



“Nothing About Me Without Me”: Exploring how Educational Psychologists in Irish Disability, Educational and Primary Care Services Elicit and Represent the Voices of School Aged Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs.

Emma Louise Bohan

A thesis submitted to the Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education, Mary Immaculate College, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology (DECPsy)

Supervised by: Dr. Siobhán O’Sullivan

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Abstract

Background: National and international policy stipulate the importance of listening to the voices of children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs (SEN). During consultation, educational psychologists (EPs), as key stakeholders in the lives of CYP with SEN, are required to use evidence-based approaches to ensure that CYP's voices are listened to and heard.

Aims: Emanating from a rights-based social justice theoretical perspective, the current study sought to explore how EPs in three psychological services in Ireland elicit and represent the voices of CYP with SEN.

Sample: The sample comprised EPs practicing in Irish disability, educational and primary care services in Ireland that work with school aged CYP with SEN. A total of 83 EPs from the three services took part in the online questionnaire. A subsample of 11 EPs participated in the subsequent online semi-structured interviews.

Methods: An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was utilised, involving two phases. In phase one, quantitative data was obtained from an online questionnaire completed by EPs to provide an overview of their practice in eliciting and representing the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. Descriptive approaches were used to analyse the quantitative data. To garner qualitative data in phase two, interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of EPs to gain further insight into their professional practice. Framework analysis was applied to the qualitative data, with results extending and elaborating on the initial quantitative findings.

Results: The quantitative results conclude that EPs most commonly elicit voice using discussion-based and indirect approaches. Qualitatively, four key themes were identified regarding how EPs working across the three services elicit voice: Unique Role of the EP, Utilising a Range of Supports, Child-Led Process and Adapted Practice. EPs most frequently represent voice in psychological reports and during meetings with parents and school personnel. Two main themes were generated qualitatively in relation to how EPs across the three services represent voice: Responsibilities and Competencies of the EP and An Array of Mediums.

Conclusions: The study offers new insight into EP practice and extends on findings from other contexts. Implications of the findings for the field of educational and child psychology are presented in terms of practice, policy, and research.

Keywords: *educational psychologists, children and young people, special educational needs, voice, mixed methods design*

Declaration

This research is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology (DECPsy) at Mary Immaculate College. The work has not previously been accepted for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted for any degree.

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. Where the use has been made of other people, it has been fully acknowledged and referenced. I hereby give my permission for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for reading and interlibrary loans, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Name: Emma Louise Bohan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Louise Bohan', written in a cursive style.

Signature:

Date: 24th April 2023

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This thesis marks the culmination of three years of a doctoral journey; one which has not been without many highs and lows. Such a journey would not have been possible without the support of many people in my life who I would like to say thank you to.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated in loving memory of my mom. Her unconditional love, warmth, and attunement to my needs moulded me into the person that I am today, and very likely influenced the long and winding career path that I chose. Although she did not get to see the last number of years of my journey to becoming a psychologist, I know that she would be very proud.

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List of Abbreviations

APA	American Psychological Association
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
BPS	British Psychological Society
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
COMOIRA	Constructionist Model of Informed Reason Action
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CYP	Children and Young People
C/YP	Child or Young Person
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DE	Department of Education
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs
ESD	Explanatory Sequential Design
GoI	Government of Ireland
HSE	Health Service Executive
ID	Intellectual Disability
MIREC	Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee
MMAT	Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool
MMD	Mixed Method Design
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Services
OT	Occupational Therapist
PCP	Personal Construct Psychology
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
PSI	Psychological Society of Ireland
RQs	Research Questions
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SFBT	Solution Focused Brief Therapy
SLT	Speech and Language Therapist

SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
WoE	Weight of Evidence

1 Introduction Paper

1.1 Overview of Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the current research area, which focuses on the voices of children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs (SEN), as captured by educational psychologists (EPs). The chapter outlines the researcher's personal interest in the research area and the national and international practice and policy context. Ontological and epistemological considerations are detailed as is the theoretical perspective of the current study. The overall structure of the thesis is described and visually portrayed using a flowchart.

1.2 Interest in the Research Area and Rationale

This research explored how EPs working across Irish disability, educational and primary care services elicit and represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. My interest in the voice of the child and young person with SEN arose from my professional experiences and personal beliefs. To illustrate, as a trainee EP, and during my earlier professional experiences as a support worker and assistant psychologist, I noticed diverging practice across services. Such divergence related to the degree to which professionals, including EPs, included the voices of CYP with various needs and abilities in casework and consultation. What is more, as a trainee EP, I completed several of my professional placements during a time of change in national service delivery. Through this, I witnessed a movement towards family-centred practice, in line with the policy developments (Health Service Executive [HSE], 2020). Consequently, I was exposed to practices that centred around the priorities and needs of the family, meaning that the child or young person's (C/YP's) voice was not always a focal piece (HSE, 2020). Despite such experiences, I personally believe that the phrase "Nothing about me, without me" (The Scottish Government, 2016, p.2), which is associated with the medical realm, bears immense value for this area of professional practice in educational and child psychology. Specifically, that EPs possess a pivotal role in listening to the voices of CYP with SEN and involving them in any decision-making processes which may impact upon their lives (The Scottish Government, 2016). Therefore, my rationale for selecting this area of research stems from the intersection between my professional experiences and personal beliefs.

The national and international practice context relative to the present research area has been delineated by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) (2022) and British

Psychological Society (BPS) (2022). To elucidate, the PSI (2022) have necessitated that EPs should be skilled in communicating effectually with CYP across a range of intellectual and verbal abilities to promote equitable and inclusive practice. Moreover, both the PSI (2022) and BPS (2022) have outlined that as scientist-practitioners, EPs ought to be skilled in using evidence-informed and person-centred approaches to acknowledge the voice of CYP as central stakeholders in decision-making.

Aside from the educational psychology practice context, policy is important to consider, given that EPs are required to give due weight to the rights of the C/YP (PSI, 2022). Specifically, the international policy context is that:

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

(United Nations [UN] General Assembly, 1989, p.4)

Recent national policy in Ireland has emphasised the importance of including the voices of CYP with SEN in educational and healthcare settings, and moreover, using adapted supports for CYP with disabilities, where appropriate (Department of Education [DE], 2021a; HSE, 2022a). The present research study is therefore situated within the preceding educational psychology practice and policy context.

1.3 Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

A critical realism paradigm (Bhaskar, 2008) was utilised by the researcher to inform the present research study. Critical realism brings together a realist ontology (there is something real to discover) and a relativistic epistemology (different individuals will come to discern different things through different methods) (Stutchbury, 2021). As such, critical realist researchers posit that while one reality exists, there are many interpretations of such reality (Bhaskar, 2008). Furthermore, that knowledge is positioned within a historic, cultural, and social context (Maxwell, 2012). A defining element of critical realism is the idea of stratified reality, meaning that an all-embracing understanding of phenomenon can only be attained by using various methods and approaches (Bhaskar, 2008; Botha, 2021). This concept of stratified reality led the researcher to adopt a mixed-method research approach for the present study.

1.4 Theoretical Perspectives

A social justice psychological perspective was adopted as the theoretical framework for the current study. Within the literature, defining social justice theory has been regarded as

complex due to divergences in personal experiences (Todd & Rufa, 2013). Yet, in an American Psychological Association (APA) presidential address it was posited that theories of social justice are entwined with the discernment of human rights (Vasquez, 2012). For the current research study, Bell's (1997) definition of social justice theory will be considered. That is, that social justice encompasses the "full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" (Bell, 1997, p.3). Such a definition sits with the context of the present research study for the following reasons. Firstly, that EPs must promote equitable and inclusive practice through being skilled in moulding and adapting their practice to communicate with a specific group of CYP in society, namely those with SEN (PSI, 2022). Secondly, EPs are required to use specific evidence-based and person-informed approaches to enable the participation of this group of CYP in decision-making processes (BPS, 2022; PSI, 2022). Finally, the PSI (2022, p.8) has stipulated that EPs must demonstrate "commitment to providing effective services and promoting social justice and inclusion for all children and young people, families and schools".

1.5 Overview of Thesis Structure

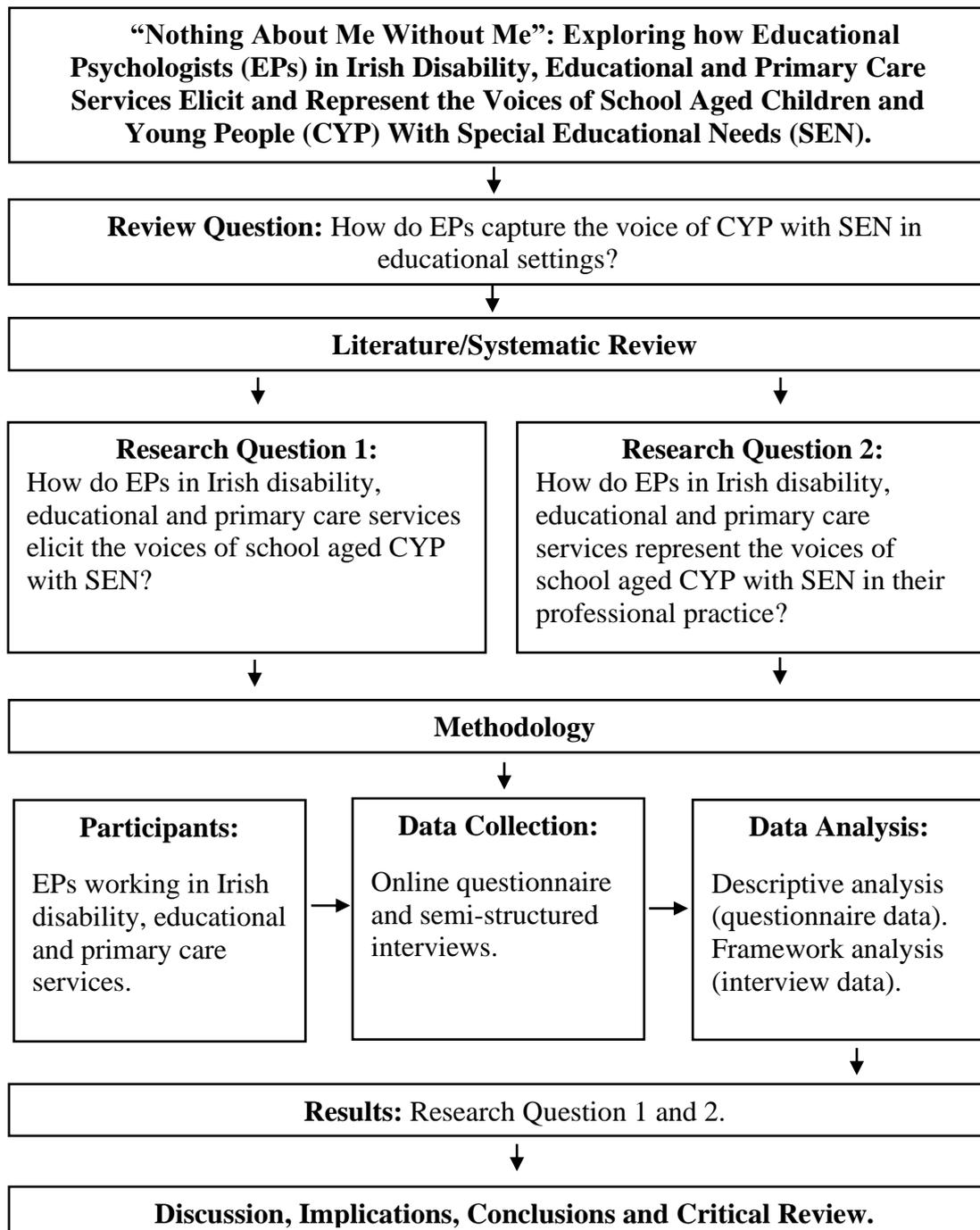
The remainder of the thesis is presented in three parts (see Figure 1.1 for a visual map). The next section (Part 2) provides a systematic critique of the germane research. Part 3, the empirical paper, provides an account of the research conducted and is presented in the format of a journal article. The research questions (RQs) that are explored in Part 3 are:

1. How do EPs in Irish disability, educational and primary care services elicit the voices of school aged CYP with SEN?
2. How do EPs in Irish disability, educational and primary care services represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN in their professional practice?

Part 4 comprises a critical review and impact statement and provides an opportunity for the researcher to reflect on the learning that ensued when conducting the research study and to clearly communicate the impact of the research.

Figure 1.1

Visual Map of Thesis Layout



2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review presents a critical review of how EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN in educational settings. Firstly, the voice of the C/YP is introduced, including challenges and benefits which prevail when capturing the voice of CYP with SEN. This is followed by a discussion of the policy context internationally and nationally. Next, professional practice of the EP, empirical evidence, and psychological theory are explored. Ensuing this, a systematic literature review of the research is presented to examine the review question. Finally, conclusions and implications for research, policy and practice are further indicated, along with the research questions (RQs) for the present study.

2.2 The Voice of CYP

To begin with, a considerable issue is the lack of agreement in relation to the definition for the ‘voice of the C/YP’ (Brooks and Murray 2016). For instance, the expression ‘CYP’s voice’ supposes that all CYP impart one view (Bakhtin, 1963), however it is recognised that CYP may have their own individual perspectives (Carnevale, 2020; Murray, 2019). Thus, the definition put forth by Murray (2019) takes account of such multiplicity. To demonstrate, this definition “recognises pluralism in children’s perspectives and puts the onus on not only hearing – but attending to – children’s feelings, beliefs, thoughts, wishes, preferences and attitudes” (Murray, 2019, p.1). In line with such a definition it has been recognised that CYP may impart contradictory perspectives (Eldén, 2012). For that reason, it may be helpful for researchers to ask, “which children and under what circumstances?” (Eldén, 2012, p.327) when conducting research in this area.

Carroll and Twomey (2021) define voice by placing weight on acting upon the C/YP’s feelings, needs, views, desires, and inclinations. According to Carroll and Twomey (2021), this weight acknowledges CYP’s contributions to decision-making in relation to their lives. However, participation in decision making processes may be more limited for those with intellectual and communicative differences (Carnevale, 2020). Moreover, when a C/YP’s voice is absent an alternative form of communication is necessary (Carroll & Twomey, 2021). Sociological explanations of voice have identified the significance of the C/YP’s voice in influencing society (Carroll & Twomey, 2021). Within the literature CYP have been described as capable social actors (James, 2007), competent in communicating their views (Einarsdottir, 2007) and being worthy providers to the society that they live

within (Moore et al., 2008). To elucidate, CYP “are not only affected by but also affect social structures and relationships” (Matthews, 2007, p. 323).

Eliciting the voice of CYP has been deemed a complex process (Warshak, 2004) and the voices of certain cohorts of CYP are rarely listened to, including those with SEN (Noble, 2003). It has been contended by Twomey and Carroll (2018) that voice, agency, capability, and rights have become the directing concepts when considering disability and childhood. However, Rose and Shevlin (2004) noted that CYP with SEN tend to linger on the margins of the decision-making process regarding their learning and education, despite the positive impact upon their lives that is expected from eliciting and listening to their voice. On the occasions that CYP with SEN are consulted with, their voices may be overlooked, undermined, thought of as equal to the voice of their parents or caregivers or suppressed by the voice of professionals (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Lewis et. al., 2006; Tangen, 2009; Ytterhus et al., 2008).

2.2.1 The Challenges Faced When Capturing the Voice of CYP With SEN

A range of challenges prevail when capturing and listening to the voices of this group of “seldom-heard” CYP (Department of Children and Youth Affairs [DCYA], 2014, p. 31). A frequently cited barrier is the resistance of adults and the power discrepancy that may exist between the C/YP and the implicated adult (Aubrey & Dahl, 2006; Davie, 1996; Smillie & Newton, 2020; Wolfendale & Robinson, 2004). Frequently, the opinions of the C/YP are not in keeping with what the adult deems to be in the best interests of the C/YP (Thornton, 2019). Yet, it is imperative that CYP are supported to put forth their voice in an appropriate manner (Thornton, 2019). A lack of maturity and competence are often cited as reasons to omit CYP from decision-making processes that can significantly impact their lives (Rose & Shevlin, 2004). Further challenges include the significant time and effort needed to obtain the C/YP’s views in a meaningful way (Thornton, 2019). For instance, professional opinion may be required to determine the C/YP’s level of functioning and ability to take part in the decision-making process, their voice may be harder to obtain, comprehend or interpret, and those with communicative or complex needs may require additional support to put forth their voice (DCYA, 2014; Smillie & Newton, 2020; Warshak, 2004).

2.2.2 The Benefits of Capturing the Voice of CYP With SEN

Lewis et al. (2006) argued that stemming from an inclusive perspective, all CYP can be supported to share their voice in a meaningful manner. Moreover, there are many benefits

associated with listening to the voices of CYP with SEN, including an improvement in psychological, social and educational outcomes (National Council for Special Education [NCSE], 2011). Murray (2019) denoted that adults who actively listen to the voices of CYP can enhance their understanding of CYP's needs and interests, and react positively to CYP's needs and interests, if they decide to do so. What is more, within the educational context, adults can adapt the provision based on the needs and interests of the C/YP, which in turn bestows opportunities to augment CYP's development and learning (Murray, 2019). If CYP experience learning that aligns with their own interests and needs, it is more probable that it will be meaningful for them (Murray, 2019). Even more, a feeling of meaning is a core element of subjective well-being (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018). For this reason, it has been contended that CYP's wellbeing can be improved when their opinions about their educational provision are taken into consideration (Murray, 2019).

If CYP take part in the decision-making process, they can offer information about their skills and capabilities, in addition to imparting their opinions on potential interventions, increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes (Todd, 2003). Asking CYP for their viewpoint on matters which affect them can also enhance their feelings of belongingness (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Specifically, Roller (1998) detailed that there are obvious advantages to including CYP with SEN in the assessment planning and review processes. These comprise enhanced motivation, independence, awareness of personal control, growth of meta learning skills (e.g., reflective thinking, organisation, and evaluation, understanding of learning styles and personal strengths and difficulties), personal accountability for progress, and an increased responsibility for change (Roller, 1998).

2.3 Context

The previous section has introduced the voice of CYP with SEN, highlighting the range of challenges and benefits that may be experienced when capturing and listening to their voice. It is evident from the literature that this is a complex process. Next, the pertinent international and national policy will be outlined. Relative to legislation, a core professional competency of the EP is to apply understanding of, and execute the ability to work within the legal, national and local frameworks and policy for educational psychology practice (BPS, 2022). Moreover, EPs possess a defining role in policy advice and development (PSI, 2022).

2.3.1 *International Policy*

Emanating from an international context, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) delivered a momentous development through article 12, highlighting the right of

CYP to be heard (UN General Assembly, 1989). In 2009, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child outlined that this right ought to be executed for CYP experiencing difficulties in expressing their views. To illustrate, CYP with disabilities should be supported to operate any communication method required to enable them to express their views. What is more, article 12 asserted the right for CYP to be heard in procedures which affect him or her, including in educational and health care settings (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009).

The fundamental requirements, which must be met for successful, ethical, and meaningful application of article 12 have been outlined by the committee (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009). Namely, that all processes in which CYP are heard and participate are clear and informative, voluntary, respectful, relevant, child-friendly, inclusive, reinforced by training, protected and sensitive to risk, and accountable to review and evaluation. The committee further emphasised that successful and meaningful participation ought to be comprehended as a process, and not as a single event (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009).

2.3.2 National Policy and Strategies

Nationally, the importance of listening to the voices of all CYP has been given due weight since Ireland ratified the UN CRC treaty in 1992 (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010; UN General Assembly, 1989). Subsequently, Ireland's first National Children's Strategy (Department of Health and Children, 2000) intended to provide a voice to CYP and promote their participation through providing the first comprehensive national policy document underpinned by the UN CRC (Children's Rights Alliance, 2008). Accordingly, a range of national policy and strategy documents were developed. To demonstrate, the third goal of the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (DCYA, 2014) national policy framework was to listen to and include all CYP in decisions which affect them individually and collectively. In particular, the government delineated its dedication to including the voices of CYP who are "seldom-heard" (DCYA, 2014, p.8). The DCYA (2014) particularised that this population of CYP include those with disabilities, as their voices may be more difficult to grasp and perceive.

Following this, the first national participation strategy was published (DCYA, 2015). One of the central objectives of this strategy was the enhancement and formation of processes to assure the engagement of seldom heard CYP in decision-making. Next, the rights-based National Participation Strategy (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth [DCEDIY], 2021a) was created to enhance and develop systems to ensure that these

CYP are listened to and included in decision-making processes. This framework, which was constructed upon a reviewed version of the Lundy (2007) model, delivers a pathway to support the conceptualisation of article 12 of the UN CRC (DCEDIY, 2021a). The Lundy (2007) model was originally created to support educational professionals to meaningfully and effectively implement a C/YP's right to participate (Kennan et al., 2018). Accordingly, the model concentrates on the separate yet interconnected elements of the rights of the C/YP, as represented in article 12 of the UN CRC (Kennan et al., 2018). Each element will be discussed in more detail in a later section which considers models of participation in more detail (Section 2.6).

Despite policy and national strategies highlighting the importance of listening to seldom-heard CYP, it has been recounted that none of the C/YP consultations carried out thus far have concentrated exclusively on the views of CYP with learning, sensory and physical disabilities (DCEDIY, 2021b). Hence, it is evident that there is a significant paucity of research and literature in this area. This paucity has also been acknowledged within Ireland's recent National Action Plan (DCEDIY, 2022a). Consequently, the DCEDIY (2022a) outlined that efforts to commission a methodological review of how to elicit the voices of vulnerable CYP are ongoing. However, the DCEDIY (2022a) noted that there will be a specific emphasis on vulnerable CYP experiencing poverty. Therefore, it can be cognised that there will be an enduring need to focus on the cohort of CYP with SEN (particularly those with learning, sensory and physical disabilities) in future national consultations, reviews and research.

2.3.2.1 National Educational Policy. Several policies and strategies have been developed since the UN CRC was ratified in 1992, focusing on the inclusion of the voices of CYP with SEN in educational contexts. To begin with, the White Paper on Education (Government of Ireland [GoI], 1995) outlined that “All students, regardless of their personal circumstances, have a right of access to participation in the education system, according to their potential and ability” (p.26). Moreover, the Education Act (GoI, 1998) reiterated this constitutional right for all CYP, including those with SEN. Nonetheless, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (GoI, 2004), which focuses on inclusion, highlights the active role of the parent, alluding to the ongoing power imbalance for CYP with SEN within the Irish educational system (Howe & Griffin, 2021; Thornton, 2019). Aubrey and Dahl (2006) detailed that CYP are existing in adult-oriented societies where they are subject to an adult-child power imbalance. Further, it has been contended by

Thornton (2019) that the language used in the EPSEN act is in keeping with Hart's (1991) perception of the C/YP as property, submissive to the procedures of their parents, the school principal and special educational needs officer.

The voice of CYP features an integral element of recent educational policy. To illustrate, the Wellbeing Policy (GoI, 2019) detailed that obtaining student voice is an indicator of success across two of the four key elements of wellbeing promotion. In addition, the recent Statement of Strategy (DE, 2021a) policy vision is to enhance national services for CYP with SEN and integrate their voice into policy. This is timely, given that within the literature, it has been asserted that vulnerable CYP have insufficient power to sway national policies (Aubrey & Dahl, 2006). Furthermore, this strategy stipulated that the onus is on professionals to place the C/YP's voice at the heart of their work in terms of planning and educational provision (DE, 2021a).

2.3.2.2 National HSE Policy. As well as the policy and strategies outlined above, it is also imperative to consider germane HSE policy, for instance, the National Consent Policy (HSE, 2022a). The right of all CYP to be heard, including those with a disability, informs this policy. When obtaining their consent, the HSE (2022a) have recommended the use of age-relevant and adapted additional support, where appropriate.

Despite the array of literature, research and policy referred to thus far, it has been maintained that educational settings have been acclimatising to listening to the voices of CYP since 1996 (Davie, 1996). What is more, it has been outlined that an awareness of the C/YP's voice in relation to their education is a somewhat topical phenomenon, given the challenges in recognising the validity of their voice (Rose & Shevlin, 2021). There is evidence to suggest that CYP are frequently not included in the decision-making process (Armstrong et al., 1993; Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Rose & Shevlin, 2004), that their views are seldom sought, and on the occasions when they are sought, that the efforts put forth may in fact be tokenistic in nature (Lewis et al., 2006; Noble; 2003; Smillie & Newton, 2020).

2.3.3 CYP With SEN

SEN, in relation to a person, is defined as “a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition and cognate words shall be construed accordingly” (GoI, 2004, p. 6). In 2014, the NCSE also put forth that the following are recognised as being within the definition of SEN: specific learning disabilities, hearing

impairments, blind/visual impairments, emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems, autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs), SEN resulting from an assessed syndrome, specific speech and language disorders, and multiple disabilities.

In 2016, there were 75,963 CYP with a disability in Ireland, accounting for 6.4% of the total child and young person population (DCEDIY, 2022b). What is more, the number of CYP with SEN attending special schools and special classes in both mainstream primary and post-primary schools increased significantly in the last number of years (DE, 2021b). In 2016 there were 1,560 pupils with SEN enrolled in special classes in post primary schools nationally. This figure has increased to 2,856 pupils with SEN in 2020, demonstrating an 83% rise since 2016 (DE, 2021b).

2.4 Professional Practice of the EP and the Voice of the C/YP With SEN

Nationally, EPs may be employed across a range of educational and healthcare settings. For example, within children's disability network teams, educational services, and primary care services to mention but some contexts (HSE, 2021; PSI, 2022). EPs within each service work within a different model of service i.e., family centred practice (disability services; HSE, 2020), consultative model (educational services; GoI, 2023) and a stepped care model (primary care; HSE, 2023). A core competency of the EP as a scientist-practitioner, is to use evidence-based and person-centred approaches in their professional practice to ensure that the C/YP's voice is heard during consultation (BPS, 2022; PSI, 2022). Further, EPs are required to be skilled in acknowledging the voices of CYP with SEN as central stakeholders in decision-making in relation to decisions that impact on their lives (PSI, 2022). In a study carried out by Aubrey and Dahl (2006), EPs were cited by vulnerable children (including those with SEN), as being the only adults aside from their parents who listened to their views. However, the way in which the views of CYP are ethically and reliably sought by EPs, remains challenging (Lightfoot & Bond, 2013). Lewis (2004) asserted that there is a dearth of evidence concerning the genuineness, integrity and reliability of particular methodologies for delving into the views of CYP with SEN. Moreover, it has been rebuked that there is risk in insisting the benefits of obtaining CYPs' voices without reflecting on the practicalities and concerns in ensuring that their voices are accurately heard (Gray & Wilson, 2004). Besides, Gersch (1996) deemed that the valid inclusion of CYP is not possible without suitable means for them to express their opinions.

Given that a myriad of ethical concerns may be relevant at any one time when working directly with CYP, EPs must keep up to date with high quality ethical and

professional practice that is in the best interests of CYP (O'Donnell & Gersch, 2015). The following principles may support EPs to provide an “ethically excellent service” (O'Donnell & Gersch, 2015, p.185) to CYP during direct involvement: respecting the dignity of the C/YP by listening to their views, acting as advocate by representing the C/YP's voice where appropriate, obtaining consent and maintaining confidentiality, building rapport, and practicing within the legal frameworks whilst sustaining highly moral standards of professional practice (O'Donnell & Gersch, 2015).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

As outlined in Part 1, social justice is one such psychological theory relevant to the voice of the C/YP with SEN. According to Bell (1997), social justice is defined as encompassing the full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is reciprocally moulded to meet their needs. Like Bell's (1997) definition, the concepts of ‘equity’ and ‘fairness’ have been referenced in definitions of social justice within the field of educational psychology to date (Moy et al., 2014). Furthermore, it has been contended by Vaghri et al. (2020) that the principles underlining article 12 of the UN CRC (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009) align with a social justice theory perspective within the educational psychology domain. Thus, on consideration of such definitions and relevant literature, EPs may be facilitated to demonstrate social justice for CYP with SEN through professional practice that is equitable, fair and rights based.

Within the international literature, EPs have been regarded as well positioned to endorse social justice via individual and systemic school practice, in addition to working collaboratively with families, school personnel and professionals to effect change for CYP (Power, 2008; Schulze et al., 2017; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000; Shriberg & Clinton, 2016). At a national level, the PSI (2022) have stated that trainee EPs ought to learn about this theory during their doctoral training and further, that qualified EPs must demonstrate commitment to promoting social justice in their professional practice. To this end, it has been contended that EPs are well positioned to promote social justice theory in their work given that they are required to give due weight to the rights of CYP (see Section 2.3) and moreover, as their role ought to encompass equitable and inclusive professional practice (BPS, 2022; PSI, 2022; Schulze et al., 2017). The PSI (2022) have put forth that EPs can promote equitable and inclusive professional practice by being skilled in communicating effectually with CYP across a range of intellectual and verbal abilities, and by understanding and respecting differences in CYP's learning and development arising from their SEN profile (PSI, 2022).

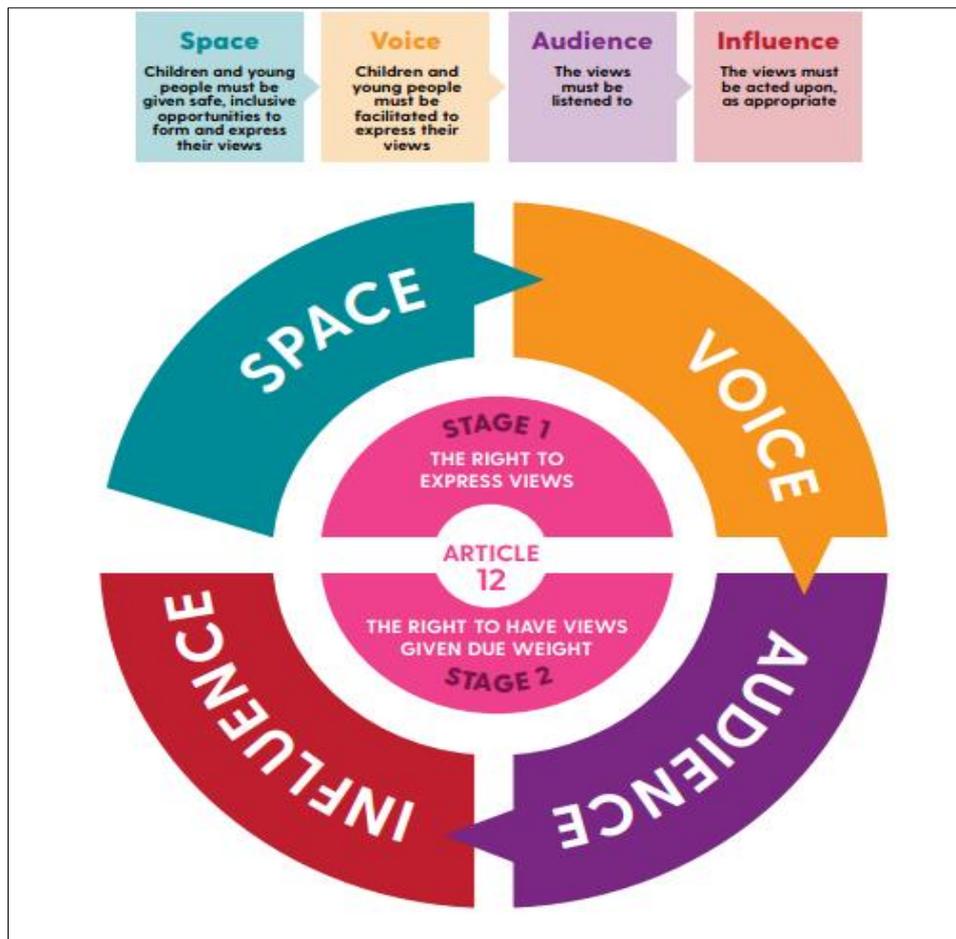
Furthermore, that EPs can do so through understanding the implications of such differences for the C/YP's education and for working with the C/YP and their family (PSI, 2022).

2.6 Participation Models Informing EP Practice

Through their advocacy role, EPs may from time to time represent the viewpoint of CYP to other stakeholders (O'Donnell & Gersch, 2015). To date, several participation models have been developed that may facilitate EP practice in representing the voices of CYP with SEN. The National Participation Strategy (DCEDIY, 2021a), outlined earlier in the National Policy and Strategies section, is one such model. This strengths and rights-based model is underpinned by the Lundy (2007) model of participation (Figure 2.1) and seeks to offer guidance to professionals on the four sequential steps to take to provide CYP with a meaningful voice in decision-making. The first component, 'space' stipulates that CYP must be provided secure, inclusive openings to shape and articulate their views; the second component 'voice' proposes a requirement that CYP are supported to articulate their views; the third component 'audience' asserts that their views must be listened to; and the final component 'influence' specifies that their views are acted upon aptly. Vaghri et al. (2020) has stipulated that social justice can be promoted for CYP within educational settings through the provision of equitable opportunities that are underpinned by these four components of the Lundy (2007) model. In addition, research and literature have outlined that a strengths-based approach in educational psychology practice is evolving in the last decade (Bozic, 2013; Wilding & Griffey, 2015). Moreover, EPs are "uniquely placed" (Joint Professional Liaison Group, 2020, p. 10) to provide a strengths-based picture of CYP within the educational setting. Taken together, such research and literature suggest the suitability of EPs in implementing practice based on the strengths-based National Participation Strategy (DCEDIY, 2021a) in their professional practice.

Figure 2.1

Lundy (2007) Model of Participation



Note. From the “Participation Framework: National Framework for Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making (p.15) by Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), 2021 (https://hubnanog.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/5587-Child-Participation-Framework_report_LR_FINAL_Rev.pdf).

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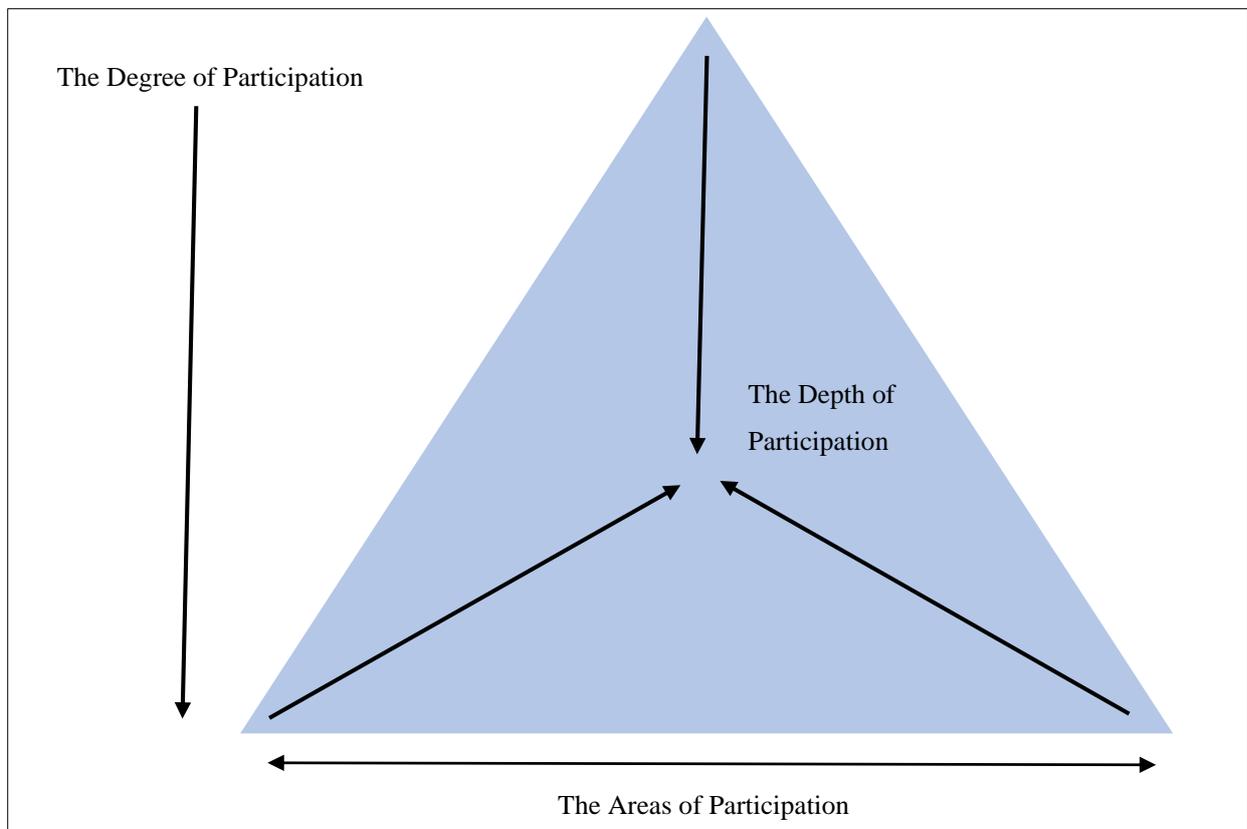
Beforehand, Shier (2001) proposed a model entitled the Pathway to Participation as a practical tool to support professionals, teams, and organisations to improve CYP’s participation. This model is underpinned by five stages of participation and focuses on listening to CYP, supporting CYP to communicate their views, acknowledging CYP’s views, including CYP in decision-making, and sharing power and accountability for decision-making with CYP.

Like the two former models, Fox (2016) also put forward a participation model, titled the Pyramid of Participation (Figure 2.2). Besides the participatory element, the specific

intention of this model is to support EPs to enhance their practice and ensure that the C/YP's voice is represented in psychological reports. To elucidate, the model is envisaged downwards, to where there is a broader base and compact underpinning for understanding the C/YP. The pyramid comprises three dimensions of participation. Firstly, the Degree of Participation involves the weight given to the C/YP's voice and whether it is acted upon. Secondly, the Areas of Participation considers the areas in which EPs accrue information. For example, is voice being offered to merely their likes and dislikes, or also to their opinion on the support that is being recommended? Finally, the Depth of Participation concerns the methods and approaches that EPs use to accrue information. For instance, are CYP simply asked their opinions, or are more advanced strategies employed to support them to reflect on and express their opinion. The aim of the model is that EPs will support CYP's participation by moving their practice in all three directions of participation. Equally, EPs may uncover hidden elements of the presenting situation. Fox (2016) concluded that the model ought to be positioned within the context of up-to-date professional practice regarding the views, wishes and feelings of CYP.

Figure 2.2

The Pyramid of Participation



Note. From “The Pyramid of Participation: The Representation of the Child’s Voice in Psychological Advice”, by M. Fox, 2016, *Educational Psychology Research and Practice*, 2(2), p.61 (<https://doi.org/10.15123/uel.886z0>), CC BY 4.0.

2.7 Rationale

2.7.1 Capturing the Voice of CYP With SEN and the Role of the EP

The PSI (2022) and BPS (2022) elucidate the role of the EP during consultation as recognising the centrality of the C/YP’s voice in the decision-making process and using evidence-based and person-centred approaches when doing so. Further, several participation models exist which may support EPs to advocate for CYP with SEN by representing their voice (DCEDIY, 2021a; Fox, 2016; Shier, 2001). To that end, Todd et al. (2000) contends that it ought to be the primal aim of every EP to develop a professional practice which authentically supports the voice of the C/YP to be heard. As Davie (1996) has argued “you need to have more in your kit than just talking” (p.7) if CYP are going to participate meaningfully. However, listening to and capturing the voice of CYP with SEN is a complex

process, with many benefits as well as challenges. Even more, a myriad of ethical issues may be applicable when working at a direct level with CYP (O'Donnell & Gersch, 2015). As a result, EPs must stay informed of high quality ethical and professional practice that is in the best interests of the C/YP (O'Donnell & Gersch, 2015). Thus, given the pivotal role of the EP in promoting and representing the voice of CYP with SEN as well as the need to stay informed of high-quality practice, a clear rationale exists for a review of the research and literature regarding how EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN.

Even more, at a national level, there has been a significant increase in the number of CYP with SEN attending special schools and special classes in mainstream primary and post-primary schools in the last number of years (DE, 2021b). As a result, there may be an intensifying demand for EPs to provide direct services to this cohort of CYP in the future. Given the focus on the voice of CYP with SEN in the recent DE strategy (2021a) as well as the increase of CYP with SEN in Irish educational settings, it seems timely to explore and review the empirical literature focusing on this topic. Therefore, the focus of the following systematic review is to critically appraise research concerning how EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN, within educational settings. Accordingly, the following review question has been developed to inform the review: "How do EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN in educational settings?" An appraisal of this research will allow for an exploration of current EP practice, which could inform the limited research and literature base nationally and internationally and support future EP practice in this area.

2.8 Systematic Review

To critically examine the literature to investigate how EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN in educational settings, a systematic review of the literature was conducted. Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence (WoE) framework was used to critically appraise the studies included in this review, based on their relevance and quality.

Systematic literature reviews have many crucial functions (Page et al., 2021). Through systematic, replicable, and transparent methods, systematic literature reviews can offer a reliable synthesis of up-to-date information in a field, illustrate gaps in the research and elucidate clear paths for future research (Moher et al., 2009; Page et al., 2021; Paul & Criado, 2020; Siddaway et al., 2019). Robust and comprehensive conclusions and implications can be achieved through the synthesis process (Baumeister, 2013). Furthermore, systematic literature reviews can produce or appraise theories about how or why phenomena ensue, or alternatively new ideas or concepts may come forward from evaluating and amalgamating the

existing research (Page et al., 2021; Siddaway et al., 2019). Finally, they can focus on questions that may not be answered by a single study and they can detect issues in primary research that can be resolved in future research studies (Page et al. 2021).

A systematic literature review may guide future researchers in several ways. Firstly, a future researcher may decide to update or elaborate on an existing review (Siddaway et al., 2019). Secondly, they may follow directions for future research and in doing so, explore an area where there is a dearth of research or where poor-quality research has been identified (Siddaway et al., 2019). However, a limitation is that systematic reviewers are constricted by what other researchers have executed (Siddaway et al., 2019). Nonetheless, systematic reviewers are not subject to the “pressure to publish statistically significant findings” or “publication bias” (Siddaway et al., 2019, p. 754), which researchers of individual research studies may be concerned about.

2.8.1 Search Strategy

The terms ‘educational psychologist’ OR ‘school psychologist’ AND ‘child* voice’ OR ‘child view*’ OR ‘CYP voice’ OR ‘CYP view*’ OR ‘young person voice’ OR ‘young person view*’ were searched using the electronic databases Academic Search Complete, APA PsycInfo and ERIC. The search was limited to peer reviewed journals which were published in the English language from 1999 to the search date. The first search was carried out from June to July 2021 and another was carried out during July to August 2022. A final search was executed in January 2023. The search resulted in a total of 175 articles after 101 exact duplicates were removed. The titles and abstracts were screened using the inclusion criteria detailed in Table 2.1, and 47 articles were identified to undergo a full text review. Of these, 36 did not meet the inclusion criteria and 11 articles were identified for a critical review (see Table 2.2). The excluded studies and rationale are detailed in Appendix A, while an overview of the included studies is provided in Appendix B. As advised by Page et al. (2021), a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram is detailed in Figure 2.3 to summarise the search process.

Table 2.1*Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria and Rationale*

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion	Rationale
1. Publication Type	Study published in a peer reviewed journal	Study was not published in a peer reviewed journal	Increased credibility. These studies have undergone scrutiny to ensure minimum standards
2. Language	Written in the English language	Study was not written in the English language	Translation is not possible
3. Participants	Reports EPs' or school psychologists' views on recording the voice of CYP with SEN Reports on the voice of CYP with SEN as captured by EPs or school psychologists	Reports on the views of CYP with SEN as captured by other personnel, or reports on methods used by other personnel to capture the voice of CYP with SEN	The voice of CYP with SEN as captured by EPs or school psychologists are the focus of the review question
4. Setting	Studies carried out or based within educational settings including nursery, primary or secondary school (mainstream, special or residential) and/or college	Studies carried out in other settings e.g., community services or youth justice services	To enable the examination of the voice of CYP with SEN in educational settings
5. Design	Empirical study providing a detailed description of the methodologies used by EPs or school psychologists to elicit the voice of CYP with SEN	Review papers or reports	An empirical study enables the analysis of primary data based on direct observation or experiences in the 'field'
6. Date	Articles published between 1999-2023	Articles published before 1999	The start date was the founding year of the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) and so, would allow for the identification of any relevant papers in an

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion	Rationale
			Irish setting. The end date was selected to ensure the inclusion of contemporary research in this area

Figure 2.3

PRISMA Flow Diagram for New Systematic Reviews (Page et al., 2021, p.5)

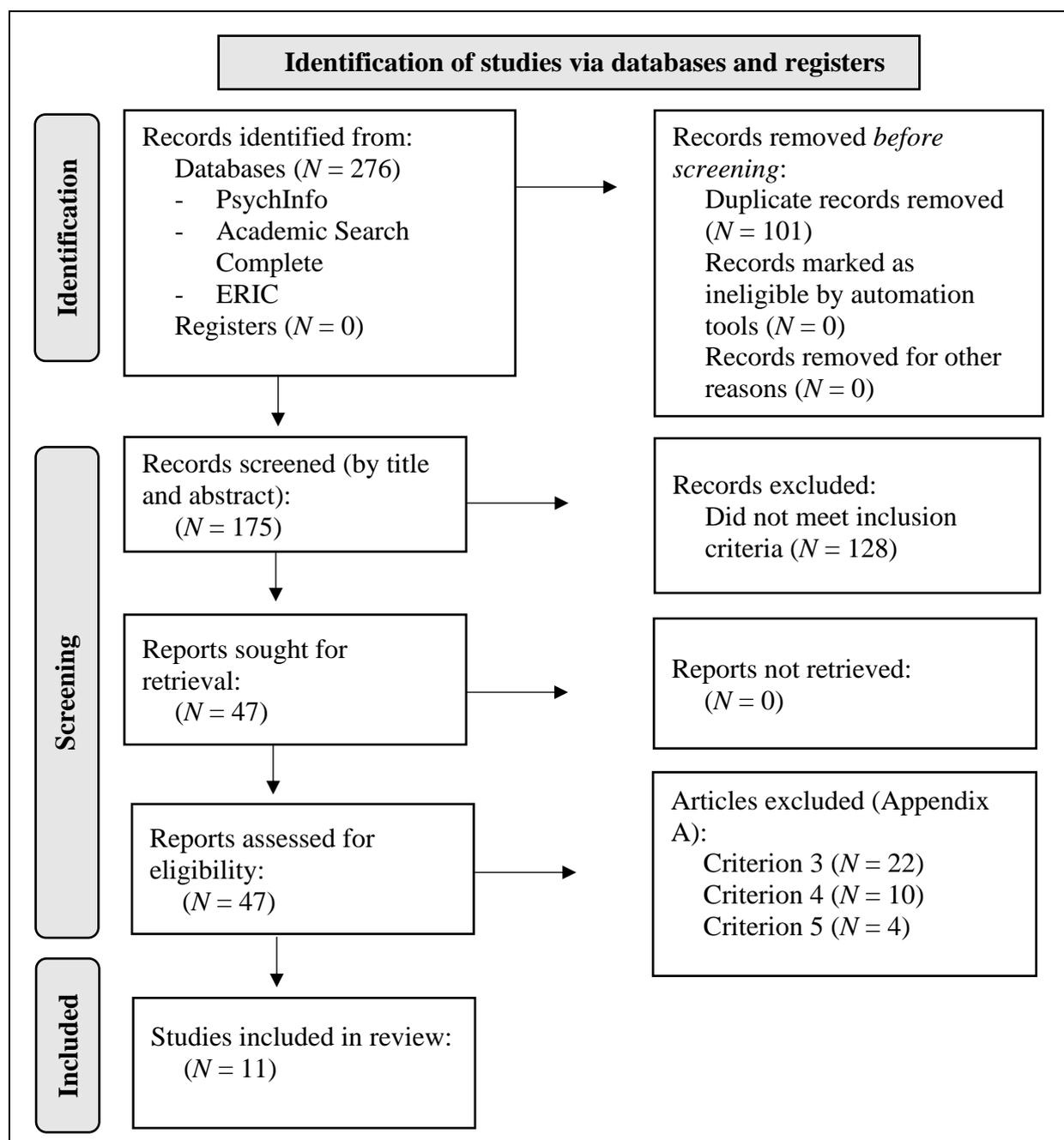


Table 2.2*Articles Selected for Review*

Full References of Articles selected for the Review
1. Barrow, W., & Hannah, E. F. (2012). Using computer-assisted interviewing to consult with children with autism spectrum disorders: An exploratory study. <i>School Psychology International</i> , 33(4), 450–464. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034311429167
2. Bartlett, R. (2017). The experience of deaf students in secondary mainstream classrooms. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 34(4), 60–69. https://doi.org/10.21954/ou.ro.000114fb
3. Craig, L. J. (2009). Post-school transitions: Exploring practice in one local authority. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 26(1), 41–51. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2009.26.1.41
4. Harding, E., & Atkinson, C. (2009). How EPs record the voice of the child. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 25(2), 125–137. https://doi.org/10.0.4.56/02667360902905171
5. Hill, V., Croydon, A., Greathead, S., Kenny, L., Yates, R., & Pellicano, E. (2016). Research methods for children with multiple needs: Developing techniques to facilitate all children and young people to have “a voice”. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 33(3), 26–43. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2016.33.3.26
6. Lightfoot, L., & Bond, C. (2013). An exploration of primary to secondary school transition planning for children with Down’s syndrome. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 29(2), 163–179. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2013.800024
7. Midgen, T., Theodoratou, T., Newbury, K., & Leonard, M. (2019). “School for Everyone”: An exploration of children and young people’s perceptions of belonging. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 36(2), 9–22. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2019.36.2.9
8. Neal, S., & Frederickson, N. (2016). ASD transition to mainstream secondary: A positive experience? <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 32(4), 355–373. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2016.1193478
9. Smillie, I., & Newton, M. (2020). Educational psychologists’ practice: Obtaining and representing young people’s views. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 36(3), 328–344. https://doi.org/10.0.4.56/02667363.2020.1787955
10. Wagner, K., & Bunn, H. (2020). Academic progress from the perception of children with SEND: An IPA study. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 36(1), 52–68. https://doi.org/10.0.4.56/02667363.2019.1674250
11. Zilli, C., Parsons, S., & Kovshoff, H. (2020). Keys to engagement: A case study exploring the participation of autistic pupils in educational decision-making at school. <i>British Journal of Educational Psychology</i> , 90(3), 770–789. https://doi.org/10.0.4.87/bjep.12331

2.8.2 *Critical Appraisal*

Gough's (2007) WoE framework was used to critically appraise the 11 studies in this review (Table 2.2), based on their relevance and quality. The framework consists of judgements based on four areas; the methodological quality of each study (WoE A); the appropriateness of the methodology in relation to the review question (WoE B); the relevance of the study in relation to the review question (WoE C); and finally, the degree to which each study provides relevant and quality research evidence, to answer the review question (WoE D). The resulting scores for WoE A, B and C are calculated to provide a mean score, which informs the overall WoE (WoE D; see the note in Table 2.3 for ratings and description).

To make judgements based on WoE A, the Brantlinger et al. (2005) coding criteria (Appendices C-E) was applied to eight studies that were qualitative in nature. This coding protocol is apt as it assesses the methodological quality of qualitative studies, through questions related to credibility measures and quality indicators. The resulting credibility measures and quality indicator scores were taken together and calculated to provide a mean score, which informed the overall WoE A scores (Appendix E) for all qualitative studies in the review. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT; Hong et al., 2018) was also utilised for WoE A (Appendix F) to critically appraise the remaining two studies, as these were mixed method in nature. This tool is appropriate as it allows for the methodological quality of individual components of mixed method design (MMD) studies to be appraised. As such, ratings were determined by the researcher based on the number of quality indicators evident in the individual qualitative, quantitative, as well as mixed methods elements of these studies.

To inform WoE B (Appendix G), all studies were appraised based on the appropriateness of the methodology in relation to the review question. As Gough (2007) reports, WoE B is a review-specific judgement concerning the appropriateness of the research study design in answering the review question. Research has advised against the use of rigid and mechanical models to evaluate qualitative research, while a flexible use of checklists established within a broader understanding of qualitative research design and analysis are recommended (Barbour, 2001; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002). Comparative to the present review, the quality indicators utilised by the researcher for WoE B were standardised and valid. Aligning with Gough (2007), a wider approach was espoused and both qualitative and mixed method study designs were evaluated. Qualitative studies were critically appraised using a reformed version of the criteria proposed by Walsh and Downe (2006) and Letts et al. (2007) (see Appendix G). This reformed framework was utilised reflexively, flexibly, and

imaginatively by the author to identify the strengths and limitations of the qualitative studies. What is more, this framework is amply compact to be of help to other researchers when appraising the quality of qualitative research (Walsh & Downe, 2006; Letts et al., 2007). Mixed method studies were evaluated using a reformed version of the quality framework put forward by Pluye et al. (2009) and O’Cathain et al. (2008) (Appendix H). After employing this quality framework, quality ratings of ‘high’, ‘medium’, ‘low’ and ‘zero’ were given to each mixed method study by the researcher. It has been contended by Midgen et al. (2019) that using mixed methods in educational psychology is a helpful way of ensuring that a more ample understanding of a complex topic is captured.

Judgements based on WoE C were applied to the studies based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 2.1). These judgements which allowed for an evaluation of each study, centred around their relevance to the review question. As such, ratings were prescribed based on the appropriate details postulated regarding the participants, methodologies, settings, and findings (see Appendix I). The ratings were then summated and averaged to provide the final WoE C scores.

Finally, WoE A, B and C scores were taken together and calculated to provide a mean score, which informed the overall WoE (WoE D). WoE D, details the degree to which each study provides relevant and quality research evidence, in answering the review question (Gough 2007) (see Table 2.3). The ensuing sections outline how Gough’s (2007) WoE framework was applied to critically appraise the included studies, specifically based on the following elements: participants, research design, methodology, analysis, and findings. In sum, the findings from Table 2.3 indicate that one study (Smillie & Newton, 2020) was rated with a ‘high’ overall WoE descriptor. The remaining ten studies received an overall ‘medium’ WoE rating. The next sections elaborate further on the critical appraisal with respect to participants, research design and methodology, analysis, and findings.

Table 2.3*Overall WoE for all Studies in the Review (Gough, 2007)*

Study	WoE A (Methodological Quality)	WoE B (Methodology Appropriateness)	WoE C (Study Relevance)	WoE D (Overall WoE)	Overall WoE Descriptor
1. Barrow and Hannah (2012)	2.23	2	2	2.08	Medium
2. Bartlett (2017)	1.87	1	2	1.62	Medium
3. Craig (2009)	1.73	2	1.5	1.74	Medium
4. Harding and Atkinson (2009)	2.09	2	2.5	2.20	Medium
5. Hill et al. (2016)	1.61	2	1.75	1.79	Medium
6. Lightfoot and Bond (2013)	1.87	2	1.5	1.79	Medium
7. Midgen et al. (2019)	3	2	1.5	2.17	Medium
8. Neal and Frederickson (2016)	2.28	2	2	2.09	Medium
9. Smillie and Newton (2020)	3	3	3	3	High
10. Wagner and Bunn (2020)	2	2	2	2	Medium
11. Zilli et al. (2019)	2.55	2	2	2.18	Medium

Note. > 2.4 = high quality, 1.5 – 2.4 = medium quality and < 1.4 = low quality.

2.8.2.1 Participants. This review includes 11 studies that were carried out from 2009 to 2020. All studies were carried out in Britain, with the majority being carried out in England ($n = 9$), while one was carried out in Scotland (Craig, 2009) and one in Wales (Smillie & Newton, 2020). All studies adhered to the inclusion criteria (Table 2.1) regarding participants, which stipulated that the study must report EPs' views on recording the voice of CYP with SEN (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020) or report on the voice of CYP with SEN as captured by EPs (Barrow & Hannah, 2012; Bartlett, 2017; Craig, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Lightfoot & Bond, 2013; Midgen et al., 2019; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Wagner & Bunn, 2020; Zilli et al., 2019). In total, the studies comprised of data from 354 participants and included EPs ($N = 79$), psychological reports ($N = 30$), CYP with SEN ($N = 207$), school and educational facility staff ($N = 36$) and mothers ($N = 2$). The sample sizes ranged from $N = 6$ (Lightfoot & Bond, 2013; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Wagner & Bunn, 2020) to $N = 83$ (Hill et al., 2016; Midgen et al., 2019).

To ensure the relevance of the study in relation to the review question (WoE C), the studies were rated differently based on the included participants and an analysis of participant demographics (see Appendix B for an overview of participant information). EPs and CYP with SEN are both considered to be appropriate participants according to the inclusion criteria for this review. However, for WoE C, higher weightings were given to studies with EP participants (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020), as EP practice is central to the review question (see Appendix I). The sample of EPs included in this review work across 17 local authority educational psychology services in England and Wales and support CYP with SEN in mainstream and special secondary schools (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020).

Next, consideration was given to the nine studies that included CYP with SEN as the participants (Barrow & Hannah, 2012; Bartlett, 2017; Craig, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Lightfoot & Bond, 2013; Midgen et al., 2019; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Wagner & Bunn, 2020; Zilli et al., 2019). The SEN status of the CYP was identified in seven studies, and therefore they received a medium WoE C rating within the ‘participant’ domain (Appendix I). However, both Craig’s (2009) and Zilli et al.’s (2019) studies did not report the SEN types of the young people in the sample and so, this negatively impeded the WoE C score attained in the ‘participant’ criterion for both studies.

2.8.2.2 Research Design and Methodology. Qualitative ($n = 9$) and MMDs ($n = 2$) were critically appraised by the researcher for the present review. Higher ratings were prescribed across WoE A and B for adequate detail provided concerning the methodologies adopted. Three studies received a ‘high’ WoE A rating for methodological quality, while eight attained ‘medium’ awards. Furthermore, one study received a ‘high’ WoE B rating for methodological appropriateness, with nine receiving a ‘medium’ rating and one receiving a ‘low’ rating.

2.8.2.2.1 Qualitative Design. Across WoE A, higher weightings were prescribed to the qualitative studies that comprised sufficient credibility measures and quality indicators to denote the methodological quality of the study. One qualitative study was awarded a ‘high’ WoE A rating (Zilli et al., 2019), whilst the remaining eight qualitative studies were prescribed with medium WoE A ratings. In terms of rigour, the highest WoE A scores within the credibility measures criterion were prescribed to the qualitative studies that evidenced multiple methods of triangulation (see Appendices C and D). For instance, an array of data triangulation, investigator triangulation, methodological triangulation, and theory

triangulation were documented within Barrow and Hannah (2012), Harding and Atkinson (2009), Neal and Frederickson (2016), Wagner and Bunn (2020) and Zilli et al.'s (2019) studies.

Most qualitative studies ($n = 7$) provided evidence of data triangulation. Data triangulation is an important element of research as a manifold of data sources can enhance the reliability of the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Two qualitative studies, however, did not evidence data triangulation (Bartlett, 2017; Wagner & Bunn, 2020) and so, this implicated the overall WoE A scores attained for both. Only one qualitative study provided evidence of member checks. Hill et al. (2016) did so by confirming the emerging themes with members of the young researchers' group, at all levels of the study. Member checking is considered to enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings obtained from qualitative research and indicates reliability between the researcher and participants (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

In terms of WoE B (Appendix G), most qualitative studies ($n = 6$) provided a rationale for the specific qualitative method used. Craig (2009) and Wagner and Bunn (2020) implemented phenomenological research approaches, while Lightfoot and Bond (2013) and Zilli et al. (2019) adopted case study approaches. Additionally, Hill et al. (2016) utilised a participatory research approach, while Harding and Atkinson (2009) employed a grounded theory approach. Bartlett (2017) also reported the use of a grounded theory approach however a rationale was not provided. This implicated the overall WoE B score that was calculated for Bartlett's (2017) study, given that rationale is proposed as an essential criterion for appraising qualitative research studies (Letts et al., 2007; Walsh & Downe, 2006).

A theoretical perspective was stipulated in four of the qualitative studies. Craig (2009) adopted a social constructionist perspective, while Lightfoot and Bond (2013) utilised appreciative inquiry, and Neal and Frederickson (2016) employed a strengths-based approach. Wagner and Bunn (2020) reported the use of multiple theoretical perspectives, and these included the theory of psychosocial development; the circumstance and compromise model; self-determination theory; theory of cooperative learning; and growth mindset theory. The use of theoretical perspectives in these four studies granted the researchers with frameworks that they could employ to guide their analyses, and positively contributed to their overall scores attained for WoE B (see Appendix G). According to Reeves et al. (2008), good theory-based research is instant, insightful, and relevant for practice.

2.8.2.2.2 Mixed Methods Design (MMD). The two mixed methods studies in this review comprised focus groups, individual or group reflection sessions, interviews,

questionnaires, and standardised scales. For WoE A, both MMD's (Midgen et al., 2019; Smillie & Newton, 2020) were prescribed 'high' ratings concerning methodological quality (see Appendix F). In terms of methodological appropriateness, one study attained a 'high' rating (Smillie & Newton, 2020) for WoE B, while Midgen et al.'s (2019) study received a 'medium' rating (see Appendix H). Both studies provided evidence of a rationale for using a MMD and this encompassed 'exploration' and the use of different RQs (Doyle et al., 2016). Exploration involves a preliminary phase to create an instrument or intervention, distinguish variables or to analyse or create a hypothesis that requires testing. A rationale of different RQs includes the outlining of both quantitative and qualitative questions at the outset of the study (Doyle et al., 2016). Mixed method research is frequently inadequately justified (Bryman, 2008), therefore providing rationales contributed to the overall 'medium-high' ratings attained for these studies on WoE A and B.

Kratochwill and Stoiber (2000) advocate for the "interweaving of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies so that the most accurate and authentic picture of the knowledge bases and skills associated with change processes is available" (p.600). What is more, O'Cathain et al. (2008) argue that integration of data and findings is central to mixed methods research. Smillie and Newton's (2020) study achieved integration through "connecting" (Fetters et al., 2013, p. 2136) at the methods level. As such, the EP participants who took part in the interview emerged from the population of participants that completed the questionnaire. For both Smillie and Newton (2020) and Midgen et al.'s (2019) studies, integration took place at the results level using a 'contiguous approach'. That is to say that the results were presented within one report, but the quantitative and qualitative elements were outlined in different areas (Fetters et al., 2013). Given that integration can improve the quality and rigor of MMDs, the evidence of effective integration in both studies positively impacted the overall WoE A and B ratings attained for these studies (Fetters et al., 2013) (see Appendices F and G).

2.8.2.2.3 Methodology. As per WoE C (methodology criterion), the highest weightings were given to the two studies that used data collection methodologies to explore and report on EP's views (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). These two studies collected data from EPs through interviews, a review of psychological reports, focus groups and questionnaires. Data triangulation allows for an exploration of the range of perspectives of the same experience, while also safeguarding the validity of the findings (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Therefore, a strength of the findings from the present review is the

evidence of data triangulation from EPs in relation to how they record the voice of CYP with SEN within educational settings.

The remaining studies ($n = 9$) employed a variety of methodologies to elicit the voice of CYP with SEN, as captured by EPs in educational settings. The methodologies included a range of activities (diamond ranking activity, graffiti wall, school preference cards and photo-elicitation), focus groups, interviews, observations, reflection sessions, scales, SCERTS framework (Prizant et al., 2006) and a young researchers' group.

In terms of WoE C (Appendix I), Bartlett (2017) and Zilli et al. (2019), received medium scores in the methodology criterion for demonstrating the use of evidence-based methodologies for CYP with SEN. The APA (2008) outline that evidence-based practice in psychology incorporates the amalgamation of the best available research with clinical expertise, in respect of patient characteristics, culture and inclinations. Thus, for this review, methodologies were deemed evidence-based if the researchers drew on relevant and applicable research to the SEN status of the CYP included in the study sample. To illustrate, Bartlett (2017) reported the use of a voice of the child approach (Fayette & Bond, 2017; Grover, 2004; Fargas-Malet et al., 2010; Lundy, 2007; Prosser & Loxley, 2008) to support students with a hearing impairment to elicit their voice. Moreover, Zilli et al. (2019), detailed the evidence-base for using visual methods with CYP with ASD, particularly photo-based methods (Shepherd, 2015; Hill, 2014; Beresford et al., 2004), as well as the data collection procedures. Four additional studies received medium scores in the WoE C methodology criterion for detailing the adaptations made during the research process to enable CYP with specific types of SEN to take part (see Appendix I).

2.8.2.3 Analysis. In terms of data analysis, five of the studies incorporated a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Three of the qualitative studies included thematic analysis as the sole method of data analysis (Craig, 2009; Lightfoot & Bond, 2013; Neal & Frederickson, 2016). Midgen et al.'s (2019) MMD incorporated thematic analysis in addition to a quantitative analysis (collation of scores), while Smillie and Newton's (2020) study comprised thematic and descriptive analyses. One study employed a deductive analytic qualitative analysis (Barrow & Hannah, 2012). Two studies utilised participatory research methods to guide the analyses (Hill et al., 2016; Zilli et al., 2019), while Bartlett (2017) employed a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 2008), and Wagner and Bunn (2020) used interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009). Harding and

Atkinson (2009) used a content analysis (Robson, 2002), in combination with open, axial coding (see Appendix B).

In terms of WoE A, only three studies (Barrow & Hannah, 2012; Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Neal & Frederickson, 2016) provided evidence of researcher reflexivity, during data analysis (see Appendices C and D). Researcher reflexivity has been progressively documented as a vital element involved in the process of creating knowledge through qualitative research (Berger, 2015). Further, only one study (Zilli et al. 2019) provided some evidence of an audit trail by talking about making notes of the process (field notes). Creating an audit trail is deemed to be another method for preserving researcher reflexivity (Berger, 2015). So, the lack thereof in the remaining studies is an additional limitation that influenced the credibility, quality and thus, WoE A scores for these studies.

2.8.2.4 Findings. Both Harding and Atkinson's (2009) and Smillie and Newton's (2020) studies were prescribed with 'high' WoE C ratings regarding findings (Appendix I). The remaining studies, which received 'low' to 'medium' WoE C scores within the finding's criterion will also be referred to.

Firstly, Smillie and Newton (2020) aimed to gather information regarding EP's practice in attaining and representing the voice of CYP with SEN in mainstream secondary schools. Descriptive statistics detailed the frequency of different methodologies and theories used by EPs and included discussion-based methods, asking parents/guardians and solution-focused methods, to name but a few methodologies. The most often applied theoretical approaches included personal construct psychology (PCP), solution-focused techniques and person-centred planning, amongst a whole host of others. The findings also revealed the benefits (empowering CYP) and challenges (accessing a true representation of CYP's views) for practice. Secondly, Harding and Atkinson's (2009) study aimed to identify how EPs in one educational psychology service capture and signify children's views, including CYP with SEN in mainstream and special secondary schools. In relation to the review question, findings from the focus group identified five methodologies: discussion-based methods, task related procedures, therapeutic based approaches, indirect methods, and measures specific to children in special school. Findings from Smillie and Newton's (2020) study illustrated that most participants both paraphrase CYP's views and use their actual words. Only a minority of participants ($n = 12$) reported solely using the CYP's actual words when representing their voice. Findings from the report analysis in Harding and Atkinson's (2009) study indicated that the EP participants occasionally quoted the child's views verbatim and were inclined to

interpret or sum up their views. In addition, particular criteria were indicated by EP participants regarding how the C/YP's views were outlined within psychological reports. Regarding implications, the findings from Harding and Atkinson's (2009) study led to practice-based recommendations for EPs, such as writing child-friendly reports.

Barrow and Hannah (2012) and Midgen et al.'s (2019) studies received 'medium' WoE C ratings for the finding's domain. Such ratings were prescribed given that the findings reported on the voice of CYP with SEN and furthermore, illustrated the helpfulness of the qualitative methodologies (computer-based programmes, focus groups and individual tasks) used by EPs to elicit and listen to the C/YP's voice. To demonstrate, EPs used the rich qualitative findings obtained from the CYP to create and share the 'Top Ten Tips' for school belonging. The remaining seven studies were rated a 'low' WoE C score relative to findings as they merely reported on the voice of CYP with SEN. The findings from these studies reported on the voices of CYP with SEN in relation to their experience of school (Bartlett, 2017; Hill et al., 2016; Wagner & Bunn, 2020; Zilli et al., 2019) and school transitions (Craig, 2009; Lightfoot & Bond, 2013; Neal & Frederickson, 2016).

2.8.3 Summary

Ensuing a search of appropriate databases and through application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 11 studies were identified as the most appropriate for the present review question. Two studies used a MMD (Midgen et al., 2019; Smillie & Newton, 2020), with the remaining nine studies utilising a qualitative research design (Barrow & Hannah, 2012; Bartlett, 2017; Craig, 2009; Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Lightfoot & Bond, 2013; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Wagner & Bunn, 2020; Zilli et al., 2019). Two studies reported EPs' views on capturing the voice of CYP with SEN in educational settings (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020), while the remaining nine studies reported on the voice of CYP with SEN as captured by EP researchers (Barrow & Hannah, 2012; Bartlett, 2017; Craig, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Lightfoot & Bond, 2013; Midgen et al., 2019; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Wagner & Bunn, 2020; Zilli et al., 2019). From this, it was evident that the views of EPs are lacking in the research. Furthermore, that capturing the voice of CYP with SEN is a complex process with many benefits, in addition to challenges.

As is evident from Table 2.3, 10 of the studies received a 'Medium' WoE D, while one attained a 'High' overall WoE. Having critically appraised the 11 studies in this review, their overall WoE ratings will now be considered in answering the current review question. To demonstrate, almost all studies which received a 'Medium' overall WoE (Barrow &

Hannah, 2012; Bartlett, 2017; Craig, 2009; Hill et al., 2016; Lightfoot & Bond, 2013; Midgen et al., 2019; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Wagner & Bunn, 2020; Zilli et al., 2019) will be given equal attention in the next section, given the degree to which each study provided relevant and quality research evidence in answering the review question (Gough 2007). Smillie and Newton's (2020) study will receive an additional focus in the subsequent section due to the 'High' overall WoE D score that this study attained. Although Harding and Atkinson's (2009) study received a 'Medium' overall WoE score, this study will also receive an additional emphasis. This is because higher weightings for WoE C (Appendix I) were prescribed to this study with EP participants since EP practice is central to the review question. Key findings from the review will be integrated with relevant research, theory, and policy.

2.8.4 Findings for the Review Question: "How do EPs Capture the Voice of CYP With SEN in Educational Settings?"

Given that child and young person consultation is a central role of the EP, EPs are well placed to elicit their voice (BPS, 2022; PSI, 2022). Obtaining the views of EPs will therefore provide an insight into their professional practice and in addition, help to inform national and international policy relating to the voice of CYP with SEN in educational contexts. Overall, the findings from this review question distinguished four key themes relevant to how EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN in educational contexts: Eliciting their Voice; Representing their Voice; Policy; and Advocacy Role. These themes were identified through a three-step thematic synthesis process (Thomas & Harden, 2008) (see Appendix J for details of this process).

2.8.4.1 Eliciting their Voice. A range of methods, approaches, and theories to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN were reported by EP participants and EP researchers. Findings from EP participants included the use of the following methods and approaches to elicit the voice of CYP with SEN in mainstream and special secondary schools: discussion-based methods; task related procedures; therapeutic based approaches; indirect methods; and measures specific to children in special school (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). EP participants in both Harding and Atkinson (2009) and Smillie and Newton's (2020) studies cited discussion-based methods as the most frequently used approach with CYP with SEN in mainstream and special secondary schools. These findings were echoed within additional studies that focused on eliciting the voice of CYP with SEN, as captured by EP researchers. To illustrate, interviews were executed in six of the studies,

spanning primary school (mainstream), secondary school (mainstream and special) and college level contexts (Bartlett, 2017; Craig, 2009; Lightfoot & Bond, 2013; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Wagner & Bunn, 2020), while focus groups were utilised in Midgen et al.'s (2019) study within nursery, primary (mainstream), and secondary (special) school settings.

Findings further indicated the methods and approaches that EPs employed in their practice to elicit the voices of CYP with varying SEN types. For instance, a voice of the child approach for children with hearing impairments (Bartlett, 2017); computer, visual and photo-based methods with CYP with ASD (Barrow & Hannah, 2012; Zilli et al., 2019); a pre-meeting to build rapport, games, discussion, visuals, rating scales, modelling and an active element for children with Down's syndrome (Lightfoot & Bond, 2013); questions posed at a suitable level of language development for children with learning needs and social, emotional and mental health needs (Wagner & Bunn, 2020); and support to recognise and label emotions, use of visuals and bullet point lists of strategies for children with ASD (Neal & Frederickson, 2016).

In terms of theory, findings from the EP participants highlighted that EPs use a variety of psychological theories when eliciting the voice of CYP with SEN in mainstream and special secondary schools. These comprised PCP; solution focused brief therapy (SFBT); person-centred planning; social constructionism; positive psychology; cognitive behavioural therapy; constructionist model of informed reason action (COMOIRA); developmental psychology; humanistic theory; attribution theory; motivational interviewing; and attachment theory, to mention but some of the most frequently reported theories. Findings from Wagner and Bunn's (2020) study indicated that EPs used multiple theoretical perspectives to elicit and conceptualise the views of CYP with SEN. Such theories included psychosocial development; the circumstance and compromise model; self-determination theory; theory of cooperative learning; and growth mindset theory. The findings from Craig's (2009) study illustrated the use of social constructionism theory when eliciting the voice of young people with support needs, while Lightfoot and Bond's (2013) study highlighted the use of an appreciative inquiry perspective for eliciting the views of children with Down's syndrome. In addition, findings from Neal and Frederickson's (2016) study outlined the use of strengths-based theory when eliciting and generalising the voice of children with ASD.

Such findings are wholly important for EPs working with CYP with SEN in Ireland. To elucidate, EPs employed in Irish educational and healthcare contexts possess a central role in eliciting the voices of school aged CYP with SEN, through consultation (HSE, 2021; PSI,

2022). Thus, familiarity with the range of range of methods, approaches, and theories outlined above may be helpful for enhancing EP practice in consultation. Further, EPs are required to be skilled in adapting direct psychological services and intervention based on the SEN profile of the C/YP (HSE, 2022a; PSI, 2022). Therefore, awareness of the specific methods and approaches that may be effective for eliciting the voices of CYP with specific types of SEN may prove informative for EP practice.

2.8.4.2 Representing their Voice. Findings highlighted that the representation of the C/YP's voice features an integral element within the process of capturing their voice (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). EP participants reported the representation of the C/YP's voice in written form (i.e., within the 'child's view' section of psychological reports), verbally, via a website, or using the young person or an advocate. Child-friendly reports were also recommended as mechanisms to represent the voices of CYP with SEN (Harding & Atkinson, 2009).

Findings explicated that EP practice varies when it comes to the representation of the C/YP's voice in psychological reports. To illustrate, whilst some EP participants delineated the use of the C/YP's words verbatim to represent their voice, this did not seem to be common practice (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Other modes of representation that EPs outlined comprised paraphrasing or interpreting the C/YP's views (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Nevertheless, the findings demonstrated that challenges may be encountered when interpreting the views of CYP with SEN. For instance, it may be difficult to interpret their real opinion (Lightfoot & Bond, 2013). Specific criteria were indicated by EP participants regarding how the C/YP's views were outlined within psychological reports and these included: utilising professional judgement; cognisance of audience; advocacy responsibilities; and sensitivity. Additional factors for consideration included the implicated C/YP, the intended audience, the quality of the report needed, and the impact on the C/YP's self-esteem (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). Harding and Atkinson (2009) highlighted a dilemma with regards to the representation of the C/YP's voice; it was questioned whether their views should be acted on, presented to educational staff, or shared with the young person?

EPs working in national educational and health care services ought to be skilled in report-writing, which involves the communication of assessment outcomes to a range of stakeholders, including CYP with SEN, where appropriate (PSI, 2022). Thus, in response to the dilemma posed by Harding and Atkinson (2009) above, there is scope for EPs to represent

the C/YP's voice by sharing it in child friendly reports, and within psychological reports. Of worth to note, EP participants included in this review did not reference any participation models when representing the voices of CYP with SEN. Several participation models do however exist and may facilitate EP practice in representing the voices of CYP with SEN (DCEDIY, 2021a; Fox, 2016; Shier, 2001). For instance, whilst Harding and Atkinson (2009) questioned whether the C/YP's voice should be acted on, both the models by Fox (2016) and the DCEDIY (2021a) state the importance of doing so, aptly. Nonetheless, EPs must practice ethically and maintain CYP's confidentiality, unless pre-agreed or exceptions arise (O'Donnell & Gersch, 2015).

2.8.4.3 Policy. Taken in congruence, findings indicated that EPs are supported by policy which stipulates the importance of placing the C/YP's voice at the centre of their work and including them in decision-making processes (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Findings moreover highlighted the need for EPs to adhere to local authority policies as well as national and international policies (Hill et al., 2016; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Such findings are consistent with the national policy and practice context in Ireland; EPs working in national educational and healthcare settings ought to be skilled in acknowledging the voice of CYP with SEN as central stakeholders in decision-making relative to decisions that impact upon their lives (PSI, 2022). Moreover, in line with the core professional competencies of the EP, it is a requirement that EPs perform within the realms of the national and international policy frameworks for educational psychology practice (BPS, 2022).

The findings furthermore denoted that given EPs' role in liaising with schools, colleges, and educational management, EPs are well placed to offer their help when policies are being developed and reviewed (Craig, 2009). For instance, EPs could assist and contemplate with schools regarding how they can endorse the key ideas that children with SEN have about their sense of belonging in educational policies (Midgen et al., 2019). These findings are significant for EPs working in national educational and healthcare contexts given that the PSI (2022) have emphasised the major role of the EP in relation to policy and advice and development.

2.8.4.4 Advocacy Role. Findings from the studies highlighted that EPs are supported to capture the voice of CYP with SEN through their role as advocate (Craig, 2009; Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Through this advocacy role, EP participants in Harding and Atkinson's (2009) study were eager to represent information in their reports that

would help to improve outcomes for the child. Almost all young people with support needs in Craig's (2009) study elucidated that adult advocacy during a time of transition is important to them, while the quality of the adult relationship was emphasised in the findings section of both Craig (2009) and Hill et al.'s (2016) studies. Findings from Zilli et al.'s (2019) study included a summary of the pivotal practices identified for EPs in supporting participation, by creating a shared relationship of acceptance and acknowledgement. One of which was that young people with ASD valued perceiving professionals as human beings who have their own likes and personalities, to create rapport. Findings from Bartlett's (2017) study elaborated on the prospectively powerful role of the EP by outlining that they can better aid CYP by describing and supporting the changes that students "so eloquently suggest when given the opportunity" (p.68). Findings from Midgen et al.'s (2019) study expanded on the EP's role and explained that EPs ought to incite schools to ask all CYP with SEN for their views, to consider their views earnestly and aid schools, if necessary, on how to execute recommendations regarding the things that children want. These findings relative to the advocacy role are significant for EPs in national services given that the DE (2021b) have delineated that the onus is on professionals to place the C/YP's voice at the heart of their work.

2.8.5 Critique of the Approach to Synthesis

The findings from the review were identified through using thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008) and taken together, provide an insight into how EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN in educational settings. Nonetheless, several strengths and limitations are associated with using this approach and these should be considered when reviewing the findings above. Firstly, in terms of strengths, the thematic synthesis was helpful in providing a transparent approach using NVIVO (QSR International, 2022) and the application of a detailed three-step process (Thomas & Harden, 2008). In addition, this approach is regarded within the literature as being the most straightforward type of synthesis (Flemming & Noyes, 2021). Limitations comprise the threat that thematic synthesis will be used "over-simplistically" (Flemming & Noyes, 2021, p.6). To circumvent this, the researcher ensured to follow the three-step process systematically and became familiar with comprehensive applications of thematic synthesis in the field (Nicholson et al., 2016; Pinto et al., 2021; Thomas & Harden, 2008).

2.9 Conclusions

The aim of the present review was to collate empirical data to explore how EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN within educational settings. 11 studies were identified that adhered to the inclusion criteria. These studies were critically appraised using Gough's (2007) framework. There is evidence to suggest from this review that EPs have a significant role in capturing the voice of CYP with SEN in educational settings. The present review of the literature, however indicated that there is a paucity of research focusing explicitly on the views of EPs, particularly in educational contexts outside of mainstream and special secondary schools. In response to the review question, 'Eliciting their Voice', 'Representing their Voice', 'Policy' and 'Advocacy Role' were identified as key themes in the 11 studies reviewed. Implications for research, policy, and practice are outlined as well as limitations of the review.

2.9.1 Implications for Research

This review has systematically appraised evidence on how EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN in educational contexts. Collectively, the studies reviewed focused on the process of capturing the voices of CYP with SEN at nursery; primary school (mainstream); secondary school (mainstream and special); residential special school; and college level in England, Scotland and Wales. Study samples comprised EPs in addition to CYP with SEN. Only two studies were identified that included an EP sample (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). This is surprising, given EPs' skills in acknowledging the voices of CYP with SEN (PSI, 2022). As such, further exploration of their perspectives is valuable. Given that no Irish study was identified, it is recommended that future research explore how an Irish-based sample of EPs capture the voices of CYP with SEN in educational settings. Nationally, EPs may be employed across a range of educational and healthcare settings. For example, within children's disability network teams, educational services, or primary care services, to mention but some contexts (HSE, 2021; PSI, 2022).

Harding and Atkinson's (2009) and Smillie and Newton's (2020) study comprised EPs working in educational services, namely local authorities. However, it is pertinent to discuss that in an Irish context, EPs supporting CYP with SEN in educational settings may be employed by disability, educational or primary care services (HSE, 2021; PSI, 2022). For this reason, it is recommended that future Irish-based research include an EP sample obtained from all three services to explore if EP practice is consistent across services. Thus, the current study aims to extend the research base concerning how EPs employed within Irish disability,

educational and primary care services capture the voices of CYP with SEN in educational contexts. This, therefore, will be a unique piece of research in Ireland.

2.9.1.1 Methodological Limitations of the Included Studies. Several methodological limitations were identified from a critical appraisal of the studies included in this review. Firstly, only one study reported on data saturation (Neal & Frederickson, 2016), with sampling continuing until saturation was reached within this data set. Saturation is frequently referred to as a criterion for sample size in qualitative studies (Morse, 1995). The lack of evidence of data saturation in the remaining 10 studies can be thought of as a limitation of the findings from the present review, as failure to attain data saturation can affect research quality and impede content validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Secondly, eight of the included studies did not report on researcher reflexivity. Researcher reflexivity has been progressively documented as a vital element involved in the process of creating knowledge through qualitative research (Berger, 2015). Therefore, the lack of researcher reflexivity in most of the included studies, may be thought of as an additional limitation impacting the findings from this review. Finally, nine of the studies did not provide any evidence of an audit trail. Only the researchers in Barrow and Hanna (2012) and Zilli et al.'s (2019) studies provided some evidence of an audit trail by talking about making notes of the process (field notes). Creating an audit trail is deemed to be another method for preserving researcher reflexivity (Berger, 2015). So, the inadequate evidence of an audit trail in nine of the studies is a further limitation which impacts the findings from this review. Such limitations are pertinent for the researcher to consider and reflect on for future research in this area.

2.9.2 *Implications for Policy and Practice*

Evidence from the review findings indicate that EPs capture the voices of CYP with SEN through the process of eliciting and representing their voices. EPs are supported to do so through their role as advocate, in addition to being supported by national and international policy. In terms of policy, EPs need to adhere to local and international policy, and findings suggest that this helps them to elicit the voice of the C/YP with SEN in an “automatic” (Smillie & Newton, 2020, p. 338) manner. What is more, it is evident that there should be input and assistance from EPs to contribute to the review and development of educational policy, and further to advocate for the key ideas that children with SEN may have regarding educational policies (Craig, 2009; Midgen et al., 2019). While no Irish study was identified, national policy stipulates the onus on professionals to place the C/YP's voice at the heart of their work regarding educational planning and provision (DE, 2021a). Moreover, EPs in

Ireland have a defining role in policy advice and development within educational and healthcare settings (PSI, 2022). Thus, there is a need to explore how EPs in Ireland are supported by policy to capture the voice of the C/YP with SEN.

In terms of future practice implications, the present review lends support to the use of a range of methods, approaches, and theories to elicit the voice of CYP with SEN within the context of mainstream and special secondary schools. A primal role of the EP is to place the C/YP's voice at the centre of their practice and to utilise evidence-based approaches when doing so (BPS, 2022; PSI, 2022). Indeed, EPs may consider applying the range of the methods, approaches and theories discussed by Smillie and Newton (2020) and Harding and Atkinson (2009) when eliciting the voices of CYP with SEN in mainstream and special secondary schools. This conclusion has practice implications for the area of educational and child psychology, particularly EPs working with CYP with SEN in secondary schools. Whilst it will be worthwhile to explore if these findings are generalisable to EP practice in Irish secondary schools, there is a clear need for future research to be conducted which explores the methods, approaches and theories used by EPs with CYP with SEN in both a primary and secondary school context. Furthermore, the findings illuminate that the use of strengths-based theory within the realm of educational and child psychology is continuing to evolve and may prove helpful for EPs working with CYP with SEN (Bozic, 2013; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Wilding & Griffey, 2015). In addition, specific methods, approaches, and theories for CYP with varying SEN types have been identified. For instance, for those with ASD; Down syndrome; learning needs; and social, emotional and mental health needs. These findings have the potential to enhance the professional practice of the EP.

Findings elucidate that in written form, EPs represent the C/YP's voice within psychological reports. Whilst some EPs represent the C/YP's views verbatim, findings reveal that this is not common practice. Paraphrasing and interpreting emerged as other modes of representation (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Further, the intricacies regarding how EPs represent the C/YP's voice verbally, via a website, or using the young person or an advocate were not detailed (Smillie & Newton, 2020). Thus, further research is warranted to explore such intricacies. Whilst the findings emphasised that EPs referenced some criteria for representing their voice in psychological reports (Harding & Atkinson, 2009), there was no reference to any formalised criteria such as the Pyramid of Representation (Fox, 2016), the Pathway to Participation (Shier, 2001) or the National Participation Strategy (DCEDIY, 2021a). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a need

for further exploration into how EPs represent the voices of these CYP, with consideration being given to any formalised criteria.

2.9.3 *Limitations of the Review*

Several limitations of the present systematic review have been identified and are outlined below in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4

Limitations of the Systematic Review

External Validity and Generalisability to an Irish Context
1. This systematic review is limited by the narrow focus of studies based in one nation. All 11 included studies were based in the United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Wales), whilst no study was identified that focused on an Irish context. As such, the external validity of the review is questionable; particularly, whether the review findings are generalisable to EPs working within an Irish context (Järholm & Bohlin, 2014). Similarities across contexts exist given that consultation is a central element of service delivery for EPs working in both Irish and United Kingdom-based educational psychology services (GoI, 2023; Nolan & Moreland, 2014). Furthermore, to practice as an EP in Ireland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, trainees are required to complete three years of post-graduate training in the form of a professional doctorate (Association of Educational Psychologists, 2022; PSI, 2022).
Paucity of EP Participants
2. Only two research studies were identified that comprised EP participants (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Given that the review question centralises around EP practice, their views are of immense value. Considerations of this limitation have been discussed with reference to the implications of this review for research.
Absence of Empirical Coding Criteria/Framework for Evaluating WoE C
3. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that a limitation of the researcher’s approach to the systematic review is the absence of an empirically grounded coding criteria or framework for the evaluation of WoE C. Whilst judgements based on WoE A and B were determined using such coding criteria and frameworks, evaluations for WoE C were applied to each study based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 2.1).

2.9.4 *Research Questions (RQs)*

Following a review of the literature, the RQs to emerge concerning the acknowledged gaps in the literature are:

1. How do EPs in Irish disability, educational and primary care services elicit the voices of school aged CYP with SEN?

2. How do EPs in Irish disability, educational and primary care services represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN in their professional practice?

A report on the research carried out by the researcher is now introduced and outlined in the Empirical Paper (Part 3).

3 Empirical Paper

3.1 Introduction

This paper outlines the research conducted for the present study. A brief introduction to the research area is provided. Subsequently, information on the method is detailed in relation to the research design and paradigm, participants, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. Quantitative and qualitative results are presented. The paper concludes with a discussion of the integrated quantitative and qualitative findings. Implications for practice, policy, and research are also considered.

3.1.1 Aims of Study

The study aims to explore how EPs in Irish disability, educational and primary care services elicit and represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. Nationally, the number of CYP with SEN in mainstream primary and secondary schools, as well as special schools has dramatically increased in the last number of years. To illustrate, there has been an 83% increase in the number of CYP attending special classes in secondary schools during the period from 2016 to 2019 (DE, 2021b). Whilst Warshak (2004) has postulated that eliciting the voice of CYP with SEN is a complex process, it has been contended that all CYP can be supported to share their voice in a meaningful manner (NCSE, 2011). However, CYP with SEN tend to linger on the margins of the decision-making process regarding their learning and education, despite the positive impact upon their lives that is expected from eliciting and listening to their voice (Rose & Shevlin, 2004).

In an Irish context, EPs working in disability, educational and primary care services have a pivotal role in working with school aged CYP with SEN across an array of educational and healthcare settings, comprising pre-school settings, primary schools, secondary schools, and special schools, amongst others (HSE, 2021; PSI, 2022). In their role, EPs are skilled in acknowledging the voice of these CYP as central stakeholders in decision-making in relation to decisions that impact on their lives (PSI, 2022).

3.1.2 Policy Context

CYP have a fundamental human right to voice their opinion in relation to matters that impact upon their lives and to have their voice listened to, in keeping with their age and maturity. This right has been recognised in national and international policy since the UN CRC put forth article 12, which illustrates the right of all CYP to be heard, including those experiencing difficulties in expressing their views (GoI, 2000; UN General Assembly, 1989).

EPs, in their professional practice, are expected to apply, comprehend, and demonstrate the ability to perform within the legal, national, and local frameworks for educational psychology practice (BPS, 2022). This role extends to encompass policy advice and development within educational and healthcare settings (PSI, 2022).

Nationally, including and listening to the voices of CYP with SEN has been highlighted as an integral element of recent educational and healthcare policy. Within educational policy, obtaining the C/YP's voice is recognised as an indicator of success in the national Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (GoI, 2019). Moreover, recent national educational policy has stipulated the onus on professionals to place the C/YP's voice at the heart of their work regarding planning and educational provision (DE, 2021a). In addition, the DE (2021a) policy vision is to enhance national services for CYP with SEN by integrating their voice into policy. This is timely, given that within the literature, it has been asserted that vulnerable CYP (including those with SEN) have insufficient power to sway national policies (Aubrey & Dahl, 2006). It can be thought that EPs are well placed to support the integration of their voice, given their role in policy advice and development. In a healthcare context, the HSE (2022a) in their National Consent Policy outlined the right of all children to be heard, including those with disabilities. The HSE (2022a) further recommended for professionals to use age-relevant and adapted additional support for CYP with disabilities, when indicated. Despite the legislative context outlined, it has been maintained that educational settings have been acclimatising to listening to the voices of CYP with SEN since 1996 (Davie). What is more, Rose and Shevlin (2021) have denoted that an awareness of the C/YP's voice regarding their education is a somewhat topical phenomenon, given the challenges in recognising the validity of their voice. Even more, there is evidence to suggest that CYP are often not included in the decision-making process, that their views are seldom sought, and on the instances when they are sought, that the efforts to put forth their voice may be tokenistic in nature (Armstrong et al., 1993; Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Lewis et al., 2006; Noble, 2003; Rose & Shevlin, 2004; Smillie & Newton, 2020).

3.1.3 Theoretical Perspective

To date, the intersection between social justice and children's rights has been an area of focus in the realm of educational psychology research (Shriberg & Desai, 2014; Vaghri et al., 2020). Social justice theory has been defined as the full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is reciprocally moulded to meet their needs (Bell, 1997). In their

systematic review of the literature, Schulze et al. (2017) concluded that advocacy, non-discriminatory practice, and fairness were fundamental to the definition of social justice. Further, social justice has been conceptualised as a mutual process and goal (Adams & Bell, 2007). The process of reaching the goal of social justice ought to be independent and participatory, inclusive, and affirming of individual influence and ability for working collaboratively to effect change (Adams & Bell, 2007). According to Pillay (2020, p.41), this definition by Bell (1997) extends to include an image of society whereby the sharing of resources is “equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure”. A critique of social justice theory, however, is that several authors have indicated that conceptualising ‘social justice’ is a challenging procedure as the term may have diverse meanings for different individuals amidst different circumstances (Ayers et al., 2009; Bell, 2013; Brennan & Naidoo, 2008; Rambiritch, 2018; Sleeter, 2014). Nonetheless, it has been regarded in the literature that considerable conversation has stemmed from Bell’s (1997) extensively applied definition of social justice (Pillay, 2020). Even more, Bell’s (1997) definition of social justice was deemed to be appropriate for guiding the current study as it has been utilised in some educational psychology research and reviews to date (Pillay, 2020; Schulze et al., 2017).

According to Power (2008), EPs are well positioned to endorse social justice through individual and school systems work and by working in a collaborative manner with families, school personnel and professionals to facilitate change for CYP (Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000; Shriberg & Clinton, 2016). Within an Irish context, qualified EPs must demonstrate commitment to promoting social justice in their professional practice for all CYP, families and schools (PSI, 2022). As a result, the PSI (2022) has postulated that during doctoral training, trainee EPs should develop their expertise, skills, and reflective ability to engage in equitable practice for diverse populations, including CYP with SEN.

3.1.4 Practice Context

EPs nationally may work within a range of educational and healthcare settings comprising disability, educational or primary care services to name but some contexts. EP practice within each service is underpinned by a different model of service (HSE, 2021; PSI, 2022). For instance, family centred practice within disability services, a consultative model in educational services and a stepped care model within primary care (GoI, 2023; HSE, 2020, 2023). CYP consultation has been identified as an essential element of EP practice (Smillie & Newton, 2020). The PSI (2022) and BPS (2022) elucidate the role of the EP during

consultation as acknowledging the centrality of the C/YP's voice in the decision-making process and utilising evidence-based approaches when doing so. This comprises using such approaches to support CYP to contribute to plans and decisions that are made for them and about them by stakeholders in their lives (BPS, 2022). Further, EPs ought to demonstrate highly ethical standards of practice during such direct work with CYP, and may do so by demonstrating respect, advocating for CYP where appropriate, obtaining consent and maintaining confidentiality, building rapport, and practicing within legal frameworks whilst providing highly moral services (O'Donnell & Gersch, 2015). Within the literature, EPs have been cited by CYP with SEN as being the only adults aside from their parents who listen to their views (Aubrey & Dahl, 2006). A prime time for EPs to do so is during the assessment and consultation process (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). What is more, Todd et al. (2000) contends that it ought to be the primal aim of every EP to develop a professional practice, which authentically supports the voice of the C/YP to be heard. However, there is a dearth of research exploring how EPs capture the voices of CYP with SEN in educational settings. Overall, this area has been reported as under-researched (Skivenes & Stranbu, 2006). As such, only two published studies have been found which focus on this area of research. The studies specifically explored how EPs working in local authority educational psychology services in the United Kingdom captured the voices of CYP with SEN in mainstream and special secondary schools (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020).

3.1.5 Research Focus

Ensuing a search of pertinent databases, empirical studies of how EPs elicit and represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN in educational settings are limited to two published studies. Albeit limited, the available research and evidence from the review illuminates that EPs have a significant role in capturing the voices of CYP with SEN in educational settings. Key themes, which emerged from the review highlight that EPs capture the voices of CYP with SEN by eliciting and representing their voice. Further, that they are facilitated to do so through their advocacy role in addition to being supported by applicable policy. However, the studies comprised an English and Welsh sample of EPs working in educational settings, specifically with CYP with SEN in mainstream and special secondary schools. This highlights a gap in the research and as a result, offers a rationale for the present research study. To address this gap, the current research therefore intends to explore how an Irish-based sample of EPs working across disability, educational and primary care services

elicit and represent the voices of CYP with SEN at both a primary and secondary school level.

3.1.6 Research Questions (RQs)

The aim of this research study is to answer the subsequent RQs:

1. How do EPs in Irish disability, educational and primary care services elicit the voices of school aged CYP with SEN?
2. How do EPs in Irish disability, educational and primary care services represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN in their professional practice?

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Research Design

This study explored how EP's working in Irish disability, educational and primary care services elicit and represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. A mixed method design (MMD) was employed to address the RQs, specifically, an explanatory sequential design (ESD). In phase one of this study, quantitative data was obtained from the online questionnaire (SurveyMonkey) (Momentive Incorporation, 2022) and analysed to provide a general depiction of the research area (Ivankova et al., 2006). Use of the questionnaire was beneficial as it enabled the researcher to gather quantitative data from a sizable number of participants over a short time frame (McCrudden et al., 2019). In phase two, the researcher examined qualitative data gathered from the semi-structured interviews between the researcher and participant to further explore EP practice relative to the research area (Ivankova et al., 2006). A notable strength is that the qualitative data obtained from the EPs during the interviews offered a more in-depth depiction of the research area (McCrudden et al., 2019). Given the explanatory nature of the study, the qualitative data was used to extend and elaborate on the quantitative findings (Ivankova et al., 2006).

3.2.2 Research Paradigm

This research was conducted through the lens of a critical realism paradigm (Bhaskar, 2008). The fundamental assumptions of critical realism (also known as the 'holy trinity') entail ontological realism; epistemological relativism; and judgemental rationalism (Pilgrim, 2020). Ontological realism is the premise that the world subsists independent of what humans think or discern about it, while epistemological relativism is the basis that humans interpret the world they live within, and both reflect upon and converse about it (Pilgrim, 2019).

Finally, judgemental rationalism is the idea that in view of the first two assumptions, humans can evaluate truths and probabilities (Pilgrim, 2020). Considering the current research, EPs completed a questionnaire, and a subgroup were then interviewed to gain their perspectives on the process of eliciting and representing the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. In line with the conventions of critical realism, the perspectives of the EPs were interpreted relative to the role of values; the theoretical disposition of facts; the idea that reality is intricate, multifaceted and constructed; and the assertion that any data set may be rationalised by multiple theories (Robson, 2002). Within the literature, critical realism is contended as the approach of most relevance to educational psychology, given that the profession is both practice and value centred (Anastas, 1998; Kelly, 2008). What is more, the paradigm is considered to embrace the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches through the idea of stratified reality (Bhaskar, 2008; Botha, 2021; Robson, 2002).

3.2.3 Participants

3.2.3.1 Sampling Strategy. This study sought to explore the perspectives of EPs working in Irish disability, educational and primary care services. The researcher employed purposeful stratified sampling, which is a well acknowledged sampling strategy used in MMD's (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Purposeful stratified sampling allowed for the identification of information-rich cases associated with the phenomenon of interest, and for this study, offered rich information relating to certain characteristics and experiences of the EPs (Palinkas et al., 2015; Braun & Clarke, 2013). Use of this strategy enabled the researcher to divide the sample into three groups of cases based on EPs' current service of employment (disability; educational; or primary care service).

The recruitment process for obtaining EP participants working within primary care services was challenging due to the low number of EPs working in this service nationally. Convenience sampling was employed in this circumstance, meaning that the EP participants working within this service were identified in an ad hoc manner based on their accessibility and proximity to the study (Jager et al., 2017). The researcher utilised professional and personal contacts to facilitate convenience sampling for interview, which ensued in all data being gathered within the research time frame.

3.2.3.2 Sample Size. This study aimed to extend upon research conducted by Smillie and Newton in 2020 utilising an Irish-based sample of EPs. As such, the researcher aimed to achieve a sample size like that which was yielded by Smillie and Newton (2020) for questionnaire completion ($N = 73$). For the present study, a total of 83 EP's working across

Irish disability, educational and primary care services completed the questionnaire. For the interviews, five EPs working within disability services took part, four within educational services, and two within primary care services ($N = 11$). The researcher originally aimed to interview four participants per subgroup i.e., disability, educational and primary care service subgroups (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). The rationale for this number was so to attain data saturation and information redundancy and reduce the enigma of atypical information that may derive from one participant (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). One EP working in primary care services opted in for interview, and so a second recruitment drive was carried out using convenience sampling. This resulted in the recruitment of an additional EP working in primary care services.

3.2.3.3 Demographic Information. Detailed demographic information was gathered from EPs who completed the questionnaire (Table 3.1). Of the 83 EPs who completed the questionnaire, 64% ($n = 52$) were currently working in educational services, 28% ($n = 23$) in disability services and 7% ($n = 6$) in primary care services. Most participants ($n = 31$) were working in their current service for 1-5 years and over half ($n = 53$) held the title of ‘staff grade psychologist’. Almost all participants were female ($n = 75$), while eight male participants participated. 75% of participants ($n = 62$) completed their training in the Republic of Ireland, 18% ($n = 15$) in the United Kingdom, 6% ($n = 5$) in Northern Ireland, whilst one participant completed their training outside of Europe. 43% ($n = 35$) of participants reported that a doctorate was their highest level of education, while 54% ($n = 44$) reported that a masters was their highest level of education. 3% ($n = 2$) of participants detailed that a bachelor’s degree was their highest level of education.

Table 3.1

Demographic Information for all EPs

Demographic Information	Response Option	<i>N</i>	%
Current service of employment	Disability Services	23	28.4%
	Educational Services	52	64.2%
	Primary Care service	6	7.4%
Length working in the current service	0-1 years	12	14.8%
	1-5 years	31	38.3%
	5-10 years	7	8.6%
	10-15 years	17	21.0%
	15-20 years	10	12.3%
	20+ years	4	4.9%

Demographic Information	Response Option	<i>N</i>	%
Current title	Staff grade psychologist	53	65.4%
	Senior psychologist	24	29.6%
	Principal psychologist	1	1.2%
	Other	3	3.7%
Gender	Male	8	9.6%
	Female	75	90.4%
Country EP training completed in	Republic of Ireland	62	74.7%
	Northern Ireland	5	6.0%
	United Kingdom	15	18.1%
	Outside of Europe	1	1.2%
Highest level of education completed	Bachelor	2	2.5%
	Masters	44	54.3%
	Doctorate	35	43.2%

3.2.4 Procedure

Data collection was undertaken over a five-month period, during April to August 2022. The questionnaire was circulated to EPs working nationally across disability, educational and primary care services. Semi-structured interviews were conducted online via MS TEAMS with a subgroup of EPs working across these three services.

To begin with, psychology managers of Irish disability, educational and primary care services in Ireland were identified by the research supervisor and their emails were provided to the researcher. A Recruitment Email (Appendix K) was emailed to these psychology managers, which outlined the research study. Within the email, managers were asked to circulate the email to EPs on their team so to identify potential participants. The email comprised an attachment with the Participant Information Letter (Appendix L) as well as a link to the online questionnaire. If the psychology manager was interested, a virtual meeting was organised to discuss the study in more detail. The researcher ensured that manager support was obtained prior to commencing the study. A follow-up email was circulated to the psychology managers after two weeks (Appendix M). Due to an initially low response rate from participants in educational services, the research was recirculated at a national service level, after one month. The researcher also circulated the study via relevant social media forums including a national EP forum, on Twitter and with the PSI Division of Educational Psychology (see Appendix N for Recruitment Poster). The inclusion criterion was qualified EPs currently working with school aged CYP with SEN in Irish disability, educational or primary care services.

In implied consent, signed consent is not required and taking part in the study provides evidence of consent (Manandhar & Joshu, 2020; MIREC, 2021). Such consent is deemed to be appropriate for low-risk research involving some questionnaires (Lancaster University, 2023). Nonetheless, it is still critical that participants are provided with written information about the background to the study including study aims (Lancaster University, 2023). Therefore, whilst completing the questionnaire implied consent from the participants for the present study, participants were still provided with the Participant Information Letter in advance of taking part (Appendix L). The Information Letter comprised written information about the study background, benefits, participant involvement, right to withdraw, anonymity/confidentiality, dissemination and finally, information about what would happen to the data after the research had been completed. EPs interested in taking part in the semi-structured interview selected a box to ‘opt in’ at the end of the questionnaire and provided their email address. The researcher selected EPs based on their service of employment. A date and time were organised for the interview. Participants emailed signed consent forms to the researcher in advance of the interview (Appendix O).

3.2.5 Data Collection and Measures

The questionnaire was employed to gather quantitative data from the EPs, while semi-structured interviews were conducted to garner qualitative data. Use of the questionnaire enabled the researcher to provide evidence of patterns amongst a large population of EPs concerning how they elicit and represent the voices of CYP with SEN. The qualitative interviews afforded the researcher more in-depth insights into the EPs’ feelings, thoughts, and behaviours (Kendall, 2008).

The online questionnaire and interview guide (Appendices P-R) were developed to reflect and extend on current literature in the field, particularly Smillie and Newton’s (2020) research, given that the current study endeavoured to expand upon this study with an Irish sample of EPs (Brod et al., 2009). Participants were informed of the time frame for the questionnaire (10 to 15 minutes) and interview (30 minutes to one hour). The online questionnaire comprised a mix of question and response styles including multiple choice, short answer, and Likert scales. Demographic questions were also posed to the participants (see Appendices P, Q and R). Differences between the current online questionnaire and the questionnaire posed by Smillie and Newton (2020) are detailed in Appendix S. The questionnaire data was exported from SurveyMonkey (Momentive Incorporation, 2022) to SPSS by the researcher. All interview data were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The audio-recordings were later played and reviewed alongside the transcripts to check for accuracy and to clarify any uncertainties (Poland, 2003) (see Appendix T for a sample interview transcript).

3.2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee (MIREC) in January 2022 (Appendix U) and amendments to the questionnaire were made and approved by MIREC in April 2022 (Appendix V). Ethical approval was also received from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Research Advisory Committee in March 2022 (Appendix U). The researcher ensured that the PSI's (2019) Code of Professional Ethics was adhered to throughout the research process. Further information and reflections on the ethical considerations are provided in the Critical Review (Part 4).

3.2.7 Pilot Studies

To ensure reliability and validity, the initial draft of the questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions were reviewed by the researcher, their supervisor and review panel members during the researcher's Progression Panel in March 2022. As an outcome, initial amendments were made to the questionnaire based on feedback and deliberation (Appendix V). These encompassed changing several questions and response styles from rank order to Likert scales to allow for further analysis; separating questions relating to EP practice in 'eliciting' and 'representing' the CYP's voice to ensure the gathering of data relating to all RQs; and finally, allowing for short answer responses to demographic questionnaires about age and gender, in line with bias-free and inclusive language guidance from the APA (2022a, 2022b). Pilot studies were then undertaken for both phases of this research study, integrating this initial feedback. The questionnaire and interview were piloted with a similar sample to distinguish issues relating to feasibility, accessibility, formatting, or gaps in the questions being asked, in addition to reviewing participant comprehension. Feedback was used to review and refine the items of both methods in advance of data collection and with the intention of enhancing the quality of the acquired data (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The researcher aimed to sample 10% of the total projected sample (Connelly, 2008; Peate et al., 2017). Seven participants completed the pilot questionnaire ($n = 3$ EPs from disability services; $n = 3$ EPs from educational services; and $n = 1$ EP from primary care services). One EP from primary care services took part in the pilot interview. Given that no modifications were necessary for the questionnaire or interview questions

following the pilot studies, consent was sought to merge this data with the main research data (Leon et al., 2011).

3.2.8 Researcher Reflexivity

Researcher reflexivity has been increasingly recognised as an imperative element involved in the process of creating knowledge through qualitative research (Berger, 2015). Through a process of being reflexive, researchers endeavour to comprehend and self-disclose their assumptions, views, morals, and predispositions (Brantlinger et al., 2005). Doing so, supports the researcher to be up-front regarding their positionality in relation to the research process (Brantlinger et al., 2005). For the present study, the researcher evidenced reflexivity through taking field notes, using a research diary, and utilising an independent coder (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003; Gale et al., 2013; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

3.2.9 Data Analysis

To begin with, the researcher developed a codebook to transform the questionnaire data into a format appropriate for the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS; IBM Corp., 2021), prior to data analysis (Pallant, 2020). Quantitative data from the questionnaire was subsequently analysed using descriptive analyses on IBM SPSS Statistics (IBM Corp., 2021). Descriptive statistics enabled the researcher to describe characteristics of the sample by analysing, summarising, and representing the data (Mertens, 2015). A limitation of this technique is that it does not allow for generalisability of conclusions outside of the study sample (Mertens, 2015).

Framework analysis was used to analyse the qualitative interview data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). This analysis entailed two major elements. The first of which was for the researcher to develop an analytic framework and secondly, to apply this analytic framework to the data. The researcher did so through the five-step data analysis process outlined by Ritchie and Spencer (1994). This comprised data familiarisation; framework identification; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation (see Appendix W for further details). The overall aim of framework analysis is to detect, describe, and interpret main patterns within and across cases or themes within the area of interest by being both grounded in and interpreting from the data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Spencer et al., 2014). The inter-related yet separate steps permitted for theme-based or case-based analysis, or an amalgamation of both, through the creation of charts that could be read across (cases) or downwards (themes) (Ward et al., 2013). It is deemed to be a flexible and powerful approach that is used by

qualitative researchers to systematically describe a population of interest including the prominent disparity within the population. As such, the analytic framework facilitated an ease of comparison of findings across the three stakeholder groups: EPs working across disability, educational, or primary care services (Goldsmith, 2021).

The systematic approach enabled the researcher to provide a clear audit trail from initial raw data to final themes, including illuminating quotes, which enhanced the transparency of the research process (Flick, 1998; Gale et al., 2013; Goldsmith, 2021). To ensure reflexivity and rigour, field notes were logged after each interview and a research diary was used throughout the entire research process (see Appendix X for a sample of each). Logging field notes supported the researcher to document what was observed and heard throughout the interviews, views and emotions that ensued as well as any issues that were pertinent during analysis (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003). Use of the research diary facilitated the researcher to record reflexive notes, their early sense of the data and any deliberations about analysis (Gale et al., 2013). In line with prior research, an independent coder was utilised to attain intercoder reliability, and thus augment the rigour and transparency of the coding process (Gale et al., 2013; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). The independent coder coded a sample of the data, disparities were reviewed, and modifications were made if needed (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Member checks were carried out to enhance the credibility of the research and ensure the trustworthiness of the results (Birt et al., 2016; Thomas, 2017). Apart from this, it has been postulated that member checking is “sensitive and meaningful” (Doyle, 2007, p. 906) for participants in studies that pursue social justice (Motulsky, 2021). While all participants were invited to take part in member checking, only a few participants agreed to partake in the process. These participants were presented with their interview transcript, a synopsis of emerging themes and a copy of the final report and asked to review and confirm the validity of the analytic interpretations (Gale et al., 2013; Thomas, 2017). No modifications were made to the results following the member checking process. NVIVO (QSR International, 2022) software was used to support the data analysis process given that it is compatible with framework analysis, and further provides tools to aid this analysis (Parkinson et al., 2015).

3.3 Results

The data gathered from EPs working across disability, educational and primary care services was analysed quantitatively and then qualitatively. To answer RQ1 and 2, the quantitative results are described, followed by the qualitative results.

3.3.1 Quantitative Results for RQ1: “How do EPs in Irish Disability, Educational and Primary Care Services Elicit the Voices of School Aged CYP With SEN?”

EP responses to the questionnaire (Appendix Q) were analysed by descriptive statistical analyses using the SPSS (IBM Corp., 2021). The results for each questionnaire item exploring how EPs in disability, educational and primary care services elicit the voices of school aged CYP with SEN in their professional practice are presented in Table 3.2. Whilst completing the questionnaire, EPs were asked to rate their response to each item utilising a 5-point Likert scale based on frequency, where 1 = ‘never’ and 5 = ‘always’. On average, EPs across the three services selected a score of ‘often’ ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.679$) when ranking their use of indirect methods to elicit the voices of school-aged CYP with SEN. EPs on average, also selected a score of ‘often’ ($M = 4.17$, $SD = .775$) when ranking their use of discussion-based methods or approaches to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN. Conversely, therapeutic approaches were indicated as the least often executed approach; on average, EPs selected a score of ‘rarely’ ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 1.100$) when ranking their use of such approaches to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN.

Table 3.2

Descriptive Statistics for how EPs Elicit the Voices of CYP with SEN

Variable	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Indirect methods	59	2	5	4.47	.679
Discussion-based methods or approaches	58	3	5	4.17	.775
Questionnaires or self-report scales	59	2	5	3.27	.848
Task or activity-based approaches	59	1	5	3.07	.980
Therapeutic approaches	58	1	5	2.98	1.100

Responses were analysed to ascertain the frequency of psychological theories and strategies underlying EPs’ work when eliciting the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. As can be seen in Table 3.3, PCP ($n = 22$), SFBT ($n = 11$) and person-centred theory ($n = 10$) emerged as the most frequently cited psychological theories used by EPs working across disability, educational and primary care services. The most frequently reported strategies comprised questionnaires, worksheets or templates ($n = 7$), scaling questions ($n = 7$) and direct questioning ($n = 6$) (Table 3.4).

Table 3.3*Frequency of Responses according to the Psychological Theories used by EPs to Elicit Voice*

Psychological Theory	<i>n</i>	Psychological Theory	<i>n</i>
Personal construct psychology (PCP)	22	Psychodynamic theory	2
Solution focused brief therapy (SFBT)	11	Psychosocial theory	2
Person-centred theory	10	Social construct theory	2
Humanistic theory	8	Social-cognitive theory	2
Attachment theory	7	Social model of disability	2
Biopsychosocial	5	Cognitive behaviour theory	1
Cognitive theory of development	5	Dialectical behaviour therapy	1
Acceptance and commitment therapy	3	Developmental theory	1
Behavioural theories	3	Empathizing-systemizing theory	1
Ecological systems theory	3	Humble inquiry	1
Social learning theory	3	Play theory	1
Unsure	3	Rights/justice theory	1
Attribution theory	2	Self-determination theory	1
Constructivism	2	Social identity theory	1
Motivational theory	2	Sociocultural theory	1
Narrative therapy	2	Systems theory	1
Polyvagal theory	2	Theory of mind	1
Positive psychology	2		

Table 3.4*Frequency of Responses according to the Strategies used by EPs to Elicit Voice*

Strategy	<i>n</i>	Strategy	<i>n</i>
Questionnaires, worksheets, or templates	7	Emotions cards	1
Scaling questions	7	Environmental considerations i.e., seeking to make it safe	1
Direct questioning	6	Exception finding	1
Drawing the ideal self or ideal school	4	Exploring themes through play	1
Play	4	Family Tree	1
Drawing	3	Future-self question	1
Including CYP with SEN in meetings or consultation	3	Games	1
Interviews (structured or unstructured)	3	Introducing self before assessment	1
Observations	3	Joint attention	1
Art	2	Kinetic family drawing	1
Assessment	2	Life story work	1
Conversation/chat	2	My t-shirt bag	1
Matching CYP's communication profile or using adapted communication	2	Narrative therapy questioning	1

Strategy	<i>n</i>	Strategy	<i>n</i>
Miracle/magic wand question	2	Open, accepting and non-judgemental approach	1
Rapport/relationship building	2	Parent and teacher interviews	1
Socratic questioning	2	Probing questions	1
Visuals	2	Repertory Grids	1
Blob tree	1	Regulating body language and tone of voice to convey respect/interest	1
Core beliefs	1	Salmon line questions	1
Child-centred practice	1	Self-characterisation	
Choice/preferences	1	Strength-based approach	1
Circles of connectedness	1	Tree of Life	1
Diary/log (cognitive behavioural exercises)	1	Unconditional positive regard	1
Direct therapeutic work with the child	1	Understanding of the broader context /the interaction of factors	1
Drawing links between thoughts-feelings-behaviour	1	Understanding stages of development	1
Dyadic work	1		

3.3.2 *Qualitative Results for RQ1*

In response to RQ1, four main themes, each containing sub-themes, were identified using the method of framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) (Figure 3.1). Such themes ultimately represent a mapping of the key elements regarding how EPs working across the three services elicit the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. Taken together, the themes and sub-themes below were the most salient for the EPs across all three service groups. In the discussion below, convergence and divergence amid EP practice across the three different services is noted. To offer some indication of the frequency of the experiences discussed by the EPs, the following quantitative system adapted from Midgley et al. (2015) in Table 3.5 has been implemented in the reporting of findings. According to Hochwald et al. (2023), quantifying qualitative data as part of a MMD can augment the study results. Convergent results may bolster the findings, whilst divergences may provide an avenue for further in-depth discussion (Hochwald et al., 2023). Pseudonyms, beginning with the participants service group, have been used following the reporting of any extracts from the interviews.

Figure 3.1

Thematic Tree Diagram comprising Themes and Sub-themes for RQ1

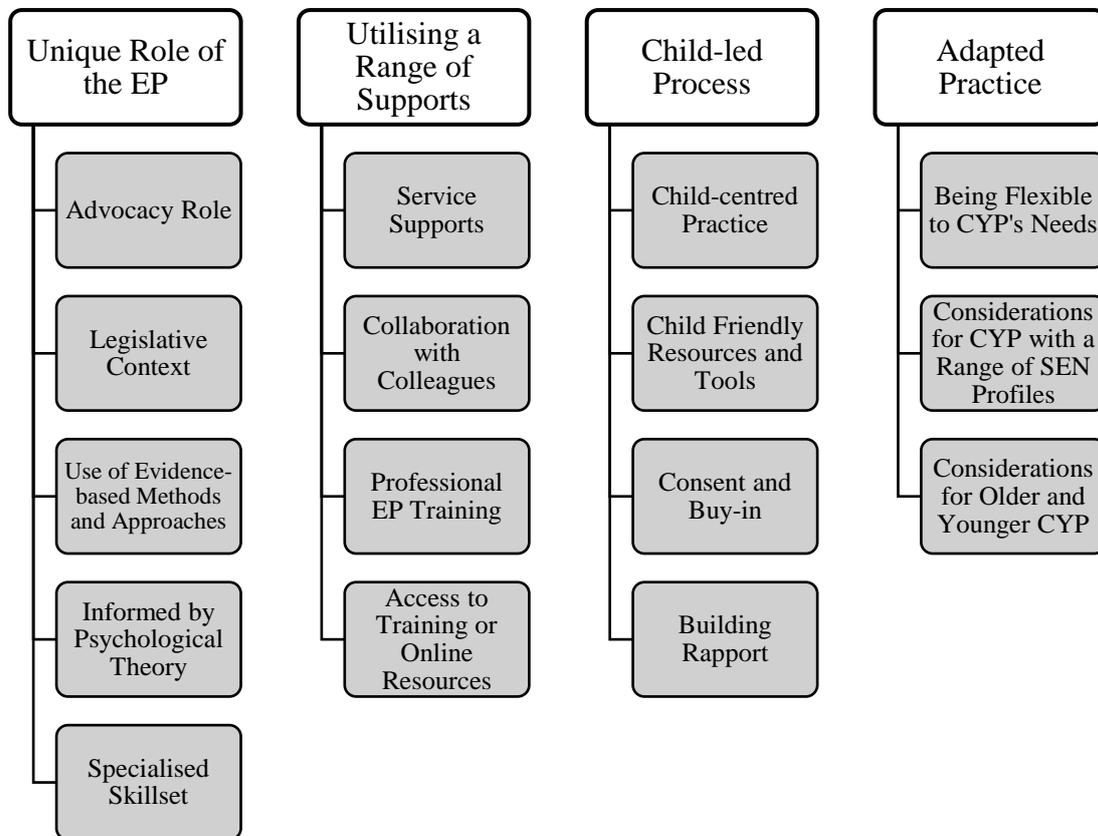


Table 3.5

System applied to Interview Data (Midgley et al., 2015)

Frequency Descriptor	Explanation
Most	This finding was based on data from 10 or more of the 11 interviews
Many	This finding was based on data from 7-10 of the 11 interviews
Some	This finding was based on data from 4-7 of the 11 interviews
A few	This finding was based on data from 1-3 of the 11 interviews

3.3.2.1 Unique Role of the EP. The first theme “Unique Role of the EP” is aligned with EPs’ perception of their distinctive role in eliciting the voices of CYP with SEN in their professional practice. This theme comprises the following five subthemes, namely: Advocacy Role; Legislative Context; Use of Evidence-based Methods and Approaches; Informed by Psychological Theory; and Specialised Skillset.

3.3.2.1.1 Advocacy Role. When asked to describe their role, many of the participants across the three service groups highlighted the core role that advocacy plays in their practice. To illustrate, one participant summarised:

I think it is a huge part of the role of the educational psychologist, because I do find we are an advocate for the child, we are on the child’s side, that is our role and our responsibility to elicit the children’s views, no matter whether they’re nonverbal, verbal, whatever, their difficulties are (EducationalEP2)

EPs in disability services explained their advocacy role in terms of obtaining CYP’s voice in relation to decision-making, supporting CYP to achieve priorities that they have identified and encouraging other stakeholders to see the situation from the C/YP’s perspective. Within educational services, EPs accentuated their strong advocacy role and elucidated that a major role of the EP is to encourage CYP to “share their voice” (EducationalEP3). Furthermore, a primary care EP spoke about their advocacy role in the context of supporting CYP with SEN to understand the value of their voice and “giving them the message that it’s OK to use it” (PrimaryEP2).

3.3.2.1.2 Legislative Context. Some of the EPs in disability and educational services described how they are supported by the legislative context to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN. However, in sum, only a few EPs referred to specific legislation. For example, EducationalEP3 stated that “it’s a right under the UN conventions”, whilst another participant noted that EPs must continue to be cognisant of the international legislative context. A sense of frustration was inferred from a few EPs who imparted that CYP’s views are “not included enough”, despite being a right under the UN Conventions.

3.3.2.1.3 Use of Evidence-based Methods and Approaches. Many of the EPs across the three services discussed how they elicit the voices of CYP with SEN using a range of evidence-based methods and approaches. For example, the ideal self/classroom, Minecraft, pupil friendly support plans, and Planning Alternative Tomorrow with Hope were some approaches indicated. One participant emphasised that EPs are “scientist-practitioners”

(EducationalEP3) and therefore, are required to demonstrate a practice which is evidence-based. Further, it was noted that EPs are “more likely to get a positive result” (DisabilityEP2) from the use of evidence-based methods and approaches.

3.3.2.1.4 Informed by Psychological Theory. Many of the EPs across the three services outlined that their role is informed by psychological theory. To demonstrate:

[psychological theories] are kind of a vehicle for getting a sense of the child’s voice and from all different areas really, just whatever I think is going to be most accessible to the child and most useful in terms of gaining information. (PrimaryEP2)

PCP is one such psychological theory that was spoken about by EPs across the three services. Participants spoke about how this specific psychological theory can be used to gather information, to delve into the C/YP’s “persona” (DisabilityEP3) and offer “insight into the child’s voice” (PrimaryEP2).

3.3.2.1.5 Specialised Skillset. Some of the EPs across all three services spoke about how their specialised skillset supports them to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN. To elucidate, the specialised training which EPs receive, has been highlighted as formative and influential by participants. For example, one EP stated that:

we’re trained specifically to work with children. Like, that’s the difference compared to other strands of psychology training, ... is that we are completely child focused. Which I think does offer a different perspective. And aspects then of the training like, the personal construct work and the focus on attachment and the developmental side of things ... I suppose, have contributed to kind of focusing in on the child’s experience (PrimaryEP2)

Such comments were echoed by EPs across the three services. For instance, it was highlighted that eliciting CYP’s voice is something that is “really drilled into us through our training and it tends to be more something valued” (DisabilityEP4) and that EPs know that “this is good for the child” (EducationalEP3) in terms of enhancing CYP’s self-esteem and self-advocacy skills.

3.3.2.2 Utilising a Range of Supports. The second theme is concerned with EPs’ perceptions of the array of supports that they use, which enable them to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN. This theme entails the subsequent four sub-themes, namely: Service

Supports; Collaboration with Colleagues; Professional EP Training; and Access to Training or Online Resources.

3.3.2.2.1 Service Supports. Many of the EPs across all three groups discussed how they are supported by their service to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN. It was apparent that the supports vary across services. EPs in disability services explained that practicing in line with the family centred model enables them to elicit information from CYP to inform the Individual Family Service Plan. However, one EP indicated that they do not believe that it is “common practice” (DisabilityEP4) to include the C/YP’s voice in this process. Another EP explained that “in the policy documents, it’s maybe not described as child voice, but it’s leaning that way for sure” (DisabilityEP3), inferring a possible reason as to why obtaining the C/YP’s voice may not yet be widespread practice. Within educational services, EPs named several service-based supports (e.g., a working group, child-friendly leaflets for CYP and checklists developed by the service). One EP in educational services, however, commented that they do not believe that there are sufficient service resources based on recent models and research i.e., “the Lundy Model of Child Participation” (EducationalEP3). Finally, in primary care services, the EPs commented that they are supported by a top-down approach in their service via management and their supervisor. To demonstrate, PrimaryEP2 stated “I think definitely the service promotes it ... and that comes from ... a management level down ... it’s always the child at the centre of it”.

3.3.2.2.2 Collaboration with Colleagues. Many of the EPs across all three services spoke about how they find it supportive to collaborate with colleagues. In disability services, EPs noted that they collaborate with colleagues such as “SLT [speech and language therapist] and OT [occupational therapist] in terms of their interpretation of behaviours” (DisabilityEP5) and that they implement “all the things the SLT would recommend” (DisabilityEP3). EPs in both disability and educational services echoed that their colleagues “share ideas” (EducationalEP1) e.g., at regional psychology meetings and peer supervision. Within primary care services, eliciting the voices of CYP with SEN “informs” EPs of their work with multidisciplinary colleagues (PrimaryEP1).

3.3.2.2.3 Professional EP Training. Many of the EPs amidst the three services reflected that they learned about “the different techniques that can be used and how important it is to hear the voice of the child” (DisabilityEP2) during their professional EP training. EPs highlighted that their professional training in this area “was all quite broad” (EducationalEP3) but that the topic of eliciting the voices of CYP with SEN “was definitely threaded

throughout” (DisabilityEP3). In addition, many of the EPs spoke about how their professional placements have augmented their practice in this area. One EP accentuated that “learning on the job out on placement ... was probably the biggest influence really” (EducationalEP4). EPs explained that they acquired knowledge about suitable approaches from their supervisors and were provided with opportunities to implement theory to practice on placement.

3.3.2.2.4 Access to Training or Online Resources. Some of the EPs across the three services acknowledged that access to training or online resources bolsters their ability to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN. One EP emphasised that they always “think there’s room for adding to the bank of ways of trying to elicit that voice” (PrimaryEP2) through training. EPs spoke about the myriad of ways that they can access training in this area, for instance through continuing professional development, service training or online training on Webex or Zoom. A few of the EPs in educational and primary care services remarked that COVID restrictions have resulted in an “increase in Webex trainings and zoom trainings” (EducationalEP2) and therefore, rendered training which is more accessible for EPs. Furthermore, EPs across the three services highlighted that the resources shared online on Twitter, Instagram, Reading Clubs, Facebook groups and LinkedIn by EPs can be useful.

3.3.2.3 Child-led Process. The third theme encapsulates how EPs elicit the voices of CYP with SEN through a process focused on the C/YP and includes the following subthemes: Child-centred Practice; Child Friendly Resources and Tools; Consent and Buy-in; and Building Rapport.

3.3.2.3.1 Child-centred Practice. Many of the participants amidst the three services relayed that they elicit the voices of CYP with SEN through a practice which centres around the C/YP and their voice. To illustrate, one participant outlined:

without the child’s input, without their voice, really, how much of all of it matters?
Because otherwise things would be done to the child as opposed to with the child. So, for me ... the voice of the child is the cog in the middle, the rest comes out, the information gathering, the assessment, the intervention. That all comes after.
(EducationalEP2)

EPs in disability services mentioned that child-centred practice involves asking the C/YP solution-focused and problem-solving questions (DisabilityEP4), identifying goals that are “in line with the views of the child” (DisabilityEP2) and co-creating behaviour support plans (DisabilityEP3). Those in educational services quoted that such practice incorporates the inclusion of CYP with SEN “in the consultation process” (EducationalEP1) and “Showing

respect to the child ... by asking them for their experience” (EducationalEP4). One participant outlined that they critically consider “Are we doing what the child wants us to do? And if not, why not?” (EducationalEP3). Primary care services EPs inferred a child-centred practice by obtaining the “child’s perception of why they’ve been referred into us and their thoughts around whether they should be or not” (PrimaryEP2).

3.3.2.3.2 Child Friendly Resources and Tools. Some of the EPs within the three services referenced that they use child friendly resources and tools in their practice. EPs in educational services outlined that they use child friendly resources developed by their service such as the ‘My Thoughts about School’ and ‘What’s Going On?’ questionnaires. One EP in disability services also referenced the use of an educational service child friendly resource in addition to the ‘HSE clinical interview’ questions. An array of further child friendly resources and tools were cited by participants across the three service groups including: ‘Lego’, ‘Minecraft’, ‘blob tree’, and ‘life story work’ to mention but some of those named.

3.3.2.3.3 Consent and Buy-in. A few of the EPs in disability and educational services outlined the necessity of acquiring consent and buy-in from the C/YP with SEN. For example, one participant detailed:

the other thing ... is the consent piece. I think we take a lot for granted, we walk in, we take a child out of class. And off we go and often times they haven’t even been told ... But I would always have that conversation with them at the beginning anyway, in terms of consent. So that piece is really important. (EducationalEP1)

EPs in educational services remarked that they will contact the C/YP prior to any psychological involvement to seek consent, or ask the C/YP “Did you know you were going to meet me?” (EducationalEP4). Those in disability services commented that they ascertain buy-in by asking the C/YP “Do you actually want to do this? Is this something you’d find helpful?” (DisabilityEP4), prior to providing intervention or therapy.

3.3.2.3.4 Building Rapport. A few of the EPs in educational services spoke about the importance of building rapport with CYP with SEN when eliciting their voice. EPs outlined that they do so by informing themselves of the C/YP’s interests before meeting them. For example, by reviewing the ‘My Thoughts About Me’ questionnaire, observational work, talking to parents or teachers, and doing a quick search of the C/YP’s interests online before meeting them. Participants elaborated that they continue to develop the rapport throughout the process of involvement with CYP. For instance, one EP delineated that

“there’s loads of moments in between transitioning between the items on these assessments that you’re still interacting, engaging and getting the voice and keeping that rapport going” (EducationalEP3).

3.3.2.4 Adapted Practice. The fourth and final theme is concerned with how EPs tailor their practice depending on the C/YP’s individual needs as well as their SEN and age profile. This theme is composed of three sub-themes namely: Being Flexible to CYP’s Needs; Considerations for CYP with a Range of SEN Profiles; and Considerations for Older and Younger CYP.

3.3.2.4.1 *Being Flexible to CYP’s Needs.* Most of the EPs throughout the three groups spoke about how they demonstrate a practice which is flexible to the C/YP’s presenting needs and capabilities when eliciting their voice. For example, by questioning “What would be helpful for this child and this situation?” (DisabilityEP3). EPs across the three services discussed how they would consider the C/YP’s age, intellectual ability level, verbal ability, any specific learning disability, motor skills/functioning, academic ability and background factors (home life and family type).

3.3.2.4.2 *Considerations for CYP with a Range of SEN Profiles.* Most of the EPs across the three service groups outlined that they consider the SEN profile of CYP when eliciting their voice. Such SEN profiles that the EPs spoke about comprised ASD, anxiety and selective mutism, communication difficulties, and intellectual disabilities (IDs). There were conflicting views on the approaches to use when eliciting the voices of CYP with ASD. Some EPs detailed that they use direct questioning. For instance, one EP explained that during the process of an ASD assessment they have started asking CYP “Do you feel yourself that you are autistic?” (DisabilityEP4). Conversely, another participant explained that the direct questioning approach was not very successful for them. Further, one EP outlined an experience where they did a “lot of talking and [the C/YP with ASD] just completely shut down”. The EP explained that this was a learning point “in terms of having other tools in my toolkit that I can draw on” (EducationalEP1). Other approaches that EPs indicated that they use to elicit the views of CYP with ASD comprise those which are not word-focused.

For CYP with anxiety or selective mutism, EPs again outlined that a direct questioning approach may not be helpful. Instead, it was indicated that CYP with anxiety may prefer creative and activity-based methods. Moreover, one EP illustrated that the “relationship is actually really important” (EducationalEP2) to help CYP with selective mutism to feel comfortable. EPs also spoke about eliciting the views of CYP with

communication difficulties. EPs outlined that the following approaches may be helpful: using a range of tools (i.e., visual methods or assistive technology), considering speech and language therapy needs and eliciting the views of the CYP indirectly from parents or teachers. Finally, it was detailed that it can be quite challenging to elicit the views of CYP with IDs. One EP explained that they would indirectly ask parents or teachers for the C/YP's views. Another EP specified a "very personalised" (DisabilityEP3) approach where the thoughts and emotions aspects from questions are omitted as they may not be familiar to CYP with IDs.

3.3.2.4.3 Considerations for Older and Younger CYP. Many of the EPs among the three services articulated that they consider the age profile of the C/YP when eliciting their voice. It was indicated that teenagers may not want to talk directly to EPs about their difficulties as they may be embarrassed or do not want the focus on them. Therefore, for older CYP, a few EPs commented that a combination of a conversational approach, augmented by a questionnaire, screener, checklist, or visuals may be helpful. For younger CYP, it was noted that for the "under 4s or 5s ... that kind of introspection ... it's not there" (DisabilityEP5) and therefore, a myriad of tools may be required to elicit their voices. For example, some EPs spoke about play-based and exploratory approaches such as using toys or manipulatives, art, sand tray therapy and activity cards.

3.3.3 Quantitative Results for RQ2: "How do EPs in Irish Disability, Educational and Primary Care Services Represent the Voices of School Aged CYP With SEN in their Professional Practice?"

Descriptive statistical results regarding how EPs across the three services represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN in their professional practice, are outlined in Table 3.6. Again, whilst completing the questionnaire (Appendix Q), EPs were asked to rate their response to each item utilising a 5-point Likert scale based on frequency, where 1 = 'never' and 5 = 'always'. On average, EPs across the three services selected a score of 'often' when ranking the representation of the C/YP's voice in psychological reports ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .775$), during consultation/meetings with parents ($M = 4.11$, $SD = .769$), and during consultation/meetings with school personnel ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .903$). Findings indicated that child-friendly reports were the least frequently ranked medium; on average, EPs selected a score of 'rarely' when ranking their use of child-friendly reports ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 1.119$) to represent the voices of school-aged CYP with SEN in their professional practice.

Table 3.6*Descriptive Statistics for how EPs Represent the Voices of CYP with SEN*

Variable	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Represent in psychological reports	54	2	5	4.24	.775
Represent during consultation/meetings with parents	54	2	5	4.11	.769
Represent during consultation/meetings with school personnel	55	1	5	4.00	.903
Record CYP's voice using own words	54	2	5	3.94	.856
Record CYP's voice by paraphrasing or summarising their words	54	2	5	3.74	.732
Represent during consultation/meetings with other professionals	54	1	5	3.72	.738
Record CYP's voice by interpreting their words	54	1	5	2.91	.937
Represent in child-friendly reports	55	1	5	2.45	1.119

EP responses were analysed to establish the frequency of psychological theories and strategies underpinning EP's work when representing the voices of school aged CYP with SEN, in their professional practice. As reported in Table 3.7, PCP ($n = 13$), humanistic theory ($n = 7$), the biopsychosocial model ($n = 6$), and person-centred theory ($n = 6$) transpired to be the most frequently employed psychological theories used by EPs to represent the voices of CYP with SEN.

Table 3.7*Frequency of Responses according to the Psychological Theories used by EPs to Represent Voice*

Psychological Theory	<i>n</i>	Psychological Theory	<i>n</i>
Personal construct psychology (PCP)	13	Positive psychology	2
Humanistic theory	7	Psychodynamic theory	2
Biopsychosocial	6	Acceptance commitment therapy	1
Person-centred theory	6	Attribution theory	1
Attachment theory	5	Empathizing-systemizing theory	1

Psychological Theory	<i>n</i>	Psychological Theory	<i>n</i>
Solution focused brief therapy (SFBT)	5	Goal setting theories	1
Ecological systems theory	4	Humble inquiry	1
Narrative theories	3	Mindset theories	1
Unsure	3	Self-determination theory	1
Behavioural theories	2	Social-cognitive theory	1
Cognitive theories	2	Social learning theory	1
Constructivism	2	Social model of disability	1
Consultative theories/practices	2	Systems theory	1
Developmental theory	2	Trauma theory	1
Polyvagal theory	2		

The most frequently stated strategies were writing the ‘child’s view section of the report’ ($n = 4$) and ‘strengths-based reports’ ($n = 4$). Four EPs also reported being unsure of the strategies used in their professional practice to represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8

Frequency of Responses according to the Strategies used by EPs to Represent Voice

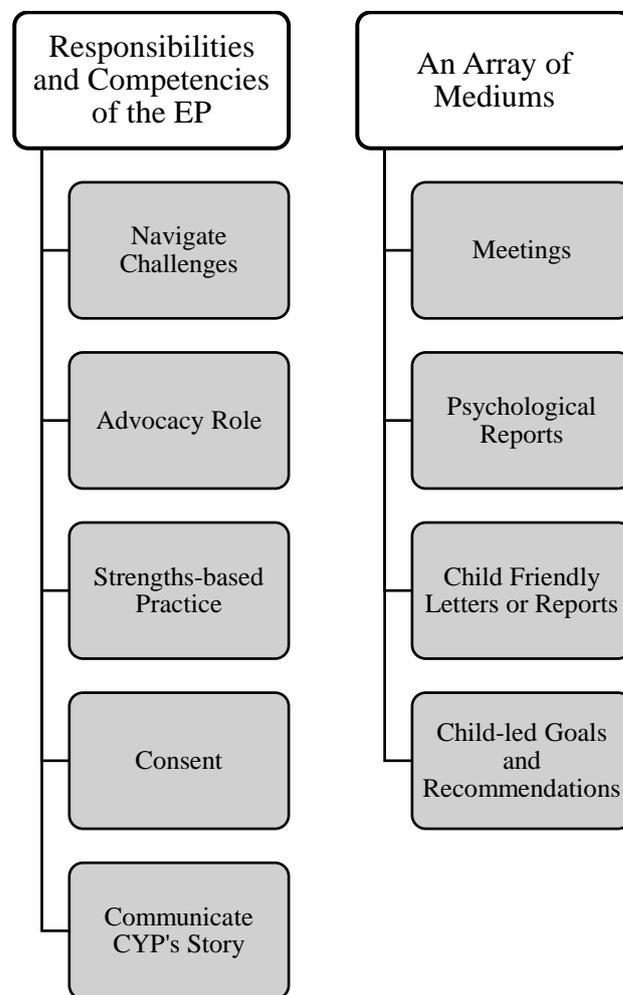
Strategy	<i>n</i>	Strategy	<i>n</i>
Child’s view section of report	4	Drawing	1
Strengths-based report	4	Encourage parents and teachers to step into child’s shoes	1
Unsure	4	Family tree	1
Emotion/wellbeing or incomplete sentence cards	3	Kinetic family drawing	1
Visuals	3	Magic question	1
Drawing ideal self or ideal school	2	Open, accepting and non-judgemental	1
Scaling	2	Psychoanalytic techniques	1
Represent voice in a solution focused way/solution circles	2	Tree of life	1
Verbally/consultation	2	Daniel Siegel’s hand model of the brain to explain stress	1
Behavioural techniques	1	Unconditional positive regard	1
Child-friendly report	1	Understanding the broader context/interaction of factors	1
Direct quotes in reports	1	Child seen within context of community (avoiding within child deficit)	1

3.3.4 Qualitative Results for RQ2

To answer RQ2, two main themes and sub-themes were generated from the application of the framework analysis method (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) (Figure 3.2). Similarly, to RQ1, the themes and sub-themes below were the most salient for EPs across the three service groups and represent a mapping of the main elements regarding how these EPs represent the voices of CYP with SEN. Again, convergence and divergence amid EP practice is documented and Midgley et al.'s (2015) adapted system was utilised in the reporting of findings (Table 3.5 above).

Figure 3.2

Thematic Tree Diagram including Themes and Sub-themes for RQ2



3.3.4.1 Responsibilities and Competencies of the EP. The first theme is in accordance with EPs' understanding of their responsibilities and competencies in representing the voices of CYP with SEN. This theme embraces the following five sub-

themes, namely: Navigate Challenges; Advocacy Role; Strengths-based Practice; Consent; and Communicate CYP's Story.

3.3.4.1.1 *Navigate Challenges.* When asked about how they represent the voices of CYP with SEN, many of the EPs across the three services indicated their responsibilities to navigate challenges whilst doing so. Such challenges entailed meeting resistance from stakeholders when representing CYP's views and the complexity of aligning with the views of the C/YP as well as those of parents and school personnel. Many of the EPs specified what can help them to navigate such challenges. For instance, developing a professional relationship with the teachers and parents based on empathy, validation, and a non-judgemental perspective, remaining "neutral" (DisabilityEP1) or "balanced" (DisabilityEP5) in their response to stakeholders, and reflecting on challenges in supervision. To illustrate this sub-theme, one EP summarised:

you just try to walk with the person ... and get them to see ... that actually involving the young person can be a very valuable and useful process and yield information that's very helpful and beneficial and bring them along with that way of thinking (DisabilityEP1).

3.3.4.1.2 *Advocacy Role.* Some of the EPs across the three services highlighted that their advocacy role supports them to represent the voices of CYP with SEN, particularly at meetings with parents, teachers, and other professionals. Within disability services, it emerged that this role encompassed "not being too afraid" (DisabilityEP4) to speak up on behalf of CYP, advocating for "meaningful and positive change" (DisabilityEP3), and always being "on the side of the child" (DisabilityEP5). In primary care services, it was echoed that the EPs' advocacy role also entailed speaking up for CYP with SEN. EPs in educational services emphasised that this role involved explaining the C/YP's point of view in meetings or highlighting to stakeholders that they are not comfortable talking about the C/YP, without the C/YP present.

3.3.4.1.3 *Strengths-based Practice.* Some of the EPs across the three services indicated that they represent the C/YP's voice through a strengths-based practice. To illustrate, EPs in disability services indicated that they endeavour to facilitate "positive change" (DisabilityEP3) and that they are "always be positive towards the child" (DisabilityEP5). Within primary care services, participants illustrated that they like to emphasise the C/YP's strengths in the report including "Everything that they can do" as they are mindful that CYP referred into their service "probably hear what they can't do"

(PrimaryEP1). PrimaryEP1 further noted that in cases where they are aware that the school is being negative towards the C/YP, they will ensure that their report “shines a light” on the C/YP. It transpired that in educational services, EPs are encouraged to represent the C/YP’s voice through a ‘child’s view’ section of a report template, which comprises a strengths-based questioning and reporting style.

3.3.4.1.4 Consent. A few of the EPs in educational services highlighted the importance of seeking consent from the C/YP before representing their views. EPs spoke about how they would ask CYP if and how they want their voices represented. For instance, one EP explained that they “would always check” (EducationalEP1) if CYP are happy for the EP to share everything that they said. Whilst participants indicated that most of the time CYP are happy for EPs to represent their views, EPs nonetheless must “be careful with confidentiality” (EducationalEP3).

3.3.4.1.5 Communicate CYP’s Story. A few of the EPs in disability services illuminated that they represent the C/YP’s views by narrating their story. Particularly, with the intention to help parents to understand the C/YP’s perspective and to promote an alternative view of the C/YP. One EP described the role that EPs play in narrating the C/YP’s experience:

you may be trying to be like a microphone or a translator for the child, because the child might have been saying this the whole time and people weren’t really listening. But when it’s a professional who says, “The [C/YP is] saying “You’re being too loud, they’re saying you’re standing too close”, people pay attention then (DisabilityEP3)

3.3.4.2 An Array of Mediums. The second and final theme embodies the various means which EPs use to represent the voices of CYP with SEN. It is composed of the subsequent four sub-themes namely: Meetings; Psychological Reports; Child Friendly Letters or Reports; and Child-led Goals and Recommendations.

3.3.4.2.1 Meetings. Many of the EPs across the three services indicated that they represent the C/YP’s voice at meetings with a range of stakeholders including parents, school personnel, team members and external professionals (i.e., those from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services [CAMHS], the NCSE, Tusla, or the National Educational Welfare Board). The types of meetings cited by EPs which they share the C/YP’s voice at comprised feedback meetings, school placement meetings, transition meetings and team meetings.

3.3.4.2.2 Psychological Reports. Many of the EPs amidst the three service groups outlined that they represent the C/YP's voice in psychological reports. EPs in disability and educational services indicated diverging criteria within and across services regarding how they represent the C/YP's voice. To illustrate, one EP in disability services indicated that they try to summarise the C/YP's views in the report based on relevance. This EP elaborated that they "don't usually keep anything hidden" (DisabilityEP1). Another EP spoke about how they endeavour to organise the C/YP's views into ideas that could be "practically helpful around day-to-day life ... let's say, columns that are almost like 'Dos and Don'ts'" (DisabilityEP3). DisabilityEP4 iterated that they would consider the expression "What's nice to know versus what we need to know", when representing CYP's views, inferring that they would consider information which stakeholders need to know and "what's clinically relevant". In educational services, one EP articulated that they would record what is more relevant to the referral question, whilst another EP stipulated that they would exercise "personal and professional judgment" (EducationalEP7). EPs across both disability and educational services discussed how they represent the C/YP's views in reports "using direct quotations" (DisabilityEP1).

3.3.4.2.3 Child Friendly Letters or Reports. Some of the EPs across the three services shared that they write child friendly letters or reports to CYP appropriately outlining the process of involvement with the service, findings, and feedback. DisabilityEP3 illuminated that they and their EP colleagues have "gotten into the habit of doing a child version of the report anytime that we can", but that other disciplines on the children's disability network team "haven't come across them". A few EPs highlighted that time constraints impede their ability to write such letters or reports. For instance, one EP explained "if I really want to do it authentically, it does take time because you're really drawing on what the child said and you're trying to get that down in the right way" (EducationalEP1).

3.3.4.2.4 Child-led Goals and Recommendations. A few of the EPs in disability and primary care services shared that they represent the voices of CYP with SEN through goals and recommendations focused on what the C/YP has identified. To expand, PrimaryEP1 stated that they "always factor the child's goals" into their reports, whilst DisabilityEP3 specified that they transpire the C/YP's voice into personalised recommendations. It was vocalised that "oftentimes the kids have a lot of the answers themselves. If we can just get it out of them" (DisabilityEP3). What is more, sometimes the

C/YP's goals are "really simple" and can be ticked off "pretty quickly" (DisabilityEP3) enhancing team satisfaction.

3.4 Discussion

This study aimed to explore how EPs in Irish disability, educational and primary care services elicit and represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN in their professional practice. The research topic was initially investigated quantitatively, with succeeding qualitative exploration conducted to extend and elaborate on the initial findings. In the ensuing sections, each RQ will be discussed sequentially. Findings from the quantitative phase will be portrayed to answer the RQs, and where qualitative findings have elaborated such quantitative results, they will be integrated into the discussion with reference to relevant literature. The strengths, limitations and implications of the present study will furthermore be indicated.

3.4.1.1 RQ1: "How do EPs in Irish Disability, Educational and Primary Care Services Elicit the Voices of School Aged CYP with SEN?". Findings from the online questionnaire indicate that on average, EPs across the three services most often use indirect and discussion-based methods or approaches to elicit the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. Qualitative findings partly corroborate these quantitative findings. For instance, EPs in disability services named that they may use indirect approaches (asking parents or teachers) to elicit the views of CYP with IDs or discussion-based approaches such as direct questioning to elicit the voices of CYP with ASD. The latter finding is well positioned within the context of some existing studies, which describe that the most frequently used methods to elicit the voices of post-primary aged CYP with SEN comprise those that are discussion-based, specifically direct questioning (Harding & Atkinson, 2008; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Indirect approaches have also been cited in previous research as a method used by EPs to ascertain the views of post-primary aged CYP with SEN (Harding & Atkinson, 2008).

Despite being a frequently cited approach in the quantitative element of this study and in some pre-existing studies, the qualitative findings have extended that discussion-based approaches may not be appropriate for all CYP with SEN. For example, those with anxiety or selective mutism and those with communication difficulties. Interestingly, conflicting qualitative findings regarding the use direct questioning to elicit the views of CYP with ASD have been reflected in the current study. Nonetheless, previous research has highlighted that CYP with ASD can offer rich and detailed accounts of their views, when directly asked by EPs during interview (Neal et al., 2016). However, extra considerations may be required such

as the use of visuals and exploration of the C/YP's ability to understand emotions (Neal et al., 2016). The deliberation of additional considerations for CYP with SEN is important and has been regarded by EPs in the qualitative element of this research. EPs spoke about the need to consider the C/YP's individual needs, age, and SEN profile before deciding on an approach to use to elicit their views. Individual needs such as the C/YP's intellectual ability level, verbal ability, the presence of any specific learning disability, motor skills and functioning, academic ability and background factors were indicated as factors to deliberate. Indeed, the factors of age and SEN profile have furthermore been highlighted in previous research by EPs working in educational services, when determining which approaches to use to elicit the voices of post-primary aged CYP with SEN (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). Besides this, in the qualitative phase of the current study, EPs highlighted the necessity to be competent as scientist-practitioners in using a range of evidence-based methods and approaches as well as child friendly resources and tools. Such a necessity cannot be overlooked given that it has previously been contended by Davie (1996) that EPs are required to have more in their toolkit than the act of talking, when eliciting the voices of CYP.

Regarding the use of strategies, the quantitative findings indicate that EPs use an extensive assortment of strategies to elicit the voices of school aged CYP with SEN, with the most common being the use of questionnaires, worksheets, and templates. Qualitative data, specifically from EPs in educational services elaborated that EPs in this service are supported by the service to elicit the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. Particularly through the sharing of child-friendly leaflets for CYP and checklists developed by the service. Some of the named tools include the 'My Thoughts about School' and 'What's Going On?' questionnaires. Interestingly, an EP in disability services also named the use of a resource developed by educational services, as well as the use of a set of clinical interview questions devised by the HSE. Such service supports may be interpreted as a facilitator to EP practice in eliciting the views of CYP with SEN, given that previous research has illustrated a dearth of available techniques as one of the major barriers to such practice (Norwich et al., 2006). Within educational services, the working group and EPs' collaboration with colleagues may be valuable in terms of the development and sharing of resources. EPs in disability or primary care services did not mention a relevant working group, however EPs in disability services signified that they collaborate with colleagues to share ideas. Despite the supports within educational services, it was acknowledged by a participant within this service that there are insufficient resources in the service based on novel research and models i.e., the Lundy (2007) model of child participation. The DCEDIY (2021a) recently put forth a National

Participation Strategy, which is underpinned by the Lundy model (2007). Given that the most recent accessible educational services resource named ‘Listening to Children and Young People’ (DE) was published in 2016, it may be that the resources in this service need review and updating. Considering the findings from this study, both quantitative and qualitative data illustrate how EP practice aligns with the four components of the National Participation Strategy framework (DCEDIY, 2021a), namely space; voice; audience; and influence. To demonstrate, for ‘space’, EPs give space to the voice of CYP with SEN through a child-led process, which also involves rapport building; EPs facilitate ‘voice’ by using evidence-based methods/approaches and psychological theory and by adapting their practice; for ‘audience’ EPs represent CYP’s voice through an array of mediums; and finally, for ‘influence’, EPs act on CYP’s voices by creating child-led goals and recommendations.

The quantitative results demonstrate that PCP and SFBT were the most named psychological theories used by EPs across the three services to elicit the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. Accordingly, qualitative findings extend that EP practice is informed by psychological theory when eliciting CYP’s voices. PCP was named by EPs across all three services as a vehicle used to delve into the persona of CYP, offer insight into their views and collate information. SFBT was also discussed in the interviews; EPs indicated a child-centred practice by asking CYP solution-focused and problem-solving questions. Such findings are in keeping with those from earlier research, in which both theories emerged as the most frequently underpinned theories of psychology used by EPs in educational services to elicit the views of post-primary aged CYP with SEN (Hobbs et al., 2000; Roller, 1998; Smillie & Newton, 2020). These findings are significant, given the ensuing core professional competencies of the EP; firstly, to enhance CYP’s development and education by exhibiting knowledge of relevant psychological theories and secondly, to utilise evidence-informed person-centred approaches to enable CYP to appropriately participate in the consultation process (BPS, 2022).

Although social justice theory informed the theoretical lens for the current study, quantitative results reveal that only one EP referenced the use of a ‘rights/justice’ based theory when eliciting the voices of CYP with SEN. This may be because social justice has only been referred to in the most recent ‘Accreditation Criteria for Professional Doctoral Training in Educational Psychology in Ireland’ (PSI, 2022) document, and was not mentioned in previous versions of this document (PSI, 2017). As such, it may be that EP doctoral training programmes did not focus extensively on this theory, until directed to in

2022. What is more, qualitative results extend that only a few EPs in disability and educational services mentioned specific legislation. These findings are important given the plethora of relevant national and international policy that are applicable to the role of the EP. Besides this, EPs in their practice are required to give due weight to the rights of CYP and demonstrate a commitment to promoting social justice (PSI, 2022). Of worth to note, the qualitative findings indicate that in addition to the legislative context, EPs consider their advocacy role and the necessity of acquiring consent and building rapport when eliciting the voice of CYP with SEN. Previous literature has highlighted that these are important principles which may support EPs to provide an “ethically excellent service” (O’Donnell & Gersch, 2015, p.185). Though many of the EPs across the three services highlighted their advocacy role, only a few EPs in disability and educational services commented on consent whilst merely a few EPs in educational services spoke about the importance of building rapport. For this reason, it could be concluded that some EPs, particularly those in primary care and disability services may benefit from up-to-date training in this area.

3.4.1.2 RQ2: “How do EPs in Irish Disability, Educational and Primary Care Services Represent the Voices of School Aged CYP with SEN in their Professional Practice?”. Quantitative findings from the questionnaire indicate that on average, EPs most often represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN within psychological reports and during consultation and meetings with parents and school personnel. Qualitative data extend that EPs represent the voices of CYP through an array of mediums and support that EPs do so in psychological reports and meetings. Such findings are consistent with previous research (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020).

The quantitative data reveals that on average, EPs most frequently record the C/YP’s voice using their own words. These findings were echoed in the qualitative results by EPs in disability and educational services; EPs in both services spoke about how they use direct quotations from the C/YP within psychological reports. Such findings are notable given that previous literature has outlined that EPs ought to cautiously consider the language chosen when representing the voices of CYP to negate the occurrence of inaccurate interpretations and resulting representations (May, 2004; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Whilst formalised models do exist (Fox, 2016), qualitative results reveal that EPs do not use any when representing the voices of school aged CYP with SEN in psychological reports. Such findings are consistent with earlier research (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Netwon, 2020). Relative to the current study, qualitative data highlight that EPs did however consider the

relevance of the information that they were representing and exercise personal and professional judgement. The demonstration of professional judgment is one criterion which is in line with previous research (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). Quantitative results specify that on average, EPs rarely represent the voices of CYP with SEN in child friendly reports. This is somewhat of an expected finding, given that qualitative results in addition to previous research elaborate that time constraints impede EPs ability to write child friendly reports and letters (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). Despite such findings, the PSI (2022) stipulate that EPs ought to be skilled in report-writing which involves the communication of assessment outcomes to a multiplicity of stakeholders, including CYP, where appropriate.

In relation to representing the voices of CYP with SEN in meetings with parents and school personnel, the common narrative from the qualitative data was that EPs did so at feedback meetings, school placement meetings and transition meetings. What is more, the qualitative data highlights that EPs may be required to navigate challenges during such meetings with parents and school personnel. Such challenges entail meeting resistance from stakeholders and aligning with the views of CYP as well as those of parents and school personnel. The challenges cited in the current study align with those in existing research, which have identified that the sensitive communication of the C/YP's views is challenging for EPs, particularly the communication of views that adults may not want to hear (Cook-Sathar, 2006; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Qualitative results furthermore elucidate how EPs may navigate such challenges. For instance, through the development of professional relationships with parents and teachers using person-centred approaches such as empathy, validation, and a non-judgemental approach. Additionally, through demonstrating a neutral or balanced perspective and reflecting on challenges in supervision.

Quantitative results from the questionnaire highlight that on average, EPs most often represent the voices of CYP with SEN using PCP. Humanistic theory, person-centred theory, and the biopsychosocial model also emerged as frequently employed theories used by EPs to represent voice. These findings are significant, given that existing studies in this area did not explore the psychological theories used by EPs to represent the voices of CYP with SEN (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). In terms of theory application, PCP theory may be helpful to represent voice through the constructs that CYP form of their world (Kelly, 1955). Humanistic and person-centred approaches both stem from psychodynamic theory and therefore, may prove illuminating for understanding CYP's relationships with others, including the EP (Billington, 2006). The biopsychosocial model may be informative

in illustrating CYP's voice through the multifaceted relationships between biological, psychological, and social factors (Wu, 2021).

In terms of strategies, the quantitative results indicate that EPs most frequently use the child's view section of the report and a strengths-based report to represent the voices of CYP with SEN. These findings are extended on in the qualitative phase of the current study. To demonstrate, EPs in educational services elucidate how they are encouraged to represent the C/YP's voice through the child's view section of their service report template, which comprises a strengths-based questioning style. Such findings are consistent with earlier research and literature which outline that a strengths-based approach in educational psychology practice is evolving (Bozic, 2013; Wilding & Griffey, 2015). However, it must be noted that ($n = 4$) EPs reported being unsure of the strategies used to represent voice. This, therefore, may be an area of training need for some EPs. The qualitative results indicate that some of the EPs across the three services highlighted that their advocacy role supports them to represent the voices of CYP with SEN, whilst only a few EPs in educational services spoke about the importance of acquiring consent before representing the C/YP's views. These results provide further evidence that some EPs, particularly those in primary care and disability services may benefit from current training in high quality ethical and professional practice.

3.4.2 Methodological Considerations

The strengths and limitations of the current research are presented in detail in the Critical Review (Part 4). Such strengths relate to the research design, paradigm, sample scope and approach, analysis methods and area of research focus. Limitations comprise the sample size of EP participants derived from primary care services and social desirability bias.

3.4.3 Conclusions

Whilst limitations are indicated in Part 4, the present study provides an exploration into how EPs in three Irish psychological services elicit and represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN in their professional practice. Taking a critical realist approach, the study offers new insights to EP practice and extends on findings from other contexts.

Predominately, this study concludes that EPs most commonly elicit CYP's voice using discussion-based and indirect approaches. Nonetheless, EPs are skilled in using a range of strategies and in deliberating additional considerations for CYP with SEN when eliciting their views. Moreover, EPs' practice is informed by psychological theory, most often PCP

when eliciting and representing the views of school aged CYP with SEN. Although social justice theory informed the theoretical perspective taken for the present study, there was minimal reference to this theory within the data as well as a dearth of reference to the legislative context, nationally and internationally. Despite this, the findings demonstrate that EP practice aligns with the four components of the recent National Participation Strategy framework (DCEDIY, 2021a), which is underpinned by the Lundy (2007) model.

This study furthermore reveals that EPs frequently represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN within psychological reports and during meetings with parents and school personnel. In reports, EPs most often represent the C/YP's voice using their own words. Whilst formalised models have been created to support EPs to represent the C/YP's voice in psychological reports, the participants did not reference any. Furthermore, despite the PSI's (2022) stipulation that EPs must be skilled in report-writing assessment outcomes to all stakeholders including CYP, EPs rarely write child friendly reports. Notably, the qualitative findings extend that EPs must be competent in navigating challenges during meetings with parents and school personnel when representing CYP's voices. Of significance, the educational service has developed resources for EPs to use to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN, which may be deemed to be a facilitator for EP practice in this area within the respective service. In addition, the educational service report template includes a 'child's view' section, with questions stemming from a strengths-based approach.

3.4.3.1 Implications

Several implications for practice, policy and future research are detailed in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9

Implications for Practice, Policy, and Research

Implications for the Professional Training of EPs	
1.	In compliment to those that are discussion-based and indirect, it is essential that trainee EPs are skilled in using an array of approaches to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN. For instance, trainee EPs would benefit from exposure to training, which is evidence-based and entails the use of questionnaires or self-report scales, task or activity-based approaches, and therapeutic approaches.
2.	Given that EPs must be skilled in navigating challenges during meetings with parents and school personnel, it is recommended that trainee EPs receive practical training on doing so. Person-centred techniques were outlined by participants in the current study, as being helpful to use to traverse through such challenges, as was the appropriate use of supervision. Therefore, training which focuses on the application of Rogers' (1951) core conditions to aid a person-

centred approach, may be useful for trainee EPs. These conditions, which include empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard, are deemed to facilitate the development of successful therapeutic relationships. Moreover, the importance of using supervision to reflect on challenging encounters with stakeholders ought to be emphasised to trainee EPs. Access to supervision models which encourage trainee EPs to do so is recommended. One such model is the Seven-Eyed model (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012), which comprises one mode that explores the therapist's countertransference reactions to their clients.

3. The PSI (2022) have stated that trainee EPs ought to learn about social justice theory during their doctoral training. However, the data highlights that there was minimal reference to this theory by EPs. Even more, the results provide evidence that EPs may benefit from topical training in high quality ethical and professional practice. Given the legislative foundation of ethical practice, it may be helpful if social justice theory is used as a lens to support trainee EPs to learn about the topics of respect, advocacy, consent and confidentiality and building rapport with CYP with SEN during their doctoral training (O'Donnell & Gersch, 2015).

Implications for Practice for Qualified EPs and Psychological Services

4. It is recommended that EPs are supported to access further training on eliciting and representing the voices of CYP with SEN. With regards to eliciting voice, additional training may consist of learning about suitable evidence-based questionnaires or self-report scales, task or activity-based approaches and therapeutic approaches. Such training should support EPs to have knowledge and access to a myriad of tools to refer to when eliciting the voices of CYP with SEN, given that discussion-based methods may not be appropriate for all profiles of SEN. Targeted training ideas that focus on representing voice are suggested next.
5. The data illustrates that some EPs are unsure of the strategies used to represent voice. In addition, the findings indicate that participants did not reference the use of any formalised model when representing the voices of CYP with SEN in psychological reports. Therefore, it may be helpful for EPs to receive training and input on relevant models such as the National Participation Strategy (DCEDIY, 2021a), Pyramid of Representation (Fox, 2016) and Pathway to Participation (Shier, 2001).
6. EPs in educational services are supported to represent the C/YP's voice in the 'child's view' section of their report template, which comprises a strengths-based questioning style. It is recommended that other services consider adapting their reports to include such a section, as this may prompt EPs to both elicit and represent CYP's views. Moreover, given that strengths-based practice in educational psychology is continuing to evolve (Bozic, 2013; Wilding & Griffey, 2015), EPs may benefit from training on writing strengths-based reports.
7. Data from this study highlights that EPs rarely write child friendly reports. However, EPs are required to be skilled in communicating assessment outcomes to all stakeholders, including CYP (PSI, 2022). Relative to the current study and previous research, time constraints have been identified as a possible reason as to why EPs seldom write such letters (Harding & Atkinson, 2009). To circumvent

time constraints, it is recommended that a resulting service priority from this research is the creation of child friendly report templates, which can be adapted and personalised by EPs based on the C/YP's individual needs.

8. Similarly, to educational services, it may be helpful for EPs in disability and primary care services to consider establishing a working group which focuses on the voices of CYP. The group ought to be responsible for keeping up to date with practice in eliciting and representing the voices of CYP with SEN, and in creating and sharing resources. Collaboration between working groups in each service may be helpful to enhance EP practice across all three services.

Implications for Policy

9. Data from this study highlights that only a few EPs in disability and educational services referenced the international legislative context, while no reference to any national policy was made. Given the EPs' robust role relative to policy, it is recommended that any training provided to EPs focusing on the voices of CYP with SEN, is underpinned by the national and international policy context. For instance, with reference to the UN CRC treaty (UN General Assembly, 1989), the recent Statement of Strategy (DE, 2021b) and the National Consent Policy (HSE, 2022a). Furthermore, it may be helpful if such training is underpinned by a rights-based theoretical approach of social justice, given that the PSI (2022) has stipulated that EPs ought to demonstrate a commitment to promoting social justice in their professional practice.
10. The findings from this study illustrate that EP practice in eliciting and representing the voices of CYP with SEN aligns with the four components of the National Participation Strategy (DCEDIY, 2021a). Therefore, it may be valuable if this information is communicated to EPs nationally through relevant training or the researcher's dissemination of these findings. Ensuing this, these findings could be considered in the development of bespoke resources for EPs to use when eliciting and representing the voices of CYP with SEN.
11. It is further recommended that each service consider the relevant applicable national policy and share this with EPs in their service. For instance, within disability and primary care services, EPs must use age-relevant and adapted additional support for CYP with disabilities, when indicated (HSE, 2022a). Whereas in educational services, the onus is on EPs to place the C/YP's voice at the heart of their work regarding planning and educational provision, and furthermore, to enhance national services for CYP with SEN by integrating their voice into policy (DE, 2021b).

Implications for Future Research

12. This was the first study to explore EP practice in eliciting and representing the voices of CYP with SEN outside of the educational context i.e., by exploring EP practice in disability and primary care settings also. Future research could replicate whether the findings would differ for EPs working within the CAMHS, given that it is only since 2016 that EPs have become eligible to work within this context (HSE, 2021). Furthermore, an additional study within this area may be

appropriate as CAMHS provides specialised services for CYP with moderate to severe mental health presentations (HSE, 2019).

13. It is recommended that as a follow on to this study, the perceptions of school aged CYP with SEN are explored. Specifically, with the intention to explore how CYP in receipt of psychological services within disability, educational and primary care services want to be consulted with by EPs.
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4 Critical Review and Impact Statement

4.1 Introduction

This final paper offers a critical review and reflection on the research process. It begins with a reflection on the epistemological position and theoretical perspective adopted. Ensuing this, a detailed rationale is provided for the design, measures and methods of data analysis utilised. A personal reflection on the research process is then imparted and the strengths and limitations of the research are presented. The final section comprises an impact statement which conveys how this research contributes to the discipline of educational and child psychology and professional practice.

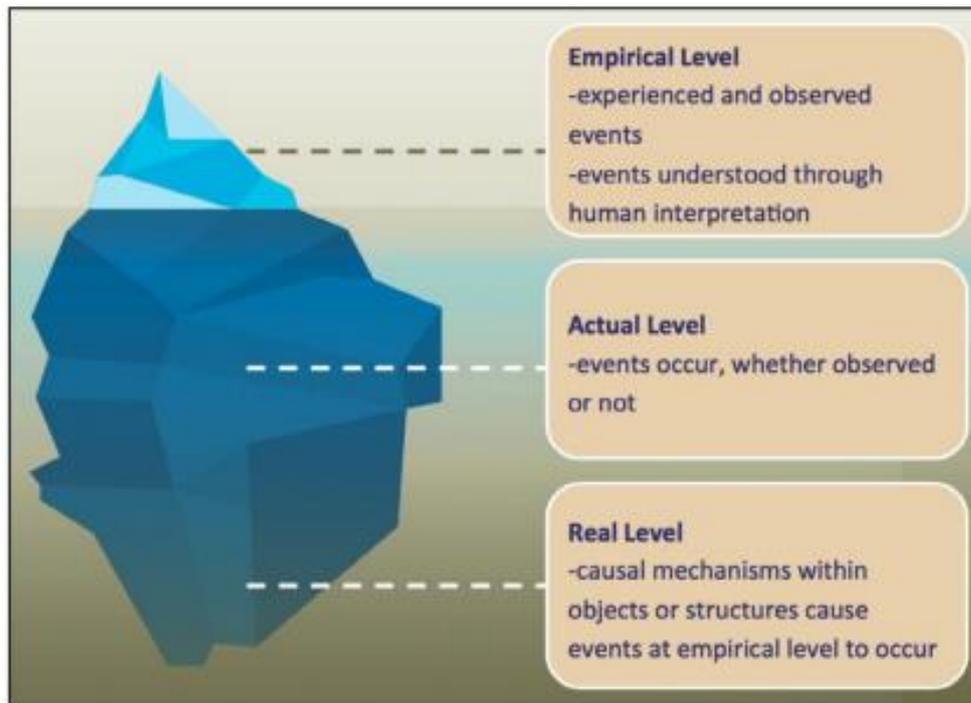
4.2 Reflections on the Epistemological Position

4.2.1 Critical Realism

The present research study, which is concerned with how EPs in three national psychology services elicit and represent the voices of CYP with SEN, was viewed through the lens of a critical realist epistemological position (Bhaskar, 2008). Critical realism acknowledges the possibility of alternate rational explanations of any phenomenon (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). Figure 4.1 below illustrates an iceberg metaphor of critical realism (Fletcher, 2017), which is intended to depict the critical realist ontology and epistemology as it is related to human knowledge of reality. In doing so, the iceberg metaphor conveys the ‘*empirical*’, ‘*actual*’ and ‘*real*’ aspects of reality. To elucidate, these domains refer to the *experience*, the *event* that is occurring, and the *causal mechanisms* underpinning both the experience and the event (Booker, 2021). For critical realists, the main intention of investigation is to obtain knowledge about underlying causal mechanisms to attain an explanation of how things work (Lawani, 2020).

Figure 4.1

Iceberg Metaphor for Critical Realism



Note. From “Applying Critical Realism in Qualitative Research: Methodology Meets Method. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, by A. J. Fletcher, 2017, 20(2), p. 183 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2016.1144401>), CC BY 4.0.

Critical realism was deemed to be an appropriate position to adopt for the current study as the ontological realism element could be reflected on by the researcher to understand EPs knowledge of reality. This has been demonstrated in a recent Irish-based educational psychology paper by Prendeville and Kinsella (2022) and consequently informed the perspective taken in the present research study. To illustrate, within the current study, the researcher perceived that the EP’s professional practice was based on knowledge from a scientist-practitioner perspective (the *empirical*), their experiences as EPs (the *actual* event), and how evidence-based practice, ethical practice and policy was informing their reality (the *causal mechanisms*).

What is more, a notable strength of critical realism entails the idea of stratified reality, which underlines the realist ontology (Bhaskar, 2008; Botha, 2021). This idea recognises that multi-method research techniques are necessary to attend to the manifold levels of reality. As such, this supported the researcher to utilise a MMD for the current study. A further strength

is that critical realism supports a ‘laminated system’ whereby diverging levels of reality are accepted and can be explained through a myriad of layers, which are the essence in providing a well-rounded understanding of phenomenon (Bhaskar & Danermark, 2006; Botha, 2021; Prendeville & Kinsella, 2022). For this research study, the different layers comprised the three service contexts that EPs worked in, namely disability, educational and primary care services. Final strengths are that critical realism is both values-based and social justice oriented (Botha, 2021; Prendeville & Kinsella, 2022). A values-based position aligns with the present research, given that EP practice nationally is guided by professional principles and values (PSI, 2022). Moreover, EPs nationally are required to have an awareness of how their values influence their practice (PSI, 2019). Lastly, the social justice orientation of critical realism is in keeping with the theoretical perspective used for the current research study.

Although the aforesaid points indicate why critical realism was deemed appropriate for the present study, this position is not without some criticism. For example, it has been acknowledged that critical realism has been underrepresented in educational psychology to date (Prendeville & Kinsella, 2022). As a result, the application and relevance of this position within educational psychology research may not yet be fully demonstrated or apprehended. To account for this criticism, the researcher ensured to follow the guidelines and assumptions for critical realism in the broad realm of psychology, as put forth by Pilgrim (2020). These comprise ontological realism, epistemological relativism, and judgemental rationalism, which are detailed earlier in Part 3 (Section 3.2.2). Such guidelines and assumptions enabled the researcher to understand EPs’ knowledge of reality in the context of eliciting and representing the voices of CYP with SEN, whilst also bearing in mind evidence-based practice, ethical practice and policy. In addition, consideration was given to existing educational psychology literature and research that have outlined the utility of critical realism (Booker, 2021; Ingram, 2013; Prendeville & Kinsella, 2022).

4.2.2 *Alternative Approach*

An alternative approach that was considered for the current research study entailed that of social constructivism. Social constructivism espouses that reality is socially constructed and that a myriad of realities exist which are time and context dependent (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2015). Indeed, it was initially considered that this approach would enable the researcher to gain an understanding of the multiple realities constructed by EPs across the various service contexts. However, a critique of social constructivism is that of methodological rigidity (Botha, 2021). Qualitative methods are usually employed in research

designs using social constructivism given that the nature of knowledge is deemed to be subjective, and the focus is on lived experience (Botha, 2021; Lincoln et al., 2011). Accordingly, in the existing literature, mixed method approaches are not endorsed for this approach (Botha, 2021). In view of the current study, a well-rounded understanding of EP practice in eliciting and representing the voices of CYP with SEN was required, using a multitude of approaches. Therefore, in contrast to social constructivism, critical realism favoured the use of multiple research methods (Botha, 2021).

4.3 Theoretical Perspective

4.3.1 Social Justice Theory

Social justice theory informed the theoretical perspective for the current research study. As already outlined within this thesis, Bell (1997) defined social justice as involving the full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is reciprocally moulded to meet their needs. Nationally, the PSI (2022) have emphasised that EPs are responsible for promoting social justice and inclusion for all CYP, families and schools. Thus, the use of social justice theory in the present research study was appropriate as it facilitated the researcher to consider the significant role that EPs possess in promoting social justice relative to the voice of CYP with SEN, by working at a systems level and with a range of stakeholders. Furthermore, the social justice-oriented lens supported the researcher to interpret the findings in terms of how EPs adapt their practice, in an equitable manner, to elicit and represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN.

A notable strength of adopting this perspective is that there is an abundance of international literature contesting the role of social justice in psychology (Arfken & Yen, 2014; Louis et al., 2014; Mays, 2000). However, much of the available research and literature is positioned within the fields of community (Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002; Prilleltensky, 2001) and counselling psychology (Cutts, 2013; Vera & Speight, 2003), which may be interpreted as a critique. Nonetheless, the application of social justice theory in the realm of educational psychology appears to be evolving (Pillay, 2020; Schulze et al., 2017). Furthermore, school psychologists have defined social justice as ensuring the protection of rights and opportunities for all (Shriberg et al., 2008). Therefore, social justice theory was deemed appropriate for the present study as it supported the researcher to reflect on the onus on EPs to give due weight to the rights of the CYP (PSI, 2022), throughout the research process. What is more, this rights-based theoretical perspective was considered during the

researcher's interpretation of the findings, markedly within the 'Legislative Context' sub-theme.

However, there are challenges in universally defining social justice due to individual experiences (Todd & Rufa, 2013). Still, Bell's (1997) definition was deemed to be appropriate for the current study as it has been utilised in some educational psychology research and reviews to date (Pillay, 2020; Schulze et al., 2017). Furthermore, there is a paucity of literature and research relative to the application of this theory in the Irish field of educational psychology. This is despite the PSI (2022) stipulating that trainee EPs are required to learn about this theory during their doctoral training and moreover, that qualified EPs ought to demonstrate commitment to promoting social justice in their professional practice.

4.3.2 Alternative Theoretical Perspective

Several alternative theoretical perspectives were considered by the researcher when determining the conceptual theory to inform the current research study. One such theory was PCP (Kelly, 1955). PCP theory begins with the assumption that individual's build their own individual, subjective understanding of reality from the viewpoint of their own experiences, which is therefore rational (Kelly, 1955; Sewell, 2020). A strength of PCP is that it has been contested in the educational psychology research as a suitable psychological theory to comprehend and represent the multifaceted intricacy of CYPs' perspectives, garnered from exploring their experiences and viewpoints only (Sewell, 2020). However, while the current study concentrates on the voice of the C/YP, it does so from the perspective of EPs, with a predominant focus on EP practice in eliciting and representing voice. Therefore, given that PCP theory is typically used to understand, elicit and represent the voices of CYP, it was not deemed to be suitable for the present study, which explores the perspectives of EPs. Furthermore, it has been contested that PCP exists within a constructivist paradigm, which is not consistent with the critical realist perception utilised for the present study (Raskin, 2002).

4.4 Reflections on, and Rationale for the Research Design

4.4.1 Mixed Method Design (MMD)

Mixed method research, by definition, is that in which the researcher gathers and analyses data, integrates the findings, and derives inferences using both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). A primary reason for using a MMD is that a critical realist approach stipulates that this design offers the most in-depth

understanding of the research area (Botha, 2021). Consequently, a MMD was used to gain an extensive insight into how EPs in Irish disability, educational and primary care services elicit and represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. There are several strengths to using such a design (McCrudden et al., 2019). To demonstrate, relative to the current study, the researcher was facilitated to ask and answer several different RQs (Mertens, 2015); attain a more profound and extensive understanding of the research area than that which would be yielded from a purely qualitative or quantitative approach (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006; McCrudden & Marchand, 2020); and obtain a greater assurance in the findings and conclusions derived from the research study (O’Cathain et al., 2010). Despite such strengths, limitations of devising and conducting rigorous mixed methods research were considered by the researcher and entailed the significant constraints in terms of effort, time, and proficiency (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; McKim, 2017).

4.4.1.1 Explanatory Sequential Design (ESD). An ESD (Figure 4.2), which is a core MMD, was deemed to be appropriate for the current research study. In phase one of this research design, the researcher collected and analysed quantitative data from the online questionnaire. Subsequently, in phase two, the researcher used the quantitative findings to inform the qualitative data collection (semi-structured interviews) and analysis.

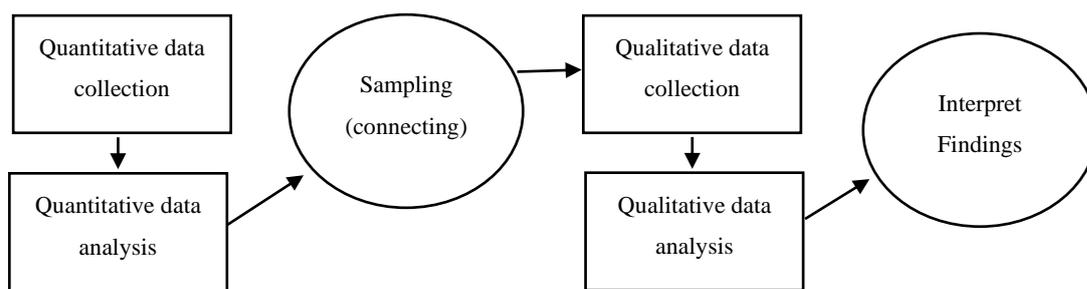
A notable strength of this design was the process of integration, which facilitated the researcher to use the qualitative findings to extend and elaborate on the initial quantitative findings (Creswell et al., 2003; Ivankova et al., 2006). According to Bryman (2006) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the integration of quantitative and qualitative data can considerably enhance the value of mixed methods research. For the present research study, integration took place at two points. Firstly, integration through ‘connecting’ occurred at the methods level; the EP interview participants were selected from the sample of EP participants who completed the online questionnaire via an ‘opt in’ process. Secondly, integration at the interpretation level transpired through an ‘interleaving’ approach. As such, the quantitative data collection and analysis element was described and this was followed by descriptions of the qualitative data collection and analysis, the quantitative results, and the qualitative results. In the last part, the quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated (McCrudden & Marchand, 2020; McCrudden & McTigue, 2019).

Although integration at the method and interpretation level can augment the quality of mixed methods research and create rigorous evidence (Fetters et al., 2013), the challenges of an ESD are important to consider. Within the literature, limitations associated with such a

design comprise the intricacy of the inquiry (Guest, 2013; Morse & Niehaus, 2009), sampling difficulties (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), and an extended timescale (Doyle et al., 2016). Tayon (2021) however, proposes that issues as such can be dealt with by concentrating on the concepts of reliability and validity. Therefore, to ensure reliability and validity, the researcher compared the questionnaire and interview schedules with those already existing in the research area (Smillie & Newton, 2020), consulted the research supervisor and review panel members during the researcher’s Progression Panel in March 2022 (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019), and conducted pilot studies (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Member checks and an independent coder were also utilised (Gale et al., 2013; O’Connor & Joffe, 2020).

Figure 4.2

Visual of ESD to Illustrate the Current Research Study



Note. From “Implementing Integration in an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Study of Belief Bias about Climate Change With High School Students” by M. T. McCrudden and E. M. McTigue, 2019, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 13(3), p. 36. (<https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689818762576>), CC BY 4.0.

4.4.1.2 Alternative Design. An alternative MMD design that was considered was that which was convergent in nature. In such a design, the data for the quantitative and qualitative elements are gathered within the same period, the data for both elements are analysed independently, and then the data from both elements are integrated during interpretation to locate potential examples of convergence or divergence (McCrudden et al., 2019). Strengths of this design are that the integration that takes place can broaden the depth and range of the inquiry and/or pursue validation of results from the two elements (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). However, while it may have been helpful to see if EP self-reported practice on the questionnaire and during the interview was at variance, it was decided that this was not the

primary intention of the present research. What is more, a limitation of the convergent design is that data collection for both the quantitative and qualitative elements takes place in tandem (McCrudden et al., 2019). Given that the researcher was completing this research as an independent researcher, it was determined that ESD would be appropriate as there is flexibility regarding data collection i.e., the quantitative and qualitative data collection could be completed separately. This was advantageous for the researcher given the supplementary demands upon the researcher throughout the doctorate (i.e., completion of professional placement whilst conducting the current research study).

4.5 Reflections on, and Rationale for the Measures and Sample

Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are commonly used together in MMD's to impart confirmatory results (Harris & Brown, 2010). These measures were both used in the present study to acquire direct responses from the EPs about their comprehensions, impressions, beliefs, and attitudes regarding their practice in eliciting and representing the voices of school aged CYP with SEN (Harris & Brown, 2010). Both measures will now be reflected on individually and critiqued.

4.5.1 Questionnaire

During phase one of the study, EPs completed an online self-report questionnaire on Survey Monkey (Momentive Incorporation, 2022). The questionnaire comprised two parts. Firstly, the demographic questions (Appendix P) intended to capture information about the EPs background, current role and employment service, levels of education and profiles of SEN that the EPs predominately work with in their current role. In the second part, EPs were asked questions about their practice in eliciting and representing the voices of school aged CYP with SEN (Appendix Q). These questions were designed by the researcher to reflect and extend on those already existing in the area (Smillie & Newton, 2020). Moreover, the questions in this part entailed a combination of question and response styles, predominately Likert scales as well as multiple choice and short answer questions. For the Likert scale items, participants were asked to rate their response to each item utilising a 5-point Likert scale based on frequency, where 1 indicates 'never' and 5 indicates 'always'.

Questionnaires have both strengths and limitations. Price et al. (2017) proposes that good measurement commences with a robust conceptual definition of the construct being measured. For this reason, the questionnaire was created with a clear focus on the distinct concepts of 'eliciting' and 'representing' CYP's voices. This was achieved through clear thinking and a preceding systematic review of the literature (Price et al., 2017). A further

strength is that the face validity of the questionnaire was assessed by the research supervisor and progression panel members in the area as previously mentioned (Price et al., 2017). Apart from this, the questionnaire supported the researcher to gather quantitative data from a sizable number of participants ($N = 83$) over a short period of time (McCrudden et al., 2019). Despite such strengths, limitations entail issues relating to self-reporting, given that the validity of the information is dependent on the honesty of the participant (Mertens, 2015). For instance, research has identified that a proportion of individuals may respond in line with what they think is socially desirable as opposed to what they believe is true (Richman et al., 1999). To minimise such bias, the researcher guaranteed anonymity and introduced the study in advance using a participant information form (Bergen & Labonté, 2020; Mertens, 2015). Another limitation is that questionnaire response rate is likely impacted by the length of the questionnaire (Mertens, 2015). To circumvent this, the researcher made the questionnaire as direct and concise as possible (Price et al., 2017). Pilot studies were also carried out to identify issues relating to feasibility, accessibility, formatting, or gaps in the questions being asked, in addition to reviewing participant comprehension (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Nevertheless, the wording of ‘elicit’ and ‘represent’ (Appendix Q) make question 35 on the questionnaire redundant.

With regard to alternative measures, the researcher initially considered using the existing questionnaire devised by Smillie and Newton (2020). The advantages of doing so would have entailed time efficiency and that the results from the current study could easily be evaluated with the results in Smillie and Newton’s (2020) study (Price et al., 2017). However, given that the present study sought to extend and elaborate on Smillie and Newton’s (2020) study and separately explore the constructs of ‘eliciting’ and ‘representing’, a modified questionnaire was deemed to be more suitable.

4.5.2 *Semi-Structured Interviews*

Individual semi-structured interviews between the researcher and participants took place during phase two of the research study. The intention of using semi-structured interviews was to gather in-depth information from the participants and extend and elaborate upon the initial quantitative findings due to the ESD nature of the research study (Brod et al., 2009; Creswell et al., 2003; Ivankova et al., 2006). Like the questionnaire, the interview guide was developed based on the researcher’s prior knowledge of the area derived from the preceding systematic review of the literature and expert opinion in relation to the area i.e., from the research supervisor and Progress Panel members (Brod et al., 2009).

Like questionnaires, semi-structured interviews possess both strengths and limitations. A distinct strength is that through the semi-structured interview, new information about the research area could be generated and prior information from existing studies could be validated or refuted (Brod et al., 2019). This strength was important as it supported the researcher to consider the findings in the context of the limited existing research in this area i.e., those from Harding and Atkinson (2009) and Smillie and Newton's (2020) studies. Another strength relates to flexibility. To elucidate, although the researcher began each interview by asking a modest number of open-ended questions, there was opportune to spend time probing the participant responses and inciting them to provide further detail and explanation (Harris & Brown, 2010). Again, like the questionnaire, limitations are associated with the self-reporting nature of this measure and the possibility of social desirability bias. Thus, the researcher strived to establish rapport and ask questions during the interviews to minimise such bias (Bergen & Labonté, 2020).

An alternative approach that was considered was a focus group. Focus groups are also appropriate for gathering qualitative data. A strength is that they provide a breadth of experiences and viewpoints (Morgan, 1996). However, a critique is that during focus groups, some participants may be more hesitant in sharing their views or experiences within a group dynamic. For this reason, it was decided that individual interviews would be more appropriate as they would provide a platform for the EPs to privately share their perceptions and experiences of their practice, without input from others (Morgan, 1997).

4.5.3 Sample

The stratified purposive sampling approach in the present study is deemed to be useful in MMD's, particularly as it supports the researcher to identify and describe in detail features that are convergent or divergent across subgroups (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Therefore, this sampling approach was considered appropriate for the current study given that the primary intention was to explore if there was variance in practice between the EPs working across the three subgroups, namely EPs in disability, educational and primary care services. Further, the theoretical premise for using a stratified sample was that EPs working across the three services work within a different model of service and so, may work differently with CYP with SEN (Robinson, 2014). It is only since 2016 that EPs became eligible for employment in primary care and CAMHS (HSE, 2021). Apart from this, CAMHS services are complex in that they provide specialist services to CYP with moderate to severe mental health presentations (HSE, 2019). Therefore, EPs in CAMHS were not included in the study sample.

As a result of recent changes to eligibility criteria for EP employment in CAMHS and the specialised service provision, an additional study focusing on EP practice within this service context may be of benefit (see Table 3.12 for the relevant research implication).

4.6 Reflections on, and Rationale for the Methods of Analysis

For this study, the quantitative data was analysed using descriptive analyses, while a framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) was applied to the qualitative data. A reflection and critique of these methods of analysis will now be detailed.

4.6.1 *Quantitative Data Analysis*

Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted in this study so to describe characteristics of the entire sample (Mertens, 2015). Such analyses were appropriate for the present study as they enabled the researcher to summarise and present the demographic data from the sample (Mertens, 2015). The resulting demographic data, which was presented in table format, was informative given that this was the first study of its kind in Ireland. An alternative statistical approach that was considered was that which was correlational in nature. Such an approach may have been helpful in explaining the strength and direction of two or more variables (Mertens, 2015). Whilst the resulting findings may have proven illuminating in understanding the variables (i.e., educational level) which impact EP's practice in eliciting and representing the voices of CYP with SEN, such investigations were not the primary intentions of this research study. Therefore, and for the reasons outlined above, the descriptive analyses were deemed to be more appropriate.

4.6.2 *Qualitative Data Analysis*

Qualitative data from the interviews was analysed through framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Framework analysis is an intrinsically comparative form of qualitative analysis that is used to create themes inductively or deductively and moreover, facilitate cross-sectional analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Spencer et al., 2014). As such, the primary rationale for using this method of analysis was that it enabled a comparison of findings across EPs working in disability, educational and primary care services (Goldsmith, 2021). Thus, ensuring the context of individual participants was still considered (Gale et al., 2013). A second strength was that it allowed for inductive theme generation by the researcher (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Spencer et al., 2014). This was important given the limited pre-existing research within this area internationally (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020) and the notable absence of research nationally. Another strength is that

framework analysis is regarded as having an extended and fruitful reputation for enhancing understanding of policy concerns and social issues to aid policy makers, service deliverers and other knowledge consumers (Goldsmith, 2021). Accordingly, framework analysis was helpful in supporting a theoretical-led understanding of the data, by facilitating the researcher to consider the findings within a social-justice oriented lens (Bell, 1997). As recommended by Gale et al. (2013), the researcher engaged in a reflexive process by keeping a research diary and field notes to document feelings, thoughts, and initial interpretations of the data (Appendix X). Moreover, in line with that which was recommended by Gale et al. (2013), the researcher also used the research diary and field notes to think critically about the data and how it related to pre-existing research and literature.

Limitations however were that “framework analysis is not inherently simple, quick or undemanding” (Goldsmith, 2021, p.2062). To navigate such challenges, the researcher exposed themselves to comprehensive examples of research using framework analysis, in line with recommendations in previous research (Goldsmith, 2021). The researcher also availed of NVIVO (QSR International, 2022) training in their college, given that this software was used to support the data analysis.

An alternative qualitative approach that was originally considered for analysis of the interviews was thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is a six-step approach that is used to detect, analyse, and construe patterns of meaning (or themes), within qualitative datasets (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A strength of this approach is that it is used to detect themes relating to the participant’s lived experience, perception, behaviour, and practices (Braun & Clarke, 2017). Moreover, it can be used within a critical framework and for both inductive and deductive analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2017). However, unlike framework analysis, it is not a fundamentally comparative method of qualitative analysis (Goldsmith, 2021).

4.6.2.1 Rigour and Credibility. Several methodological limitations comprising insufficient evidence of data saturation, lack of researcher reflexivity and inadequate evidence of an audit trail were identified following a critical appraisal of the 11 studies included in the systematic review (see section 2.9.1.1, Part 2). To address such limitations, the researcher endeavoured to ensure both rigour and credibility in the current study using various techniques. To demonstrate, the systematic five-step approach of the framework analysis as well as NVIVO software (QSR International, 2022) supported the researcher to provide a clear audit trail and thus, enhance the transparency of the research process (Flick, 1998; Gale et al., 2013; Goldsmith, 2021). Taking field notes, use of the research diary and

utilising an independent coder furthermore supported the researcher to ensure both rigour and researcher reflexivity (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003; Gale et al., 2013; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). To ensure credibility and thus, ensure the soundness of the study, the researcher evidenced data triangulation (qualitative and quantitative data) and carried out first and second level member checks (Brantlinger et al., 2005). Finally, the researcher conducted the interviews until such a time that it was considered that data saturation was reached (Brod et al., 2009).

4.7 Reflections on the Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was applied for and received from the MIREC in January 2022 (see Appendix U). Subsequently, amendments to the questionnaire were made and approved by MIREC in April 2022 (see Appendix V). To include participants from one of the educational services, ethical clearance was also sought and obtained from the NEPS Research Advisory Committee in March 2022 (see Appendix U).

The researcher ensured to conduct the research in a manner which adhered to the PSI Code of Professional Ethics (2019). This was pertinent for the recruitment and data collection process as well as ensuring participant confidentiality and anonymity. For the online questionnaire, signed consent forms were not required since completing the questionnaire implied consent from participants (Manandhar & Joshu, 2020; MIREC, 2021). Nonetheless, potential participants were provided with the Participant Information Letter (Appendix L), prior to deciding whether to take part in the study or not (Lancaster University, 2023). The information letter provided information on what the research was about, who was undertaking it and why, and there was also a description of what was expected of participants. It was acknowledged that participants completing the anonymous questionnaire would be unable to withdraw from the study once the form was submitted. Participants were made aware that they may choose to withdraw from the subsequent interview without giving a reason and without consequence. For the interviews, participants read and signed an informed consent form (Appendix O). This form contained information about how their participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without giving any reason and without any consequence. Participants were also informed about how the research outcomes would be used. All research activities were carried out on the researcher's password-protected laptop. All research data remained confidential and were stored on a password-protected USB. No identifiable details were used, including names of participants or services. Each participant was given a unique identification number to ensure

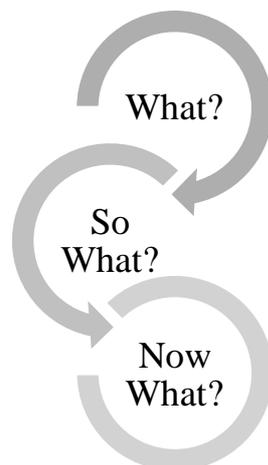
anonymity during the data collection process. For written reporting of results, pseudonyms were used.

4.8 Personal Reflection

Rolfe et al.'s (2001) reflective model was used to reflect on my experience of conducting this doctoral research process. This model is based on the consideration of the following three questions: 'What?', 'So What', and 'Now What?' (Figure 4.3). In part one, the research experience and process is described, while part two illustrates the significance of engaging in this research process and my newly acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Finally, part three details the next steps that I will take to enhance my professional practice as a qualified EP (Rolfe et al., 2001).

Figure 4.3

Rolfe et al.'s (2001) Reflective Model



4.8.1 'What?'

Throughout my training on the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology my interest in listening to the voices of CYP, particularly those with SEN continued to develop. Although this interest was somewhat pre-existing, I recall a lecture in semester two of first year entitled the 'The Voice of the Child', which prompted me to consider this area for my doctoral research study. This lecture introduced me to theoretical approaches in this area, specific techniques, and relevant policy. Further, given that I was undertaking my professional placement in children's disability services at the time of this lecture, I was mindful of the range of CYP with SEN that were receiving services in disability services, and how I, as trainee EP, could adapt my practice to listen to their voice, given their array of needs and abilities. Following this, I systematically reviewed the

available research in this area to inform my practice as a trainee EP and moreover, to inform the development of my own RQs and resulting research study.

4.8.2 ‘So What?’

For me, this research process provided me with ample opportunity to enhance my knowledge and skills as a critical researcher. To demonstrate, some of the methods and approaches employed throughout this research study were novel to me, including the MMD, framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) and use of NVIVO software (QSR International, 2022). Therefore, it was necessary for me to familiarise myself with the approaches of MMDs and framework analysis by exposing myself to relevant work using these approaches. Moreover, I attended and engaged in NVIVO (QSR International, 2022) training organised by the Research and Graduate School in Mary Immaculate College to enhance my skills in using this software. Such learning was significant for my knowledge and skill development, given that the PSI (2022) have emphasised that trainee EPs ought to be skilled in devising and conducting applicable and rigorous research and demonstrating knowledge of research paradigms, methods and designs that are relevant to research in the realm of educational psychology.

Initially, I believed that my main learning transpired to this development of knowledge and skills as a researcher. However, on reflection, I believe that engaging with this research process has also had a significant impact on my attitudes and my resulting practice as a trainee EP, particularly in relation to actualising social justice in an Irish educational psychology context. To illustrate, on my current placement in child and adolescent psychology, I now believe it is important to underpin my work within the national legislative context and give credence to the components of space; voice; audience; and influence in line with the Lundy (2007) model. Such an approach is helping me to weave social justice into my practice, given that it has been stipulated that social justice can be promoted for CYP in educational settings through equitable practice underpinned by these four components of the Lundy model (Vaghri, et al., 2020). What is more, through the findings from my research study, I have come to learn about how these four components may be implemented in practice by EPs i.e., through a child-led process (space); using evidence-based approaches, psychological theory, and adapting practice (voice); representing voice through an array of mediums (audience); and finally, acting on CYP’s voices through child-led goals and recommendations (influence). Such learning has ultimately instilled confidence

in my own ability to apply theory to practice, in relation to actualising social justice theory as a trainee EP and even more I hope, as a future qualified EP.

As a next step, I would like to disseminate this research at various local, national and international levels so to enhance EP knowledge in this area of practice. Moreover, I think it is necessary that such dissemination emphasises the national and international legislative context, which EPs operate within, given the notable dearth of policy named by participants during the semi-structured interviews of this research study. In addition, I think that it would be informative to situate such dissemination within a rights-based, social justice-oriented lens given that the PSI (2022) have emphasised that EPs are responsible for promoting social justice and inclusion for all CYP.

4.8.3 ‘Now What?’

Finally, in my future practice as a qualified EP, I intend to demonstrate my commitment to the intersect of social justice and the rights of CYP with SEN to be heard through the following: promoting the four components of the Lundy (2007) model in practice; being skilled in using a myriad of tools to elicit voice; representing voice in child-friendly reports (where appropriate) or the ‘child’s view’ section of psychological reports; and advocating for the establishment of working groups in disability and primary care services focusing on the voices of CYP with SEN, as well as collaboration between resulting working groups in disability, educational and primary care services. Besides this, conducting this research project has sparked my interest in joining the PSI (2023) special interest group in ‘Human Rights and Psychology’ and ultimately, endorsing the education of psychologists on human rights and the national and international legislative frameworks.

4.9 Strengths and Limitations of the Research

This research study is not without its own strengths and limitations. The strengths relate to the research design, paradigm, sample scope and approach, method of data analysis and area of research focus, while the limitations predominantly relate to sample size and social desirability bias. The strengths and limitations are presented in detail below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1*Strengths and Limitations of the Current Research Study*

Strengths	
1.	A strength of the present study is the adoption of a MMD. Use of a mixed methods approach allowed for a more in depth understanding of the research topic than a purely quantitative or qualitative approach (McCrudden & Marchand, 2020). Moreover, utilising this design enabled the researcher to ask and answer multiple RQs (Mertens, 2015).
2.	A further strength was the participation of EPs from three national psychological services. Previous research exploring this area has solely utilised an educational services sample of EPs (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). However, EPs in an Irish context may work with school aged CYP with SEN across educational services, in addition to disability and primary care services. Use of a purposeful stratified sampling approach furthermore supported the researcher to divide the sample into three groups based on EPs' service of employment (Robinson, 2014).
3.	Application of the framework method of analysis is another strength of the current study (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). This tool offered the researcher the mechanisms to qualitatively compare findings across the three stakeholder groups, namely, EPs working in disability, educational and primary care services (Goldsmith, 2021).
4.	Moreover, a strength is that EP practice was explored in relation school aged CYP with SEN, thus incorporating CYP in both primary and post-primary school. Previous research in this area has only evaluated EP practice in eliciting and representing the voices of post-primary aged CYP with SEN (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020).
5.	Utilising the critical realism research paradigm allowed the researcher to interpret EPs' perspectives relative to the role of values in research; the theoretical disposition of facts; the idea that reality is intricate; and the assertion that the data may be rationalised by multiple theories (Robson, 2002)
Limitations	
6.	This research study comprised a small sample size of primary care EPs for both the questionnaire ($n = 6$) and interview ($n = 2$). Nonetheless, in line with Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), the primary care sample size was sufficient to attain data saturation, informational redundancy and reduce the enigma of atypical information, which may derive from one primary care participant.
7.	An additional limitation of this study is that EP practice was self-reported on the questionnaire and during the semi-structured interview, meaning that social desirability bias is important to consider. Social desirability entails a predisposition to bestow reality to align with what is professed to be socially

acceptable (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). To minimise such bias during the questionnaire, the researcher introduced the study in advance using a participant information form, whilst also establishing rapport and asking questions during the interviews (Bergen & Labonté, 2020).

8. The practice of the EPs who took part in this study may be at variance to the EPs who did not take part. To elucidate, the EPs who took part in this study may be passionate about advocating for CYP with SEN to put forth their voice.
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4.10 Impact Statement

The present study set out to explore how EPs working across Irish disability, educational and primary care services elicit and represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN in their professional practice. It was hoped that devising and conducting such applicable and rigorous research would be of benefit to the field of educational and child psychology, in addition to the professional practice of EPs nationally and internationally.

To begin with, the findings and insight from this study have importantly contributed to the field of educational and child psychology by adding to the dearth of empirical literature and research in this area nationally and internationally. To elucidate, despite national and international policy, as well as the relevant core professional competencies of the EP in child consultation (BPS, 2022; PSI, 2022), there is little available research that explores EPs' practice in this specific area. In addition, the limited research that is available is situated within a UK educational psychology services context and focuses only on post-primary CYP with SEN. Therefore, a notable strength of this research study is that it is the first study to explicitly explore how EPs working across a range of psychological services elicit and represent the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. Moreover, it extends to include the breadth of CYP attending both primary and post primary schools. Additionally, it is currently the only study of this nature within an Irish context. Thus, the primary impact of this research study relates to its originality in the field of educational and child psychology in Ireland and internationally.

A further impact of this study relates to the professional practice of the EP and germane policy. EPs possess a significant role in promoting social justice for CYP with SEN by giving due weight to their rights (PSI, 2022). However, the findings and insight from this research study highlight that there is a need for EPs working across disability, educational and primary care services to enhance their awareness and knowledge of the policy context in terms of their role in eliciting and representing the voices of school aged CYP with SEN. Such knowledge, findings and insight have led to policy implications for EPs nationally in

the form of training that focuses on the voices of CYP with SEN and, importantly, is underpinned by the national and international policy context.

It is envisaged that the dissemination of the findings, knowledge and insight presented in this research study will be of benefit to the field of educational and child psychology and the professional practice of EPs nationally and internationally. Such disseminations have started through the researcher's presentation of the initial research plan at the Mary Immaculate College, Research Week 'Thesis in 3' competition in February 2022 as well as presentation of preliminary findings at the PSI's Annual Conference in November 2022. The researcher furthermore plans to present the research study at future conferences and the Department of Educational and Child Psychology Research Methods Summer School at Mary Immaculate College in May 2023. Finally, the researcher plans to submit the Empirical Paper for publication to relevant peer-reviewed journals in the hope that such dissemination will extend the impact of the research study. Such journals that the researcher has considered to date include '*Educational Psychology*', '*Educational and Child Psychology*', '*Educational Psychology in Practice*', '*British Journal of Educational Psychology*', and '*Irish Educational Studies*'.

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Appendix A: Excluded Papers (Full References and Rationale)

Full References for Excluded Papers	Rationale
1. Ashton, R. (2008). Improving the transfer to secondary school: how every child’s voice can matter. <i>Support for Learning</i> , 23(4), 176–182. https://doi.org/10.0.4.87/j.1467-9604.2008.00391.x	Criterion 3.
2. Bannirchelvam, B., Bell, K. L., & Costello, S. (2017). A qualitative exploration of primary school students’ experience and utilisation of mindfulness. <i>Contemporary School Psychology</i> , 21(4), 304–316. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-017-0141-2	Criterion 3.
3. Boström, P., & Broberg, M. (2018). Protection and restriction: A mixed-methods study of self-reported well-being among youth with intellectual disabilities. <i>Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities</i> , 31(1), e164–e176. https://doi.org/10.0.4.87/jar.12364	Criterion 3.
4. Colville, T. (2013). Strengths-based approaches in multi-agency meetings: The development of theory and practice. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 30(4), 100–123. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2013.30.4.100	Criterion 4.
5. Craggs, H., & Kelly, C. (2018). School belonging: Listening to the voices of secondary school students who have undergone managed moves. <i>School Psychology International</i> , 39(1), 56–73. https://doi.org/10.0.4.153/0143034317741936	Criterion 3.
6. Davies, O., & Lewis, A. (2013). Children as researchers: An Appreciative Inquiry with primary-aged children to improve “Talking and Listening” activities in their class. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 30(4), 59–74. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2013.30.4.59	Criterion 3.
7. Francis, Y., & Sanders, L. (2022). Using a quality first communication approach: Working systemically to support children with speech, language and communication needs in the youth justice system. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i> , 39(2), 102-120. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2022.39.2.102	Criterion 4.
8. Gersch, I., Dowling, F., Panagiotaki, G., & Potton, A. (2008). Listening to children’s views of spiritual and metaphysical concepts: A new dimension to educational psychology practice? <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 24(3), 225–236. https://doi.org/10.0.4.56/02667360802256782	Criterion 3.
9. Gersch, I., Lipscomb, A., Stoyles, G., & Caputi, P. (2014). Using philosophical and spiritual conversations with children and young people: A method for psychological assessment,	Criterion 3.

Full References for Excluded Papers	Rationale
listening deeply and empowerment. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 31(1), 32–47.	
10. Giles, P., & Rowley, J. (2020). Educational psychologists' responses to a post-16 service user film on their practice: A participatory research project. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 36(1), 78–92. https://doi.org/10.0.4.56/02667363.2019.1688135	Criterion 3.
11. Goodhall, N., & Atkinson, C. (2020). An exploratory case study: Children's perceptions of play access in two schools (England and Wales). <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 37(4), 37–52. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2020.37.4.37	Criterion 3.
12. Hamill, P., & Boyd, B. (2002). Equality, Fairness and Rights – The Young Person's Voice. <i>British Journal of Special Education</i> , 29(3), 111–117. https://doi.org/10.0.4.87/1467-8527.00252	Criterion 3.
13. Hammond, N. (2013). Introducing Forum Theatre to elicit and advocate children's views. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 29(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.0.4.56/02667363.2012.733309	Criterion 3.
14. Hart, S. N., Pavlovic, Z., & Zeidner, M. (2001). The ISPA Cross-National Children's Rights Research Project. <i>School Psychology International</i> , 22(2), 99. https://doi.org/10.0.4.153/0143034301222001	Criterion 3.
15. Hayes, J. (2004). Visual annual reviews: how to include pupils with learning difficulties in their educational reviews. <i>Support for Learning</i> , 19(4), 175–180. https://doi.org/10.0.4.87/j.0268-2141.2004.00344.x	Criterion 5.
16. Hills, R. (2016). An evaluation of the emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) project from the perspectives of primary school children. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 33(4), 50–65. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2016.33.4.50	Criterion 3.
17. Howarth-Lees, D., & Woods, K. (2022). Eliciting and integrating views of children and families within the work of youth justice services: What can educational psychologists contribute? <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i> , 39(2), 121–133. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2022.39.2.121	Criterion 4.
18. Hughes, M. (2016). Critical, respectful, person-centred: Q Methodology for educational psychologists. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 33(3), 63–75. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2016.33.3.63	Criterion 3.
19. Jacob, J., Edbrooke-Childs, J., Holley, S., Law, D., & Wolpert, M. (2016). Horses for courses? A qualitative exploration of goals formulated in mental health settings by young	Criterion 4.

Full References for Excluded Papers	Rationale
people, parents, and clinicians. <i>Clinical Child Psychology & Psychiatry</i> , 21(2), 208–223. https://doi.org/10.0.4.153/1359104515577487	
20. King, J. (2022). Prioritising young peoples’ voices in research and work in youth offending services: Themes from free association research methods and a co-production project with young people. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i> , 39(2), 28-41. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2022.39.2.28	Criterion 4.
21. McCarter, S., & Woolner, P. (2011). How listening to student voice can enable teachers to reflect on and adjust their use of physical space. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 28(1), 20–32. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2011.28.1.20	Criterion 3.
22. Mercieca, D., & Mercieca, D. P. (2014). EPs becoming ignorant : Questioning the assumption of listening and empowerment in young children. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 31(1), 22–31. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2014.31.1.22	Criterion 5.
23. Mercieca, D., & Mercieca, D. P. Uncertainty and practical judgement in research: A call for attentive listening. <i>Qualitative Research</i> , 22(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794120985685	Criterion 5.
24. Mohamed, S., & Thomas, M. (2017). The mental health and psychological well-being of refugee children and young people: An exploration of risk, resilience and protective factors. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 33(3), 249–263. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2017.1300769	Criterion 3.
25. Pearlman, S., & Michaels, D. (2019). Hearing the voice of children and young people with a learning disability during the Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). <i>Support for Learning</i> , 34(2), 148–161. http://10.0.4.87/1467-9604.12245	Criterion 3.
26. Pearson, R., & Howe, J. (2017). Pupil Participation and Playground Design: Listening and Responding to Children’s Views. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 33(4), 356–370. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2017.1326375	Criterion 3.
27. Purcell, A. (2012). A qualitative study of perceptions of bullying in Irish primary schools. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 28(3), 273–285. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2012.684343	Criterion 3.
28. Rizwan, R., & Williams, A. (2015). “Only the wind hears you...” The experiences of Pakistani girls in a primary school: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 32(2), 36–46.	Criterion 3.

Full References for Excluded Papers	Rationale
https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2015.32.2.36	
29. Sancho, M., & Cline, T. (2012). Fostering a sense of belonging and community as children start a new school. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 29(1), 64–74. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2012.29.1.64	Criterion 3.
30. Tatlow-Golden, M., O’Farrelly, C., Booth, A., O’Rourke, C., & Doyle, O. (2016). ‘Look, I have my ears open’: Resilience and early school experiences among children in an economically deprived suburban area in Ireland. <i>School Psychology International</i> , 37(2), 104–120. https://doi.org/10.0.4.153/0143034315613777	Criterion 3.
31. Warham, K. (2012). Engaging with young people through narrative co-construction: Beyond categorisation. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i> , 29(2), 77–86. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2012.29.2.77	Criterion 3.
32. Warton, P. M. (2001). The Forgotten Voices in Homework: Views of Students. <i>Educational Psychologist</i> , 36(3), 155–165. https://doi.org/10.0.4.183/S15326985EP3603_2	Criterion 3.
33. Weidberg, F. (2017). Giving children of imprisoned parents a voice. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> , 33(4), 371–386. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2017.1336703	Criterion 4.
34. Wong, B., Cripps, D., White, H., Young, L., Kovshoff, H., Pinkard, H., & Woodcock, C. (2020). Primary school children’s perspectives and experiences of emotional literacy support assistant (elsa) support. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i> . https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2020.1781064	Criterion 3.
35. Woolfson, R., & Harker, M. (2008). Consulting with children and young people: Young people’s views of a psychological service. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i> , 25(4), 85–91. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2008.25.4.85	Criterion 4.
36. Zirkelback, E. A., & Reese, R. J. (2010). A review of psychotherapy outcome research: Considerations for school-based mental health providers. <i>Psychology in the Schools</i> , 47(10), 1084–1100. https://doi.org/10.0.3.234/pits.20526	Criterion 5.

Note. See Table 2.1 for details of the criteria for exclusion.

Appendix B: Mapping the Field to Provide an Overview of Studies included in the Review

Study	Aims	Research Design	Methodology	Analysis	Sample Information for relevant Participants	Identified SEN of C/YP	Educational Setting and Location	Findings
1. Barrow and Hannah (2012)	To explore the use of computer assisted interviewing (CAI) as a method of consulting with children with ASD.	Qualitative.	Interviews with children using a CAI approach, namely, the In My Shoes programme.	Deductive coding approach.	<i>N</i> = 8 children Gender = not stated. Age = 9-15 years.	ASD.	Range of educational provisions: mainstream primary schools, mainstream secondary schools and specialist secondary school. England.	CAI propounds potential as a consultation tool to use with children with ASD.
2. Bartlett (2017)	To explore the experience of students with a hearing impairment who are attending mainstream secondary schools.	Qualitative.	Interviews; using a voice of the child approach (Grover, 2004; Fargas-Malet et al., 2010; Lundy, 2007).	Grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).	<i>N</i> = 10 secondary school students. Gender = not stated. Age = not stated.	Hearing impairment (deafness).	Mainstream secondary school. England.	Three main themes were identified from the voice of the student: barriers to learning, individualised and personal responses.
3. Craig (2009)	To depict existing practices concerning the transition information transfer, to examine the current use of the transition document and to elicit the voice of all implicated in the transition process, including young people.	Qualitative.	Interviews with young people; open questions derived from person-centred planning methodologies (Sanderson, 2000). Questionnaires; three adaptations were created to probe the appropriate facility i.e., school, organization or agency (completed	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).	<i>N</i> = 5 young people who had a positive transition from secondary school to college. Gender = not stated. Age = not stated.	Range of SEN (type not stated).	Mainstream secondary schools. Scotland.	Four main themes emerged from the voice of the young person: relationships with adults/peers, systems and feeling confident. Four vignettes created from questionnaire responses: practice in schools/FE college/Careers Scotland and use of transition form.

Study	Aims	Research Design	Methodology	Analysis	Sample Information for relevant Participants	Identified SEN of C/YP	Educational Setting and Location	Findings
			by $N = 23$ staff members)					
4. Harding and Atkinson (2009)	To identify how EPs in one educational psychology service capture and signify children's views in reports.	Qualitative.	Collection of data from child's view section of EP report. Focus groups.	Content analysis (Robson, 2002) and open, axial coding.	$N = 30$ psychological reports completed for children in year nine (secondary school). $N = 6$ EPs working in one local authority educational psychology service. Gender = not stated. Age = not stated.	Range of SEN including communication and interaction, cognition and learning, behaviour, emotional and social development and sensory and/or physical needs.	Reports regarding children in mainstream and special secondary schools. England.	Child's voice depicted in psychological reports through the following content: behaviour, interests and preferences outside school, decisions and arrangements concerning the young person's education, feelings about school, difficulties in school, preferences in school, general information about the young person, strengths/dislikes in school. Focus groups identified five methodologies that EPs use to ascertain the child's views: discussion-based methods, task related procedures, therapeutic based approaches, indirect methods and measures specific to children in special school.
5. Hill et al. (2016)	To explore the experience of CYP receiving their education in residential special schools.	Qualitative.	Participatory research techniques (Cornwall, 1996; Truman & Raine, 2001); creation of a young researchers' group, use of a graffiti wall approach (Fajerman et al., 2004), diamond ranking activity (O'Kane, 2008), school preference cards (Brand et al., 2012), the SCERTS	Critical evaluation of participatory research methods.	$N = 83$ CYP. Gender = male ($N = 50$) and female ($N = 33$). Age = range from 8:3-19:8	Range of SEN: attention deficit hyperactive disorder ($N = 2$), ASD ($N = 44$), behavioural, emotional, and social disorders ($N = 3$), severe intellectual disability ($N = 1$), epilepsy ($N = 3$), hearing impairment ($N = 11$), profound and multiple	Residential special schools. England.	Participatory research methodologies are helpful in supporting CYP with a broad range of SEN to elicit their voice.

Study	Aims	Research Design	Methodology	Analysis	Sample Information for relevant Participants	Identified SEN of C/YP	Educational Setting and Location	Findings
			framework and structured observation (Prizant et al., 2006). Adaptations: social stories (Gray, 2010).			learning difficulties ($N = 2$), speech and language communication needs ($N = 13$) and visual impairment ($N = 1$).		
6. Lightfoot and Bond (2013)	To investigate the dynamics that influence decisions about the transition and what is successful for children with Down's syndrome moving from primary to secondary school.	Qualitative.	Interviews with children. Adaptations: pre-meeting to support rapport building, a short introductory game, discussion, use of visuals, rating scales, modelling and an active component. Interviews with mothers ($N = 2$) and learning support assistants ($N = 2$).	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).	$N = 2$ children. Age = not stated. Gender = male ($N = 1$) and female ($N = 1$).	Down's syndrome.	Mainstream primary and secondary schools. England.	Interviews with children resulted in identifying their likes and dislikes as well as the reasoning behind these. Interviews with mothers and learning support assistants identified six themes: home-school relations, individual difference, provision, choice, transition, and voice of the child.
7. Midgen et al. (2019)	To explore the views of CYP regarding the elements that influence their feelings of belonging in their educational setting.	Mixed methods.	Qualitative; focus groups, individual or group reflection sessions. Adaptations: differentiated games and stories and assessed with related questions to aid understanding. Quantitative; the Belonging Scale (Frederickson et al.,	Qualitative; peer-reviewed inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Quantitative; collation of scores to indicate CYP's feelings of school belonging and inclusion.	$N = 83$ CYP. Age = 3:0-16:0. Gender = not stated.	Range of SEN (type not stated).	Nursery, mainstream primary school, mainstream secondary and special secondary school. England.	Four main themes emerged from the voice of CYP: relationships, school environment, teaching and learning and extra-curricular activities. CYP rated themes to create top ten tips for inclusion and belonging. 90.17% of CYP reported a sense of belonging and 91.67% reported a sense of school connectedness.

Study	Aims	Research Design	Methodology	Analysis	Sample Information for relevant Participants	Identified SEN of C/YP	Educational Setting and Location	Findings
			2007) and School Connectedness Scale (Resnick et al., 1997).					
8. Neal and Frederickson (2016)	To explore the views of children with ASD who have had a recent successful transition to secondary school.	Qualitative.	Semi-structured interviews. Adaptations: support to understand and label emotions, use of visuals and bullet point lists of strategies (made on consideration of the needs of children with ASD).	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).	<i>N</i> = 6 year seven pupils. Age = not stated. Gender = male (<i>N</i> = 5) and female (<i>N</i> = 1).	ASD.	Mainstream secondary schools. England.	Seven main themes emerged from child's voice: emotions, an experience shared with family, positive experiences, individualize by change, facilitators, barriers and individualized support.
9. Smillie and Newton (2020)	To gather information in relation to EP's practice in attaining and representing the voice of CYP with SEN.	Mixed methods.	Questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews.	Descriptive statistics. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).	<i>N</i> = 73 EPs working in different local authority educational psychology services (<i>N</i> = 73 EPs completed the questionnaire and of these, <i>N</i> = 6 completed the interview). Age = not stated. Gender = not stated.	Range of SEN (type not stated).	Mainstream secondary schools. Wales.	Descriptive statistics detailed the frequency of different methodologies and theories used by EPs in their practice to attain and represent the voice of CYP with SEN. Three main themes emerged from EPs: attaining a factual representation of CYP's perspective, attaining their views empowers them and child-centred practice.
10. Wagner and Bunn (2020)	To elicit children's views on the concept of academic progress.	Qualitative.	Semi-structured interviews. Adaptations: questions posed at a suitable level for children's level of	Interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009).	<i>N</i> = 6 year four pupils. Gender = female (<i>N</i> = 4) and male (<i>N</i> = 2).	<i>N</i> = 4 children with learning needs and <i>N</i> = 2 children with social, emotional	Mainstream primary school. England.	Four main themes identified from the children's voice: a process for future acquisitions, portrayed by outside checks, range of influences and related feelings.

Study	Aims	Research Design	Methodology	Analysis	Sample Information for relevant Participants	Identified SEN of C/YP	Educational Setting and Location	Findings
11. Zilli, et al. (2019)	To support a comprehensive exploratory analysis of the practices that allow pupils with ASD to engage in the decision-making process and to provide novel material about pupil participation in an educational context.	Qualitative.	language development. Observations in decision-making settings and photo-elicitation activity (Shepherd 2015; Hill, 2014; Beresford et al., 2004). Semi-structured interviews with staff ($N = 11$).	Framework for participation (Black-Hawkins, 2010, 2014; Florian et al., 2016).	Age = range from 6:0-12:0. $N = 4$ pupils. Age = range from 11:0-15:0. Gender = male ($N = 4$).	and mental health needs. ASD ($N = 2$). Asperger's syndrome ($N = 2$).	Special school. England.	Three main participation themes identified: access, achievement and diversity.

Appendix C: WoE A Appraisal of Methodological Quality for Qualitative Studies (Brantlinger et al., 2005)

Table C1

Credibility Measures for Qualitative Research

Credibility Measures for Qualitative Research	Description by Brantlinger et al. (2005, pp. 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
1. Triangulation.	<p>Search for convergence of, or consistency among, evidence from multiple and varied data sources (observations/interviews; one participant & another; interviews/documents).</p> <p>Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Data triangulation</i> – use of varied data sources in a study. • <i>Investigator triangulation</i> – use of several researchers, evaluators, peer debriefers. • <i>Theory triangulation</i> – use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data. • <i>Methodological triangulation</i> – use of multiple methods to study a single problem. 	<p>If the study states the type of triangulation, it receives a tick.</p> <p>0 = No evidence of triangulation (0 criterion).</p> <p>1 = Weak evidence of triangulation (at least 1 criterion met).</p> <p>2 = Medium evidence of triangulation (2 criteria).</p> <p>3 = Strong evidence of triangulation (3-4 criteria).</p>
2. Disconfirming Evidence.	<p>After establishing preliminary themes/categories, the researcher looks for evidence inconsistent with these themes (outliers); also known as negative or discrepant case analysis.</p>	<p>0 = There is no evidence of negative/discrepant case analysis.</p> <p>1 = There is evidence of negative/discrepant case analysis, but it is not stated directly.</p> <p>2 = There is evidence of negative/discrepant case analysis, and it is stated directly.</p> <p>3 = There is evidence of negative case analysis, it is stated directly with examples.</p>
3. Researcher Reflexivity.	<p>Researchers attempt to understand and self-disclose their assumptions, beliefs, values, and biases (i.e. being forthright about position/perspective).</p>	<p>0 = There is no evidence of own views/perspectives/reflections.</p> <p>1 = States methods of being reflective but not that they were used/minimising their views e.g., researchers all looked at the transcripts.</p> <p>2 = Refers to methods of being reflective that minimised their views e.g., researchers looked at transcripts and discussed findings.</p>

Credibility Measures for Qualitative Research	Description by Brantlinger et al. (2005, pp. 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
4. Member Checks.	<p>Having participants review and confirm the accuracy (or inaccuracy) of interview transcriptions or observational field notes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First level</i> – taking transcriptions to participants prior to analyses and interpretation of results. • <i>Second level</i> – taking analyses and interpretations of data to participants (prior to publication) for validation of (or support) for researchers' conclusions. 	<p>3 = Explicitly states how they were reflexive e.g., researchers looked at transcripts, discussed and collated findings and agreed on final outcomes. Emergence of themes from the data as a result.</p> <p>0 = No evidence of member checks.</p> <p>1 = Evidence of member checks but not stated directly.</p> <p>2 = Evidence of first or second level member checks.</p> <p>3 = Evidence of first and second level member checks.</p>
5. Collaborative Work.	<p>Involving multiple researchers in designing a study or concurring about conclusions to ensure that analyses and interpretations are not idiosyncratic and/or biased; could involve interrater reliability checks on the observations made or the coding of data. The notion that persons working together will get reliable results is dependent on the "truth claim" assumption that one can get accurate descriptions of situational realities.</p>	<p>0 = Not discussed.</p> <p>1 = Stated that multiple researchers were used.</p> <p>2 = Stated that multiple researchers were used and in which sections.</p> <p>3 = Stated that multiple researchers were used and included discussions about interrater reliability.</p>
6. External Auditors.	<p>Using outsiders (to the research) to examine if, and confirm that, a researcher's inferences are logical and grounded in findings.</p>	<p>0 = Not discussed.</p> <p>1 = Stated that they used external auditors in the research.</p> <p>2 = Stated who they used as external auditors and who they were.</p> <p>3 = Stated that the external auditors were used, who they were and the outcomes.</p>
7. Peer Debriefing.	<p>Having a colleague or someone familiar with phenomena being studied review and provide critical feedback on descriptions, analyses, and interpretations or a study's results.</p>	<p>0 = This was not discussed.</p> <p>1 = There was a mention of multiple researchers.</p> <p>2 = Stated who they used and who they were.</p> <p>3 = Stated that they were used, who they were and what the outcomes were.</p>

Credibility Measures for Qualitative Research	Description by Brantlinger et al. (2005, pp. 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
8. Audit Trail.	Keeping track of interviews conducted and/or specific times and dates spent observing as well as who was observed on each occasion; used to document and substantiate that sufficient time was spent in the field to claim dependable and confirmable results.	<p>0 = This was not discussed.</p> <p>1 = Talks about making notes of the process but does not call it audit trail.</p> <p>2 = Stated that they used audit trail.</p> <p>3 = Stated that they used audit trail, why and the purpose of it.</p>
9. Prolonged Field Engagement.	Repeated, substantive observations; multiple, in-depth interviews; inspection of a range of relevant documents; thick description validates the study's soundness.	<p>0 = There is no evidence of this.</p> <p>1 = There is one of three items.</p> <p>2 = There is two of three items.</p> <p>3 = All three items: observations, in-depth interviews and inspection of documents.</p>
10. Thick, detailed description.	Reporting sufficient quotes and field note descriptions to provide evidence for researchers' interpretations and conclusions.	<p>0 = There were no quotes used.</p> <p>1 = One or less quotes used for each theme or short quotes (1-3) words.</p> <p>2 = There were full quotes used for each theme.</p> <p>3 = There were multiple quotes used for each theme and from different participants.</p>
11. Particularizability.	Documenting cases with thick description so that readers can determine the degree of transferability to their own situations.	<p>0 = There is no evidence of situation discussed.</p> <p>1 = Limited details about the participants and context or not representative of the outside world.</p> <p>2 = Extended details of situation discussed.</p> <p>3 = Explicit details of situation discussed.</p>

Credibility Measures for Qualitative Research	Description by Brantlinger et al. (2005, pp. 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
WoE A Credibility Measures.	Triangulation, Disconfirming Evidence, Researcher Reflexivity, Member Checks, Collaborative Work, External Auditors, Peer Debriefing, Audit Trail, Prolonged Field Engagement, Thick, Detailed Description and Particularizability.	Average of the scores for each category.

Table C2

Quality Indictors for Qualitative Research

Quality Indicators Within Qualitative Research	Description by Brantlinger et al. (2005, pp. 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
1. Interview Studies (or Interview Components of Comprehensive Studies).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate participants are selected (purposefully identified, effectively recruited, adequate number, representative of population of interest). 2. Interview questions are reasonable (clearly worded, not leading, appropriate and sufficient for exploring domains of interest). 3. Adequate mechanisms are used to record and transcribe interviews. 4. Participants are represented sensitively and fairly in the report. 5. Sound measures are used to ensure confidentiality. 	<p>0 = Does not meet any of the criteria.</p> <p>1 = Meets one of five of the criteria.</p> <p>2 = Meets two of the five criteria.</p> <p>3 = Meets three to five of the criteria.</p>
2. Observation Studies (or Observation Components of Comprehensive Studies).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate setting(s) and/or people are selected for observation. 2. Sufficient time is spent in the field (number and duration of observations, study time span). 3. Researcher fits into the site (accepted, respected, unobtrusive). 4. Research has minimal impact on setting (except for action research, which is purposely designed to have an impact). 5. Field notes systematically collected (videotaped, audiotaped, written during or soon after observations). 	<p>0 = Does not meet any of the criteria.</p> <p>1 = Meets one of six of the criteria.</p> <p>2 = Meets two of six of the criteria.</p> <p>3 = Meets three to six of the criteria.</p>

Quality Indicators Within Qualitative Research	Description by Brantlinger et al. (2005, pp. 201-202)	Coding Criteria (0-3 ranking)
3. Document Analysis.	<p>6. Sound measures are used to ensure confidentiality of participants and settings.</p> <p>1. Meaningful documents (texts, artifacts, objects, pictures) are found and their relevance is established.</p> <p>2. Documents are obtained and sorted in a careful manner.</p> <p>3. Documents are sufficiently described and cited.</p> <p>4. Sound measures are used to ensure confidentiality of private documents.</p>	<p>0 = Does not meet any of the criteria.</p> <p>1 = Meets one of the criteria.</p> <p>2 = Meets two of the criteria.</p> <p>3 = Meets three to four of the criteria.</p>
4. Data Analysis.	<p>1. Results are sorted and coded in a systematic and meaningful way.</p> <p>2. Sufficient rationale is provided for what was (or was not) included in the report.</p> <p>3. Documentation of methods used to establish trustworthiness and credibility are clear.</p> <p>4. Reflection about researchers' personal position/perspectives are provided.</p> <p>5. Conclusions are substantiated by sufficient quotations from participants, field notes of observations, and evidence of documentation inspection.</p> <p>6. Connections are made with related research.</p>	<p>0 = Does not meet any of the criteria.</p> <p>1 = Meets one of six of the criteria.</p> <p>2 = Meets two of the three criteria.</p> <p>3 = Meets three to six of the criteria.</p>
WoE A Quality Indicators.	Interview Studies, Observation Studies, Document Analysis and Data Analysis.	Average of the scores for each category.

Appendix D: WoE A Coding for Qualitative Studies based on Credibility Measures and Quality Indicators

Table D1

Coding for Credibility Measures

Credibility Measures for Qualitative Research	Barrow & Hannah (2012)	Bartlett (2017)	Craig (2009)	Harding and Atkinson (2009)	Hill et al. (2016)	Lightfoot and Bond (2013)	Neal and Frederickson (2016)	Wagner and Bunn (2020)	Zilli et al. (2019)
1. Triangulation.	Coding = 3. Data triangulation (questionnaires and semi-structured interviews). Investigator triangulation (two researchers). Methodological triangulation (CAI programme and interviews). Strong evidence.	Coding = 1. Theory triangulation (multiple perspectives; researcher and 'critical friend'). Weak evidence.	Coding = 1. Data triangulation (generalizable and interviews). Weak evidence.	Coding = 3. Data triangulation (transition reports and focus group). Investigator triangulation (several researchers). Methodological triangulation (content analysis and focus group approach). Strong evidence.	Coding = 1. Data triangulation (young researcher's group, graffiti wall, diamond ranking activity, school preference cards, SCERTS framework and structured observation). Weak evidence.	Coding = 1. Data triangulation (interviews with children, mothers and learning support assistants). Weak evidence.	Coding = 2. Data triangulation (quantitative data to establish anxiety levels and semi-structured interviews). Investigator triangulation (peer scrutiny by a postgraduate student not involved with the research). Medium evidence	Coding = 2. Investigator triangulation (use of several researchers). Theory triangulation (use of multiple perspectives to interpret data set). Medium evidence.	Coding = 2. Data triangulation (observations and photo-elicitation activity with young people and interviews with staff). Methodological triangulation (observations, photo-elicitation activity and interviews). Medium evidence.
2. Disconfirming evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 1. Evidence but not stated directly (i.e., feedback sought from those with experience within a comparable context).	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.
3. Researcher Reflexivity.	Coding = 3. Explicitly states reflexive methods (researchers checked the accuracy of	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 1. States that an external EP in training undertook data analysis.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 3. Explicitly states reflexive methods (peer-scrutiny by post-graduate student not involved with the research).	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.

Credibility Measures for Qualitative Research	Barrow & Hannah (2012)	Bartlett (2017)	Craig (2009)	Harding and Atkinson (2009)	Hill et al. (2016)	Lightfoot and Bond (2013)	Neal and Frederickson (2016)	Wagner and Bunn (2020)	Zilli et al. (2019)
	their notes and reflected on other elements of the interview process).								
4. Member Checks.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 1. Evidence of first and second level checks.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.	Coding = 0. No evidence.
5. Collaborative Work.	Coding = 2. Stated that multiple researchers were used and in which sections.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 2. Stated that multiple researchers were used and in which sections.	Coding = 1. Stated that a research team was used.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 1. Stated that multiple researchers were used.	Coding = 1. Stated that multiple researchers were used.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.
6. External Auditors.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 1. Stated use of external auditor ('critical friend').	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 3. Stated that external auditors were used, who they were (post-graduate student) and outcomes (results likely not implicated by the researcher's characteristics)	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.
7. Peer Debriefing.	Coding = 1. Mention of multiple researchers.	Coding = 1. Mention of multiple researchers.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 1. Mention of multiple researchers.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.
8. Audit Trail.	Coding = 1. Talks about making notes of the process but does not call it audit trail.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 0. Not discussed.	Coding = 1. Talks about making notes of the process but does not call it audit trail.
9. Prolonged Field Engagement.	Coding = 1.	Coding = 1.	Coding = 2.	Coding = 2.	Coding = 2.	Coding = 1.	Coding = 1. In-depth interviews.	Coding = 1. In-depth interviews.	Coding = 3.

Credibility Measures for Qualitative Research	Barrow & Hannah (2012)	Bartlett (2017)	Craig (2009)	Harding and Atkinson (2009)	Hill et al. (2016)	Lightfoot and Bond (2013)	Neal and Frederickson (2016)	Wagner and Bunn (2020)	Zilli et al. (2019)
	In-depth interviews.	In-depth interviews.	In-depth interviews and questionnaires	Document review and focus groups.	Observations and in-depth interviews.	In-depth interviews.			Observations, in-depth interviews and review of documents (photo-elicitation activity and field notes).
10. Thick, detailed description.	Coding = 2. There were full quotes used for each theme.	Coding = 3. Multiple quotes used for each theme from different participants.	Coding = 1. Short quotes used.	Coding = 2. Full quotes for each theme used.	Coding = 0. No quotes used.	Coding = 3. Multiple quotes used for each theme from different participants.	Coding = 3. Multiple quotes used for each theme from different participants.	Coding = 3. Multiple quotes used for each theme from different participants.	Coding = 3. Multiple quotes used for each theme from different participants.
11. Particularizability.	Coding = 3. Explicit details of situation discussed.	Coding = 1. Limited details about participants and context.	Coding = 1. Limited details about participants and context.	Coding = 3. Explicit details of situation discussed.	Coding = 1. Limited details about the participants and context.	Coding = 3. Explicit details of situation discussed.	Coding = 3. Explicit details of situation discussed.	Coding = 3. Explicit details of situation discussed.	Coding = 3. Explicit details of situation discussed.
Overall Score.	16	8	5	13	6	8	17	11	12
Average Score.	1.45	0.73	0.45	1.18	0.55	0.73	1.55	1	1.09

Table D2*Coding for Quality Indicators*

Quality Indicators within Qualitative Research	Barrow & Hannah (2012)	Bartlett (2017)	Craig (2009)	Harding and Atkinson (2009)	Hill et al. (2016)	Lightfoot and Bond (2013)	Neal and Frederickson (2016)	Wagner and Bunn (2020)	Zilli et al. (2019)
1. Interview Studies.	Coding = 3. Meets four criteria (1, 3, 4 and 5).	Coding = 3. Meets three criteria (1, 3 & 4).	Coding = 3. Meets three criteria (2, 4 & 5).	Coding = 3. Meets four criteria (1, 3, 4 & 5).	Coding = 2. Meets two criteria (1 & 2).	Coding = 3. Meets three criteria (3, 4 & 5).	Coding = 3. Meets four criteria (1, 3, 4 & 5).	Coding = 3. Meets four criteria (1, 2, 4 & 5).	Coding = 3. Meets four criteria (2, 3, 4 & 5).
2. Observation Studies.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	Coding = 3. Meets three criteria (1, 3 & 4).	Coding = 3. Meets three criteria (1, 2 & 3).	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	Coding = 3. Meets all criteria (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6).
3. Document Analysis.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	Coding = 3 Meets three criteria (1, 3 & 4).
4. Data Analysis.	Coding = 3. Meets three criteria (1, 3, 4 & 6).	Coding = 3. Meets four criteria (1, 2, 3 & 6).	Coding = 3. Meets three criteria (1, 2 & 6).	Coding = 3. Meets six criteria (1 – 6).	Coding = 3. Meets three criterion (1, 3 & 6).	Coding = 3. Meets four criteria (1, 3, 5 & 6).	Coding = 3. Meets four criteria (1, 3, 5 & 6).	Coding = 3. Meets four criteria (1, 3, 5 & 6).	Coding = 3. Meets four criteria (1, 3, 5 & 6).
Overall Score.	6	6	6	9	8	6	6	6	12
Average Score.	3	3	3	3	2.67	3	3	3	4

Appendix E: WoE A Scores for Qualitative Studies in Review (Brantlinger et al., 2005)

	Study	Credibility Measures	Quality Indicators	Overall WoE A	Descriptor
1	Barrow & Hannah (2012).	1.45	3	2.23	Medium quality.
2	Bartlett (2017).	0.73	3	1.87	Medium quality.
3	Craig (2009).	0.45	3	1.73	Medium quality.
4	Harding & Atkinson (2009).	1.18	3	2.09	Medium quality.
5	Hill et al. (2016).	0.55	2.67	1.61	Medium quality.
6	Lightfoot & Bond (2013).	0.73	3	1.87	Medium quality.
7	Neal & Frederickson (2016).	1.55	3	2.28	Medium quality.
8	Wagner & Bunn (2020).	1	3	2	Medium quality.
9	Zilli et al. (2019).	1.09	4	2.55	High quality.

Appendix F: WoE A Appraisal for Mixed Methods Studies in Review (Hong et al., 2018)

Table F1

Quality Criteria for Mixed Methods Studies

Category of Study Designs	Methodological Quality Criteria	Midgen et al. (2019)	Smillie and Newton (2020)
Screening questions (for all types).	1. Are there clear research questions? 2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	1. Yes (x 3). 2. Yes.	1. Yes (x 3). 2. Yes.
1. Qualitative*.	1.1. Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question? 1.2. Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question? 1.3. Are the findings adequately derived from the data? 1.4. Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by the data? 1.5. Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?	1.1. Yes. 1.2. Yes. 1.3. Yes. 1.4. Yes. 1.5. Yes. Total: Yes (x 5). No (x 0).	1.1. Yes. 1.2. No. 1.3. Yes. 1.4. Yes. 1.5. Yes. Total: Yes (x 4). No (x 1).
2. Quantitative Randomized Controlled Trials.	2.1. Is randomization appropriately performed? 2.2. Are the groups comparable at baseline? 2.3. Are there complete outcome data? 2.4. Are outcome assessors blinded to the intervention provided? 2.5. Did the participants adhere to the assigned intervention?	N/A.	N/A.
3. Quantitative Non-Randomized.	3.1. Are the participants representative of the target population? 3.2. Are measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention (or exposure)? 3.3. Are there complete outcome data? 3.4. Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis? 3.5. During the study period, is the intervention administered (or exposure occurred) as intended?	N/A.	N/A.
4. Quantitative Descriptive*.	4.1. Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question? 4.2. Is the sample representative of the target population? 4.3. Are the measurements appropriate? 4.4. Is the risk of nonresponse bias low? 4.5. Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?	4.1. Yes. 4.2. Yes. 4.3. Yes. 4.4. Yes. 4.5. Yes. Total: Yes (x 5). No (x 0).	4.1. Yes. 4.2. Yes. 4.3. No. 4.4. Yes. 4.5. Yes. Total: Yes (x 4). No (x 1).
5. Mixed Methods*	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question? 5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question? 5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted? 5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed? 5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?	5.1. Yes. 5.2. Yes. 5.3. Yes. 5.4. Yes. 5.5. Yes. Total: Yes (x 5). No (x 0).	5.1. Yes. 5.2. Yes. 5.3. Yes. 5.4. Yes. 5.5. Yes. Total: Yes (x 5). No (x 0).
Overall WoE A for Mixed Methods Studies:	See Table F2 for weighting and descriptor. ^a	High (3).	High (3).

Note. *Chosen as appropriate for study type.

It is discouraged to calculate an overall score when generalizing the MMAT. A detailed presentation of the ratings for each criterion is advised, as demonstrated above, to better inform the quality of each study included (Hong et al., 2018).

Table F2*WoE A Scores for Mixed Methods Studies in Review*

Criteria	Numerical Rating	Descriptor
Study comprised of 14+ quality indicators across all applicable areas including screening, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods areas.	3	High quality.
Study comprised of 10–13 quality indicators across all applicable areas.	2	Medium quality.
Study comprised of 6–9 quality indicators across all applicable areas.	1	Low quality.
Study comprised of 0–5 quality indicators across all applicable areas.	0	Zero quality.

Appendix G: WoE B Appraisal of Methodological Appropriateness for Qualitative Studies (Letts et al., 2007; Walsh & Downe, 2006)

Table G1

WoE B Appraisal Criteria for Qualitative Studies in Review

Weighting	Descriptor
High (3): Design: Method/design was apparent, and consistent with the research intent. Data collection strategy was apparent and appropriate.	Study includes <u>six to seven</u> of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rationale is given for the use of qualitative design. 2. Rationale is explored for the specific qualitative method used (e.g. ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology). 3. Discussion about why the method chosen is most appropriate/relevant for the research question/aims i.e. research design is appropriate to address the study question. 4. Theoretical or philosophical perspective was identified for this study e.g. researcher's perspective. 5. Data collection methods are appropriate for the type of data required and for the specific qualitative method. 6. Triangulation of data sources was used. 7. Sampling was done until redundancy in data was reached.
Medium (2).	Study includes <u>three to five</u> of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rationale is given for the use of qualitative design. 2. Rationale is explored for the specific qualitative method used (e.g. ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology). 3. Discussion about why the method chosen is most appropriate/relevant for the research question/aims i.e. research design is appropriate to address the study question. 4. Theoretical or philosophical perspective was identified for this study e.g. researcher's perspective. 5. Data collection methods are appropriate for the type of data required and for the specific qualitative method. 6. Triangulation of data sources was used. 7. Sampling was done until redundancy in data was reached.
Low (1).	Study includes <u>at least two</u> of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rationale is given for the use of qualitative design. 2. Rationale is explored for the specific qualitative method used (e.g. ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology). 3. Discussion about why the method chosen is most appropriate/relevant for the research question/aims i.e. research design is appropriate to address the study question. 4. Theoretical or philosophical perspective was identified for this study e.g. researcher's perspective. 5. Data collection methods are appropriate for the type of data required and for the specific qualitative method. 6. Triangulation of data sources was used. 7. Sampling was done until redundancy in data was reached.
Zero (0).	Study includes <u>one or none</u> of the criteria.

Table G2

WoE B Scores for Qualitative Studies in Review

Criteria (see Table G1)	Barrow & Hannah (2012)	Bartlett (2017)	Craig (2009)	Harding and Atkinson (2009)	Hill et al. (2016)	Lightfoot and Bond (2013)	Neal and Frederickson (2016)	Wagner and Bunn (2020)	Zilli et al. (2019)
1. Rationale is given for the use of qualitative design.	Yes (1). To explore children's views.	Yes (1). To elicit the participants classroom experiences through listening to and recording the student's own words.	Yes (1). To elicit the views of young people included in the transition process.	No. Not specified by researchers.	Yes (1). To elicit the child's voice.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	Yes (1). To ascertain which procedures are implicated with positive transition outcomes in the ASD population.	Yes (1). To explore children's views regarding progress and bring to light the experience of children with SEN and disabilities.	No. Not specified by the researchers.
2. Rationale is explored for the specific qualitative method used (e.g. ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology).	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Grounded theory is noted but no rationale is provided.	Yes (1). Phenomenology. To explain, construe and comprehend the meanings of the participants experiences.	Yes (1). Grounded theory. To identify themes in the data and establish relationships amongst them.	Yes (1). Participatory research. To ensure that the CYP could add to the design of the study, counsel on data collection techniques/data analysis and aid in guiding the study.	Yes (1). Case study. To record an example in action and offer understanding into real individuals and real situations, in addition to a concentration of study.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	Yes (1). Phenomenology. To explore individual constructs relating to educational experience.	Yes (1). Case study. To offer an in-depth understanding of an individual phenomenon in a real-world setting.
3. Discussion about why the method chosen is most appropriate/relevant for the research question/aims i.e. research design is appropriate to address the study question.	Yes (1). Deductive approach and manifest analysis. Based on research questions and relevant existing literature. The	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	Yes (1). Participatory research. To ensure that the project was not absorbed by the adults.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	Yes (1). Framework for participation. To contemplate the school practices that support participation in school life.

Criteria (see Table G1)	Barrow & Hannah (2012)	Bartlett (2017)	Craig (2009)	Harding and Atkinson (2009)	Hill et al. (2016)	Lightfoot and Bond (2013)	Neal and Frederickson (2016)	Wagner and Bunn (2020)	Zilli et al. (2019)
	data was interpreted at face value.								
4. Theoretical or philosophical perspective was identified for this study e.g. researcher's perspective.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	Yes (1). Social constructionist perspective.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	Yes (1). Appreciative inquiry.	Yes (1). Strengths-based approach.	Yes (1). Erikson's theory of psychosocial development; circumstance and compromise model; self-determination theory; theory of cooperative learning; and growth mindset theory.	No. Not specified by the researchers.
5. Data collection methods are appropriate for the type of data required and for the specific qualitative method.	Yes (1). Semi-structured interviews using a CAI approach. In other studies, children with ASD have responded positively to the use of a computer programme.	Yes (1). One to one interviews. Interviews are frequently grounded in general theory.	Yes (1). Questionnaires with open questions and interviews based on person-centred approaches. Interviews are commonly used in phenomenological research.	Yes (1). Focus group approach and review of child's view section of EP reports. Focus groups are commonly used in a grounded theory approach, while text from reports is used for content analysis.	Yes (1). Creative methodologies are commonly utilised in participatory research.	Yes (1). Semi structured interviews and voice of the child interviews. Interviews are commonly used in case study research.	Yes (1). Semi-structured interviews are commonly used in qualitative research.	Yes (1). Interviews are commonly used in phenomenological research.	Yes (1). Observations; photo elicitation; and semi-structured interviews. Interviews are commonly used in case study research.
6. Triangulation of data sources was used.	Yes (1). Semi-structured interviews with children and	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Not specified by researchers.	Yes (1). Focus groups and EP reports.	Yes (1). Young researcher's group; graffiti wall; diamond ranking	Yes (1). Semi-structured interviews with mothers and the learning support assistant. Voice	Yes (1). Data triangulation (quantitative data to establish anxiety levels	No. Not specified by the researchers.	Yes (1). Polyhedronation: multiple perspectives from multiple sources (observations;

Criteria (see Table G1)	Barrow & Hannah (2012)	Bartlett (2017)	Craig (2009)	Harding and Atkinson (2009)	Hill et al. (2016)	Lightfoot and Bond (2013)	Neal and Frederickson (2016)	Wagner and Bunn (2020)	Zilli et al. (2019)
	questionnaires completed by parents.				activity; school preference cards; SCERTS framework; and structured observation.	of the child interviews with the children.	and semi-structured interviews).		photo elicitation; and semi-structured interviews).
7. Sampling was done until redundancy in data was reached.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Not specified by researchers.	No. Not specified by researchers.	No. Not specified by researchers.	No. Not specified by researchers.	Yes (1). Sampling continued until saturation was achieved.	No. Not specified by the researchers.	No. Not specified by the researchers.
Overall Weighting for WoE B.	Yes (x4). <i>Medium (2).</i>	Yes (x2) <i>Low (1).</i>	Yes (x4). <i>Medium (2).</i>	Yes (x3). <i>Medium (2).</i>	Yes (x5). <i>Medium (2).</i>	Yes (x4). <i>Medium (2).</i>	Yes (x5). <i>Medium (2).</i>	Yes (x4). <i>Medium (2).</i>	Yes (x4). <i>Medium (2).</i>

Appendix H: WoE B Appraisal of Methodological Appropriateness for Mixed Methods Studies in Review (O’Cathain et al., 2008; Pluye et al., 2009)

Table H1

WoE B Appraisal Criteria for Mixed Methods Studies in Review

Weighting	Descriptor
High (3).	<p>Study includes <u>six to seven</u> of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Described the justification for using a mixed methods approach to address the research question. 2. Described the design in terms of the purpose, priority, and sequence of methods. 3. Described each method in terms of sampling, data collection and analysis. 4. Combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection-analysis techniques or procedures. 5. Integration of qualitative and quantitative data or results. 6. Described any limitation of one method associated with the presence of the other method. 7. Described any insights gained from mixing or integrating methods.
Medium (2).	<p>Study includes <u>at least three</u> of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Described the justification for using a mixed methods approach to address the research question. 2. Described the design in terms of the purpose, priority, and sequence of methods. 3. Described each method in terms of sampling, data collection and analysis. 4. Combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection-analysis techniques or procedures. 5. Integration of qualitative and quantitative data or results. 6. Described any limitation of one method associated with the presence of the other method. 7. Described any insights gained from mixing or integrating methods.
Low (1).	<p>Study includes <u>at least two</u> of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Described the justification for using a mixed methods approach to address the research question. 2. Described the design in terms of the purpose, priority, and sequence of methods. 3. Described each method in terms of sampling, data collection and analysis. 4. Combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection-analysis techniques or procedures.

5. Integration of qualitative and quantitative data or results.
6. Described any limitation of one method associated with the presence of the other method.
7. Described any insights gained from mixing or integrating methods.

Zero (0).

Study includes one or none of the above criteria.

Table H2

WoE B Scores for Mixed Methods Studies in Review

Criteria (see Table H1)	Midgen et al. (2019)	Smillie & Newton (2020)
1. Described the justification for using a mixed methods approach to address the research question.	Yes (1). Different research questions: to answer one quantitative and one qualitative research question. Moreover, the researchers hoped to use a multi-dimensional approach to gain a fuller understanding, and explore, the sense of belonging experienced by a population of CYP.	Yes (1). Different research questions: to answer two quantitative and one qualitative research question. Further, to explore EP practice in obtaining CYP's views and to also explore the adopted theories which may enlighten this activity.
2. Described the design in terms of the purpose, priority and sequence of methods.	Yes (1). Details the specifics of phase one and two of the research. The sequence of focus groups, individual or semi-structured group reflection sessions and standardised questionnaires (the Belonging Scale and School Connectedness Scale outlined) are outlined. Qualitative and quantitative methods received equal priority in the methods and subsequent analysis.	Yes (1). Details the specifics of the sequence in that an initial questionnaire was circulated to EPs in local authorities and after a two-month period, EPs were interviewed. Qualitative and quantitative methods received equal priority in the methods and subsequent analysis.
3. Described each method in terms of sampling, data collection and analysis.	Yes (1). Phase one: 38 children aged 3-16 years took part in this phase (focus groups, individual or semi-structured group reflection sessions and standardised questionnaires). Two	Yes (1). For the first part of the study, 73 EPs working in local authorities completed the questionnaire. For the second part, 8 EPs participated in the interview after an opt-in process.

Criteria (see Table H1)	Midgen et al. (2019)	Smillie & Newton (2020)
	<p>primary aged children withdrew and therefore, were not included in the analysis.</p> <p>Phase two: 46 children aged 7-15 years took part in this phase (focus groups, individual or semi-structured group reflection sessions and standardised questionnaires).</p>	
4. Combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection-analysis techniques or procedures.	<p>Yes (1). See above. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Quantitative data was analysed to provide a synopsis of the children's sense of belonging and inclusion.</p>	<p>Yes (1). See above. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis.</p>
5. Integration of qualitative and quantitative data or results.	<p>Yes (1). Results were integrated using contiguous approach (Fetters et al., 2013).</p>	<p>Yes (1). Integration through 'connecting' took place at the methods level. Results were also integrated using contiguous approach (Fetters et al., 2013).</p>
6. Described any limitation of one method associated with the presence of the other method.	<p>No. Not specified by the researchers.</p>	<p>Yes (1). Utilising self-report measures (questionnaire and subsequent interview) may have enhanced social desirability bias.</p>
7. Described any insights gained from mixing or integrating methods.	<p>No. Not specified by the researchers.</p>	<p>Yes (1). Increasing respondents using the questionnaire (quantitative) and exploring in-depth perspectives of the EPs using interviews (qualitative).</p>
Overall Weighting for WoE B.	<p>Yes (x5). <i>Medium (2).</i></p>	<p>Yes (x7). <i>High (3).</i></p>

Appendix I: WoE C Criteria to Appraise Study Relevance in relation to the Review Question

Table I1

WoE C Appraisal Criteria for all Studies in Review

Criteria	WoE C Numerical Rating and Descriptor	Rationale
A. Participants	<p>3 = High. Participants comprise EPs. Study reports on EPs' views on recording the voice of CYP with SEN within educational settings (nursery, special schools, mainstream primary or secondary schools or college).</p> <p>2 = Medium. Participants do not include EPs and instead, include CYP with SEN within educational settings (nursery, special schools, mainstream primary or secondary schools or college). Study reports on the voice of CYP with SEN as captured by EP researchers. The C/YP's SEN status is identified.</p> <p>1 = Low. Participants do not include EPs and instead, include CYP with SEN within educational settings (nursery, special schools, mainstream primary or secondary schools or college). Study reports on the voice of CYP with SEN as captured by EP researchers. The C/YP's SEN status is not identified.</p>	<p>As EPs are the focus of the review question, the highest weightings will be given to studies, which include EPs as the participants. This will allow for the review to truly explore the methodologies used by these professionals to elicit the voice of CYP with SEN within educational settings.</p> <p>However, only two studies were identified that included such participants (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020). Therefore, the remaining eight studies will be weighted based on the inclusion of the voice of CYP with SEN within educational settings as reported by EP researchers. To allow for generalisability and to make comparison across groups, the highest weightings will be given to studies which have identified the SEN status of the C/YP (Sifers et al., 2002).</p>
B. Methodologies	<p>3 = High. Uses a methodology (one or more) to explore and report on EPs' views on recording the voice of CYP with SEN within educational settings (nursery, special schools, mainstream primary or secondary schools or college).</p> <p>2 = Medium. Uses a methodology (one or more) to report on the voice of CYP with SEN as captured by EP researchers. The methodology is evidence-based and/or EPs have detailed the adaptations required to use appropriately with CYP with specific types of SEN.</p> <p>1 = Low. Uses a methodology (one or more) to report on the voice of CYP with SEN as captured by EP researchers. The methodology is evidence-based or EP</p>	<p>As EPs are the focus of the review question, the highest weightings will be given to the studies which use general data collection methodologies to explore and report on EPs' views on recording the voice of CYP with SEN within educational settings.</p> <p>However, to increase the scope of the review, studies were also included which report on the voice of CYP with SEN as captured by EP researchers. To rate these studies, the highest weightings will be prescribed to those which detail evidence-based methodologies and/or detail the adaptations necessary to support CYP with specific types of SEN to elicit their voice. The rationale for this scoring is that the findings from these studies will be generalizable and thus, inform EPs about the methodologies or adaptations appropriate for using with CYP with specific SEN types (Sifers et al., 2002)</p>

Criteria	WoE C Numerical Rating and Descriptor	Rationale
	has detailed the adaptations required to use appropriately with CYP with SEN. However, the study has not identified the specific SEN type of the child.	
C. Setting	<p>3 = High. Reports on the voice of CYP with SEN in one identified educational setting (nursery, special schools, mainstream primary or secondary schools or college).</p> <p>2 = Medium, Reports on the voice of CYP with SEN in more than one educational setting, but details the number of participants in each educational setting (nursery, special schools, mainstream primary or secondary schools or college).</p> <p>1 = Low. Reports on the voice of CYP with SEN in educational settings, but does not detail the specific educational setting, nor details the number of participants in each setting (nursery, special schools, mainstream primary or secondary schools or college).</p>	To allow for generalisability across educational settings, the highest weightings will be given to studies, which have carried out their research in one identified educational setting (Sifers et al., 2002).
D. Findings	<p>3 = High. Findings report EPs' views about the methodologies used in their professional practice to record the voice of CYP with SEN within educational settings (nursery, special schools, mainstream primary or secondary schools or college).</p> <p>2 = Medium. Findings report on the voice of CYP with SEN and the helpfulness of specific methodologies used by EPs to elicit and listen to their voice in educational settings.</p> <p>1 = Low. Findings report on the voice of CYP with SEN but not in relation to the helpfulness of specific methodologies used by EPs to elicit and listen to their voice in educational settings.</p>	<p>The highest weightings will be prescribed to the studies in which the findings report on the methods and theories used by EPs to elicit and listen to the voice of CYP with SEN within educational settings. The rationale for this, is that these findings will truly answer the present review question.</p> <p>To increase the scope of the review, medium weightings will be provided to studies that report on the voice of CYP with SEN regarding the helpfulness of specific methodologies in eliciting and listening to their voice. The lowest weightings will be allotted to studies whose findings do not report on EPs' views about methodologies, nor provide information regarding the helpfulness of specific methodologies for CYP with SEN.</p>

Table I2*WoE C Scores for all Studies in Review*

Study	Numerical Rating	Final WoE C Score	WoE C Descriptor
Barrow & Hannah (2012)	A = 2 B = 2 C = 2 D = 2	2	Medium quality.
Bartlett (2017)	A = 2 B = 2 C = 3 D = 1	2	Medium quality.
Craig (2009)	A = 1 B = 1 C = 3 D = 1	1.5	Medium quality.
Harding and Atkinson (2009)	A = 3 B = 3 C = 1 D = 3	2.5	High quality.
Hill et al. (2016)	A = 2 B = 1 C = 3 D = 1	1.75	Medium quality.
Lightfoot and Bond (2013)	A = 2 B = 2 C = 1 D = 1	1.5	Medium quality.
Midgen et al. (2019)	A = 1 B = 1 C = 2 D = 2	1.5	Medium quality.
Neal and Frederickson (2016)	A = 2 B = 2 C = 3 D = 1	2	Medium quality.
Smillie and Newton (2020)	A = 3 B = 3 C = 3 D = 3	3	High quality.
Wagner and Bunn (2020)	A = 2 B = 2 C = 3 D = 1	2	Medium quality.

Study	Numerical Rating	Final WoE C Score	WoE C Descriptor
Zilli et al. (2019)	A = 2 B = 2 C = 3 D = 1	2	Medium quality.

Appendix J: Application of Thematic Synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008)

A three-step process of thematic synthesis was applied by the researcher to the 11 research studies included in the systematic review (Part 2). This process enabled the researcher to systematically identify four key themes relevant to the review question: “How do EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN in educational settings?”. Each step of this process is described below, and visuals are also included. As recommended by Thomas and Harden (2008), a software package i.e., NVIVO (QSR International, 2022) was used to support the transparency of this thematic synthesis. To ensure rigour, the translation of concepts amid studies was achieved through following the three-step process detailed below.

Step One: Free Line Coding of the Findings from the Included Studies

The researcher entered the findings from the 11 included studies verbatim into NVIVO (QSR International, 2022) software. The researcher then coded every line of text corresponding to its meaning and content. Figure J1 below details the line-by-line coding for the results from Craig’s (2009) study findings. Codes were then developed inductively to portray the meaning and content of every sentence. Each sentence received a minimum of one code and all of the text that received a code was reviewed to ensure consistency of interpretation and to decipher whether further stages of coding were required. This process resulted in a total of 125 codes.

Figure J1

Example of Line-by-Line Coding from NVIVO for the Results Section of Craig's (2009) Study

Craig, 2009

Click to edit

Theme 1: Relationships with adults (Figure 5)
 Young people identified relationships with various adults as important to them during their transition period, particularly where adults were advocating for them, that is, looking for information or helping them choose courses. Whilst still at school this included having strong support from family members and assistance from school staff.

Regarding relationships with school staff young people's experiences were divided into two categories:

1. those who had experienced general and additional support from staff, from finding out about courses and acquiring forms, to accompanying them to college and assisting with completing applications;
2. those who had no help from school staff, felt that teachers did not care about students' issues or safety, felt they were not consulted by staff about their aspirations and felt unable to ask for help, or that they were not treated with respect by staff. One young person in this category did remember that a member of school staff had tried to help, but this came too late. These young people indicated that their transition had been a success because of the help they received from their family, usually Mum. Once at college, relationships with college staff were identified as being very positive for all young people. Young people appreciated being able to ask for help, staff's use of humour and feeling respected. In addition some staff members were identified as being important, including guidance or personal tutors and specific support staff. Relationships with family were identified as playing an important supporting role both whilst at school (particularly for those young people who did not feel supported by school) and once at college. Mothers still played an important role for these young people, although fathers, siblings and aunts were mentioned too.

Theme 2: Relationships with peers (Figure 6)
 Relationships with peers was identified as another important issue for young participants during and after their transition from secondary school. Concerns about having and making friends added to the anxiety felt by some about moving from school, while for others getting away from a situation where they were being bullied and felt unsafe meant that transition was welcome. Once at college relationships with peers (either friends or other students in general) was something young participants felt helped them. Some indicated that their peers also helped them with their course work and valued being able to share issues with them.

Theme 3: Systems (Figure 7)
 The young people also identified aspects of the two systems (school and college) which affected their experience during the transition phase. Students who whilst at school had the opportunity to become familiar with college, either through general visits or the school-link programme, said they felt more prepared for their move from school. Others would have liked to know more about structures in place at school which could offer them support, as they could identify those mechanisms in place at college. Once at college, they identified the opportunity for flexible learning and having time between classes as something they valued, and also identified activities they took part in as being of benefit to them for the future. In addition they recognised that school and college were different systems

Positive emotions about college placement
 Anxious post-transition
 Adult advocacy
 Appreciate being able to ask for help
 Support was too late
 Lack of respect
 Two categories of relationships with school personnel
 Importance of relationships with adults
 Type of support
 No support
 Successful transition
 Appreciate humour, feeling respected
 Peer or friend relationships as a source of support
 More preparation won
 Preparation as a form of support
 School and college systems
 College level
 Relationships with peers
 Anxiety about transitioning from school
 Welcome transition
 Worries about making friends
 Fluctuating confidence
 Anticipatory/college-related anxiety
 Adults comprise family and school personnel
 Support from adults
 Coding Density

Step Two: Arrangement of ‘Free Codes’ into Connected Sections to Develop ‘Descriptive Themes’

For step two, the researcher examined the codes for convergence and divergence and to develop a hierarchy of codes. Additional codes were then generated to depict the meaning of the original coding created during step one. This process culminated a total of 15 descriptive themes (see Figure J2).

Figure J2

Visual of Hierarchy of Codes/Descriptive Themes

Hierarchy of Codes	Hierarchy of Codes	Hierarchy of Codes	Hierarchy of Codes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods to elicit voice of CYP with SEN • Approaches to elicit voice • Theories to elicit voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing the voice of CYP with SEN is an important element of EP practice • Modes of representing voice • Varying EP practice in representing voice • Challenges in representing voice • Criteria for representing voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP supported by existing policy to capture voice of CYP with SEN • EP role in policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy role as an EP • Improve outcomes for CYP with SEN through advocacy role • Importance of adult advocacy for CYP with SEN • Practices to support participation • Powerful role of advocacy

Step Three: Creation of ‘Analytical Themes’

During this step, the researcher moved past the content of the preliminary studies and the descriptive themes to answer the review question: “How do EPs capture the voice of CYP with SEN in educational settings?”. Whilst doing so, the researcher used their reasoning and insight to

create the final four analytical themes: Eliciting their Voice; Representing their Voice; Policy; and Advocacy Role (Figure J3).

Figure J3

Visual of Four Final Analytical Themes

1. Eliciting their Voice	2. Representing their Voice	3. Policy	4. Advocacy Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods to elicit voice of CYP with SEN • Approaches to elicit voice • Theories to elicit voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing the voice of CYP with SEN is an important element of EP practice • Modes of representing voice • Varying EP practice in representing voice • Challenges in representing voice • Criteria for representing voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP supported by existing policy to capture voice of CYP with SEN • EP role in policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy role as an EP • Improve outcomes for CYP with SEN through advocacy role • Importance of adult advocacy for CYP with SEN • Practices to support participation • Powerful role of advocacy

Appendix K: Recruitment Email to Psychology Managers



Subject: Participants (Educational Psychologists) being sought for a research study.

Dear Psychology Manager,

My name is Emma Louise Bohan and I am a year two trainee educational and child psychologist attending Mary Immaculate College. I am currently completing my doctoral research under the supervision of Dr Siobhán O’Sullivan. I am conducting research into the ways in which educational psychologists (EPs) elicit and represent the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs in their professional practice. This includes EPs working across children’s disability network teams, educational services and primary care services in Ireland.

I am emailing to ask if your psychology service would like to participate in this study. Participation is completely voluntary, and responses will be anonymous. I have attached the *Participant Information Letter* for further information on this research study. I would be grateful if this e-mail could be circulated to EPs on your team for their attention.

This research study has received ethical clearance from the Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee (MIREC). If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent authority, you may contact Mary Collins, MIREC Administrator, Research and Graduate School, Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick. Telephone: 061-204980 / E-mail: mirec@mic.ul.ie

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email on:
15101711@micstudent.mic.ul.ie

Thank you for your time.

Emma Louise Bohan

Trainee Educational and Child Psychologist (Year Two)

Mary Immaculate College

Appendix L: Participant Information Letter



Exploring how Educational Psychologists Elicit and Represent the Voices of School Aged Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs in Ireland

Participant Information Letter

What is the project about?

This study focuses on the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs. To aid this cohort of children and young people, a defining role of the educational psychologist (EP) is to acknowledge the centrality of their voice, while providing psychological and educational support (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2022; Psychological Society of Ireland, 2022). What is more, EPs are required to use evidence-based approaches to ensure that the child or young person's voice is heard during consultation (BPS, 2022). Children and young people have a fundamental human right to voice their opinion in relation to matters that impact upon their lives and to have their voice listened to, in keeping with their age and maturity. This is recognised in national and international policy (Government of Ireland, 2000; United Nations General Assembly, 1989). Moreover, recent national policy has stipulated the onus on professionals to place the child or young person's voice at the heart of their work (Department of Education, 2021).

However, a review of the educational psychology literature has indicated that there is a dearth of research exploring how EPs elicit and represent the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs in their professional practice. This project, therefore, will delve into this under-researched area by exploring how EPs across Irish children's disability network teams, educational services and primary care services do so.

Who is undertaking it?

My name is Emma Louise Bohan and I am a postgraduate student attending Mary Immaculate College. I am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology in the Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education, under the supervision of Dr Siobhán O'Sullivan. The current study will form part of my thesis.

Why is it being undertaken?

The objective of the project is to explore how educational psychologists working in Irish children's disability network teams, educational services and primary care services, elicit and represent the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs.

What are the benefits of this research?

Overall, this study will delve into an under-researched area within educational psychology. It will also provide an insight into a defining role of the EP in practice, including the challenges and

benefits encountered by EPs when supporting this cohort of children and young people to have a voice. Further practice implications relating to consultation and the use of evidence-based approaches may also be obtained.

Exactly what is involved for the participant (time, location, etc.)

Participants will be invited to complete an online questionnaire on Survey Monkey (please refer to the link at the bottom of this letter). This questionnaire will contain demographic questions, as well as questions related to the educational background and professional practice of the participants. The entire questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Within the questionnaire, there will be an option to select ‘opt in for interview’. Participants who decide to opt in will be asked to provide their contact email and service type so that the researcher can email the participant to arrange a convenient time and date for the interview.

A selection of participants who choose to opt in for interview will be invited to partake in an online semi-structured interview with the researcher via MS TEAMS. The researcher will forward a consent form in advance and ask that the participant read and complete this to show that they fully understand what will be involved in the interview. Interview questions will further delve into participants professional practice in eliciting and representing the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs. The entire interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes.

Right to withdraw

Your anonymity is assured, and you are free to withdraw from the study without giving a reason and without consequence. However, it is acknowledged that participants completing anonymous questionnaires are unable to withdraw from a study once the form is submitted. Nonetheless, you may choose to withdraw from the subsequent interview without giving a reason and without consequence.

How will the information be used / disseminated?

The data from the research will be combined with that of the other participants in this study and used to form the results section of my thesis. Anonymised quotes from individual participants may be used in the researcher’s thesis and publications. It is envisaged that the anonymised results will also be shared in journal articles and conference proceedings. The focus of the research is on the researcher’s reflections and responses of the participants gathered throughout the study.

How will confidentiality be kept?

All information gathered will remain confidential throughout the research process and will not be released to any third party. No identifiable details will be used, including names of participants, services or emails. Pseudonyms will be applied throughout the research rather than the participant’s name to maintain their anonymity.

Your email will not be needed for questionnaire completion (participants are only asked to provide their email if they wish to opt in for the interview). Emails that are provided will be removed from the questionnaire data set prior to exporting, as these will only be used to invite participants to interview. As soon as the questionnaire data is not needed, it will be exported from Survey Monkey, encrypted and stored electronically on the researcher’s password-protected laptop and on a

password-protected USB. The data will then be deleted from Survey Monkey. Once the one-to-one semi-structured interviews have been audio-recorded and transcribed, the completed transcriptions will be encrypted and stored electronically on the researcher's password-protected laptop and on a password-protected USB. The audio recordings will be deleted immediately after the transcriptions have been completed.

What will happen to the data after research has been completed?

Once my research activity results in the anonymisation of raw data and/or secure and complete destruction of raw data sets that contain sensitive personal information, the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) will cease to pertain.

The link for the online questionnaire on Survey Monkey is here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2L3X3TG>

Contact details:

If at any time you have any queries/issues with regard to this study, my contact details are as follows:

Emma Louise Bohan (Principal Investigator),

E-mail: 15101711@micstudent.mic.ul.ie

Contact number to be provided following participant recruitment for interview.

If you have any concerns about this study you may contact:

Dr Siobhán O'Sullivan (Supervisor),

E-mail: Siobhan.OSullivan@mic.ul.ie

This research study has received Ethics approval from the Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee (MIREC) (reference number: A21-055).

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent authority, you may contact:

Mary Collins, MIREC Administrator, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick Telephone: 061-204980 | E-mail: mirec@mic.ul.ie

Appendix M: Email to Psychology Managers – Reminder



Subject: Reminder email: Participants (Educational Psychologists) being sought for a research study.

Dear Psychology Manager,

I am emailing to follow-up about my research study and to inform potential participants that the link to the online questionnaire will remain live for the next two weeks. For this reason, I would be most grateful if you could forward this email to educational psychologists in your service who may wish to take part. Thank you for your time.

My name is Emma Louise Bohan and I am a year two trainee educational and child psychologist attending Mary Immaculate College. I am currently completing my doctoral research under the supervision of Siobhán O’Sullivan. I am conducting research into the ways in which educational psychologists (EPs) elicit and represent the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs in their professional practice. This includes EPs working across children’s disability network teams, educational services and primary care services in Ireland.

I am emailing to ask if your psychology service would like to participate in this study. Participation is completely voluntary, and responses will be anonymous. I have attached the *Participant Information Letter* for further information on this research study. I would be grateful if this e-mail could be circulated to EPs on your team for their attention.

This research study has received ethical clearance from the Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee (MIREC). If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent authority, you may contact Mary Collins, MIREC Administrator, Research and Graduate School, Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick. Telephone: 061-204980 / E-mail: mirec@mic.ul.ie

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email on: 15101711@micstudent.mic.ul.ie

Thank you for your time.

Emma Louise Bohan
Trainee Educational and Child Psychologist (Year Two)
Mary Immaculate College

Appendix N: Recruitment Poster



Exploring how Educational Psychologists Elicit and Represent the Voices of School Aged Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs in Ireland

My name is Emma Louise Bohan and I am a trainee educational and child psychologist at MIC, Limerick. As part of my doctoral studies, I am carrying out a research project which aims to explore how educational psychologists elicit and represent the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs, in their professional practice. This research is being carried out under the supervision of Dr Siobhán O'Sullivan.

If you are an educational psychologist working within an Irish children's disability network team, educational service or primary care service, I would be very grateful for your participation.

Taking part will involve:

1. An Online Questionnaire

This will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. If you wish, you can select an option to opt in for an online interview. This will take place at a later date.

2. An Online Interview (*optional*)

A number of participants who have chosen to opt in for an interview will be selected and invited to individually partake in an online semi-structured interview with me via MS TEAMS. The interview, which will be arranged at a time and date that is convenient for you, is expected to last 30-60 minutes.

Please contact me directly via my email below you are interested in taking part and I will send you the Participant Information Sheet and link to the online questionnaire.

I look forward to hearing from you.



Contact email:

15101711@micstudent.mic.ul.ie

Appendix O: Participant Informed Consent Form



Exploring how Educational Psychologists Elicit and Represent the Voices of School Aged Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs in Ireland

Participant Informed Consent Form

1. I have read and understand the *Participant Information Sheet*
2. I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for
3. I am fully aware of all of the procedures involving myself, and of any risks and benefits associated with the study
4. I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason
5. I am aware that my results will be kept confidential
6. I consent to participate in the online one-to-one semi-structured interview via MS TEAMS and to having the interview audio-recorded
7. I consent to anonymised quotations from my interview being used in the researcher's thesis/publications
8. I consent to anonymised results being shared in journal articles/conference proceedings

Yes No

Participant Name (Printed): _____

Participant Name (Signature): _____

Date: _____

Investigator Name (Printed): _____

Investigator Name (Signature): _____

Date: _____

Appendix P: Demographic Questionnaire for the Online Questionnaire (Survey Monkey)



Project Title: Exploring how Educational Psychologists Elicit and Represent the Voices of School Aged Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs in Ireland.

Question 1 (Multiple choice):

Are you an educational psychologist or is your training in educational psychology?

Yes

No (if you answer no, please do not continue with this questionnaire)

Question 2 (Short answer):

What is your gender?

Answer:

Question 3 (Short answer):

What age are you?

Answer:

Question 4 (Multiple choice):

Where did you complete your training?

Republic of Ireland

Northern Ireland

United Kingdom

Other (please name):

Question 5 (Multiple choice and short answer):

What is your educational background? Please name your course of study for each entry.

Bachelor (please name):

Masters (please name):

Doctorate (please name):

Other (please state):

Question 6 (Short answer):

When did you qualify?

Answer:

Question 7 (Multiple choice):

What service do you currently work in?

Children's disability network team

Educational service

Primary care service

Question 8 (Multiple choice):

How long have you been working in the current service?

0-1 year

1-5 years

5-10 years

10-15 years

15-20 years

20+ years

Question 9 (Short answer):

Have you worked in any other service previously? If so, please indicate the service type and how long you worked there for (in years or months).

Service type and length (years or months):

Service type and length (years or months):

Service type and length (years or months):

Question 10 (Short answer):

In total, how long have you been working as an educational psychologist for? Please record length of time in years or months.

Answer:

Question 11 (Multiple choice):

What is your current title?

Staff grade psychologist

Senior psychologist

Principal psychologist

Other (please state):

Question 12 (Short answer):

Can you provide a short description of the profile of children and young people with special educational needs that you predominately support in your practice?

Answer:

Appendix Q: Online Questionnaire (Survey Monkey)



Project Title: Exploring how Educational Psychologists Elicit and Represent the Voices of School Aged Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs in Ireland.

Question 13 (Likert scale):

How often do you use discussion-based methods or approaches (i.e., direct questioning) to elicit the voices of children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs (SEN) in your practice?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 14 (Likert scale):

How often do you use questionnaires or self-report scales to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN in your practice?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 15 (Likert scale):

How often do you use task or activity-based approaches (i.e., drawing the ideal school technique or feelings cards) to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN in your practice?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 16 (Likert scale):

How often do you use therapeutic approaches (i.e., personal construct psychology or solution-focused therapy) to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN in your practice?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 17 (Likert scale):

How often do you use indirect methods (i.e., reviewing the CYP's reports or asking the CYP's parents/caregivers or familiar adults) to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN in your practice?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 18 (Multiple choice and short answer option):

Please name any specific resources or tools that you use in your practice to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN. Record the resource/tool name under each method/approach below.

Discussion based methods i.e., direct questioning (please name):

Questionnaires or self-report scales (please name):

Task or activity-based approaches (please name):

Therapeutic approaches (please name):

Indirect methods i.e., reviewing the CYP's reports or asking the CYP's parents/caregivers or familiar adults (please name):

Other (please name):

Question 19 (Multiple choice):

What has influenced your professional practice in terms of how you elicit and represent the voices of CYP with SEN?

Educational training

Personal and professional interest

Continuing professional development (CPD)

Supervision

Colleagues

Service policy

Other (please detail):

Question 20 (Multiple choice):

Do you record the voices of the CYP with SEN that you work with?

Yes (go to Question 21)

No (go to Question 24)

Question 21 (Likert scale):

How often do you record the voices of CYP with SEN using their own words?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 22 (Likert scale):

How often do you record the voices of CYP with SEN by paraphrasing or summarising their words?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 23 (Likert scale):

How often do you record the voices of CYP with SEN by interpreting their words?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 24 (Multiple choice):

Do you represent the voices of the CYP with SEN that you work with?

Yes (go to Question 25)

No (go to Question 31)

Question 25 (Likert scale):

How often do you represent the voices of CYP with SEN during consultation/meetings with parents?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 26 (Likert scale):

How often do you represent the voices of CYP with SEN during consultation/meetings with school personnel?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 27 (Likert scale):

How often do you represent the voices of CYP with SEN during consultations/meetings with other professionals?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 28 (Likert scale):

How often do you represent the voices of CYP with SEN in psychological reports?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 29 (Likert scale):

How often do you represent the voices of CYP with SEN in child-friendly reports?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 30 (Likert scale):

How often do you represent the voices of CYP with SEN in case notes?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 31 (Short answer):

What psychological theories underlie your work when eliciting the voices of CYP with SEN?

Please detail:

Question 32 (Short answer):

What specific strategies or techniques within the above psychological theories do you use when eliciting the voices of CYP with SEN?

Please detail:

Question 33 (Short answer):

What psychological theories underlie your work when representing the voices of CYP with SEN?

Please detail:

Question 34 (Short answer):

What specific strategies or techniques within the above psychological theories do you use when representing the voices of CYP with SEN?

Please detail:

Question 35 (Likert scale):

Do you inform others of the psychological theories used in your practice to elicit and represent the voices of CYP with SEN?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

Question 36 (Multiple choice):

Does your service provide recommended guidelines, policies or documents to use when eliciting and/or representing the voices of CYP with SEN?

Yes

No

Question 37 (Short answer):

If you answered yes to Question 36, please provide some detail of the information provided by your service.

Answer:

Question 38 (Multiple choice)

Educational psychologists are required to use evidence-based approaches to ensure that the CYP's voice is heard during consultation (British Psychological Society, 2019). However, a review of the educational psychology literature has indicated that there is a dearth of research exploring how educational psychologists elicit and represent the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs in their professional practice. This project, therefore, aims to address the research gap by exploring how educational psychologists working across children's disability network teams, educational services and primary care services in Ireland do so.

If you would like to add to this under-researched area, please consider taking part in an interview. Through interview, a valuable insight into the role, challenges and benefits experienced by educational psychologists will be obtained. To opt in, tick the relevant box below, then in the next question indicate your service type and provide your email.

If selected, the researcher will email you a *Participant Information Form* and *Consent Form* and arrange a suitable time/date for the interview (via MS TEAMS).

Thank you for taking part!

Yes, I would like to opt in for interview

No, I would not like to take part in an interview

Question 39 (Multiple choice and short answer)

If you would like to take part in an interview, please indicate your service type and provide your email below.

Service type: Children's disability network team

Educational service

Primary care service

Email:

Appendix R: Semi-Structured Interview Guide (MS TEAMS)



Project Title: Exploring how Educational Psychologists Elicit and Represent the Voices of School Aged Children and Young People With Special Educational Needs in Ireland.

1. As an educational psychologist, what is your role in eliciting and listening to the voices of children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs (SEN)?

Prompt questions:

- How do you do this?
- When do you elicit and listen to the voices of CYP with SEN?
- What is the impact of doing so?
- What challenges do you meet with this role?
- Is this an important role to you?
- What has impacted your beliefs on why you think this role is (or is not) important?
- Does it form a significant part of your practice? If yes (or no), why so?
- How has your training as an Educational Psychologist supported you with this role?
- Do you think that your role in doing so could be enhanced? What would support this?

2. What is the role of your service in relation to eliciting and listening to the voices of CYP with SEN?

Prompt questions:

- How does your service support you with this role?
- Do you feel that your practice aligns with service provision concerning this role?
- Does this role form an important part of service provision? If yes (or no), why do you think so?
- What are the benefits or outcomes experienced at a service level when eliciting and listening to the voices of CYP with SEN?
- What are the challenges experienced at a service level relating to this role?
- What could be done to alleviate these challenges?

3. The British Psychological Society (2019) have stated that a core professional competency of the Educational Psychologist is to use evidence-based approaches to ensure that the CYP's voice is heard during consultation. What evidence-based approaches do you use to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN in your practice?

Prompt questions:

- What factors impact your decisions about which approaches you choose to use? (probe regarding child/psychologist/service/contextual factors)
- Do you find that different approaches are more suitable for different profiles of SEN? If yes, please provide some examples.
- Do you find that different approaches are more suitable for different age groups of CYP

with SEN? i.e., primary as opposed to post-primary aged CYP

- Where have you learned about these approaches?
- Where do you look to when you wish to find information and guidance about evidence-based approaches?
- What are the outcomes in using these approaches to elicit the voices of these CYP?
- What are the benefits?
- Have you experienced any challenges in using these approaches?
- What could be done to alleviate these challenges?

4. What is your role in representing the voices of CYP with SEN?

Prompt questions

- How/when do you represent their voices?
- Is this an important aspect of practice to you?
- How do you choose which information to represent? Is there a criteria or process?
- What is the impact of doing so? i.e., child, family, psychologist, service, contextual impact
- What are the benefits?
- What are the challenges?
- What could be done to alleviate these challenges?
- Do you find it difficult to accurately interpret the voices of CYP with SEN?
- Do you feel that your own beliefs and values impact on your interpretation of the CYP's views? If so, how do you manage these beliefs/values?

Appendix S: Differences between the Online Questionnaire and Smillie and Newton's (2020) Questionnaire

Question A). Which approaches do you use to gather young people's views in mainstream secondary schools? (Smillie & Newton, 2020)

Discussion based methods (including direct questioning)

Self-report scales

Indirect methods – using past reports to track a young person's preferences and dislikes

Task related procedures (sentence completion tasks, questionnaires, reading motivation inventories)

Therapeutic based approaches (for example, personal construct psychology tasks)

Asking parents or familiar adults about a young person's preferences and dislikes

Skills profiles

Solution focused methods

Person centred planning approaches

Other: (please specify)

Adaptations to Smillie and Newton's (2020) questionnaire are detailed next:

- See *Questions 13-17* on the current Online Questionnaire (Appendix Q)

E.g., *Question 13 (Likert scale)*:

How often do you use discussion-based methods or approaches (i.e., direct questioning) to elicit the voices of children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs (SEN) in your practice?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

- Question A was separated into five individual questions to enable the researcher to gather data on how often EPs use of the following methods in their practice: discussion-based methods, questionnaires/self-report scales, task or activity-based approaches, therapeutic approaches and indirect methods
- Likert scales were used to assess frequency and allow for further analysis
- In line with the research questions for the current study, the adapted questions stated 'CYP with SEN' so to encompass CYP in both primary and secondary school (instead of solely focusing on 'young people in mainstream secondary schools')

Question B). Please name any specific resources you use to gather young people's views in mainstream secondary schools? (Smillie & Newton, 2020)

Adaptations to Smillie and Newton's (2020) questionnaire:

- See *Question 18* on the current Online Questionnaire (Appendix Q) (*Multiple choice and short answer option*):

Please name any specific resources or tools that you use in your practice to elicit the voices of CYP with SEN. Record the resource/tool name under each method/approach below.

Discussion based methods i.e., direct questioning (please name):

Questionnaires or self-report scales (please name):

Task or activity-based approaches (please name):

Therapeutic approaches (please name):

Indirect methods i.e., reviewing the CYP's reports or asking the CYP's parents/caregivers or familiar adults (please name):

Other (please name):

- Option to record resources or tools under each method/approach above to gather information about the specific method/approach and therefore, potentially inform future practice
- In line with the research questions for the current study, the adapted question stated 'CYP with SEN' so to encompass CYP in both primary and secondary school

Question C). Do you record how the young person's views were ascertained? (Smillie & Newton, 2020)

Yes

No

Dependent on circumstances

Please specify:

Adaptations to Smillie and Newton's (2020) questionnaire:

- See *Questions 20-21* on the current Online Questionnaire (Appendix Q):

E.g., *Question 20* (*Multiple choice*):

Do you record the voices of the CYP with SEN that you work with?

Yes (go to Question 21)

No (go to Question 24)

E.g., *Question 21* (*Likert scale*):

How often do you record the voices of CYP with SEN using their own words?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

- Option for EPs to state whether they record the C/YP's voice, or not based on their own practice (*Question 20*)
- Likert scales were used to assess frequency and allow for further analysis (*Question 21*)
- In line with the research questions for the current study, the adapted questions stated 'CYP with SEN' so to encompass CYP in both primary and secondary school

Question D. Do you make use of the young person's actual words or paraphrase? (please base this on the majority of your practice) (Smillie & Newton, 2020)

Actual words

Paraphrase

Both

Adaptations to Smillie and Newton's (2020) questionnaire:

- See *Questions 22-23* on the current Online Questionnaire (Appendix Q):

E.g., *Question 22 (Likert scale)*:

How often do you record the voices of CYP with SEN by paraphrasing or summarising their words?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

- Likert scales were used to assess frequency and allow for further analysis
- In line with the research questions for the current study, the adapted questions stated 'CYP with SEN' so to encompass CYP in both primary and secondary school
- An additional question (*Question 23*) asked about 'interpretation' and is based on existing literature in the field (Harding and Atkinson, 2009)

Question E). Which frameworks and/or underlying psychology do you make use of when gathering young people's views? (Smillie & Newton, 2020)

Adaptations to Smillie and Newton's (2020) questionnaire:

- See *Questions 31-34* on the current Online Questionnaire (Appendix Q):

E.g., *Question 31 (Short answer)*:

What psychological theories underlie your work when eliciting the voices of CYP with SEN?

Please detail:

E.g., *Question 32 (Short answer):*

What specific strategies or techniques within the above psychological theories do you use when eliciting the voices of CYP with SEN?

Please detail:

- These questions specifically stated ‘psychological theory’ so to gather information about the theories used by EPs to elicit and represent CYP’s voices in an Irish context (*Questions 31 & 33*)
- Additional questions asked about strategies and techniques stemming from psychological theories to potentially inform future practice (*Questions 32 & 34*)
- The separation of questions relating to EP practice in ‘eliciting’ and ‘representing’ CYP’s voices enabled the researcher to gather data relating to all research questions (*Questions 31-34*)
- In line with the research questions for the current study, the adapted questions stated ‘CYP with SEN’ so to encompass CYP in both primary and secondary school

Question F). Do you ensure others are aware of the frameworks and psychological theories/models that inform your approach to gathering young people’s views? (please circle) (Smillie & Newton, 2020)

Never

Sometimes

Half of the time

Most of the time

Always

Adaptations to Smillie and Newton’s (2020) questionnaire:

- See *Question 35* on the current Online Questionnaire (Appendix Q) (*Likert scale*):
Do you inform others of the psychological theories used in your practice to elicit and represent the voices of CYP with SEN?
1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

- ‘Psychological theory’ was stated to keep questions within the current online questionnaire consistent
- ‘Elicit’ and ‘represent’ were stated so that the researcher could use the acquired data to answer research questions for the current study
- Likert scales were used to assess frequency and allow for further analysis
- In line with the research questions for the current study, the adapted questions stated ‘CYP with SEN’ so to encompass CYP in both primary and secondary school

Question G). How do you express the young person’s views? (Smillie & Newton, 2020)

As part of a written document (report, advice, consultation documents etc)

Verbally, to the school, parents/guardians and other systems

Other: (please specify)

Adaptations to Smillie and Newton’s (2020) questionnaire:

- See *Questions 24-30* on the current Online Questionnaire (Appendix Q):

E.g., *Question 25 (Likert scale):*

How often do you represent the voices of CYP with SEN during consultation consultation/meetings with parents?

1-5 (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always)

- The term ‘represent’ was used so to align with relevant participation models informing EP practice i.e., the Pyramid of Participation (Fox, 2016)
- Likert scales were used to assess frequency and allow for further analysis
- Different modes of representation were asked in individual questions to enable the researcher to gather data about each mode i.e., consultation, reports and case notes
- In line with the research questions for the current study, the adapted questions stated ‘CYP with SEN’ so to encompass CYP in both primary and secondary school

Additional Questions within the Online Questionnaire (Appendix Q)

- *Question 19* was asked to gather data about the influences on EP practice in eliciting and representing the voices of CYP with SEN
- *Questions 36 & 37* endeavoured to gather information about any existing guidelines, policies or documents within Irish disability, educational or primary care services that

may be relevant to this area of research

- *Questions 38 & 39* intended to gather information about whether participants were interested in taking part in an interview (in addition to their email address/employment service, if interested)

Appendix T: Example of Interview Transcript

Participant and Service: Disability Services Educational Psychologist 4 (DisabilityEP4)

Date: 15/06/2022

Interviewer: As an educational psychologist what is your role in eliciting and listening to the voices of children and young people with special educational needs?

DisabilityEP4: OK, so what my role is. I think the way I see my role and being on a children's disability team is to try and actually be inventive around how I do elicit the voices of children, because I think like up until actually very recently I was kind of like, well, actually for this particular child, it's going to be hard to elicit his voice, because maybe he has severe ADHD and an autism diagnosis and is non-speaking and all of those things. But actually, I was like, OK, voices can be elicited in other ways. It can be through, you know, providing limited choice and things like that. So, I think that's our role. It's to be inventive and not to do it in a tokenistic way.

Interviewer: Very good. And my next question is how do you do this? You've given me some examples there already. Have you anything else you would like to add?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah. So, I suppose it depends on like for me, I find that I still do have that tendency to actually elicit the voice of children that are speaking or that are verbal communicators as opposed to children that are non-speaking. But like, I'm just I'm doing autism assessments at the moment through a project and they tend to be older adolescents and maybe like referred in through CAMHS and so I suppose these are autistic people or you know potentially autistic people that would have previously been considered like 'high functioning' even though we know that that term is no longer helpful. But with these kind of kids because you know they are, so like, what's the word? A lot of the kids were really expressive with their language. It was much easier to do that with this cohort. But I would always ask, "Do you feel yourself that you are autistic?".

Interviewer: OK, interesting. Yeah.

DisabilityEP4: Yeah. So, I just ask them the question and I think that's all in line then with the neurodiversity movement. And the neural affirmative paradigm around actually, you know, I can have my clinical opinion about if somebody is autistic or not, but we actually need to ask the young people themselves. And so then like as I was doing that project, I realised, OK, I'm actually not eliciting the voice of the autistic person even at the screener stage. So, I'd give the school a screener, not that screeners are that helpful anyway, they're overinflated. But I'd give the school a screener. And then I'd give the parents a screener, and then I wouldn't include the child. So like, and then I started. So, the last day, actually, last week, I brought in a young person and then I used one of the self-report measures with her. But I didn't just give her the self-report. I just was like, "Let's chat about this". And like I said, "What do you think? Do you think you're autistic? And do you think you need this referral?". And actually, she was like, "Yeah, yeah, I think I do". But like, I never would have asked that before because I think I didn't have the

confidence to as well. I was like eliciting a conversation between adults, not the conversation with the child, but actually I was completely wrong in that way of thinking. So that's just one example.

Interviewer: Yeah. That's really interesting, and what would have prompted you then to ask the child or the adolescent, or what made you recognise that you wanted to elicit their voice?

DisabilityEP4: Like I think it's always been, it's always been something that's been brought up ever since I started training or whatever like you need to elicit the voice of the child. And like when I was training, I'd do it in kind of a tokenistic way, almost like, 'OK, this this for my portfolio' or 'This is for whatever around like maybe a watchmacall it checklist you know the [educational service] My Thoughts About School checklist and like I find it a little bit helpful but actually it was more, like if I'm being really honest, it was more kind of tokenistic and more like 'This is something I should be doing' as opposed to 'Do I place real value in this?' and actually it was only recently when I was. Like I've just started, like an area of interest of mine is that whole neurodiversity kind of neural affirmative paradigm. And I follow a lot of autistic people on Twitter because like autistic voices are completely underrepresented in research. So following people on Twitter and them actually saying "This clinician asked me" or "This psychologist asked me, do you think you're autistic yourself? And that was really helpful". And I was like, I need to do this more. And actually, that young person in the last day when I asked her and she was like, "Oh yeah, I do X, Y and Z and then I do this and I do a little bit of this. I do a little bouncing on my toes. Do you think that is?", and we had a really good conversation, but it means now if you had to write the report. But when I'm making the referral, I've such rich data.

Interviewer: Yes, from the child themselves, or the adolescent.

DisabilityEP4: Yeah. So yeah. And like, look I try to do it in other things like even in terms of like say like interventions or therapies or like I always do ask the young person I'm like "Do you actually want to do this? Is this something you'd find helpful?". Because I feel like with any other kind of therapy or anything if they don't want to, if they're not motivated to do it themselves, they're never, it's not going to work. So, I suppose they're the ways I try to elicit the voice. But yeah, there's probably no particular structure to it or anything.

Interviewer: Yeah, that sounds great. And what do you think is the impact of doing so?

DisabilityEP4: It's probably just empowering and validating, and I don't know. I think in my area of work, because I work in disability, that I'm working with a minority cohort and I think minorities typically, you know communities that their voices are always underrepresented, it's always the voice of the majority. So, I think it's probably validating in actually giving somebody a voice and especially like for some kids say if they've like a physical disability or any disability, that often that it's always stuff done to them or done for them and actually they're lost in the middle of it and it just encourages independence and confidence and all of that. But yeah, and then solutions. Kind of going back to your previous question. Yeah, I like, I really like doing solution focused questioning and yeah, so just kind of like literally saying, "Well, what do you think will help? Who can help? How do you see the problem getting better?". And I find, I am doing it way more. I'm really trying to problem solve with the child as opposed to problem

solving with the parent. But I do think for me, and it's probably stuff I should have been doing anyway. And I was here and there, but now I'm more confident because I'm like 'No, actually like this little guy is acting out and he's hitting out and he's school refusing like, why amn't I asking him? I'm asking the parents'. And it's actually really good because like the last day like one particular child he came up with an idea. He was like, "Oh, I was thinking about it like maybe this would really help or like, if my breathing goes funny maybe this would help". Yeah, it was really good. But again, like as I'm talking, I'm conscious all the examples I'm giving are examples for young people who are verbal and speaking and in terms of like non-speaking. Like, I'm just even thinking in terms of like sensory regulation, like I'll still say like "Is it OK if I touch your arm?", and I'll like do it slowly and then like kind of just check. Like say if I'm doing like kind of firm pressure down the arms or something that like, I'll always check in and really look for the reaction and stuff like that. Just to see well actually does the child like this because they'll tell you straight away and push you away. And then I'm like OK he does not like deep pressure, firm pressure, you know, rather than actually checking with the parent I'm like, 'No, he clearly does not like this' and then trying to give choices and stuff like that, but yeah, I need to be more inventive. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay and what challenges do you meet then with this role?

DisabilityEP4: Probably that. Yeah, like evaluating a child's voice when they aren't using their voice to communicate, if that makes sense. And I often think that like even 'The voice of the child', like sometimes I'm wondering, do we need to even rename that? I don't know what else you'd call it like there's probably other definitions in research, but I'm often like, why is it the voice of the children actually? Society tells us we need our voices to communicate, but actually everyone communicates differently.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's actually a really important point to consider.

DisabilityEP4: But I think that's probably the main challenge and just time. It's like time. It's all time and you probably heard that time and time again. But like actually like. Do you know what I'm going to go back on that because time, we should always make time for it. And it's kind of an excuse, because if you're trying to talk to the parent, you have time to talk to the child. But it's more like being really honest and reflective, it's like where do I value my time most in terms of like kind of an initial assessment or intake? It's probably like a preschool observation or school observation, talking to the teacher, talking to the parents that really I actually value my time enough that I have this little paragraph in around a child's perspective. I need to do it more. Sorry but yeah.

Interviewer: No, that's OK. This is good information.

DisabilityEP4: Yeah. So, this is good. This is good for me. I'm like, geez, I need some work. But yeah, yeah. Yeah, but I do feel fine for me. I'm saying time, but really, that's an excuse. It's really that I should, that it should be one of the priorities. And is it value? Is it the value we actually place on the voice of the child as opposed to that we don't have time? Because we place time on what we value.

Interviewer: Yeah, I get that and that leads me to my next question. Is this an important role to you?

DisabilityEP4: Definitely, yeah. And in like an ideal world, and what should be happening is I think like children should be involved. And even like in service delivery, like we have parent forums now as part of progressing disability services. We don't have a child's forum. We don't have like, we do these like parent education workshops around autism or around challenging behaviour, around anxiety or whatever it is, and we never actually ask children to read the PowerPoint slides. So, like my next thing I want to do that like if there's just a few different kind of projects that might be coming up in the future, but like I do want children or young people to even kind of retrospectively, so like adults to kind of look back over stuff and be like "Actually no that's not good. That's really really like deficit focused or that's", you know, but just getting voices of actual service users and past and present, but I know that's a bit different from maybe the kind of individual client work or the here and now, but yeah.

Interviewer: I think that's really important though. It's a really good idea for practice going forward.

DisabilityEP4: And yeah look, it's ideally. And I get really excited when I talk about that and the potential of that and but actually yeah, I think it's time and I think with progressing disability services and obviously this is all anonymous, I think people are absolutely exhausted. I think clinicians are exhausted, that I don't think that anybody's like, I don't know. Like one of the values of progressing disability services is that we take pride in our own work and actually I don't know about, you know, I can't speak for all psychologists, but I would be very, very confident the majority of psychologists aren't taking pride in their work at the moment. So, all of these things that actually are really motivating and exciting to most psychologists, we can't do it because we're just exhausted. Yeah, even the IFSP you know the individual family support plan, it's KPI. That's another pressure coming down and that's set with the family. It's not goal setting with the child, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, because I know on that document, it says the goals of the child and family. But I'm wondering if this happens in practice.

DisabilityEP4: No, no, never is unless, like you have people kind of coming in. Like in the service I left we, I stopped doing IFSPs because I can't at the moment and it's just too much PIs or priority ones to do. But we did bring in people like so we did bring in a young person to set the goals with her and that was lovely. That was really, really nice. But again, I don't think that's common practice. Maybe it is. But she was the only person that probably, see this is again going back to it, she's the only person that I thought was appropriate to do it with. But actually, just yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: OK. And what has impacted on your beliefs on why you think this role is important?

DisabilityEP4: I don't know. I think definitely my training. I think, yeah, I think that's one of the main things.

Interviewer: That's interesting, though. Like, it sounds like a piece of reflective practice?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, that definitely. And I think, yeah, I think it's probably bringing, like I think we all have particular research interests or whatever based on, I only had this conversation with my friend the last day. So, I suppose what we're interested in, it always stems from kind of our own personal experiences.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's a really good point. And does it form a significant part of your practice at the moment?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, I think it probably does. Yeah, I say that and I don't want to be sounding like all kind of like I'm doing the best job in the world because like I said at the moment I'm not able to with the system. But like yeah, like it probably does. It does definitely more, more so recently as my confidence has grown as like a practitioner.

Interviewer: Brilliant. What do you feel has helped your confidence to grow in terms of the role?

DisabilityEP4: I think it's experience. And then I think now that I'm in a senior role, I feel a little bit more. And actually there's no clinical governance or there's no principal like I'm kind of like, 'Oh, actually, no. OK, I've to back myself now I can't, you know, I have to just do what I think is right rather than what I always thought a supervisor would have thought was right or whatever'. And I'm like, 'Oh no. OK, I need to just need to back myself'.

Interviewer: Okay I understand that. Do you think your role in eliciting the voice of children and young people with special educational needs could be enhanced? And if so, what kind of supports might support you with that?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, like it definitely could be like. I'd really like more kind of probably like more actual strategies around how to elicit the voice of non-speaking people or like kids. There's one program in [location]. I can't remember the person. But she's the psychologist there and she has this, like, positive proactive solutions or something really.

Interviewer: Is it CPS?

DisabilityEP4: Yes, CPS, collaborative proactive solutions. Yeah, something like that. And [psychologist] says, I've just heard her speak. I used work in the [location], kind of in the same areas as her. But like, I've heard her say multiple times, "It's a cop out when people say we can't elicit the voices of those who don't have ways of you know, communicating verbally" and that there's always a way even with like a severe ID child with behaviours that challenge, you can still seek out solution with them. Yeah, I always thought it was really interesting. So, I would love to have like probably more CPD but again it's going back to I'm just thinking with everything, it's probably like clinicians are going to be more inclined to like want to get trained in like a program like Circle of Security rather than. But yeah, like I don't know, even if the colleges for like supervisors, just the way like Mary I often run kind of things for supervisors something around that, that's free.

Interviewer: Yeah, those are really good ideas. So next I have some questions about the service. What is the role of your service in relation to eliciting and listening to the voices of these children and young people with special educational needs?

DisabilityEP4: Nothing like I don't mean to be, yeah. There isn't. It's not there, is my experience. We don't have a manager and on my team we have right now, today we have one psychologist, two physios, a nurse and an OT. So actually we don't have. Yeah, we probably just don't have enough people on the ground to actually meet most needs and then like, we don't have that kind of top there. There is no kind of ethos of eliciting the voice of the child. Yeah, there isn't any ethos on my team and actually I would say and I've like even from other areas I've worked in. No, there probably isn't that ethos. I think it's all just, I think it's so individual and so like differs. It probably just takes one person on a team to kind of raise that awareness, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, I see. And is there any way that you feel that the service does support you with this role at the moment?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, I suppose because there's no clinical governance, so. I didn't, you know that on these teams, so there's no clinical accountability. So, in a really, really backward way and kind of not a right way. It's kind of in a way clinicians do have a little bit more autonomy within their individual caseloads because. Yeah, there is, there's not really anybody. The manager is, we don't have one at the moment, but the manager is usually not from a psychology background so they can't dictate what your clinical practice is anyway. So, it's probably leaving the autonomy a little bit more with the clinicians to kind of decide, yeah, so maybe in a kind of a back handed compliment to the service.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your own practice aligns with service provision concerning this role?

DisabilityEP4: No. I probably shouldn't be saying that, but like it's all anonymous.

Interviewer: Yes, this is all anonymous.

DisabilityEP4: No, but look, it's brilliant. And I think this is more timely than ever with progressing disability services.

Interviewer: OK, so do you think this role forms an important part of service provision then?

DisabilityEP4: I just think that the staffing is the issue and with the rollout of PDS, training hasn't really happened anyway, so there's meant to be like inductions and hasn't really happened in most parts of the country as far as I know. So again, I think it's just if there's one person like, even if there was like, I'm just thinking aloud here, like you have your like inclusion and diversity officer on like a student union and you have your, whoever officer and your welfare officer, that almost if there was one person on a team that like audited things that way, kind of like was an auditor to see, 'OK, are we including the voice of the child?'. And that would be, that would be good. Yeah, yeah. Something I thought of is if somebody had the role of being like we have fire safety officers here, like a voice of the child officer.

Interviewer: Yeah, what a great idea. OK. What are the benefits or outcomes experienced at the service level when you do get to elicit or listen to the voices of these children and young people with special educational needs?

DisabilityEP4: Don't know. I presume if we're looking at like bigger picture stuff that like say if it's like around behavior that we're kind of preventing future problems because the child can meaningfully now engage with the different strategies as opposed to something that's done to them. So yeah, it might prevent future problems.

Interviewer: Okay. And you've kind of touched on the answer to this next question already. What are the challenges experienced at a service level relating to this role? And what could be done to alleviate these challenges?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, probably. Yeah. Again, like back to more staffing, isn't it? And like the education piece around why is it important to elicit the voice of the child, do you know because like I'm talking aloud here about why I think it's important but actually like I can't remember exact research. I just know that it is important, but it's like, yeah, it's the right thing to do. And the UN conventions of the rights of the child and all that kind of stuff but yeah.

Interviewer: And do you think, you know, capturing the child's voice is something that comes under the realm of psychology? Or do you think other disciplines recognise the importance as well?

DisabilityEP4: Like, I think it's definitely educational psychology, I think there's a huge distinction between clinical, counselling, educational in this regard. And I think, yeah, I think it's really drilled into us through our training and it tends to be more something valued like I'd imagine your research and I don't know, but I'd imagine a lot of your research is coming from the education domain as opposed to the psychology domain, but it might be completely wrong.

Interviewer: No, it is that and you know what actually, when I worked as an assistant psychologist, I remember sitting around tables and everyone would be around the table like family, parents, staff, everyone, but the person.

DisabilityEP4: Or the child.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. And I just always remember thinking like that is not, you know, right. And it kind of just stuck with me then.

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, and that's sad.

Interviewer: It is really. So, the next piece then is about consultation and evidence-based approaches. So, the British Psychological Society have stated that a core professional competency of the educational psychologist is to use evidence-based approaches to ensure that the C/YP's voice is heard during consultation. What evidence-based approaches do you use to elicit the voices of the children and young people with special educational needs?

DisabilityEP4: And that's a hard one. Yeah, it's probably like a solution focused kind of approach like so I use solution focused questioning which I, yeah, I genuinely do with most young people. But again, that's for a certain cohort, but yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. What factors would influence your decisions about which approaches you choose to use?

DisabilityEP4: It probably depends on whether we're looking at like assessment or intervention and what type of assessment. So, like if it's planning for future intervention, it probably would be solution focused approach. I might do a tiny bit of motivational interviewing like a teeny smidgen of it. I'm just thinking actually. Yeah, right another one would be Theraplay. Yeah. So, with the Theraplay like, I do find that that's very. It's not child led cause it's not like play therapy but it's like it's very much like 'What does the child like?' and 'Let's do that again'. So that's kind of eliciting the voice of those non-speaking kids, but sorry what was the question again?

Interviewer: So, what factors impact your decision about which approaches you choose to use? So maybe child factors, psychologist factors, service or contextual factors, or anything like that?

DisabilityEP4: Child factors. So, whether or not they're speaking, non-speaking, ID no ID. The kind of service factors, it kind of depends. It's like with the PDS model, I think some of it is like more parent consultation or parent mediated interventions that actually you mightn't necessarily be meeting the child that much. I'm sure [educational service] is pretty similar now that I think about it. And so that the way that all the models I think have been going is that in a way even though on the one hand, there's this big move towards the eliciting the voice of the child and we're child centred, family centered. But actually, this whole new move towards this kind of more parent mediated interventions is actually meaning that all of us on the ground are meeting children less. So, I don't know. So, I suppose it, yeah, it just depends on what the type of intervention is. So, is it a more than likely parent mediated intervention? But if it was individual therapy, then I'd definitely be kind of eliciting the voice of the child or kind of behaviour support plan if it was appropriate.

Interviewer: Where have you learned about these approaches? Like Thera play, motivational interviewing, or solution focused practice?

DisabilityEP4: Through like placements and through the doctorate program and that's probably just reflective of though my own kind of learning trajectory like I'm only qualified three years. So that's probably where that's coming from.

Interviewer: And do you find that different approaches are more suitable for different maybe profiles of special educational needs or different ages? So maybe primary or post primary or early intervention?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah like for some kids, I'll do like a child friendly report. Now I've done very few since I qualified, but like, I would definitely use it for, say, a child that has dyslexia because we know their IQ would be kind of in the average range. So, you know, it might be really helpful. And I've done it maybe for one or two autism reports. Yeah, not like, not enough. I haven't done enough, and I've stopped doing them recently, just because of time. So yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, OK. And then where would you look to if you wish to find some more information and guidance about evidence-based approaches in this area?

DisabilityEP4: Google? Yeah, it's terrible. Google Scholar probably. And yeah, and where else? I'm sorry. Yeah, like, you're going to think I don't use evidence-based practice, I promise I do. But yeah, Twitter. I just find it so informative, and I think, yeah, definitely. And following

autistic people. I really, really love that because you just learn so much about autistic voices. There's a quote I heard from this guy. He's called [name] and he's an autistic person on who's got like a big kind of Twitter profile or whatever. Lots of followers. And he has 'If you want to learn more about autism, ask a person with autism', you know, and I'm like.

Interviewer: Yeah I mean, it seems so simple.

DisabilityEP4: Yeah. Yeah, I think that's where I get a lot of my information, but obviously I'll read it through critical lens. I'll make sure that theory underlies things, you know? Yeah.

Interviewer: What are the outcomes in using these approaches that are evidence-based to elicit the voice of these children and young people?

DisabilityEP4: And to go back to that like validation that morally and ethically it's the right thing to do. It's probably like, actually like bringing it back to the like myself like I think I feel good after I do it because I feel like I value my work. I'm like, 'OK, no, this is a good piece of work. I'm doing the right thing. This is nice and it's enjoyable. Like it's actually really enjoyable'. And I think it probably like secures better outcomes. I'd imagine it makes it more likely that an intervention's gonna work if you engage the child.

Interviewer: Yeah, because you hopefully have the whole picture then.

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, triangulation of data and you're probably getting more accurate assessment results and all that stuff as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, OK. So, we are onto the final section now. What is your role in representing the voices of these children and young people with special educational needs?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah. So probably just being an advocate for, for people's voices. I know on our team, we have an autism kind of project team and it has come up a few times that like we actually ended up auditing some of the reports. But we audited the reports just because like I wanted to make sure they were following a neuro affirmative kind of approach. And also, we did bring it in like "OK, but we need to ask people do you think you're autistic?", because that's what autistic people are saying they want to happen. And so, I think it's just being an advocate and not being too afraid to like, speak up about things like that. So yeah, I suppose just being an advocate, which we do naturally, as EP's anyway, I think.

Interviewer: Okay. Are there any specific times that you would represent their voices or where would you represent them?

DisabilityEP4: Probably schools, probably with external agencies, more so than internally. So, with CAMHS, with schools around school placements. Yeah, that sort of thing.

Interviewer: OK, great. And is that an important aspect of practice for you? So, representing their voice?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, definitely. Yeah.

Interviewer: And how do you choose which information to represent?

DisabilityEP4: Don't know. I suppose, like any information we collect, some of it will be, what's that expression? So, 'What's nice to know versus what we need to know'. So, what we need to know and what's clinically relevant as well, probably.

Interviewer: What do you think is the impact then of representing their voice?

DisabilityEP4: Again, it's like validation for people and that, yeah, that's what I think.

Interviewer: What are the challenges in representing their voice?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, I think the systems. I think a lot of the systems. I think the last thing a lot of the systems think about are the voice of the child, they're thinking about probably money, resources, staffing, keeping parents happy, keeping the media happy, that actually the child is rarely really mentioned and what the child thinks. I don't know. I'm just thinking too deeply, I think. I think you've caught me at a bad week in that, but yeah.

Interviewer: No, this is really rich data to capture. And what do you think could be done to alleviate these challenges?

DisabilityEP4: Again like having, like formalising that kind of advocacy role within teams. But then yeah, because yeah, because I feel with, one thing I've learned from PDS, like the value, the ideas are really good. But if we have people on the ground actually being like, "OK, no, let's audit the report. Let's audit our practices. Let's include, whatever". I don't know.

Interviewer: Yeah, really practical ideas. Do you find it difficult to accurately interpret the voices of children and young people with special educational needs?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, probably because I think like. I think you really have to. Actually, I only finished writing a report recently like today or yesterday. I'll try and even find the bit. I think I still have it open. Oh, I don't. OK, where is it? Sorry, one minute.

Interviewer: No problem. Take your time.

DisabilityEP4: It's this exactly. It's about a child. It's in my report here, but that he's non-speaking and intellectual disability and I kind of have a section on what he might like and different things like that just because I think that will help with behaviour but like even the way I was writing it, I was like. I was so unsure cause like he engaged in certain activities but like. Like I'm a devil for saying 'It appears that he enjoys' because I can never say for sure if somebody enjoys something, if they haven't told me themselves. So, I think that's the difficulty in accurately capturing because with children who aren't able to communicate exactly if they like it or not. Like I can see he's playing, and I can see he's writing on something. He appears to enjoy it, but I don't know for sure, so maybe it's an inaccurate capturing of his interest when I don't know for sure. If that makes sense.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah, I get that.

DisabilityEP4: And then I think with children that it's like they are dependent on the adults around them sometimes to look out for those nonverbal cues around their needs, wants, desires

that I'm like are we misinterpreting that, because it's so subjective. Like I misinterpret people's words, never mind people's nonverbal actions. I suppose worry about misinterpretation as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, those are valid points. And do you feel that your own beliefs and values impact on your interpretation of the C/YP's views?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah surely. I'm just trying to think. Probably, like I'm thinking say if I really really think a C/YP is autistic, and I keep going back to that example because it's probably the area of work I use it in most. The majority of our service users are autistic or query. But yeah, like I might have an idea around actually you know 'This person is autistic', and I probably ask leading questions, now that I think of it or like with solution focused questions, I probably ask leading questions. I'd probably be like "And what about?" you know when you're asking what people could help. "What about like teacher?", and they were like, "Yeah". And I'm like, 'OK, she thinks teacher'. So I'm actually creating this. I probably need to step back more.

Interviewer: Yeah, but I think I can see why you do that as well, to brainstorm hopefully helpful recommendations?

DisabilityEP4: Yeah, but it's a pretty similar challenge with the IFSP that like the parents in theory set the goals. But I've noticed clinicians are setting the goals because they want them to be attainable and evidence-based. Yeah, but again, that's very much of the assumption that that expert model, isn't it of psychology, that 'We know best', but actually it's like 'We don't know best, it's the person that it's happening to. Yeah, I don't know. God I'm getting very philosophical. Like it's great. I haven't had room for, like, reflective practice in so long. Because. Yeah.

Interviewer: Well, that's good that the interview is helping with that. And last question then. How do you manage these beliefs and values in your practice?

DisabilityEP4: Like probably supervision in theory is where that should happen, but supervision tends to be taken up with other things. I think it's like anything. I think it's like self-reflection and kind of making sure that we're aware of our own biases and feelings. Yeah. I think capacity to self-reflect probably helps.

Interviewer: Brilliant. Well, thank you so much. Have you anything else to add?

DisabilityEP4: No that is it, thanks to you too.

Appendix U: Official Letter of Ethical Approval from the MIREC and the NEPS Research Advisory Committee

Figure U1

Letter of Ethical Approval from the MIREC

		<p>Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee</p> <p>MIREC-4: MIREC Chair Decision Form</p>
APPLICATION NO.		A21-055 FINAL
1. PROJECT TITLE		
<p>"Nothing about me without me": Exploring how educational psychologists elicit and represent the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs in Ireland</p>		
2. APPLICANT		
Name:	Emma Louise Bohan	
Department / Centre / Other:	EPISE	
Position:	Postgraduate Researcher	
3. DECISION OF MIREC CHAIR		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethical clearance through MIREC is required.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethical clearance through MIREC is not required and therefore the researcher need take no further action in this regard.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ethical clearance is required and granted. Referral to MIREC is not necessary.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethical clearance is required but the full MIREC process is not. Ethical clearance is therefore granted if required for external funding applications and the researcher need take no further action in this regard.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient information provided by applicant / Amendments required.	
4. REASON(S) FOR DECISION		
<p>A21- 055 – Emma Louise Bohan - "Nothing about me without me": Exploring how educational psychologists elicit and represent the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs in Ireland</p> <p>I have reviewed this application and I am satisfied that it meets with MIREC requirements. It is, therefore, approved.</p>		
5. DECLARATION (MIREC CHAIR)		
Name (Print):	Dr Marie Griffin	
Signature:		
Date:	14 th January, 2022	

Figure U2

Letter of Ethical Approval from the NEPS Research Advisory Committee



ResearchNEPS <researchneps@education.gov.ie>

To: EMMA BOHAN (Student) <15101711@micstudent.mic.ul.ie>



Fri 3/4/2022 1:19 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Emma Louise

I hope you are keeping well? I am pleased to let you know that your research proposal has been approved by NEPS IMG this week. The group were impressed with how thorough and considered your proposal was. As an organisation we look forward to seeing the outcomes of this work.

I wonder when you think your research project will be finished- I will probably contact you about that time to request a summary of the findings.

Kind wishes
Claire

Appendix V: Official Letter from MIREC Approving Amendments to Questionnaire

MIREC-5, Created November 2021



MIREC-5

Research Ethics Committee

MIREC Final Decision Form

APPLICATION NUMBER:

A21-055 Amendment Request No. 1

1. PROJECT TITLE

"Nothing about me without me": Exploring how educational psychologists elicit and represent the voices of school aged children and young people with special educational needs in Ireland

2. APPLICANT

Name:	Emma Bohan PGR
Department / Centre / Other:	EPISE
Position:	Postgraduate Researcher

3. DECISION OF MIREC CHAIR (✓)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethical clearance through MIREC is not required and therefore the applicant need take no further action in this regard.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ethical clearance is required and is hereby granted by the Chair without need for referral to the MIREC committee.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethical clearance for a funding application or a similar purpose is granted by the Chair <i>pro tem</i> without need for referral to the MIREC committee. However, the applicant must subsequently seek ethical clearance from MIREC prior to embarking on any related project work involving human participants or their data.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethical clearance is granted following review of the application by the MIREC committee.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ethical clearance is not granted following review of the application by the MIREC committee.

4. REASON(S) FOR DECISION

I have reviewed this amendment request and I believe it meets MIREC requirements. It is, therefore, approved.

5. SIGNATURE OF MIREC CHAIR

Name (Print):	Dr Marie Griffin
Signature:	
Date:	7 th April 2022

Appendix W: Demonstration of Framework Analysis Steps (Goldsmith, 2021; Parkinson et al., 2016; Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Ward et al., 2013)

Step One: Data Familiarisation

For step one, the researcher immersed themselves in the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts and listening to the recordings. This step continued until the researcher felt that they possessed a sufficient initial understanding of the data, whilst taking account of the extent of variation within the data set. During this step, the researcher took note of key ideas which were helpful to comprehend the overarching themes within the data set. From the initial notes, the researcher created a set of preliminary codes for different aspects related to how EPs elicit and represent the voices of CYP with SEN.

Step Two: Identify a Thematic Framework

Regarding step two, a thematic framework was applied to the data set, with the aim of providing a meaningful and manageable structure for the data analysis and resulting interpretation. For the present study, the framework was ordered in a way that supported the researcher to concentrate on the research area in question. For this reason, the researcher decided to construct a framework based on the EPs' service of employment. This resulted in a framework consisting of three categories namely, (1) disability services, (2) educational services, and (3) primary care services.

Step Three: Indexing

Throughout step three, the researcher applied the framework to all of the data using NVIVO (QSR International, 2022) software. Specifically, by importing the interview data to NVIVO and applying the 'Framework Matrix' criteria. The researcher continued to code the data

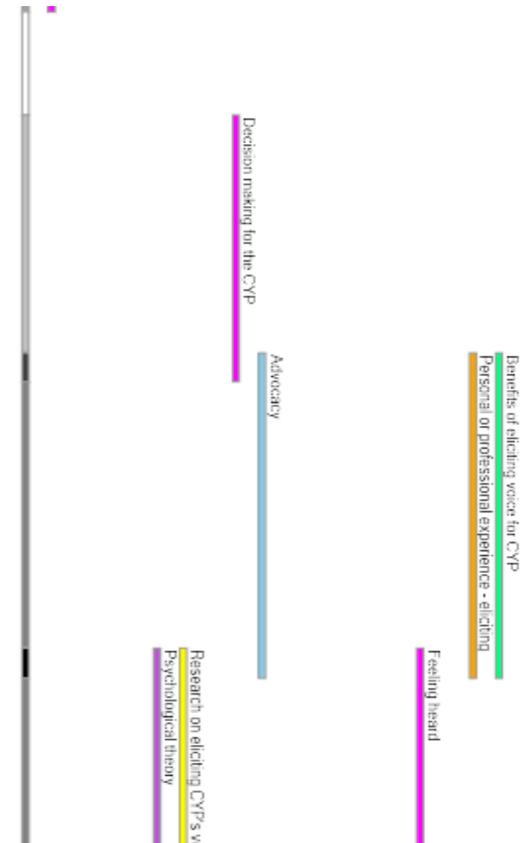
following the application of the framework, by reading through each transcript, within each of the three categories. The researcher then highlighted the relevant data and decided which theme or sub-theme to assign the data to. From this process, 167 preliminary codes were generated inductively. Notes were made regarding which theme or sub-theme was reflected in each section. During this step, the themes and sub-themes were refined, merged, and developed. The themes and sub-themes became more distinct as the researcher continued to immerse themselves in the data as part of step three. Please see Figure W1 for a sample of transcript from NVIVO from a participant from educational services (EducationalEP2), with coding detailed.

Figure W1

Example of a Transcript with Coding from NVIVO

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And what do you think is the impact of doing this? So, eliciting and listening to the voices of children and young people with special educational needs.

EducationalEP2: I think it makes a huge difference to them. I honestly do and especially in the report writing that their voice is heard because so often it's the teachers make the decision or the parents and especially more so around transitions. You know I see sometimes in 6th class parents are choosing a special class setting for post primary school and I'm like, "Have you spoken to your son or daughter about it?" And they're like "No". And I'm like, "Well, they're old enough to make that decision themselves", you know, "Are they aware they have ASD? Do they know what a special class is like?" "Do they know how it will be different?", that I think they really need to be included because if you get by in from them as well and that they hear their voice being heard, it makes such a difference. And I suppose one example I had was a boy with behaviour difficulties and during our discussion he listed off all his issues he had with the school and the way he was being treated. So, we arranged a meeting with management and ourselves. So, like that, I was the advocate for the child. Literally, it was like a board room meeting. We went in and was like, "Well, these are our issues" and the vice principal and the principal were there, and they were like "Well, you know, if you can do X" you know, and the school were like "We can do that if you will do this" and the student was like "OK, that's fair enough". So there was a barter system going on between school and the student. After that, no behavioral difficulties, no issues in class. He said to me after he was like "I can't believe they would do that for me and that they listened to me" and I suppose, it was just wonderful to see the impact of that on the student, which is really good. And it was the same actually when I was doing my Minecraft research, we had all the designs and it just so happened that the school were actually building new ASD classes, so I was there with the boys going "Come on, let's show the principal". So, the principal absolutely loved the children's screenshots of their designs, and what happened with the three boys was the architect and the engineer were coming the following day. So didn't the three boys pitch their proposals of their ideal ASD classroom to the engineer and the architect. And actually,



Note. This figure demonstrates an example of coding from NVIVO for the participant 'EducationalEP2'.

Step Four: Charting

For the charting step, the data was organised into a more manageable presentation to facilitate further data analysis. To carry out this step, the researcher succinctly summarised the indexed data for each category, theme and sub-theme by organising the summaries in chart form (see Table W1 for a sample chart for the final theme “Child Led Process” and resulting sub-themes). Use of NVIVO (QSR International, 2022) software enabled the researcher to retain live links between the summarised data in the charts and the coded references within the interview transcripts (see Figure W2).

Table W1

Sample Summary Chart for “Child-led Process” Theme and Sub-themes

Participant and EP Service	Sub-theme: Child centred practice	Sub-theme: Child friendly resources and tools	Sub-theme: Consent and buy in	Sub-theme: Building rapport
DisabilityEP1 Employment Service = Disability		Reference to the use of relevant child-friendly interview guide and clinical questions.		
DisabilityEP2 Employment Service = Disability	Listening to and hearing the C/YP's voice leads to goals which align with their views. It boosts the C/YP's confidence. Families appreciate this.			
DisabilityEP3 Employment Service = Disability	CYP may possess the solutions, if asked. Asking them can help them to feel validated and heard, promote change, and bestow ownership to the CYP. Co-creating behaviour plans with CYP can promote self-advocacy skills in those with SEN.			
DisabilityEP4 Employment Service = Disability	The importance of asking CYP their perceptions of their needs at the screener stage. EP's child-centred practice enhanced with confidence. Asking the C/YP		Asking CYP if they want to engage in therapy or the intervention.	

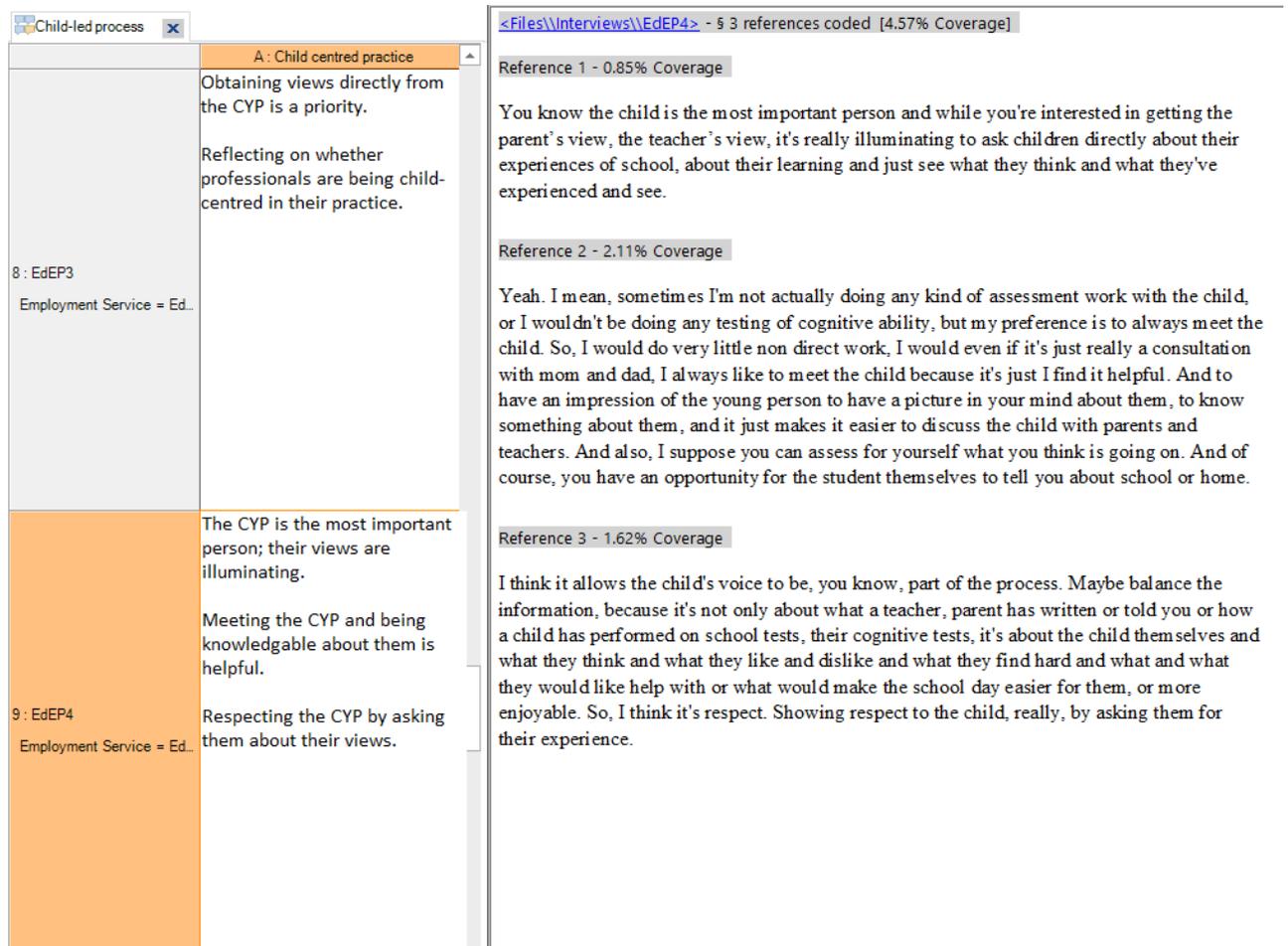
Participant and EP Service	Sub-theme: Child centred practice	Sub-theme: Child friendly resources and tools	Sub-theme: Consent and buy in	Sub-theme: Building rapport
	solution-focused questions and problem-solving with CYP. Asking CYP about their likes and dislikes, even if they have communication difficulties.			
DisabilityEP5 Employment Service = Disability		Easy to use tools (Helen Sanderson)		
EducationalEP1 Employment Service = Educational	EP tries to be child-centred in all cases by involving CYP in the consultation process. Specifically, regarding the identification of concerns and needs, and for goal setting. Belief that CYP should be at the centre of EP practice.		Conversation around consent with CYP at the beginning of involvement.	
EducationalEP2 Employment Service = Educational	Voice of the C/YP is at the centre of practice. Shift from needs-based to child centred service provision.	Easy to use tools completed at school give first insight (My Thoughts About School/What's Going On?). Activity based tools are more personable and more psychology based than questionnaires i.e., drawings, Lego, Minecraft, Likert Scale, My Feelings Ladders, Blob Tree, My Ideal School/Self. Modified child friendly questionnaires are helpful. Free drawing can be helpful for home-related issues.		Rapport needs to be built with CYP; EPs need to build a trusting relationship.
EducationalEP3 Employment Service = Educational	Obtaining views directly from the C/YP is a priority. Reflecting on whether professionals are being child-centred in their practice.	Modified student voice booklet developed by EP in service.		Get to know the child pre-assessment. Know what they are interested before meeting with them.
EducationalEP4 Employment Service = Educational	The C/YP is the most important person; their views are illuminating. Meeting the C/YP and being knowledgeable about them is helpful. Respecting the C/YP by asking them about their views.	My Thoughts About School/What's Going On booklets are helpful for school personnel to use to gain first insight into CYP's views. Activity-based tools can be helpful i.e., rating scales. Colleagues have created and shared child friendly resources.	Asking parents if they have informed the C/YP about meeting with the EP in advanced. Being genuine with the CYP. A check-in with the C/YP and agreement is needed for	My Thoughts About School questionnaire provides an initial impression of the C/YP before meeting with them. Importance of getting to know the C/YP a little bit.

Participant and EP Service	Sub-theme: Child centred practice	Sub-theme: Child friendly resources and tools	Sub-theme: Consent and buy in	Sub-theme: Building rapport
			successful involvement.	
PrimaryEP1 Employment Service = Primary Care	Elicit CYP's views across environments.	Implementing Dr Karen Treisman Therapeutic Treasure deck, All About Me template or sand-tray therapy in play-based sessions to elicit CYP's voice. My Ideal Self is helpful for CYP that find it hard to express their words. CBT or behaviour therapy can be informative in understanding where CYP are at.		
PrimaryEP2 Employment Service = Primary Care	Obtaining the CYP's perceptions on the reason for referral is a large part of the role. It allows EPs to see things from their view.	Activity-focused tools and resources i.e., drawing, CBT or life story work.		

Note. This table demonstrates the summary chart for the overarching theme “Child-led Process” and sub-themes, for all participants across disability, educational and primary care services.

Figure W2

Visual of NVIVO Depicting Live Links Between Summary Charts and Live Data



Note. This visual represents the summarised charts and links to the live data for participant ‘EducationalEP4’ (shortened to ‘EdEP4’ within NVIVO software) for the theme: “Child-led Process” and sub-theme “Child Centred Practice”.

Step Five: Mapping and Interpretation

In step five, the researcher moved past data management to understanding the data. Whilst doing so, the researcher identified key characteristics of the data to map and construe the data in its entirety. As such, throughout this phase, the researcher identified divergence and convergence amidst the data, in relation to EP practice across and within the three service groups, using the charts created as part of step four.

Appendix X: Sample of Field Notes and Research Diary Entries

Figure X1

Example of Research Diary Entry following Interview with PrimaryEP2

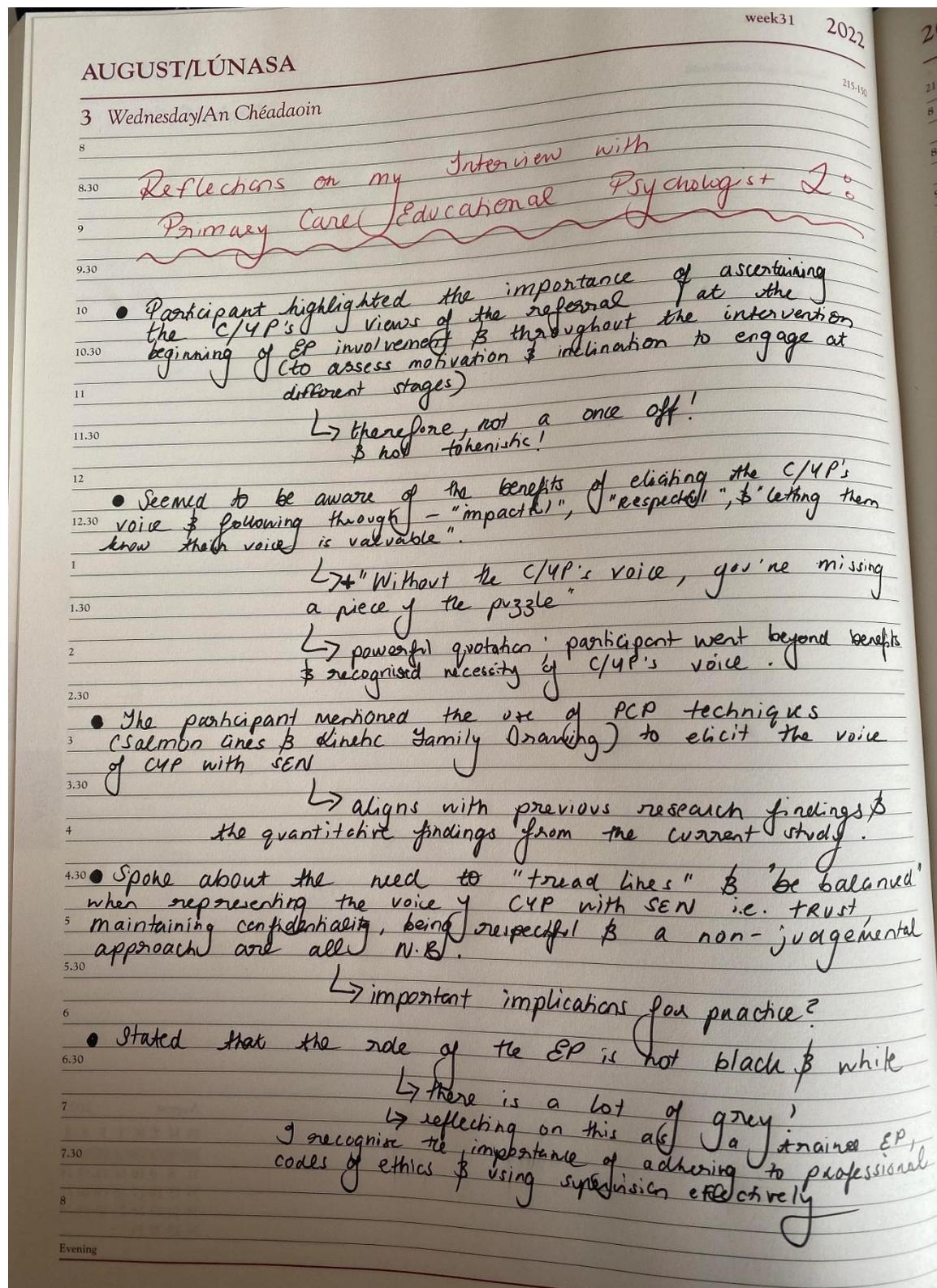


Figure X2

Example of Field Notes Entry following Interview with PrimaryEP2

