and differences together and explanations for experience. Despite no specific means of analysis the paper provides rich detail on the areas of divorce, coping and support relevant through the children's eyes.</p> <p>Note given to the children's views and honesty around their individual experience despite creating a cognitive map with which to gain some understanding of experiences.</p> <p>Some of the evidence used to support experiences of divorce come (e.g. emotional coping from the focus groups which it is noted that not all the children in these groups have experienced divorce and therefore it is hard to be sure if these are actual experiences or responses to the case vignettes.)</p>
Key Findings/ Conclusions		<p>Children who benefit from close supportive relationships with both parents described themselves as happy.</p> <p>Children who felt the commitment of one parent had diminished – expressed distress – no longer mattered.</p> <p>Despite differences in lifestyles and experiences there were similarities between children's attitudes towards coping and support.</p> <p>Children didn't seem to see teachers as main confidents or people to talk to however it is the personal qualities of the adult concerned which children value.</p>
Reflexivity		there is a very small part of the study which indicates the researchers influence of the interpretation of the research. Due to the selection of schools and rich

		interpretation this could be taken further but it is evidenced as an influence Consideration given to their role there is some reference to the withholding of information from children because of shame or dishonourable.
Ethical dimensions		This study demonstrates the most ethical consideration, it not only attempts to draw a culturally diverse sample from different schools. They indicated the differences of using an opt in or opt out consent between the policies requirements of two schools. Some children wanted to take part but parents' consent meant that they couldn't. one child even forging a parent's signature to take part but couldn't so space limits are discussed about ethical considerations but evidence of thought given to the complexity of it.
Relevance & transferability		

Paper 10: Trinder, Beek & Connolly (2002) Making contact: How parents and children negotiate and experience contact after divorce.		
	Yes/No/Unclear	Comments
Design & Methodology		
Sample & Sampling strategy		Half with private ordered contact arrangements and had varying degree of involvement with lawyers and courts. 140 individuals 61 families. Breadth of experience across different perspectives and different forms of contact. Lack of minority participants.
World view & Theoretical positions		Some allusion to world view by not wanting to illuminate the true account but instead identify how

		each family member experiences the same arrangements.
Scope & Purpose		The study aimed to examine how adults and children negotiate contact, how contact is experienced and what issues shape contact. What makes contact work and not work for children and parents.
Approach to Analysis		Grounded theory – software package
Interpretation		
Key Findings/ Conclusions		Quality and quantity of contact varies tremendously. 9 different types of contact arrangement were identified.
Reflexivity		Not stated
Ethical dimensions		Informed consent and confidentiality addressed and speciality interviewer for children. Further reference to ethics with anonymity and language.
Relevance & transferability		Important to acknowledge that where children and adult perspectives are sought, adult voices tend to dominate over the children.

Appendix 5. Anonymised GEM grids

A. James

I am interested in what you associate (think about) when you think of your parents' divorce or separation. Draw, write or tell me what first comes to your mind when you think about your parents' divorce or separation. Please put one image/word/ phrase in each box.

		two houses two of an everything	new relationships
split time Food		traveling car	

B. Sienna

I am interested in what you associate (think about) when you think of your parents' divorce or separation. Draw, write or tell me what first comes to your mind when you think about your parents' divorce or separation. Please put one image/word/ phrase in each box.

living in different houses

If it makes them happy

Parents new boyfriends/girlfriends

Not seeing the other.

C. Ben

I am interested in what you associate (think about) when you think of your parents' divorce or separation. Draw, write or tell me what first comes to your mind when you think about your parents' divorce or separation. Please put one image/word/ phrase in each box.

Styling

Washing

Gun

Surf

King

D. King

I am interested in what you associate (what first comes into your head) when you think of your parents' divorce or separation. Draw, write or tell me what first comes to your mind when you think about your experience of your parents' divorce or separation. Please put one image/word/ phrase in each box.

Why did they split up?



Sad



Angry

+

Sad

=

Angry

Why is my daddy so mean
to my mummy.

I met some nice people.

Appendix 6. Confirmation of Ethical approval from the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust Research Ethics Committee

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement
Directorate of Education & Training
Tavistock Centre
120 Belsize Lane
London
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2699
<https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/>

Jordon Stone

By Email

19 July 2018

Dear Ms Stone,

Re: Trust Research Ethics Application

Title: A psycho-social exploration of children and young peoples lived experience of the breakdown of their parent's relationship.

Thank you for submitting your updated Research Ethics documentation. I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee your application has been approved. This means you can proceed with your research.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Best regards,



Paru Jeram

Secretary to the Trust Research Degrees Subcommittee
T: 020 938 2699
E: academicquality@tavi-Port.nhs.uk

Cc: Course Lead, Supervisors, Research Tutors

Appendix 7. Confirmation of Ethical approval from Tower Hamlets local authority research committee



Jordan Stone
 Children's Services Directorate
 5th floor
 Mulberry Place

Law, Probity and Governance
 Corporate Research Unit
 6th Floor
 Town Hall, Mulberry Place
 5 Clove Crescent
 London E14 2BG

Tel: 020 7364 4238
 Email: rgf@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Our Ref: CERGF 224

Date: 28th June-18

Dear Jordan

Research Title:

A psycho-social exploration of children and young peoples lived experience of the breakdown of their parent's relationship.

This is to confirm that your research proposal has been approved by the Research Governance Framework Panel.

Upon completion can you please submit a copy of your report or an extract from your conclusion to the above postal or email address. We may then publish details of your research on the National Social Care Research Register.

I would be grateful if you would complete a short questionnaire to provide feedback on the service that you have received. Please click on the link below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/rgfsurvey> We want to ensure that we offer the best quality service to our users and your feedback is essential in improving our services further.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any further assistance.

I wish you well in your research study.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Juanita Haynes".

Juanita Haynes
 RGF Co-ordinator

Appendix 8. Information sheet provided to participants & parents of participants

A. Participant Information sheet



Participant information sheet

Information Sheet

Project title

Children and Young People's experiences of divorce or separation

Who is doing the research?

My name is Jordan Stone and I am training to be an Educational Psychologist at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust.

I am doing this research as part of my course.

Would you like to take part in research?

I would like to ask if you would like to take part in my research.

You will need to read the information carefully to decide if you would like to take part or not.



This information will help you understand what it is about and what I am asking you to do.

What is the research and who can take part?

I want to find out about children's experiences of their parent's divorce or separation. I am looking for children whose parents have divorced or separated or who are in the process of divorcing or separating, this includes if one of your parents lives in a different house to you or if they live in the same house.



I am interested in hearing about your experiences and talking with you about them.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There is not much research about children's experiences of their parents' divorce and what they think and feel about it.

What you say is important because my research is all about children and young people's experiences.



Do I have to take part?

No.

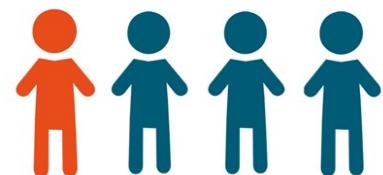


You do not have to; it is up to you to decide. You are free to stop doing the research at any time, without any consequences.

If I want to take part will I automatically be selected for the research?

No.

Because I want to be able to gather detailed information about children and young people's experience, I can only select a small number of children to take part (4-6).



This means that if you want to take part, your parents will have to send back the parent consent form and your assent form, which tells me you have read the information and wish to take part.

I will select participants on a first come first serve basis and I am interested in talking with children and young people of different ages.

Who has given permission for this research?

Your school has given me permission and The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (where I am training) have given me permission too.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be invited to come and meet me at your school.

When we meet, I will explain what we will do and will talk for a short time (no longer than 1 hour) about your experiences of your parent's divorce separation.

About a week after we first meet, we will meet again to think a bit more (no longer than an hour).



I would like to make audio recordings of our meetings to help me remember and think about things that were said during them. The recordings will be stored using password protected software. You can ask for the recordings to be stopped or deleted at any time and they will be deleted once I have typed them up.

What will happen to the findings from the research?

I will write it up as part of my course. I will share some findings with your school and the Tower Hamlets Educational Psychology Service where I am on placement so they hear about children and young people's experiences. I might also share the findings with other professionals working with young people.



I want to tell you about what I write up if you would like. We can decide how you would like to know about the findings such as me explaining them to you in person or me sending them to you.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with this research?

You can change your mind at any time and stop taking part if you want to, without any consequences. Any research data collected before you stop might be used, unless you ask for it to be destroyed. If it has already been anonymised then I will not be able to remove your data and it will not be traceable to anyone, including me.



What will happen if I get upset?

You will be given a safe word or object which will let me know if you are upset and want the interview to stop. You will be able to go to....[named member of staff] if you are worried or upset at any time during or after the interview has finished. If you



wish to talk to me after the interview, you can tell [named person] and they can let me know.

Will my information be kept confidential?

Yes.

I will follow the law (Global Data Protection Regulation, 2018), so all information about you will be confidential and stored properly. Your name will be changed to a pseudonym (made up name) to protect your identity. The data will be kept for a minimum of 5 years.



Are there times when my information cannot be kept confidential?

If you tell me something that makes me worry about your safety or someone else then I might have to share that with others to keep you or someone else safe. I would always aim to talk with you first.

Because I am meeting with 4-6 young people, there is a chance you might recognise some of the things you said. To protect your identity, your name will be a pseudonym (a made-up name) so that others are less able to recognise you and what you said.

For more information and contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the research, including the researcher please contact me:

Jordan Stone

Email: jstone@tavi-port.nhs.uk
Telephone: 077958393662

If you have any concerns about the research then you can contact Simon Carrington who works for the Tavistock and Portman research department. His contact details are:

Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance

academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk

B. Parent Information sheet



Parent Information Sheet

Research Title

Children and Young People's experiences of their parent's divorce or separation.

Who is doing the research?

My name is Jordan Stone and I am training to be an Educational Psychologist at the Tavistock and the Portman NHS Trust. I am doing this research as part of my course.

Would your child like to take part in research?

I would like to invite your child to take part in my research study. Before you decide whether you would like to give permission for your child to take part, I will explain what the research would involve. Please take time to read the information carefully. If you feel that you would be happy for your child to take part, you will be invited in to meet with me to hear more about the research and ask any questions you may have. You can then decide whether or not you wish for your child to take part.

What is the aim of the research and who can take part?

I want to find out about children and young people's experiences of their parents' divorce or separation. I am looking for children or young people whose parents have divorced or separated. This includes if one parent lives in a different house to your child or if they live in the same house. I am interested in meeting with your child to gather their experiences of this event. Your child must be aged between 7-14 and aged 5 or over when you and your partner separated.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There is not much research about children and young people's experience of their parents' divorce and what they think and feel about it. Your child's opinions and thoughts are really important for my research because it is all about young people's experiences. Your child will be given the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings in a safe and supportive environment. This research hopes to be able to support children and young people like your child in the future by enhancing the knowledge of professionals, like myself, of children's experiences.

and inform future research aiming to develop support for children related to what children talk about.

Who has given permission for this research?

The training institution that I am studying at is called the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and they have given me ethical approval to do the research. Your child's school has also given me permission to carry out the research.

Does my child have to take part?

No.

Your child does not have to take part, and it is up to you both to decide. Your child would be free to withdraw (stop taking part in the research) at any time, without giving a reason.

If your child wants to take part will they automatically be selected for the research?

No.

Because I want to be able to gather detailed information about children and young peoples experience, I can only select a small number of people to take part (4-6). This means that if your child wants to take part and you are happy for them to do so, you will have to send back the expression of interest form which tells me you have read the information and are interested in your child to take part. You will then be invited in to attend a parent meeting with myself to hear more about the research process and ask any questions you may have. You will then be asked to complete a parent consent form and a brief questionnaire which will determine if your child is eligible for the research. Your child will also be asked to complete an assent form and be given the opportunity to meet with me to ask any questions. If we receive more than 6 children who wish to participate, participants will be chosen in order of expression of interest and I am interested in talking with children and young people of different ages.

I will also invite you to meet with me to talk to ask you some questions about the background of your separation in relation to your child. There is a separate information sheet and consent form for this.

Can one or more of my children take part?

Yes.

As all children's experiences are considered unique to them, siblings are allowed to take part. However, they will be interviewed separately. You would have to provide consent for your children who you wish to take part and they will have to provide their assent too.

What will happen to my child if they take part?

They will be invited to come and meet me at their school to learn more about the research, sign an assent form and have the opportunity to ask questions. On the first day of the research, I will explain what we will do and we will talk for a short time (no longer than an hour) about their first thoughts about their experiences of their parent's divorce or separation. About a week after

we first meet, we will meet again to think a bit more (no longer than an hour) about their first thoughts and if they have had any thoughts since. I would like to make audio recordings of our meetings to help me remember and think about things that were said during them. The recordings will be stored anonymously, using password protected software. Your child can ask for the recordings to be stopped or deleted at any time. The recordings will be deleted once I have typed them up.

What will happen if my child becomes upset about anything discussed during the research?

If your child becomes upset about anything during our interview they will have a safe word or object, which we will agree before we start, that they can use to end the interview. There will also be a member of staff.....[named person], who your child will have access to during and after the interviews if they feel upset or worried at any time. I will also stay on site immediately after the interviews to be available for your child if they wish to talk. I am also easily contactable by the school, if your child wishes to talk to me at any time after the interviews have finished.

What will happen to the findings from the research?

The findings will be typed up and will make up my thesis which will be part of my Educational Psychology qualification. I may share some of the findings anonymously with the school and Tower Hamlets local authority Educational Psychology Service, so that they find out about what children and young people's experiences are and there might be times where I share the findings with other professionals working with young people. I would like to tell you about the findings of the research if you would like. We can talk about the ways in which you would like to know about the findings such as me explaining them to you in person or me sending them to you.

What will happen if my child doesn't want to carry on with this research?

Your child can change their mind at any time and if they want to stop, they can at any time without explaining why, without any consequences. Your child will be given a safe word or object before starting the interview which they can use if they wish for the interview to stop. Any research data collected before their withdrawal may still be used, unless you or they request that it is destroyed. If it has reached the point that it has been anonymised to the point that I can no longer retrieve the data I will not be able to remove the data and it will not be traceable to anyone, including me.

Will what my child talks about be kept confidential?

Yes.

I will follow ethical and legal practice and all information about your child will be handled in confidence. All information that is collected will be kept strictly confidential. All records related to your child's participation in this research study will be handled and stored appropriately. Your child's identity on these records will be indicated by a pseudonym rather than by their name. The data will be kept for a minimum of 3 years. Data collected during the study will be stored and used in compliance with the UK Global Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018).

Are there times when my child's data cannot be kept confidential?

If your child tells me something that makes me concerned about their safety or the safety of someone else then I might have to share that information with others in order to keep them or

someone else safe. However, I would always aim to discuss this with your child first when possible. Because I am meeting with between 4-6 young people, there is a chance that your child may recognise some of the things they said in my research. To protect your child's identity, their name will be a pseudonym so that others are less likely to be able to recognise them and what they said.

For more information and contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the research, including the researcher please contact me:

Jordan Stone

Email: jstone@tavi-port.nhs.uk
Telephone: 077958393662

If you have any concerns about the research then you can contact Simon Carrington who works for the Tavistock and Portman research department. His contact details are:

Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance

academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk

If you are interested in your child taking part in this research please sign your name below:

Your name.....Signed.....Date....../..../....

If you are interested in attending a meeting with myself to hear more about the research please sign your name below (there will also be an opportunity to sign a consent form in this meeting if you wish for your child to take part):

Your name.....Signed.....Date....../..../....

Alternatively, if you wish for your child to take part but do not wish to attend the parents meeting then please contact me using the details above and I will send you a consent form for you to sign.

Thank you for your help.

Appendix 9. Consent forms provided to participants & parents of participants

A. Consent form provided to participants

Participant Assent Form

Title

Children and Young People's experiences of their parent's divorce or separation.

**Please Tick
Here**

Please tick the statements below if you agree with them

- I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the chance to ask questions.



- I understand that I only have to participate if I want to and I am allowed to stop taking part in the research.



- I agree to take part in the research.



4. I agree for my interviews to be recorded.



5. I understand that a different name will be used for me in the write up of the research and that this is done to protect my identity as much as possible.



6. I understand that what I say will only be used for this research and nothing else.

7. I understand that the only time where my data might be shared is when there is an issue of safety around me or somebody else.

8. I understand that the research will be written up as a thesis which means it can be accessed through libraries and that it may be shared anonymously with your school, the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service or with professionals who work with children and young people.

9. I know that if I am worried or concerned about anything I will have[named person], who I can talk to if I am worried or want to talk about something that went on in the interview.



Please Circle,

I agree/ do not agree to participate, please sign your name below:

Your name.....Signed.....Date...../..../....

Thank you for your help.



B. Consent form provided to parents of participants

The Tavistock and Portman **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Parent Consent Form**Title****Please Initial
Here**

Children and Young People's experiences of their parent's divorce or separation.



Please initial the statements below if you agree with them

1. I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the chance to ask questions.
2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and they are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
3. I agree for my child participate in the research.
4. I agree for the interviews with my child to be recorded.
5. I understand that my child's data will be anonymised using a pseudonym and that this is done to protect their identity as much as possible.
6. I understand that my interviews will be used for this research and cannot be accessed for any other purposes.
7. I understand that the only time where my child's confidential data might be shared is when there is an issue of safety around them or somebody else.
8. I understand that the research will be written up as a thesis which means it can be accessed through libraries and that it may be shared anonymously with my child's school, the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service or with professionals who work with children and young people.

Please Circle:

I agree/ I do not agree for my child to participate, please sign your name below

Your name.....Signed.....Date...../...../.....

Thank you for your help.

Appendix 10. Scoping letter to parents

Dear Parent/Carer,

My name is Jordan Stone and I am training to be an Educational Psychologist at the Tavistock and the Portman NHS Trust. I am doing some research about children and young people's experiences of their parent's divorce or separation. I am interested in speaking to children and young people who have experienced their parent's divorce or separation. If this is an experience that applies to your family, I would love the opportunity to tell you more about the research and what it would involve, so you and your child can make an informed decision about whether you would like to take part

If you feel that you would be happy for your child to take part, you will be invited in to meet with me to hear more about the research and ask any questions you may have. You can then decide whether or not you wish for your child to take part.

This letter is to determine whether you would be interested in your child taking part in research of this kind. By expressing your interest through the form below does not mean that you or your child has to take part. By completing the form below, you will let me know that it is ok to send you further information regarding my research. I can send this to you or you can pick this up from the reception at your child's school.

To help you decide whether your child may be suitable for this research I have included some of the requirements below:

- Parent's who identify as divorced or separated.
- Your child was aged 5 or over when parents separated.
- You have informed your child of your separation.
- Parents have been separated for 6+ months.
- Your child is not currently attending an external agency for support due to the divorce/separation e.g. CAMHS
- Your child isn't personally involved in any court proceedings for the divorce.

If you feel your child meets this criteria and you are interested in hearing more about the research please return the form below to [named person].

Please Circle:

I am interested/ I am not interested in receiving more information about this research, please sign your name below

Your name.....Signed.....Date....../..../....

Thank you for your help.

Appendix 11. Full analysis export from MAXQDA showing the link between Themes through to Segmented Text

see attached USB

Appendix 12. Raw Transcripts produced following Individual Interview (King only, see USB for all participants).

Interview 1 GEM

Participant: KING
 Date: 28.11.18
 Time: 10:05 am

Key

italic text: intonation
... short pause
.. correction of speech
[] interruption e.g. laughter, longer pause, noise, writing volume

Jordan: there we go, okay.

KING: Hellooo

Jordan: Hello...so I am interested King, in what you associate and what comes first into your head when you think of your parent's divorce or separation. So, I want you to in these boxes, draw, write or tell me what first comes to your mind when you think about your experience of your parent's divorce or separation. You can put one image or word or phrase in each box.

[writing and drawing in the first box]

KING: that's me

Jordan: is it...and who's this one?

KING: that's my mum

Jordan: and that's your mum... lovely and what are you going to put in your second box and then we can talk about each one in turn when you've finished them

KING: huh?

Jordan: so what we'll do is, if you fill in your four boxes and then we'll talk about each one afterwards.

KING: okay, urrrmm

Jordan: so that's the first thing that you thought of, isn't it? is there anything else that comes to your mind that you want to put..it can be a word or a drawing?

[pause]

KING: w-when you spell why is it W-H-Y?

Jordan: it is, yes. good spelling.

KING: Why...[pause, writing]...urm yeah

Jordan: yeah so this..in this b-box you've put a question

KING: yes

Jordan: yes that's really interesting. Is there anything else you want to put in these boxes?

KING: hmm...[pause, writing]...do you spell daddy with two d's.

Jordan: yes

KING: I still call my mum mummy and my dad daddy

Jordan: that's really nice, I bet they like that

KING: after 10 years

Jordan: well I'm sure they like that, I wish I still did that

KING: I'm going to be eleven in January.

Jordan: are you? have you got anything exciting planned?

KING: urm no, it's on January the 12th so I just make one list of presents so, the things my mum tries get me for Christmas and the things she can't get, she can try and get it for my birthday.

Jordan: ah that's luckING..so you

KING: but I'll still get happy with whatever I got.

Jordan: ah that's so sweet of you. So have you finished this one, why is my daddy...

[pause, writing]

KING: there

Jordan: oh lovely, thank you. So you've written, why is my daddy so mean to my mummy?

KING: yes urmm

[pause 6 seconds]

Jordan: you still..you thinking about the fourth one? [pause] I like how you've used some pictures and some drawings as well, I mean some pictures and some writing.

[pause writing]

KING: urr...angry plus sad equals sangry.

Jordan: sangry [laughs]. that's clever that should be a new emotion that we should know about, shouldn't it. I quite like that. Have you got a fourth one, and then we can go through some of the ones you've already put down.

KING: umm... I met nice people with some of the r-relationships my mum was in but then I had to finish for some reason, but I couldn't get told because urm, she said it was adult business ...and...and I'm a child.

Jordan: so are you saying that when your mummy has met other people , you've made some nice relationships with them but sometimes you don't get to carry on seeing them?

KING: yeah...there was a nice guy called Alan.

Jordan: yeah, do you want to tell me about him?

KING: urrrm he lives in the the block that's near the o2 arena.

Jordan: yeah

KING: called the sphere

Jordan: oo that sounds exciting did you get to go?

KING: yeah we urm we lived there for a bit (coughs)

Jordan: so, you lived there for a bit...

KING: yeah...and then my mum urm she used to be a urm person who did drugs but then she stopped and then she went to AnA meetings and she's stopped it since urm I was urm...she started stop..she started to stop when I was 2, I think

Jordan: okay, so when you were little

KING: yeah but she's..she doesn't want nothing to do with it now. she feels sick when she thinks about it and one of my friends here called Dean

Jordan: yeah

KING: he's here because I was telling his mum, called Anna that urm urm that he should come here because it's a really fun school.

Jordan: ah so you were helping him to see how nice it was here.

KING: yeah but me, my mum and his mum got into a fight cos urm his mum got urm she used to be urm urm sa..alcoholic thing. I don't know the word.

Jordan: I think you got it right. so she's

KING: the alcoholic then

Jordan: yeah...so that..is that made..is that made it hard for you and luke to still be friends

KING: yehh..nah not really.

Jordan: okay

KING: and his..his..it's funny when his brother Fred urm urm err gets in a fight cos urm he goes on his tiptoes and goes like that and then he urm acts all big and it's really funny.

Jordan: is he smaller than you guys?

KING: I'm the oldest.

Jordan: you're the oldest

KING: I'm also the oldest in the school.

Jordan: are you?

KING: out of the kids not the adults.

Jordan: not the adults [laughs] okay. I've worked that one out. So have you..is th..is this everything that you wanted to put down?

KING: urrrm yeah

Jordan: yeah, you don't want to put anything in this one

KING: hmm no

Jordan: no?

KING: I can't think of anything else

Jordan: you can't think of anything else? cos you..you mentioned about meeting some of your mums new...

KING: oh yeah

Jordan: ...friends. did you want to put that in there?

[writing]

KING: is it 's' or 'c'

Jordan: 'c' ...[pause writing] lovely thank you. that's some really nice writing haven't..

KING: should I write a name, on one of those up there

Jordan: it's up to you if you want to. you don't have to

KING: okay

Jordan: perfect so shall we look at this...

KING: I also have a thir-thirteen year old nephew

Jordan: do you? so he's older than you. gosh that's..how does that feel?

KING: urm I don't know

Jordan: you don't know? can you..so let's have a look at this one.so what have you put in this box?

KING: urm I'm pretty sure my mum was sad i-I-i-i can't remember.

Jordan: okay so you..

KING: I don't know if she was sad or happy or angry

Jordan: but you have a feeling that she felt sad when it happened

KING: yeah I feel sad and angry

Jordan: and you feel sad and angry. do you want to tell me about a time that you felt sad and angry?

KING: urmm

Jordan: can you remember a time?

KING: I can't remember cos it was aggges ago.

Jordan: it felt like a long time ago. and do you ever feel sad and angry now?

KING: umm most of the time I feel sad but I don't feel angry anymore

Jordan: okay do you wanna tell me about the times...

KING: I felt angry because urm I feel angry because when my dad left I thought I couldn't see him again and then I thought it was all his fault.

Jordan: ah so you felt angry because you might not..you..thought you might not see him again

KING: yeah

Jordan: and that you..you blamed him

KING: yeah

Jordan: do you wanna tell me..can you remember a time where you felt like that?

KING: err...

Jordan: when you thought you might not see him again?

KING: it was urm, I think it was like 6 months ago. where my mum urm...they had a big argument because my dad was really late

Jordan: yeah

KING: and then she got really mad urm and just said urm she said that's it urm you can't see him until he's urm older because err you're too er irresponsible and he said you're always late she said you're always late and then the time before that urm he urm made my mum really really sad and said urm you don't do anything for King the only..the..the only thing you use your money on is for urm drugs and alcohol and and stuff

Jordan: so how did that make you feel when mum said that dad couldn't see you again because he was too irresponsible?

KING: she didn't mean it she just got super duper angry

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm... I knew she didn't mean it but I did get worried.

Jordan: you got worried?

KING: yeah

Jordan: worried that you might not be able to see him again?

KING: yeah because...that's what she said

Jordan: yeah and then you said that she..that he..that daddy spends money on other things other than on you

KING: no, my dad said that that's what she does

Jordan: oh your dad said that's what she does

KING: but she doesn't

Jordan: but she doesn't. and how did you feel when he said that?

KING: urm I didn't hear it cos I only heard it when she was screaming down the phone at him saying urm how dare you say urm urrm that all the only thing I I spend my money on is drugs and alcohol urm you inconsiderate c-u-n-t

Jordan: oh I see and and so they were on the phone together and you were you were in the house

KING: yeah

Jordan: and what were you doing while mum was on the phone?

KING: urm I was in my room. cos I know not to go into the room when my mum's sad or angry. but sometimes it's okay cause I give her a hug when she's sad and when she's angry

Jordan: that's nice of you and does that help?

KING: yeah

Jordan: and does it help you to feel better, to give a hug to mum?

KING: yeah

Jordan: oh that's really nice. and are there are there..any other times where you felt these sorts of feelings angry and sad or seen mummy sad.

KING: no

Jordan: no, that's the only time you can remember?

KING: wait see my mum sad?

Jordan: yeah or feel..

KING: no I've seen my mum sad loads of time.

Jordan: do you wanna tell me about that?

KING: last year, I think, or the year before maybe,

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm my mum had a boyfriend called Dave,

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm urm and then on Christmas she said my mum said she loved unicorns

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm and then he she..said get me can you get me something that's unicorny and then he got her a unicorn bath duck urm a er a flying unicorn for little kids and a unicorn lollipop

Jordan: ah that's nice

KING: but urm she urm it was like those things from the works like is was little kid..it was little kid it was a little kids toy an

Jordan: okay

KING: he didn't put any effort into it and it made her really sad and then she got super duper duper happy because my nan got her umr her Pandora bracelet that she really wanted

Jordan: ah so you've noticed that mum got a little bit sad when she didn't receive the presents that she wanted at Christmas time

KING: she just got sad that he didn't put any thought into it. cos umr on Christmas she doesn't even ask for anything, she just says if you've got me a present fine but if you haven't all I want is a picture of umr all umr 1,2,3,4,5 a picture of 5 of my n..or a picture of all 5 of my nieces. because I have er 5 cousins, billy, tasha, tate, olivia and angela

Jordan: wow all girls as well, that's a lot

KING: and it's funny because my mum was the first to be born out of the..my three aunts. she had one child

Jordan: yeah

KING: and aunty Claire umr was the second, she had two, billy and tasha

Jordan: yeah

KING: umr aunty evie was the was the umr is the youngest and she had three

Jordan: did she?

KING: yeah tasha, angela and olivia

Jordan: so it's like one two, three and you're the only boy?

KING: err yeah

Jordan: yeah, what's that like to be the only boy in a family of girls?

KING: I like umr more girly things but I try not to show it in front of my friends, cos I get scared

Jordan: do you want to tell me about that? what do you get scared about

KING: umr I get scared if they will laugh at me

Jordan: you get scared they might laugh

KING: yeah cos they all my er family that I grew up with, I was the only boy other than my grandad and uncle dan which is umr aunty esme's husband.

Jordan: ah okay so there you were..there's only three boys and two of them are adults?

KING: yeah.

Jordan: so that seems likely that you might like to play with some girl things like your cousins.

KING: yeah and I like styling hair

Jordan: you like styling hair?

KING: yeah I asked if I could get urm a doll head for Christmas

Jordan: oh that sounds like a good idea

KING: or just something I can do hair on. so, I can do different designs and stuff

Jordan: yeah, so you can practice

KING: yeah

Jordan: excellent, I think that sounds really fun. so is-is there anything else you wanted to say about this box or should we move onto the next one?

KING: urm I don't know what the next one is that's why it's a question

Jordan: so it says why did they split up

KING: I don't know don't know why

Jordan: so that's your question cos you're unsure about wha..why they split up? have you any..can you..remember any times where that was spoken about in? no? has mummy ever mentioned it to you?

KING: no

Jordan: No

KING: that next question, why is my daddy so mean to my mummy? because urm they always get into arguments cause he's late or he didn't pick up the phone or its just they just get in arguments a lot of the time.but it's gotten better now, now they barely have a argument but sometimes they might just have urm urm an aggressive debate but it doesn't turn into a argument

Jordan: ok so yo..that sounds like so at first they had quite a lot of arguments about dad being late

KING: they still do have big arguments but just not often

Jordan: just not as often, so they've gotten better

KING: umhmm

Jordan: can you remember, so you told me about a time

KING: sugar

Jordan: oops you've lost your page...oh good memory

KING: this is from my other friend that in class, called Alfie. we have a game called geometry dash. I have geometry dash sub zero and the normal one and geometry dash world. he has the same as me and he also has geometry dash meltdown.

Jordan: oh gosh.

KING: and these are the codes for something that urm is in the game.

Jordan: that sounds very complex

KING: we are on our iPad when we go to choosing urm he's gonna get really excited

Jordan: aww that's I'm so glad you've done that. so you said here that urm it's gotten better mummy and daddy they still have some arguments but not as many, just some disagreements

KING: yeah

Jordan: and can you remember a time about that? remember a time where they've had sort of a- another disagreement?

KING: that time that I've told you

Jordan: the one you've told me already. are there any more that you can remember?

KING: how long does that say? it says 19 is that the time.

Jordan: it's how long we've been in here

KING: oh that's long.

Jordan: it is quite long. yeah we-we've nearly finished though haven't we. is there anymore to say about this one?

KING: urm no. I feel tired

Jordan: tired?...have you got any examples of how daddy is mean to mummy.

KING: no, I try not to yawn when I'm talking about my parent's cos my eyes water and it's not because I'm sad. and then the people think I'm sad by talking about it.

Jordan: okay

KING: and that's why I keep rubbing my eyes

Jordan: that's okay

KING: and I have a bad neck

Jordan: you got a bad neck as well?

KING: yeah, in the night when I breathe in

Jordan: umm

KING: urm it's like its cold there and then I have to cough a lot.

Jordan: is that all the time or just recently?

KING: um just recently

Jordan: just recently, so you might be feeling a little bit under the weather. It's the weather outside isn't it, its quite cold and nippy...okay

KING: are we done with the questions.

Jordan: we're just going to go to this one and then were finished.

KING: oh okay.

Jordan: so I met some nice people, so do you want to tell me about that

KING: there's a man called Chris

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm he had er we stayed there for quite a while he was a really really nice man.

Jordan: yeah

KING: and he was super duper strong.

Jordan: super duper strong. want to tell me about that?

KING: and one time I got really luckING because urm he has a x-box

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm and then I knew how to turn it on and I could watch YouTube videos and stuff

Jordan: yeah

KING: and at the time it was when frozen just came out so everyone it was like a couple months after frozen came out.

Jordan: yeah

KING: maybe a like 2 years not a couple months..

Jordan: [laughs]

KING: and then urm yeah I got to just watch some videos and I searched up urm let it go fire version there was all different versions. there was the frozen one

Jordan: yeah

KING: which was about snow and ice and there was a one about earth which was urm ground and mice

Jordan: wow

KING: urm

Jordan: so you got to play on all of that when you were at his house

KING: and I played a game urm papa something sagas. you might have played it before, I don't know but it was fun. and he had er a really good game that I loved so much urm I can't remember it though.

Jordan: so it sounds like by staying at Alan's house you were able to play on some games and have quite a lot of fun there.

KING: yeah

Jordan: yeah, and then what happened after that?

KING: urm they split up and then urm my mum thought I was still a baby and then she said because they disagreed on what channel to watch in the telly

Jordan: oh okay

KING: but it was probably something else

Jordan: oh so it sounds like that mum gave you a different reason as to what you think the reason was to why they split up

KING: and I just said okay because I didn't wanna get angry if she told me what it actually was and and or get sad.

Jordan: okay so you just took her word for it.

KING: yeah

Jordan: did you have any reasons yourself why they might have split up. could you remember?

KING: urm no

Jordan: no. okay. is there anything else you want to tell me about meeting nice people.

KING: errrr

Jordan: are there any other times where that's happened.

KING: no

Jordan: no.

KING: all the other guys was. not all the other guys she she not just someone who just goes on lots and lots of dates

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm, she yeah urm some of the other guys.

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm it one of the man he urm ended out to sell drugs and my mum didn't know. so, he..they had to split up. the other guy was the man on Christmas.

Jordan: yeah. that's was Dave was it? yeah

KING: yeahh urm I don't know why Chris. They..I don't know why they split up

Jordan: so it sound's like Chris was the one that you urm you quite enjoyed spending time with.

KING: yeah

Jordan: yeah

KING: and urm yeah I still don't know why my mum and dad urm split up.

Jordan: okay

KING: it was probably because of the ch-kids he had

Jordan: oh cos he ha..has other children

KING: yeah he has 14

Jordan: he has 14

KING: from all different people

Jordan: and are many..are any of those..are they older, younger than you?

KING: urm quite a lot is older

Jordan: quite a lot of them are older

KING: when when they got together

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm urrm they..my dad had 7

Jordan: okay

KING: when my mum and my dad got together

Jordan: yeah

KING: my dad already had 7 from different people

Jordan: okay

KING: then when they split by the time they split up

Jordan: yeah

KING: there was 14 altogether. including me

Jordan: okay, so you think that might be a reason why cos he may have had some other children with other people.

KING: yeah

Jordan: I see. and do you get to see any of-of your siblings

KING: noo, yeah when he picks me up to do stuff with me.

Jordan: yeah

KING: I might see a brother, one of my brothers called Leon

Jordan: yeah

KING: he's really fun.

Jordan: ah that's nice. he's re..and what do you do together?

KING: urm I haven't..we haven't seen each other in ages so we don't really know what to talk about so I just brought up the subject about fortnight and urm I don't play it and I just said, I don't know why people are still getting crazy, because its old now, just because its updating every single..all the time the kids just lie and say urm I've got like a thousand v bucks or something or I got the new skin.

Jordan: yeah so you feel like a lot.. quite a lot of people are into fortnight and you're not..you don't really understand why?

KING: umm I like it but I've only played it like three times.

Jordan: I see and you get to buy new skins don't you, on there and do dances and things

KING: yeah

Jordan: I understand. so you see, what was he called leon?

KING: yeah

Jordan: that's your brother's name? and you mentioned you've got other..have you got other brothers and sisters?

KING: urrm

Jordan: or just brothers?

KING: I have brothers and sisters

Jordan: okay

KING: but all together its 14

Jordan: so that is quite a lot. so must be quite hard to r..keep track of all of them

KING: have you..have you got one of these books?

Jordan: I haven't but I've I've been looking at it and I really like the look of it

KING: urm the author called Emily coxhead

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm

Jordan: looks like I might want to get one

KING: yeah the author

Jordan: yeah

KING: she urm...Emily about the author, Emily Coxhead is a fluffy haired British designer, illustrator and happy thing maker, founder of the happy newspaper. Emily aims to bring a bit of sunshine to the world. she has no idea what she's doing but she's having a lovely time.

Jordan: [laughs]

KING: urm

Jordan: sounds like she's a really lovely person. doesn't it?

KING: and she puts these books around London and she puts them on buses trains and bus stops.

Jordan: does she? that's really kind of her

KING: and just on like on the floor or in where the newspaper is. you..if you get one you start seeing lots of them. cos I want I had to one time my mum rented one of those little e-cars, those really small ones and then all of a sudden I just started seeing loads of them on the streets

Jordan: did you, and do you find them really useful?

KING: no

Jordan: No [laughs]

KING: they're tiny! they're only two seats

Jordan: oh I mean one of the books. not the car. so you don't find the car useful?

KING: the boots the boots tiny it's not even as big as this chair. you can't fit the chair in the car

Jordan: I've seen them, they look like little boxes

KING: yeah just about that big.

Jordan: [laughs] okay. so do you feel like you've had had enough to say? or would you like to say something else?

KING: urm I don't know. urm. I think I'm done.

Jordan: you think you're done? okay

KING: I don't know what else to say

Jordan: so should I turn this off? if you're finished?

KING: okay

Jordan: okay. thank you.

Interview 2 FANI

Participant: Kanye KING

Date: 17.01.19

Time: 10:54 am

Key

italic text: intonation

... short pause

.. correction of speech

- stutter/hesitation

[] interruption e.g. laughter, longer pause, noise, writing

() volume

Jordan: so can you remember what we spoke about last time King?

KING: the bad things about when parents leave each other

Jordan: yeah what do you remember about that

KING: umr nothing

Jordan: so you don't remember what we spoke about...urm can you remember how you felt about what we spoke about...how did it make you feel after we met?

KING: I felt normal

Jordan: you felt normal, that's good, can you tell me more about that?

KING: um I just went back to class and then I got on with my day

Jordan: that's good and did you have a good day after that?

KING: um hmm

Jordan: good...and so do you remember that..when you were talking we did that drawing didn't we and you did some..there were four boxes

KING: umhm

Jordan: and you put how you felt..like four things can you remember the first one that you did

KING: ummm I felt sad and angry

Jordan: you did yeah that is what you put, and then you put them together to make a new word

KING: Sangry

Jordan: yeah can you..i was wondering afterwards whether you could remember a time where you felt sangry, or sad and angry

KING: umr at playtime just now

Jordan: at playtime just now...and which one was that both sad and angry or was it

KING: I was sad and angry

Jordan: both of them...and have there been any other times where you felt sad and angry maybe about regarding your parents...

KING: I felt sad and angry when my nan's dog had to leave to go back to my nans, he stayed there for 5 weeks..6 weeks at my house

Jordan: yeah

KING: and then he left

Jordan: oh so you had your nans dog living with you and then he had to go back to your nans house

KING: yeah

Jordan: do you want to tell me about that..tell me more about that

KING: I can't just pop over and see him because she lives in Ipswich

Jordan: oh I see so she lives far away

KING: yeah

Jordan: and that means it's harder to go and see him

KING: umm

Jordan: and when was the last time you saw him?

KING: I can't remember

Jordan: you can't remember. what type of dog was he or she?

KING: king Charles spaniel crossed with pug and his name was Charlie

Jordan: ah how lovely. I quite like those dogs are they the ones with the big floppy curly ears?

KING: er yeah

Jordan: what colour was he

KING: he was ginger and white

Jordan: ginger and white, I don't think I've seen a ginger one, I bet he was really..

KING: it's not like ginger ginger it's just brownish ginger

Jordan: ah I see sounds like a really

KING: like cinnamon

Jordan: sounds..like cinnamon, sounds like a really nice colour a bit like this colour

KING: umm a bit brighter

Jordan: a bit brighter than that okay and remember we were talking about um your parents not being together didn't we..las..didn't we last time

KING: umhmm

Jordan: and...

KING: and then you told me if I feel uncomfortable I give you this

Jordan: yes you can have him again so you might want to put him next to you in case that's

KING: I wanna use this one

Jordan: ah I love penguins...they're my fave...erm and is there been any times where you felt sad about that about your parents not being together?

KING: yes

Jordan: do you wanna tell me about that?

KING: urm a couple days ago I felt sa..[cough]..I felt sad because it was my birthday

Jordan: umm

KING: [coughs] and then my dad said he'd come at 1 o clock but he was all the way at Romford so he couldn't come at one o clock and then urm he came really late cos he had to get bus cos he didn't have urm a car

Jordan: umm

KING: and my sis was there and we were supposed to go ice skating

Jordan: um

KING: and we couldn't because he came late, but we went to my my nn..other gran his his mum

Jordan: yeah

KING: yeah

Jordan: and how did that make you feel when that happened?

KING: erm annoyed a little bit

Jordan: annoyed

KING: but I was fine with it cause he does that lots of times

Jordan: yeah you said that last time that sometimes he's he's late quite a lot didn't you...do you wanna tell me more about how you feel when he's late

KING: I'm used to it now so I don't really care

Jordan: and has that always been the same him sort of being late to come and get you

KING: ummhmm

Jordan: yeah

KING: but not not all the time sometimes he he just comes

Jordan: I understand and was it different before when urm mummy and daddy were together

KING: urm I can't remember

Jordan: can't remember

KING: they split up when I was 4

Jordan: okay

KING: cos when they met urm my dad already had 7 kids

Jordan: umm

KING: without me and then when by the time he know my mum and him split up in four years he had 7 more kids

Jordan: yeah so you think that might be

KING: somehow

Jordan: somehow so you think that might be why they split up

KING: yeah

Jordan: you said you feel..so you feel sad when he is late to pick you up

KING: umhmm

Jordan: have there been any other times you can remember so you said on Saturday he was late are there any other times that sort of stick in your mind

KING: urm one time I.I think I told you this before

Jordan: yeah

KING: last time he me and my hi..him and my and my mum got into a big fight

Jordan: yeah

KING: cos he's..he said urm my mum doesn't do anything for me do you..all the money she erm errr gets she urm spends on drugs

Jordan: yeah

KING: and then she went crazy because she's she used to do drugs before she had me and then she real..she worked really hard to stop

Jordan: yeah [pause] so that made you feel sort of sad when he said that to mum

KING: umhmm

[pause]

Jordan: and have there been an-any other times where they've had arguments like that

KING: yeah but I can't re-really remember

Jordan: you can't really remember them...what do you think it is about that one that stays in your mind, makes that one easier to remember?

KING: umm I don't know I just remember it

Jordan: just remember it

KING: cause she was shouting down the phone a lot

Jordan: yeah

KING: he was..like really really screaming

Jordan: so she was clearly quite upset as well

KING: yeah

Jordan: and you said last time didn't you that you'd seen your mum sad quite a lot of times and do you feel that's often because she's having arguments with dad...yeah..and do they still argue now

KING: umhmm

Jordan: yeah and what's that like when they argue how do you feel

KING: scared

Jordan: you feel scared, do you wanna tell me about that?

KING: hm?

Jordan: do you wanna tell me a bit more about how you feel scared

KING: because they're shouting..they they're shouting in the next room but it's really loud

Jordan: you can hear even though they're in the next room

KING: yeah [pause] I need a pen

[gets up to get a pen]

Jordan: you can bring that over if you want...urm ... so there in the next room shouting can you remember a time where that's happened

KING: I just told you

Jordan: yeah any other times other than that one?

KING: oh urm...oops...um...ouch

Jordan: are you okay?

KING: yeah...one time them I can't

Jordan: you can't that's okay...so how about feeling angry then, so you've mentioned that you felt sad and angry haven't you can you remember a time that really made you feel angry with regards to your mum and dad splitting up

KING: I don't really get angry cos of that but one the..the time that I..time that I used more strength than I knew I had was when I was in my mainstream school, I think I was in year 3

Jordan: umm

KING: I got super duper angry and I messed up a whole room I got all the bottles of paint and I just threw it everywhere and all the glitter and stuff

Jordan: ummm

KING: huh? [teacher is at the window]

Jordan: yeah?

[teacher interrupts comes in to talk to King about his altercation with another pupil in the playground]

Jordan: sorry King so you were saying you got super duper angry and you were throwing some paint pots in the classroom

KING: yeah and umr you know those umr I didn't know that I was that strong but I wasn't using all my strength

Jordan: um

KING: if you'll believe me..urm though..you know those classroom windows those thin ones that are like this big

Jordan: yeah

KING: and they have like the metal things in it...I punched through it

Jordan: ahh and how..you must have felt really angry at that point then

KING: yeah but I was so angry I didn't even feel feel it

Jordan: yeah

KING: when it was going on in in o my knuckles

Jordan: yeah of course and can you remember what made you feel that angry...you can't remember?

KING: I kno..i can't remember anything afterwards I get..after I get angry

Jordan: so you just kind of get the rage but you don't really remember what it is

KING: I cant.. I don't remember I just get

Jordan: but you you felt that you were quite strong because you maybe came back from that when you felt that bad and that angry

KING: no I felt really I felt really strong because I punched through that..the wi..the window

Jordan: oh I see so you had a lot of like physical strength to punch through the window

KING: yeah

Jordan: and what happened after that

KING: urm I got excluded for 2 days

Jordan: oh how did that make you feel

KING: I don't even know why they do it, cos most kids don't even like going to school

Jordan: yeah do you wanna tell me more about that?

KING: urm I didn't really care

Jordan: you di..you feel like you didn't really care

KING: um

Jordan: and did you go back to that school

KING: I go there every Wednesday

Jordan: ah okay that's where you go on Wednesday afternoons

KING: yeah

Jordan: and are there any other times where you felt angry is that the one the only the main one that you can remember

KING: err that's the main one I can remember...yeah

Jordan: and you said that erm you don't normally get angry with regard to your mum and dad you feel more sad about that that one

KING: yeah

Jordan: or maybe sangry as you said

KING: yeah

Jordan: yeah was there a time that you felt you were like yes I definitely feel sangry today

KING: yeah

Jordan: yeah do want to tell me about that

KING: I just did

Jordan: so it's the same one that's okay

KING: yeah

Jordan: that's fine...urm and you mentioned they have big arguments urm and you've told me one haven't you about it happened...a..a bit before about w-when mummy was screaming down the phone

KING: yeah

Jordan: where there any other big arguments that you can remember..no..that was the main one that sort of made you feel scared

KING: yeah

Jordan: but you mentioned that they argue a lot of the time

KING: yeah

Jordan: yeah

KING: how long has this been recording?

Jordan: well this one says 3 minutes but we just had to stop it didn't we because urm your teacher came in so th..it was actually on 8 minutes before that, so 8 plus 3 is...

KING: 11

Jordan: yeah so that's what how long we've been here for.

KING: is this the microphone or is this the microphone.

Jordan: urm I think this is the microphone and that bit is the speaker

KING: oh

Jordan: urm...is there anything else that comes to your mind when you think about your experience of your parents divorce

KING: urm they didn't have a divorce because they weren't married

Jordan: oh okay so they're separation anything else that you can..that you want to talk about...not sure?

KING: I never know what to talk about sometimes I just ring someone

Jordan: umm

KING: and them I'm I just I just zone out cos I don't know what to say then I just put the phone down...but then I call them back and say sorry I zoned out

Jordan: so sometimes you feel like that you can't really think of what to say

KING: yeah

Jordan: that's okay and is that how you feel now

KING: err a bit

Jordan: a bit

KING: but you're not on the phone so

Jordan: no [laughs] I'm not on the phone, right here erm and you also mentioned that you're not sure why mum and dad split up didn't you and that was a question that you had last time you said oh I'm not quite sure

KING: um

Jordan: and can..and you just said today that you were quite little when that happened but that you think maybe

KING: when I was three,

Jordan: yeah

KING: somehow, urm ask my mum if you've met her

Jordan: umm

KING: if you don't believe me um I wanted to get out of the room cos the door was shut and I couldn't reach the handle

Jordan: um

KING: so urm I got the steps

Jordan: yeah

KING: like the steps that's like this tall or something or like a little ladder and then urm I got I took the pins out of the door so the door just fell down so I jumped onto the sofa so it didn't fall on me

Jordan: that was quick

KING: yeah...err one time also I w-weeent I went down to the shop in just wearing my welly boots and a top I was like two and I only had 2ps and 1ps and I wanted to buy a sweet

Jordan: and you had what just the top and your welly boots on

KING: yeah

Jordan: [laughs]

KING: and a nappy

Jordan: and a nappy, do..you must have a felt a little bit cold doing that or was it summer time

KING: I can't remember

Jordan: you can't remember, do you remember getting any sweets, you had 1 p's and 2 ps'..no...what sweets do you like to buy when you go to the shop

KING: ummm

Jordan: do you have a favourite?

KING: my favourite chocolate is Reece's piece's peanut butter cups

Jordan: that is a good choice

KING: my favourite sweets is umm...jaw-jaw-jawbreakers

Jordan: jawbreakers are they those

KING: I can just bite them I don't know why they're called jawbreakers they don't break your jaw

Jordan: are they big sort of circular things

KING: they you have to suck on them

Jordan: bet it takes a while to get through them doesn't it..no

KING: you just bite it here

Jordan: are they little not the big ones

KING: err you can get big ones, jaw breaker jumbo lollipops

Jordan: yeah

KING: so like this big

Jordan: [laughs] but you can't fit that in your mouth sounds like it might be quite hard to break that one

KING: it's just my mouth here that's small, but inside its massive

Jordan: [laughs]

KING: sooo

Jordan: so once its' in you can

KING: I can probably get that things head in my mouth

Jordan: [laughs]

KING: but I don't wanna do it now cos it's not mine

Jordan: no and also the fur might not be taste very nice

KING: umm

Jordan: [laughs] erm so you obviously said you were little when mum and dad split up

KING: yeah

Jordan: can you remember what is the first thing that you remember about them not being together

KING: umm my mum was very sad

Jordan: your mum was very sad do you wanna tell me a bit more about that

KING: err pardon me

Jordan: that's okay

KING: urm I can't remember

Jordan: can't remember do you remember what you were doing at the time when your mum was sad

KING: umm

Jordan: no how you were feeling?

KING: sangry

Jordan: you were feeling sangry

KING: yes

Jordan: so when your mum feels sad you feel sangry?

KING: yes

Jordan: can tell me what she might have been sad about

KING: look a face

Jordan: ah that's so good...ah how pretty..

KING: umm

Jordan: can you remember what she might have been sad about

KING: sh-sh my dad was cheating on her...

Jordan: oh okay

KING: a lot

Jordan: and you remember her feeling quite sad

KING: yeah she was probably mainly she was probably angry most of the time

Jordan: yeah so it sounds like you've noticed that sometimes you can feel sad and angry can't you and then that made that new emotion that you came up with that new feeling sangry

KING: yeah

Jordan: and what happened after that after you noticed that she was feeling angry about your dad cheating

KING: errrr pardon

Jordan: what happened after what was the next thing that happened

KING: she tried to get a new boyfriend

Jordan: yeah

KING: but it didn't work out

Jordan: are-are they some of the people you were talking about last time is it Joe or Arthur that you mentioned

KING: yeah it was Joe and Arthur and a guy called richard

Jordan: okay

KING: he he he had lots of expensive things but my mum figured out that was because he was selling drugs and stuff so she ended that relationship quickly

Jordan: yeah cos she said she's tried quite hard hasn't she to

KING: she has stopped

Jordan: move away from that

KING: yeah

Jordan: and you told me that when you one of your really good memories was when you got to s..live with Arthur for a bit

KING: yeah

Jordan: can you tell me more about that time?

KING: he had a x-box 360

Jordan: yeah

KING: and there was this game with little tiny balls it was like papa john's saga but it was the I can't remember it but it was a really fun game

Jordan: yeah

KING: and I used that was it was..that was the time when frozen just came out

Jordan: yeah

KING: so I was searching up different types of frozen songs like I was searching up let it go fire

Jordan: yeah

KING: so it was different version about fire and stuff not about umr ice and snow

Jordan: yeah I remember you telling me you said there's different versions of the song and you can watch them

KING: yeah

Jordan: and you were able to do that at Chris's house cos he had an x-box

KING: yeah and there was a..and he used to bring me to the park

Jordan: did he do you want to tell me about those times when he took you to the park

KING: there was a massive climbing frame that was about the size of the school

Jordan: ahh

KING: it was those big string ones

Jordan: yeah I know

KING: and there was a big wooden like a big wooden den that's like the size of here there was a couple workers there just to make sure nothing bad was going on

Jordan: so you were able to go to the park to do to play on that big climbing frame when you were with Chris

KING: ummhmm

Jordan: was that near his house

KING: yeah and I didn't know what a daughter was so I said what do you call a if you have a son that is a girl

Jordan: yeah

KING: and then he didn't understand and I told my mum afterwards

Jordan: yeah

KING: umr so I said what do you call if you have a if you have a child that's that's a gayl g-girl

Jordan: yeah

KING: what's it called and then she said daughter cos she didn't understand before

Jordan: why-why did you ask that question, what was it

KING: cos I didn't know

Jordan: cos you didn't know, can you remember why that came to your mind when you were with Chris...has he got a daughter...that looks a little bit like a chick like a

KING: umm no he n-no he doesn't

Jordan: oh okay but your mum was able to answer the question that you had which is helpful

KING: yeah I was little when they when they split up

Jordan: yeh

KING: i was I was so little they thought I was um silly enough to believe that they couldn't decide on what programme to watch

Jordan: yeah

KING: that's why they split up

Jordan: that's Chris yeah do you wanna tel me about that then how that ma..what you thought about when they said umr that its cos of the programme

KING: I believed her for a while

Jordan: um

KING: a couple months ago I asked her why did you really split up

Jordan: um

KING: annnd she never told me

Jordan: so you still don't know

KING: nope

Jordan: did you have your own thinking around why they might have..did anything happen that you can remember that made you think that might be why

KING: sometimes I just believe that it was because they couldn't decide on what channel to watch

Jordan: okay sometimes you think she might be telling the truth

KING: yeah

Jordan: and other times

KING: um sometimes I don't sometimes I do

Jordan: sometimes you think that she's telling truth and sometimes you think it might be another reason that that they split up

KING: yeah

Jordan: and what happened after they split up

KING: um we moved into my mums friends house called sc..c-carol and

Jordan: yeah

KING: she has a daughter called scarlet who's very spoilt she has she had another child

Jordan: um

KING: not sarah carol

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm yeah and she won't use any of the things that she used of sarah she she wants it all to be brand new and stuff

Jordan: yeah...so both the children are spoilt

KING: yeah

Jordan: and

KING: I have like a big massive um like size of that table but like full of scooters and stuff

Jordan: oh do they that is quite a lot of things isn't it

KING: yeah um the front

Jordan: is that where you're living now with...no that was just after chris

KING: that's that's in x park where they..near my sisters, I live in x street down that way

Jordan: okay so not far from here

KING: I get bus to school by myself

Jordan: that's very go..very grown up and how did you um feel when you had to move out of chris'a house

KING: I was little so I just thought we were going on holiday

Jordan: so you didn't really remember what was actually happening

KING: no I wish I did I can't I forget lots of things and then like 10 years later I remember it

Jordan: yeah it think that does happen sometimes doesn't it when we can't really remember what's happened

KING: umm

Jordan: are there other things that you think oh ve I just remember that's what happened when you previously forgot

KING: umm no

Jordan: no have there been other times where you've had to move house or change where you were living because mummy' split up with somebody?

KING: um no

Jordan: no so that's just the one that you remember

KING: um to-day I think we're gonna do p.e

Jordan: oh

KING: but it's not actually p.e as in what you do in normal school its just my class and Georgia which is our teacher

Jordan: yeah

KING: brings us down to the lunch hall

Jordan: yeah

KING: annd last time we played hockey, last week

Jordan: yeah

KING: urm yeah and I scored lots of goals

Jordan: did you

KING: yeah but our team didn't win I just I just scored lots of goal

Jordan: well well done for doing that..i-I I really like that I like how you've done the colours in the eyes

KING: the eyes

Jordan: what urm do you know what sport you're going to play today

KING: no we might not even do it

Jordan: oh whys that

KING: I don't know, we we we we m-might just not

Jordan: we might just not

KING: cos we have to behave to do it, we can't just we're not just gonna do it if we haven't behaved

Jordan: yeah

KING: we have to behave in we have to earn it

Jordan: I see so you've got to sort of show that your..you've been doing the right thing, and do you think you might have done that today

KING: you have to do it all week not just not just for one day

Jordan: ah and how has your week been

KING: good

Jordan: good well maybe there's a chance that you might be able to do it then which will be nice wont it. you obviously sound like you quite enjoy it

KING: huh?

Jordan: you quite enjoy

KING: yeah

Jordan: playing hockey or w.. doing p.e. you gonna make another one

KING: no I'm just making a star with this paper and then I'm gonna cut it out...I don't know why I did it in the centre I should have done it on the side

Jordan: is there anything else that you wanted to talk to me about in terms of your experience of your mum and dad being separated

KING: urm because they not together when I when my dad comes round to see me I

Jordan: um

KING: I go round to see my my..his mum

Jordan: so cos they're not together you have to leave your house to go and see him at your nans house

KING: my grans

Jordan: your grans sorry

KING: it's fine...

Jordan: so your dad takes you to your grans house when he sees you

KING: yeah...not cos they are split up just because I ask him if we can

Jordan: oh ok so you like to go and see your gran

KING: because if they was together

Jordan: yeh

KING: then we'd be doing different stuff on days that hes free

Jordan: if they were together you would be doing different stuff

KING: yeah if they was together

Jordan: do you wanna tell me about that what would you be doing

KING: urm urm something like if it was a really cringey relationship something like going to Victoria park onto the boats

Jordan: oh ok...so you might go out together as a family

KING: yeah

Jordan: and how would you feel if you got to do that

KING: I would feel really happy

Jordan: you'd feel really happy, is there a time where you've been able to do that

KING: no

Jordan: and you're saying because they're not together you have to do different things

KING: yeah

Jordan: ...and one of those things is going to grans house with your dad

KING: yeah

Jordan: what else do you get..do you do with dad when you see him

KING: see my sister issey

Jordan: see your sister issey

KING: yeah she's 8 yeah she's 8 or 7

Jordan: and so is she one of your siblings that you see the most...yeah and how does that feel to see one of them and not some of the others

KING: urm I haven't even met all of them so

Jordan: do you wanna tell me about that how does that feel

KING: urrm I don't know

Jordan: you're not sure but you see Amelie, what..do you want to tell me about your..seeing Issey and what that's like

KING: we look alike

Jordan: you look alike

KING: that's the first thing I have to tell you

Jordan: oh

KING: we really really look alike

Jordan: and how does that..what's that like having looking like your sister is that something you think's a good thing

KING: um a good thing

Jordan: a good thing and so when dad picks you up does he also pick up Issey

KING: er no sometimes urm we go to see her

Jordan: you just go and see her when you're together

KING: sometimes she comes and stays over

Jordan: wow what at yur dads house

KING: er no at mine

Jordan: at yours what with your mum...that's nice...what's do you want to tell me about a time when she stayed over then

KING: er on my birthday

Jordan: on your birth..she stayed over on your birthday

KING: yeah I had a nap and then I woke up

Jordan: yeah

KING: and I thought there was a mirror in front of me but it was her

Jordan: [laughs]

KING: and then I woke up a little bit more and then I got really scared

Jordan: so your..so she's not mummy's daughter is she

KING: nope

Jordan: no...but she still comes to stay with you and your mum.

KING: yep

Jordan: and where's dad when that happens at his mums?

KING: probably not

Jordan: probably not

KING: probably in a pub somewhere

Jordan: tell me about that?

KING: urm he always does it he just says he's doing work

Jordan: yeah

KING: and and that he'll like this week we were supposed to do stuff on my birthday again because we didn't do much on Saturday

Jordan: um

KING: we didn't even do anything umr yeah and he didn't come round

Jordan: so you

KING: this week at all

Jordan: so sometimes he just doesn't come even though he says he will.

KING: ummhmm

Jordan: and what do you think about that?

KING: er I just think he should try harder

Jordan: yeah to see you?

KING: yeah

Jordan: and it sounds like you feel that he isn't really trying very hard? how's that make you feel

KING: annoyed

Jordan: annoyed

KING: sangry

Jordan: sangry...so you'd like him to try harder to see you

KING: yeah

[pause]

Jordan: and do you feel like it might be the same for Issey does she?

KING: errr

Jordan: have a similar experience

KING: probably

Jordan: have there been times where you feel that he does try ?

KING: yeah

Jordan: do you want to tell me about those times

KING: umm even though he didn't come on the time he said he would on my birthday

Jordan: umm

KING: he he came two hours late but that's because he was in Romford and he had to go um come to mine by bus and train and stuff because he didn't have the car

Jordan: yeah so it sounds like even though he was like he still came on the day he said he was going to come

KING: yeah and he said sorry

Jordan: and what was that like when he said sorry? was that did that help

KING: we're doing this for 52 minutes that's long

Jordan: no this way round

KING: oh

Jordan: we can finish whenever you want to

KING: okay I don't I don't really care how long we do it I'm just worried I might miss out on p.e

Jordan: okay wel..do you know when p.e is

KING: no

Jordan: n do you want to let me know when you want to finished

KING: okay maybe in um urm in a couple minutes after this minute finishes

Jordan: okay

KING: so in two minutes

Jordan: okay in 2 minutes okay, so what would you like to talk about in those two minutes, are there any other things that come to your mind when you are talking about dad being late

KING: one of the bad things

Jordan: yeah

KING: it's not really bad but urm my mum I because I'm not around my dad a lot

Jordan: yeah

KING: there isn't really like a man there so and I have lots of girl cousins

Jordan: yeah

KING: and not not girlfriends girlfriends but friends that are girls

Jordan: yeah

KING: because I grew up around girls most of my family are girls yay

Jordan: yeh you just mentioned that urm you what was you saying last time, you quite like doing hair don't you and things like that and you quite like playing with some girl things

KING: yeah

Jordan: and you were saying because there's not a man what do you want to tell me more about that what that's like?

KING: er he's not there to when I'm older he might not be there to say urm do you wanna go round to the pub to have a drink or something

Jordan: um

KING: cos I'll be doing something else because he won't be there with me

Jordan: ah okay so you feel like when you get older you might miss out.

[interruption from family support worker]

Jordan: we're nearly finished aren't we

KING: yeah one minute

Jordan: one minute so you said when you get a bit bigger you urm he won't won't be there to take you to the pub and things when you might want him to

KING: not just because of he won't be able to take me to the pub that's sounds a little bit bad

Jordan: [laughs] tell me more then what you mean?

KING: he won't be around to ask me if he wants to go see a football match with me

Jordan: yeah

KING: or...or meet my my girlfriend or my boyfriend whichever I-I choose

Jordan: yeah so it sounds like y-you would like him to be there to do things with you but you worry that he might not be

KING: I know my mum will be there

Jordan: yeah

KING: definitely

Jordan: that's good that you know she will definitely be there

KING: yeah

Jordan: what makes you think dad won't be there

KING: because he lets me down a lot

Jordan: cos he lets you down a lot...that sounds like it..that sounds quite tricky..sounds like it's quite hard to have someone that lets you down

KING: yeah

Jordan: do you want to tell me more about feeling let down

KING: I think I've written knock knock wrong urm

Jordan: no you've written it right

KING: umm I don't really think I know what else to say now

Jordan: that's okay would you like to finish

KING: urm...okay

Jordan: okay so should I turn it off then....thank you.