



**Providing Safe and Supported Accommodation for
Young People who are in the Care System and who
are at Risk of, or Experiencing, Sexual Exploitation or
Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation.**

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with

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Executive summary

- The scoping study took place January to March 2011 and included a literature search, consultation with young people, consultation with practitioners and development of a full research proposal. The research was funded by the NSPCC.
- The literature review focused on UK literature relating to the provision of safe and supported accommodation for young people in care who are at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation or trafficking for sexual exploitation.
- Separate and complementary searching was carried out into voluntary organisation publications and Hansard.
- The literature review highlighted the problems associated with defining sexual exploitation, reaching and engaging with the research population, and highlighted the overlapping nature of the experiences of young people in different placement settings.
- Relevant groups included those living in foster, residential and secure accommodation, but also those defined as being 'in need', unaccompanied asylum seeking young people, young people living in private foster care arrangements.
- Although this review has not looked abroad for examples of policy or practice, there is scope for an international and comparative review to be undertaken in this area of work.
- No empirical studies have looked at the specific issue of providing safe and supported accommodation for young people in care, but more generally there is an absence of systematic comparison and evaluation of different models of practice. This is true both in relation to the literature on sexual exploitation and research into the care system.
- Empirical studies highlighted the challenges of research in this area, especially in terms of identifying hidden populations and keeping in touch with young people over time
- Research examining both sexual exploitation and experience of care highlights the absence of attention to gender and ethnicity in research samples.
- Research studies adopted a range of methods and techniques, but were mainly qualitative in approach.

- The literature review highlighted the importance of recognising the significance of different theoretical and conceptual frameworks when researching the issue of sexual exploitation and vulnerable young people more generally.
- The experiences of young people in care and young people at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation, frequently involves engagement with a range of different legislative and policy frameworks. These include policy relating to children in care and looked after, young asylum seekers, children in need, private foster care arrangements as well as safeguarding policies on sexual exploitation and trafficking.
- The definition of sexual exploitation adopted in this review and proposal corresponds with that used in Government Guidance and the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Young People.
- Research demonstrates the complex nature of 'care', demonstrating that snapshots of the care population do not adequately demonstrate the nature of young people's journeys through that system, both in relation to their pre- and post- care experiences.
- The profile of young people 'on the edge of care' or 'at risk of care' will often correspond closely to that of young people in care, reflecting different local authority thresholds.
- The accommodation and housing needs of young people at risk of sexual exploitation should be considered in the context of widespread problems faced by young people seeking accommodation.
- Evidence regarding sexual exploitation highlights a lack of research evidence, but considerable concern at high levels of homelessness and limited, frequently unsafe, accommodation options.
- A disproportionate number of young people who are sexually exploited will have other difficulties, including disengagement from education, emotional and behavioural difficulties, mental health problems and problem drug use, all of which will have implications for the care and accommodation options available to them.
- Evidence regarding care leavers suggests that, overall; policy initiatives have been successful in encouraging the provision of better support to young people. However, those with more complex needs, who are paradoxically more likely to leave care early, still encounter many challenges, including accommodation.
- The concept of 'safe' care requires further exploration – young people value safety and are conscious of environments which make them feel safe, but may

find it difficult to articulate what it means. At the same time, identifying the place and type of care that provides this can involve a long and complex process.

- Frequent changes of care placement and accommodation are emphasised in the research literature as being unhelpful to young people.
- Stability of relationships is even more important than continuity of placement, and ongoing support from an adult emerges as a key issue for young people who are in care and those who are sexually exploited.
- The provision of appropriate support for carers, including training, access to support from social care, mental health, education and other services, is therefore crucial if placements and relationships are to be maintained.
- There are several issues that require consideration in respect to safety in care, including the safety of the location of the placement, safety of young people within their peer groups, and safety in terms of the overall quality of care that they receive.
- Research indicates that while care is often perceived as problematic, many young people find both safety and access to additional help and support while in care.
- Nationally there is a small, and diminishing presence of specialist services supporting sexually exploited and trafficked young people. There is also considerable variation in the level of attention the issue is receiving within individual Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs).
- Although housing has been given greater priority in leaving care services, there is still evidence that the most troubled young people experience difficulty in finding appropriate accommodation and are often placed in unsafe communities and housing, including bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Young people value a service response that is flexible, takes their views and individual circumstances seriously and recognises the importance of education, training and employment, health needs and links with their families and carers.
- Consultation with practitioners demonstrated a high level of agreement about the gaps in knowledge in the relationship between the provision of safe accommodation and the prevalence of child sexual exploitation amongst the 'looked after' and 'in care' population. They noted that it should be given greater priority in national and local policy and practice.
- During the seminar discussion, a number of elements of good practice were highlighted, including the importance of professional awareness and understanding of the complexity of the issues relating to sexual exploitation;

attachment and 'holding' the young person; and continuity in relationships with young people, even when things were difficult.

- Professionals emphasised the need for an ethical approach to research in this area that involved young people, specifically highlighting the significance of researcher/research participant relationships in the lives of young people.
- Efforts to consult with young people illustrated a number of important issues, including the potential interest from young people, the importance of support from adult professionals, but also the potential challenges to young people's involvement. These include challenges within their changing circumstances and those of the lives of adults working with them.
- Literature regarding the involvement of potentially 'hard to reach' or marginalised children and young people in research provides a number of examples from which to draw lessons for this research.
- Recognition of children and young people's vulnerabilities and differentials in power should be central to considerations of research design.
- Reasons for involving children and young people directly within research included: ideological desires to offset existing power dynamics; legal or policy frameworks highlighting the need to consult directly with children or young people; and pragmatic approaches which recognise children's and young people's contribution to new insight or understanding into issues.
- A consideration of the strengths and challenges of a range of methodological approaches to research with children and young people highlights the value of balancing research needs with the benefits of more creative and participatory approaches.
- Young people's advisory groups used in related research indicates their benefits in relation to overall scrutiny of the process, the development of appropriate materials and supporting the analysis and dissemination.
- Those understood as gatekeepers are critical to the successful engagement and continuity of children and young people's involvement in research.

The scoping study

The scoping study was undertaken January – March 2011. The overall aim of this piece of work was to review the issues associated with researching young people in the care system who are at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation or trafficking for sexual exploitation. The topic incorporates overlapping practice, theoretical and policy concerns, and this scoping stage has provided a valuable opportunity to explore the area in greater depth.

The scoping study had four main elements:

- A full literature search on the topic using key words including: sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, looked after children, foster care (including different types of foster care placement), residential care, secure accommodation, trafficking for sexual exploitation.
- Consultation with practitioners
- Consultation with young people.
- Development of a research design, including the identification of sites where the research will take place, ethical issues, research methods and tools.

This report examines the first three elements of the scoping study. It begins, therefore, with a literature review before going on to report the consultation with practitioners and young people.

Literature review

1.1 Introduction

This literature review is concerned with the accommodation experiences and outcomes for young people who are sexually exploited and in the care system. This is a wide-ranging topic that takes place within several layers of legislation and different policy frameworks, in addition to crossing academic disciplinary boundaries. While the departure from such boundaries is positive in developing understanding of this group of vulnerable young people, reviewing the literature is not, in consequence, a straightforward task. It is therefore important to be aware, while reading this review, that this is a multi-dimensional and multi-layered issue, subject to different explanation both of the nature of the problems and ways in which these are addressed.

1.2 Literature review methods

The literature review, which took place between January and March 2011, has focused on three strands of academic research: research into sexual exploitation and young people; research into young people, sexual exploitation and the care system; and research into accommodation and vulnerable young people. It is important to emphasise that this is not a systematic review, as the literature is too wide ranging and no attempt has been made to assess or rate the quality of the research. The intention is to provide an assessment of the range of research in the field, identify significant gaps in both substance and methodology, and to summarise key messages and debates.

Searches have been undertaken on a range of databases and using different search engines. Additionally, searches were carried out on Hansard and voluntary sector organisations, in an effort to reflect current policy and practice concerns and the fact that these sources are often ahead of academic research. Over recent months there has been considerable media interest in the issue of sexual exploitation (see, for example, CEOP, 2011), but analysis of media reports is outside the scope of this review. Where topics have been less central to the search, priority has been given to the most recent literature reviews of the area.

The following key words, in varying combinations, have informed the search.

- Sexual exploitation
- Sexual abuse
- Looked after children/young people
- Children/young people in care
- Children/young people in public care
- Foster care

- Residential care
- Secure accommodation
- Trafficking for sexual exploitation
- Grooming
- Leaving care
- Care leavers accommodation
- Therapeutic accommodation
- Treatment foster care
- Therapeutic foster care
- Maltreatment in care/foster care/residential care
- Out-of-home care

The decision was made to focus on research since 2000 in the UK, on the grounds of the introduction of new policy and legislation at that time that has significantly affected the debate concerning sexual exploitation and the framework for the care and welfare of vulnerable children and young people more generally (Department of Health, 2000). For this initial literature review, the focus has also been on young people under 18, though some studies, and especially those considering care leavers, include young people up to the age of 25. It is important to acknowledge many differences in the legislative, policy and service frameworks in terms of their definition of 'young people', sometimes with significant implications for the kind of support available (Melrose, 2003). Although this review has not looked abroad for examples of policy or practice, there is scope for an international and comparative review to be undertaken in this area of work.

There are a number of significant research gaps. There is an absence of reliable evidence regarding the numbers of young people who are sexually exploited or trafficked. Local data is not collected consistently (Jago and Pearce, 2009). Figures from CEOP show there has been an increase in reports of exploitation from 5,411 in 2008/9 to 6,291 in 2009/10 (CEOP 2011). Voluntary organisations also report increased numbers of young people contacting them for help regarding child sexual exploitation (Barnardo's 2011). There is correspondingly a lack of clear evidence on the numbers within the care population who are vulnerable. Recent surveys recognise the link, but even within local authorities estimates vary enormously (Barnardo's, 2011; CEOP, 2011).

Research has tended to focus on young women at the expense of boys and consideration of the experiences of different ethnic groups is lacking (Lilywhite and Skidmore, 2006; Ward and Patel, 2006). There is an absence of empirical studies which look at the specific issue of providing safe and supported accommodation for young people in different types of care placement who are also affected by sexual exploitation. More generally there is an absence of systematic comparison and evaluation of different models of practice. This is true both in relation to the literature on sexual exploitation and research into the care system. There is also an absence

of cross-disciplinary research. Interestingly, the fact that considerations of housing and accommodation are often absent from this literature is highlighted in some research reviews (Melrose, 2003; Pearce, 2010, see also Stein, 2009). Within the care literature, samples tend not to be considered in relation to gender and ethnicity and are often poorly described in respect to placement patterns, for example, failing to consider the amount of time young people may have spent in foster care placements prior to entering residential care. This corresponds with research examining the relationship between sexual exploitation and experience of care, which also highlights the absence of attention to gender and ethnicity in research samples (Lees, 2002; Coy, 2006; Coy, 2009).

Qualitative samples reinforce the overlap between the two groups: samples of young people who have been sexually exploited reveals that they frequently have experience of the care system; samples of those in care highlight both prior experience of abuse and current risk or experience of sexual exploitation (Matthews, 2000; Lees, 2002; Pearce, 2003; Melrose, 2003; CEOP, 2011). Studies emphasise the potential link between prior experience of sexual abuse, sexual abuse and/or sexually abusive behaviour within care placements, and vulnerability to sexual exploitation (see, for example, Mistral and Evans, 2002; Farmer and Pollock, 2003; Creegan, Scott and Smith, 2005) while acknowledging that the issues have tended not to be explored in detail. Green (2005) emphasises the need for caution in respect to the making of this link, arguing that the relationship between childhood sexuality and sexual abuse has been poorly conceptualised in relation to children in care.

1.3 Methodological issues

From the sample of 93 items identified through the search process, a number of different categories or 'types' of research were identified. The majority of studies comprised small scale, qualitative studies. Qualitative interviewing, both semi-structured, narrative and using vignettes, was the main method used in research into sexual exploitation (for example, Barter et al, 2004; Pearce et al, 2002; Lees, 2002; Melrose, 2003). Additionally, file based studies (Farmer, 2004), questionnaires (for example, Hicks et al, 2007; Creegan, Scott and Smith, 2005; Harding and Hamilton, 2008), non-participant observation (Barter et al, 2004) were also adopted. While research into the care population has been criticised for its pragmatic, policy orientation (Green, 2005), research into sexual exploitation has been characterised by a strong, usually feminist theoretical base which has generated more participatory methodological approaches, including the use of arts based approaches (Pearce 2009; Coy, 2009).

All empirical studies highlighted the difficulties associated with this type of research. These included identification of the population, the difficulty of ensuring a 'spread' of participants, even if representativeness was not the priority, and maintaining contact

with young people over a period of time. There was also discussion of the role of the researcher within the research process, specifically the emotional demands of research into sexual exploitation and the management of different research and practice roles (Melrose, 2002; Coy, 2006). The issues associated with research involving vulnerable young people are considered in detail in Section 3 of this report.

1.4 The role of theory

The literature review highlighted several conceptual frameworks helpful for developing research concerning the provision of safe accommodation for sexually exploited young people. These are relevant both in understanding current definitions of the issue, and the shape of research that has taken place, but also in deciphering the practice landscape, including the identification of models of good practice. Important concepts include those of resilience and risk, social exclusion, attachment, social capital, transition and pathways or turning points.

Feminist and gender based models

Feminist and gender based models have been critical to the development of research into sexual exploitation (Pearce 2009; Melrose 2010; Coy 2006). This stands in contrast to the neglect of issues of gender and sexuality in both official and academic discourse regarding young people in care, including the abuse of children and young people in care settings (Green, 2005; Barter 2006; Scott and Skidmore 2006). Green (op cit) argues that 'concrete issues' such as the need for better training, have been prioritised at the expense of consideration of the role of gender in defining children's sexuality and staff attitudes, and in explaining the way in which residential settings operate. In addition to providing a focus on gender and sexuality, this strand of theory has also emphasised the need to understand better the young person who is sexually exploited as an individual with an active role in decision making and making choices (Pearce 2010; Melrose, 2009). Only through listening and acknowledging the 'active voice' of the young person, it is argued, will it be possible to find effective ways of working. This is associated with a broader strand of literature relating to sex work, which argues against a passive and victimising role for the women and men concerned, and runs counter to policy discussion of the issue (Phoenix, 2009; Harding and Hamilton, 2008; Melrose 2010).

'Grooming' and alternative models

More broadly, considerable attention has been given to models through which young people become sexually exploited and/or trafficked. Much attention has been given to the process of 'street' or 'localised' grooming (CEOP, 2011), but the dominance of this model has been challenged, and it is recognised that there are several routes

through which young people may become involved in sexual exploitation (Chase and Statham, 2005; Scott and Skidmore 2006; CEOP, 2011). Other routes include partying, involvement in gangs and other peer networks, and the internet and other forms of technology including texting. Pearce (2003) identifies three categories of girls and young women who are sexually exploited: those at risk through the types of lifestyles and relationships they were involved in; those who swapped sex for favours such as shelter, food and other things they wanted or needed; and those who defined themselves as prostitutes. Creegan, Scott and Smith (2005) note that young people may be engaged in a range of exploitative relationships. Poverty, including homelessness, experience of care, lack of engagement in education or training, experience of abuse and other features of socio-economic and familial disadvantage are widely recognised as frequently, though not invariably, present in the lives of young people who are sexually exploited (Chase and Statham, 2005). 'Going missing' from home or care, often on a regular basis, is widely recognised as a means by which young people become vulnerable to sexual exploitation and/or trafficking (Biehal and Wade, 2000; DCSF, 2009). Melrose (2009) emphasises the complexity of young people's relationship with drug taking, arguing that there are dangers that policy and practice strategies too often conflate problems and fail to take adequate account of the socio-structural context of young people's lives.

Although sexual exploitation is not confined to adolescents, the majority of studies focus on those aged 13+. As noted above, the identification of those aged 16+ is an important element in research into both sexual exploitation and those living in care, as their experiences as older adolescents frequently run counter to what is considered 'good parenting' for young people making the transition to adulthood (Stein, 2004; Stein, 2009; see also McClure, 2000). Concepts of transition, and how these may apply to different groups of young people, are important in understanding the different elements of young people's experience. This cross-disciplinary and multi-professional concept helps place sexually exploited young people within a broader discourse of adolescence, change and development.

Concepts of transition

Youth research emphasises the nature of transition as a non-linear and individual process. The concept of transition has also been applied to the experience of moving between services – for example from a children and families' service to a leaving care team, or between CAMHS and adult mental health services (Pugh and McHugh, 2006; Lamont et al, 2009), as well as to the wider social processes involved in moving from childhood and adolescence to young adulthood (see, for example, Furlong and Cartmel, 2007). As commonly recognised, there is little consistency in when and how such service transitions take place. Pearce (2006) argues that attention to the wider needs of young people, including those relating to accommodation, are particularly important in the light of previous thinking about sexually exploitation that has tended to focus on the individual's risks and

vulnerabilities. The needs of older young people, she argues, have often been overlooked within a child protection system that has tended to focus on younger children. This links to a much broader strand in the literature concerned with the needs of young people who are vulnerable in many different and overlapping ways, and which demonstrates that the life-stage of the older adolescent requires a multi-dimensional response (Social Exclusion Unit, 2005).

Attachment theory

The concept of transition does not, however, adequately convey the levels of change and instability experienced by many, if not the majority, of young people who are at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation and also have experience of the care system. Attachment theory is well known as providing an important model for understanding why some young people are better able to negotiate their way through very complex life events. Attachment theory emphasises the social relationships formed in infancy, and the way in which these are reflected in the individual's internal models of themselves, others and their relationships. Where children and young people have experienced adverse early experiences, and a lack of secure attachments, they are likely to carry a strong sense of anxiety about relating to others, resulting in avoidant or disorganised attachment patterns (Schofield, 2003).

1.5 Who are 'young people in the care system who are at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation or trafficking for sexual exploitation?'

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse that takes place in all communities and impacts on boys as well as girls (Scott and Skidmore 2006, Pearce 2009; Jago et al. 2010). It also takes place across a wide age-range, with girls aged as young as nine and boys as young as six known to have been abused in this way (Barnardo's, 2002). Although both girls and boys experience sexual exploitation (Lillywhite and Skidmore, 2006), the majority of research and policy attention has focused on girls. While this reflects evidence that young women represent the majority of victims of sexual exploitation, concerns remain about ongoing tendencies to overlook a significant minority of male victims, whose vulnerability may be compounded by 'invisibility'. The DCSF (2009) guidance to Local Safeguarding Children Boards for 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation' draws on the definition of sexual exploitation developed and used by The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People:

'Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol,

cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing/and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. (DCSF, 2009, p10)

Child sexual exploitation can, therefore, take many forms and may include trafficking, prostitution, sex tourism, mail-order-bride trade, involvement in pornography, stripping, battering, incest, rape and sexual harassment (Estes, 2001 cited in Chase and Statham, 2005).

Legislation and policy relating to child sexual exploitation and trafficking has emerged only recently. The Palermo Protocol (2002) enshrined trafficking in international law, which defines trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of a person for the purposes of exploitation, whether sexual or otherwise (see Hynes 2010; Bovarnick 2010 for further discussion of this)

In the UK, Department of Health guidance in 2000 produced a 'paradigm shift' (Melrose, 2003) from a punishment to a welfare model, reflected in the terminology of child sexual exploitation rather than prostitution. For the first time this guidance recognised children and young people as a distinct group vulnerable to sexual exploitation, requiring protection rather than criminalisation, though tensions in policy and legislation remained (Phoenix, 2009). The guidance emphasised the need for a dual approach of protecting young people and proactively investigating the actions of their abusers. Further guidance, this time referring to the safeguarding of 'sexually exploited' children and young people, was issued in 2009 (DCSF, 2009).

Children and young people in care

The term 'in care' is often used loosely in the literature, and is frequently used alongside or interchangeably with the term 'looked after' or 'in public care'. This study is concerned with young people aged under 25 who are or have been in care wherever they are placed (for example, residential care, foster care, a young offenders institution) and including young people looked after under voluntary arrangements and those under care orders. It also includes consideration of those 'at risk' of care and those who have left or are preparing to leave medium-term or long-term local authority care.

Distinctions are also made in relation to the purpose of different kinds of placement. In respect to foster care, Wilson et al (2005) (see also Sinclair, Wilson and Gibbs, 2003) base their classification on the work of Rowe et al (1989) and distinguish

between short-term: also known as emergency, assessment, remand, 'roof over head'; shared care: regular 'short breaks' or respite care; medium-term or task-centred foster care: including treatment, bridging placements, preparation for independence or adoption; and long-term: upbringing. Distinctions can also be drawn in relation to the type of provider i.e. local authority provision or the independent sector, or in terms of location – if the young person is looked after within their home local authority, or sent to live outside the authority. Being sent to live 'out of authority' is often viewed as a safer option for young people who have been sexually exploited, though anecdotally concerns have been expressed at the monitoring of these placements and the danger of patterns of sexual exploitation being repeated (CEOP, 2011). Again, lines may be blurred but important categories are family and friends care, also termed foster care, independent and voluntary local authority care as well as statutory child care.

Care is, therefore, a – sometimes useful - administrative category (Hare and Bullock, 2006) and research studies tend to provide only a snapshot of the characteristics of the care population. Forrester (2008) emphasises the dangers inherent in treating the care population as a single, undifferentiated category and failing to take account of the different combinations of need presented by individual young people and indeed groups of young people. Retrospective research samples have been criticised as being more likely to capture the experiences of young people whose problems remain entrenched or become more serious (Hare and Bullock, op cit). This is evident in a number of research studies which draw their samples from older young people who have been sexually exploited, or adult sex workers (Coy, 2006). However, these retrospective accounts are important in unravelling the interconnected elements of individual lives, and this approach is frequently the only feasible one when researching these populations. The key message is the importance of describing carefully the nature of samples and caution in generalising conclusions.

Young people in care also move in and out of the system, with many different trajectories. Boddy et al. (2009) argue that there are important differences between those who enter care for the first time aged 10-15, and those who re-enter at this age with a previous history of care. The former group, entering care for the first time, are likely to spend less overall time in care, are more likely to experience residential care, are more likely to be accommodated on a voluntary basis and tend to enter care on account of family or behavioural problems, rather than a perceived need to protect them from abuse or neglect. This official picture of 'troublesome' adolescents can result in an underestimation of the levels of abuse and neglect experienced by adolescents, and has resulted in an overall lack of services through which to support these young people.

There is a long standing tension between care and punishment in respect of these young people, reflected in the 'ambivalent' (O'Neill, 2001) use of secure

accommodation. Young people can be placed in a secure setting for welfare reasons under section 25 of the Children Act 1989, if their behaviour is placing themselves or others at significant risk. Alternatively they may be placed there by a court on remand or to serve a sentence. As with young people placed in out-of-authority residential and foster placements, young people in secure accommodation are often living a considerable distance from home. As with the process of leaving care and other service transitions in the lives of vulnerable young people, there is often a significant lack of support following the young person's discharge from secure accommodation (Ofsted, 2010). In a study of secure provision in Scotland (Creegan, Scott and Smith, 2005) staff in secure units estimated that between 40 and 90 per cent of the young women resident in their unit at any one time had been exposed to some level of sexual exploitation. However, the study concluded that understanding of sexual exploitation, and the ability to address it, 'varied enormously' amongst staff. Access to therapy and other services was similarly variable, and staff expressed serious concerns about the welfare of young people after leaving secure units.

Children and young people on the 'edge' of care

As understanding of care careers has grown, so interest has developed concerning those who are outside the care system but are considered either at risk of entering care, or, alternatively, living in situations which have close parallels with the care system. Despite recent concern about an increase in referrals to care, the overall trend over recent decades has been to a smaller care population that remains longer within the system (see, for example, Rowlands and Statham, 2009). The focus on young people 'in care' can therefore be misleading; Morris (2005) argues that interpretations of when a child or young person is the responsibility of the local authority tend to dominate at the expense of human rights. This is reflected in the experiences of several groups, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and children living in private foster care.

It is important, therefore, to take account of young people who are not looked after but are defined as being 'in need' according to S17 of the Children Act 1989. Some of this group will have experience of being in care, others will enter care in the future, still others will remain in need. Data from the annual children in need census identified 375,900 children in need at 31 March 2010. As with children in care, there is considerable variation in local authority rates per 10,000 children. The reasons for becoming a child in need mirror those for entry to care, with abuse or neglect accounting for over one third of cases, and 'family dysfunction' the second most common reason, accounting for 16 per cent of cases (Department for Education, 2010).

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people

In 2010 3,400 children and young people were identified in official statistics as unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The majority of these young people – 71 per cent in 2010 – will be aged over 16 (Department for Education, 2010). A 2003 High Court judgement required local authorities to treat unaccompanied asylum seeking children as being ‘in care’. However, it is also known that a significant number of unaccompanied children who are placed in local authority accommodation in the UK subsequently go missing, and are subject to exploitation by traffickers (ECPAT, 2010). There is an absence of national statistics, but among the 153 children whose cases were specifically referred to the NRM between 1 April 2009 and 13 January 2010, 19 were reported to have gone missing. This issue has attracted considerable attention in parliament. In respect to accommodation, unaccompanied asylum seeking young people may be excluded from services under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, and are more likely to receive poorer housing and other services than other looked after young people of the same age (Stanley, 2001; Hai and Williams, 2004; Hek, 2005).

Young people missing from care

Going missing from care is not, of course, confined to children and young people who have also been trafficked, but there are strong indications from the research evidence of the interaction between young people in care, going missing, and risk of sexual exploitation (Biehal and Wade, 2000; Barnardo's, 2011). Biehal and Wade (2000) distinguished between an older group of young people, more often living in foster placements, who were more likely to go missing in order to stay with family or friends, and a younger group, more often but not exclusively living in residential accommodation, whose running away was more often associated with problems in placement. Frequent episodes of going missing were linked to a series of difficulties, including being out of school and involvement in offending. Revised guidance on children going missing from care was issued in 2009 (DCSF, 2009) and a recent national indicator issued requiring local authorities to report on their service provision for children at risk of, or those who have run away and gone missing. Although many LSCB's in practice are currently using this data on missing young people to inform practice about sexual exploitation, national policy which requires this data is currently changing.

Private foster care

Another relevant group that exists outside the care system are children and young people living in private foster care arrangements. This is a complex area of care. Recent reviews indicate it is under-researched (Shaw et al, 2009) and that there is a lack of reliable information concerning both the numbers of those living in private foster care, and the nature and quality of the care that they experience. In England

and Wales, private foster care is defined in the Children Act 1989 as occurring when a child under 16 is care for, and provided with accommodation, for 28 days or more by someone other than a close relative, guardian or someone with parental responsibility (Department of Health, 1991). The Children Act 2004 (s44) required local authorities to raise awareness of private foster care, including the assessment of the suitability of prospective carers, monitoring of compliance to the notification system in place within local authorities, the introduction of national standards and an enhanced inspection regime. Despite these measures, it remains unclear how many young people are privately fostered, and official statistics provide only a limited guide. Increasingly, however, research studies have suggested that a much broader range of groups should be considered within the category of private foster care. These include trafficked children, children living away from home because of parental problems, 'sofa-surfing' adolescents and unaccompanied immigrant children.

1.6 Why do sexually exploited young people need safe accommodation?

The need for safe accommodation is not, of course, restricted to sexually exploited young people. Research into housing indicates that young people more generally are widely disadvantaged in the housing market as a result of a combination of factors, including a shortage of social housing, limited employment opportunities and high rents in the private housing market. Data on young people in touch with services indicates that at least 75,000 young people experienced homelessness in 2006-07. As we might expect, young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and with experience of childhood trauma are at particular risk (Heath, 2008; Ecotec, 2008). While progress has been made in, for example, co-ordinating agency responses to homelessness, there continues to be a lack of emergency accommodation and there is ongoing debate about the most appropriate housing options for young people in crisis.

Studies of sexual exploitation illustrate the problems many young people experience in relation to accommodation and housing. One study of 55 sexually exploited young women showed that 18 were homeless (Pearce et al, 2002). An evaluation of projects in two areas supporting young people at risk of sexual exploitation found that housing and appropriate accommodation were 'consistently identified...as an area of desperate need' (Melrose, 2003, p77) as practitioners found their efforts to support young people effectively undone when they returned to the same communities, living conditions and social networks in which they had previously lived. Poverty, chronic abuse and maltreatment feature strongly in the accounts of homeless women, a significant minority were also sex workers (Harding and Hamilton, 2009).

Young people who have been sexually exploited are likely to be in particular need of accommodation that can be considered 'safe'. Sexually exploited young people will

be at continued risk from abusers, and will need a place of safety that protects them from perpetrators. While there is no one profile of a sexually exploited young person, or indeed of a young person in care, existing research evidence indicates that those who are most vulnerable have experienced other forms of social disadvantage, including poverty, the breakdown of family relationships, other forms of abuse and maltreatment, experience of the care system, experience of the criminal justice system, and poor educational experiences (Pearce, 2002; Melrose, 2002; Melrose and Barrett, 2004). Rates of mental health problems are also likely to be high (Hart, 2009; Lamont et al, 2009). Research samples of sexually exploited young people, samples of young people in care and research into adolescent mental health also reveals a high level of problem drug use (Aldridge et al, 2008; Singh et al, 2009; Lamont et al, op cit; Pearce, 2002). While there are dangers in over-individualising these issues, and thus failing to take account of wider structures of poverty and disadvantage, the literature is clear that a disproportionate number of sexually exploited and trafficked young people are in need of additional services that will enable them to find both a safe place to live and support with other aspects of their lives.

The availability of care placements

The availability of care accommodation is also an issue. At 31 March 2010 64,400 children were looked after in England, an increase of six per cent from 2009. Of these, 38,200 were looked after under a care order (59 per cent of all legal statuses) The total number of children looked after under an interim care order is 12,500. The remaining third – 21,200 children – were looked after under a voluntary agreement (Department for Education, 2011). Of the 27,800 who started to be looked after, 9,300 were aged 10-15 and 3,200 aged 16 or over. The number of children starting to be looked after aged 10-15 has remained relatively stable 2009-2010, but the proportions of young people aged over 16 starting to be looked after has increased (by 16 per cent from the 2009 figure of 2,800 and 52 per cent compared to 2006). As noted above, the overall trend amongst children in care is to stay longer, and this is reflected in the statistics relating to those who ceased to be looked after and who are aged 10-15. Young people are more likely to remain in care after the age of 16 – hence the numbers of young people ceasing to be looked after at age 16 has decreased from 27 per cent in 2006 to 21 per cent during the same period.

The increase in the number of children entering the care system overall has inevitably had implications for service delivery. Although the increase has primarily been in the under-four age group, this has implications for older young people in that the overall pool of foster placements is reduced. In relation to older adolescents specifically, the Southwark Judgement in May 2009 clarified the fact that local authorities are responsible for the assessment of homelessness of under-18s in England and Wales as children under the Children Act 1989, and should not, therefore, be referred to the housing authority to meet their housing needs. The

Fostering Network (2010) reports that there has been a rise, especially in London, in the number of older children needing foster homes as a result of this court ruling. More generally, research into care trajectories highlights the differences between local authorities in thresholds for entry to care, and the variation in the accommodation available for young people. Entry to care, therefore, provides no guarantee of a particular type or quality of placement (Cameron et al, 2007; Stein, 2009).

Accommodation available to care leavers

Young people leaving the care system often see finding accommodation of their own as one of the 'best things about leaving care' (Morgan and Lindsey, 2006, p6). The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 placed a duty on local authorities to provide financial support for accommodation and maintenance, though this is not an absolute right for those aged 18 or over. This legislation also sought to delay transitions, provide better assessment, preparation and planning for leaving care, and to ensure more ongoing support from professionals for young people moving into independent accommodation. However, both past and present benefit arrangements place considerable strain on young people's financial and material resources (Grover and Stuart, 2005) and young people find it very difficult to make ends meet (Stein, 2004; Stein, 2009). In respect to accommodation, there is evidence of an increase in the proportion of young people living in supported accommodation and shared or transitional support accommodation. However, young people continue to leave care at a younger age than other young people, thus experiencing 'accelerated' transitions. Paradoxically, this trajectory is more likely to apply to the most troubled young people, who are also at greatest risk of poor outcomes in respect to education and employment, may be struggling with mental health or substance misuse problems, and in turn face greatest difficulty in finding appropriate accommodation (Lamont et al, 2009; Stein, 2009). Cameron et al (2007) also highlight the fact that, in some respects, care leavers may be in a better position than other 'young people in difficulty' who are not eligible for support from care leaving teams.

1.7 What does it mean to provide 'safe care' to sexually exploited young people?

Children and young people in care highlight the importance of safety within placements. Research that has included children and young people has frequently highlighted the finding that care placements often represent safety, and are viewed by young people as providing safety (Morgan, 2005, 2007). This is echoed in research into groups on the 'edge' of care; for example children living in private foster care express the desire to feel safe, have all aspects of their well-being attended to, and for their situations to be monitored by local authorities (Morgan,

2005). This evidence tends not, however, to disentangle the different components of safety.

Safety can be defined as the presence of security and stability. The key messages from literature regarding young people's experience in care emphasise, unsurprisingly, their desire for a warm and loving environment which resembles but does not replace their own family (Schofield, 2003; Wilson et al, 2005; Morgan, 2007; Morgan, 2009). Maintaining family links is of immense importance to young people, and is likely to be significant in the longer term (Wade, 2008) as many young people try to revive family relationships in the longer term. Often, however, care is experienced as entirely opposite to a warm and caring environment. Coy (2009) notes that, in a sample of women with very different trajectories in the care system '...Central to all their experiences was the instability and disruption of multiple changes of placement' (p258).

It is striking that the literature review, while identifying extensive discussion of these problems, also revealed the dominance of policy discourse and terminology. Thus, the theme of place and environment, and its importance to the experience of young people, is present in the literature but is often subsumed in a language of 'placement', 'placement choice' and 'placement stability'. Arguably, it is only through further exploration of the personal geographies of young people, and their interpretations of 'place' in the sense of a space imbued with meaning, that more holistic understandings of why young people find certain placements, types of accommodation and so on more 'safe' than others (see, for example, Weller and Caballero, 2009). In similar vein, Cashmore and Paxman (2006) suggest that 'felt' security is an important factor in understanding outcomes for young people who have experienced care; while this is associated with stability and continuity of care, stability and continuity in themselves do not guarantee that the young person will have a sense of a secure base. Such arguments are also evident in work emphasising the importance of school, peer groups and activities outside care placements in providing young people with different spaces through which to establish a more secure identity and sense of self-efficacy (Gilligan, 2001).

Such concepts may help overcome the recurrent gaps between policy and the accounts of young people in respect to placement stability and change. Reducing the number of placements has been a priority issue for local authorities since the late 1990s. Official data suggest that, overall, planning and review procedures are working more effectively and fewer children – just under 11 per cent in 2010 - experience more than three placements in a year (Department for Education, 2010). However, the traumatic experience of entry to care and change of placement, as reported by Coy (op cit) is evident in many young people's accounts. Meanwhile, others emphasise that moving is sometimes necessary, and can result in positive change as well – for example, a better relationship with carers, improved progress at school or more opportunities to have contact with siblings or friends (Brodie, 2010).

More important, it seems, is the presence of an individual adult who is a consistent presence in a young person's life. The professional role of this individual is much less important than the day-to-day encouragement and support that such a person can provide. This is a strong message from research into all aspects of the care experience of young people (see Brodie, 2009; Dickson et al, 2009; Stein, 2009 for reviews of the evidence).

1.8 What does it mean to support front-line foster and residential carers caring for sexually exploited young people?

While many professionals may be involved in the lives of sexually exploited young people in care, the role of carer is clearly the most immediate and a key source of day-to-day support and care. Evidence from young people suggests this role is of much greater significance to them than, for example, that of the social worker (Ofsted, 2009).

However, research into the day-to-day work of front-line foster and residential carers highlights the complexity of the work, which is also likely to have a considerable impact on the personal lives of individual carers (Brannen et al, 2007; Sinclair, 2005). Research studies and reviews emphasise the behavioural challenges presented by young people in care, and the stress involved in working with high levels of vulnerability (see, for example, Clough et al, 2006; Wilson et al). Care for vulnerable children also continues to be perceived as low-status, poorly paid work with limited career opportunities (Brannen et al, 2007); a key theme in the literature is, therefore, the view that supporting front-line foster and residential carers working with sexually exploited young people will involve the provision of resources, including better training and better financial rewards for carers (Colton and Roberts, 2007). To this end a range of policy initiatives have been introduced, often in response to concerns about the safety of young people in care. These have focused both on organisational factors, including more rigorous selection processes for carers (Kay et al, 2007), the establishment of centres of excellence and improved training and supervision for both foster and residential carers. It is clear, however, that these laudable efforts take place in a context of many challenges, including overall problems in attracting potential carers to the sector, issues of retention, the low professional status accorded caring roles (Brannen et al) and the complex issues presented by the individual practice context (Colton, 2002). Research also emphasises the absence of specialist therapeutic services to address the serious mental health, emotional and behavioural difficulties presented by looked after children, and the lack of rigorous evaluation of those services that do exist (Dickson et al, 2010).

Working with this group of vulnerable young people presents a range of dilemmas for carers. Lipscombe (2007) highlights the tension between 'care' and 'control' evident in the practice of remand foster carers. However, such uncertainty can give rise to

practice that places young people at further risk. Farmer and Pollock's (2003) study of adolescents in foster care highlighted that carers were often unsure where young people were and how they were spending their leisure time. Studies have found that staff were very reluctant to discuss sexual exploitation and violence and those who did were 'acutely embarrassed' (Barter et al, 2004; Green, 2005; Barter, 2006).

Barter (op cit) argues that carers' responses need to be situated within wider societal discourse relating to the construction of gender and sexuality. She suggests that while policy and guidelines are important, it is only when workers' 'gendered discourses of blame' are challenged that significant shifts in practice can take place. The discourses that emerged typically positioned girls as provocative, and as using their sexuality to manipulate and control their male peers. Boys' behaviour, including sexually violent behaviour' tended to go unchallenged, and was frequently normalised. Similarly, Green (2005) found that the most usual response from staff to sexual behaviour was 'denial or refutation' or, alternatively, an attempt to stop and punish sexual behaviour within the building, without any accompanying explanation.

Farmer and Pollock (2003; 2006; Farmer, 2004) investigated the characteristics, management and treatment of sexually abused children and young people in care. They identify four key components of effective management, namely supervision, adequate sex education, modification of inappropriate sexual behaviour and therapeutic attention to the needs that underlie such behaviour. At the same time, their research indicates that carers often lack the training they need to undertake such care, and that support services are frequently unavailable. They also emphasise that providing safe care will begin during the planning process for the placement and that, crucially, 'carers must have full information about the children's backgrounds of abuse or abusing in as much detail as possible' (p104). However, findings from their study indicated that this frequently did not happen, with information about the sexual abuse of 42 per cent of children not having been passed on to carers.

There is evidence of some good practice in this area. Overall, research into foster care with adolescents indicates that placements are more likely to succeed where young people receive counselling, where social workers were proactive in arranging services for young people and provided 'useful' support to foster carers, and where carers had good social support networks. However, other findings on the impact of social work support on placements are more mixed (Sinclair, 2005). Mistral and Evans (2002) report on a project aimed at providing flexibility, fast-track assessment and therapeutic intervention to young people in care who have been sexually abused and whose placements are at risk of breaking down. Interventions are negotiated directly with young people, and cover a wide gamut of therapeutic interventions and recreational activities. Training, information and a telephone support line are also offered to carers. This corresponds to a wider body of research into services for vulnerable young people, which emphasise the need for flexibility, responsiveness,

signposting to other services, and an informal approach to service delivery (see, for example, Vasilou, 2006; Taylor et al, 2007).

Helping carers to support young people will also involve recognising the contribution carers make to young people's lives in the longer term. Wade (2008) highlights the fact that many young people in care will usually continue to have some form of family contact, and will often seek to develop this further on leaving a care placement. However, continuing contact with carers is also important. Of a sample of 100 young people leaving care, almost a third of those with a last placement in residential care were still in contact with a residential worker at least monthly, and over two-fifths of those who left foster care were still in touch with a foster carer, though frequency of contact had diminished.

1.9 To what extent does 'care' provide safe accommodation for sexually exploited young people?

The notion that the state provides 'care' implies that this will be safe, and in contrast to the lack of safety that may have been experienced by children and young people prior to their entry to care. The balance of evidence from children and young people suggests that this is often the case, and that care is viewed positively in this respect (Stein, 2009; Hicks et al, 2007; Morgan, 2007; Ofsted, 2009). This is an important message, and indicates that there are characteristics of the way in which care is provided in some settings that can provide young people with safe relationships and a safe environment in which to live.

At the same time, the repeated association between care and risk of sexual exploitation in the literature raises questions as to the 'safety' that care provides for young people at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation. This may be a question of the type of placement, rather than 'care' per se. Lillywhite and Skidmore (2006) suggest that overall the greater use of foster care is helpful in respect to sexually exploited young people, but that their 'chaotic' behaviour makes it more likely they are placed in residential care. In turn residential units are more vulnerable to targeting by adult perpetrators of sexual exploitation.

Much of the public discourse surrounding care has also focused on residential units as a source of abuse, following the many high profile cases of abuse and maltreatment that has taken place within the care system. Abuse within residential care has been most prominent as a source of concern (Horwath, 2000; see also Berridge and Brodie, 1996) contributing to the view that this was an undesirable placement option. The research on private and out-of-authority residential placements is sparse, but the information available (Hicks et al, 2007; Berridge et al, 2002) suggests that the same variability in quality and outcomes exists in the private sector as elsewhere.

Less publicity has surrounded abuse in foster care. A recent review (Biehal and Parry, 2010) concluded that there had been UK based research on maltreatment in foster care, and that the research that had taken place had focused on allegations of abuse rather than substantiated maltreatment. The authors emphasise the difficulties of quantifying experience of carer maltreatment over the entire course of children's care careers, as estimates of prevalence range from three to 19 per cent of children in foster care. At the same time, this review urges that the matter of carer maltreatment be taken seriously. Key issues include the longstanding concern on the part of carers about the way in which young people's allegations of maltreatment are handled and the extent to which support is offered to carers, their children and fostered children and young people. There is also some evidence that children's allegations are not always taken seriously, that the desire to maintain a placement can lead to over-optimism about the quality of care available and, in consequence, a failure to recognise that a young person is being maltreated (Biehal and Parry, *op cit*).

The stronger message is that young people are more likely to be at risk from peers than from adult carers. An important strand of evidence within the review relates to children's overall experience within the care placement, which may place them at risk in a number of ways. Over the past decade a growing body of research has attested to the bullying and violence young people may experience from peers within care settings, most obviously but not exclusively in residential care. Hicks et al (2007) report over a third of a sample of 175 young people living in local authority and independent sector residential care expressed unhappiness with the behaviour of other residents, and about half had experienced bullying. Barter et al (2004) in a study of violence in children's homes, found that girls were three times more likely to experience sexual violence than boys, and also the severest forms. Half of the incidents had not been reported to staff, though young people had disclosed these to peers. This issue has also been identified in mixed samples of young people in government and policy consultations as an important reason why children may run away from placements (Ofsted, 2009; Morgan, 2007).

The impact of care

This is linked to a broader argument concerning the relationship between the experience of care and the outcomes for young people later in life. There has been considerable emphasis in policy on the 'poor' outcomes of the care population in relation to homelessness, education and employment, and criminality. This theme was prominent in the work of the Social Exclusion Unit and in a wide range of policy emerging from the Labour government (see Ayre and Preston-Shoot, 2010, for discussion in relation to children and families policy).

Young people also identify care, or at least certain care placements, as key turning points – both positive and negative – in their lives. Coy (2008) interviewed 14 young

women aged 14-33 who had spent varied periods of time in care, ranging from 18 months to 16 years. All of this group were, at the time of interview, selling sex on the streets. All had experienced 'most or all' of the following – sexual and/or physical abuse, family breakdown, domestic violence, homelessness, exclusion from school and episodes of running away that had led to rough sleeping.

'When asked to present a live-story narrative, the women spoke of being in care as the primary focus that shaped their lives and – crucially – linked events and emotions of their care experiences in a way that suggests that being in care itself plays a role in the path to selling sex.' (p 1409)

However, some commentators (see Forrester, 2009; Hare and Bullock, 2006; Stein 2009) question the way in which direct causality has been attributed to the care system in respect to these poor outcomes. It is argued that the heterogeneous nature of the care population, and the varied nature of entry to and exit from the care system, mean that the care system may have limited opportunity to make a significant impact on young people's longer term outcomes. This is also true in respect to sexual exploitation: sometimes sexual exploitation may be a reason for entry to care; sometimes the nature of care placements may leave young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation; sometimes the problems that have resulted in care may make the possibility of sexual exploitation greater when a young person has left care.

This strand of research is quick to emphasise, however, that while the care system may in fact benefit many young people, there is an especially vulnerable group – sometimes termed the 'strugglers' (Stein, 2009) – who are at particular risk of these poor outcomes, including accommodation. Stein (2009) reviewing the research on the provision of 'safe and settled' accommodation for care leavers, notes that all the evidence emphasises the 'interconnected nature of the pathways' that lead young people to better or poorer outcomes. The complex pre-care experiences of this group may mean that it is difficult for the care system to have any significant impact on behavioural issues, for example (Sinclair, 2005), though this should not detract from the responsibility of carers and others to intervene. However, such evidence may be more significant in respect to education, health, CAMHS and other services that are involved at an earlier stage in young people's lives, and highlights the importance of identifying and assessing young people's difficulties as early as possible.

1.10 What do we know about services that support sexually exploited young people in finding accommodation?

Assessment of the availability of services that support sexually exploited young people in finding accommodation must be considered in the context of overall awareness and ability to identify sexual exploitation as an issue. Overall, research

evidence points to a general lack of understanding concerning sexual exploitation, together with an absence of resources with which to provide support of any kind to young people who experience sexual exploitation (Jago et al, 2010; Jago and Pearce, 2008; Swann and Balding, 2002).

The research evidence indicates that there are nuggets of good practice in supporting sexually exploited young people generally (Melrose, 2003; Jago and Pearce, 2008) but that, more broadly, there is a 'dearth' of specialist service provision (Lowe and Pearce, 2006, p289). Jago et al (2010) report that data from a sample of 100 LSCBs revealed that only 38 areas in England had a service that was in place or planned. As noted earlier, this can be attributed both to the lack of awareness nationally in relation to sexual exploitation and the needs of sexually exploited young people, and the tendency for policy to focus on sexual exploitation per se, rather than the inextricably connected issues of housing, health, educational, employment and other needs of the young person (Pearce, 2006a).

Research emphasises strongly the importance of a co-ordinated multi-agency response (Melrose, 2003; Pearce, 2006a), including attention to accommodation and housing. However, the involvement of different agencies is not, in itself, enough. Melrose (2003) notes that there is no optimal number of partners, rather having the 'right' combination is more important. An effective response will also depend on professionals' understanding of both the young person's (risk of) sexual exploitation, and the broader array of issues with which they face in their lives. This will include listening and responding to the young person's view of the situation, and what level of service they are able to manage. An 'open door' policy may be important, therefore, in keeping a young person in touch with a service or an individual professional, even while they continue to be involved in abusive relationships (Pearce, 2006b).

Some findings give room for encouragement. Overall, the development of leaving care services has been positive and is viewed as helpful by young people (Stein, op cit; Stein, 2004). In respect to accommodation, this support is helpful in terms of planning accommodation, liaison with housing providers and ongoing advocacy by professionals on the part of the care leaver. However, this is dependent on the young person accessing services and good communication between the care leaver and housing providers (Dixon and Stein, 2005; Wade and Dixon, 2006; Ofsted, 2009). However, where young people do not have arrangements for housing in place, outcomes in terms of their general well-being may well be less positive. Young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, mental health problems, persistent offending and substance misuse problems, and young disabled people are likely to have the poorest housing outcomes (Stein, 2009). Ofsted (2009) also reports that asylum seeking young people and those whose behaviour is described as 'chaotic' are often being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.

Significantly, risks of sexual exploitation are not mentioned in discussion of the housing experiences of young people leaving the care system.

More recent initiatives have also sought to provide more opportunities for young people to remain within their care placements. These include the Staying Put pilot, which took place in 11 local authorities and was targeted at young people with established relationships with their foster carers, offering the opportunity to remain with these carers until the age of 21. This initiative provided a more formal framework to a process that often takes place on an ad hoc basis, and initial evaluation indicates some positive outcomes including giving young people greater choice, flexibility and control over the process of making transition from care. This does not mean that the process is without difficulty, and there is ongoing need for training and support for foster carers preparing young people for independence. There are also ongoing issues in how to ensure young people who remain in foster care post-18 continue to be eligible for benefits and that foster carers are adequately enumerated.

1.11 Key messages from the evidence and conclusion

The literature review has highlighted a number of important issues. These include the complexity of this topic. Complexity operates on a number of levels, which is reflected in the experience of young people themselves. There is also a high degree of complexity in the overlapping nature of policy and legislation, and in the services and structures which are aimed at supporting different aspects of the lives of these young people. Not all young people who are in care are at risk of, or are experiencing sexual exploitation. Not all young people at risk of sexual exploitation are in care, and the issue may be examined in relation to other 'groups', such as asylum seeking young people, homeless young people and young people who go missing. It is important that further research into the issue recognises the permeability of these groups, and the ways in which young people who are sexually exploited may move between formal bureaucratic and service categories.

Where sexually exploited young people experience care, this has potential for both positive and negative effects. Research evidence indicates that care is perceived as beneficial by many young people; at the same time, sexually exploited young people report variable experiences, and suggest that professionals inside the care system have not always provided the stability and security sought by these individuals. More generally, services that provide specialised support to young people at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation and trafficking are key both to providing professional colleagues with information and advice, as well as the direct work they are able to undertake with young people themselves. Finally, the review has highlighted a wide range of useful research knowledge that can underpin future research, while identifying a number of important gaps.

Consultation with practitioners

From the outset it has been recognised that this is a complex area of research, involving different policy, practice and theoretical considerations. Sexual exploitation is still a relatively new area of research, despite considerable development in practice models. The process of undertaking research in this area is also known to be difficult. Consulting with practitioners has therefore been seen as central to the research process, in order to identify risks and challenges and ways in which these might be effectively managed.

To this end a seminar was held on 4 March 2011, bringing together a range of interested practitioners. A total of 14 people attended the meeting, with a broader group of some 20-25 individuals identified as interested in the issue and keen to have ongoing updates or be involved in future events. This network includes key organisations including Barnardo's, British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), Childhood First, National Care Advisory Service (NCAS), the National Children's Bureau (NCB), NSPCC, National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (NWG), and the Royal College of Psychiatrists therapeutic communities network alongside individual residential and foster care services such as Advanced Childcare.

The day consisted of a mix of presentation and discussion. Most striking was the strong feeling amongst participants that this was an issue of major concern, which some felt was ignored or poorly understood in their practice contexts. Following from this, there was a strong interest expressed in directly participating in the proposed research. The discussion can be divided into two main areas, firstly issues relating to practice and policy and, secondly, research issues.

1.12 Policy and practice

Definition

Participants emphasised the difficulty of defining sexual exploitation, noting that sexual exploitation was a form of sexual abuse. However, many were concerned that child protection policies and procedures were not suitable for the older age grouping that 'typified' sexually exploited children and young people. They noted that many practitioners, including those providing accommodation for sexually exploited young people failed to recognise the acute safeguarding needs presented by the young people concerned and were unaware of the DCSF (2009) Guidance 'Safeguarding children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation'. One practitioner noted that sexual exploitation was often understood to be restricted to 'street grooming' or 'street prostitution' but that,

“this is more difficult than it seems. I increasingly realise that young people I’ve worked with rarely fit into these hard and fast definitions –commercial or financial aspect often not a factor and specialist projects themselves work with quite open definitions.”

Practitioners also noted that the definition of ‘in care’ could be misunderstood and that it was often used loosely to explain a number of different placement types. Young people who were not ‘in care’ may be homeless, ‘sofa surfing’, living in temporary accommodation or with perpetrators of abuse. They may share as many of the vulnerabilities as those who had been placed in care and, in some cases, may be assumed to be ‘in care’. It was noted that practitioners who had less experience or training (such as some residential care workers, providers of bed and breakfast accommodation, some foster carers) referred to young people who are ‘looked after’ by the local authority interchangeably with those on full care orders. Young people moving in and out of care, young people living in private foster care arrangements and those living in out-of-authority placements were identified as groups whose placement type was often misunderstood and whose placements made them vulnerable to sexual exploitation. If the carers concerned were not aware of the range of forms that sexual exploitation can take place and did not see it as a form of sexual abuse, the young people remained unprotected from harm.

It was agreed that there was an urgent need for future research to identify what is experienced as safe accommodation by young people, and how sexual exploitation is understood by those who care for them. This should include:

- consideration of the impact of gender; ethnicity and age on placement type and experience of sexual exploitation
- young people’s interchangeable status as victim / offender
- links with children missing from home and care and experiencing sexual exploitation
- how we safeguard and treat older adolescence – questioning whether the same rigour to safeguarding adolescents from harm is applied as to protecting younger children from sexual abuse
- the balance between protecting young people from sexual exploitation while also working to gather intelligence that can be used to prosecute abusers – clarifying the scope of the role of the care/parent in this
- different experiences of children with different legal status.

Practitioners also noted that services are currently going through periods of rapid change, many experiencing severe cuts to resources. There was concern that this may have a negative impact on service provision for older children and adolescents

who are effectively seen as *'being able to cope on their own'*. Practitioners noted a concern about what local authorities can, or will be able to provide given restricted and diminishing resources. This may include having to economise on the provision of 'quality' care, resulting in further reliance on cheaper and potentially less sophisticated care provision.

The importance of family and carer relationships

While the child or young person's relationships with families and parents may often be very difficult, they may continue to place a high value on these relationships, and many will return to their families at some stage in their care careers. It is therefore important that this is recognised and incorporated into a research model. Families should not be 'eased out' of any research proposal that emerges in the future on the relationship between safe accommodation and sexual exploitation.

Practitioners were also concerned that research incorporated carers/parents understanding of 'safe accommodation' and of 'sexual exploitation'. This was felt to be important as it was noted that if parents/carers had a shared understanding of 'safety' they were more likely to be able to work together to prevent further placement breakdown and to protect the young person from sexual abuse through sexual exploitation. This point particularly emerged through a discussion of the importance of the carers' awareness of the meaning of attachment and of the impact of poor attachments on children and young people. Practitioners from therapeutic communities where residential staff's work is informed by psychodynamic approaches recognised the central importance of the relationship between the carer and the young person. It was noted that if this relationship feels safe, the young person is able to begin to have a model of what a 'safe' relationship may be. A shared understanding of 'safety' can then begin to emerge.

The experience of young people

The experience of many sexually exploited young people who were 'in care' or 'looked after' was a source of considerable concern for the practitioners present. Some participants were acutely aware of the unsafe accommodation in which some young people were placed, and where they were in fact at increased risk of sexual exploitation. This included awareness of young people being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation in areas of social deprivation. More generally, participants drew attention to the way in which young people were caught within a network of multiple agencies, professionals and structural groupings – and yet still lacked an adult who would 'hold' them. There was a discussion of the relevance of access to 'social capital' for young people. It was noted that many young people who are sexually exploited and at risk of, or in local authority care lived in areas where they had limited access to social capital. If placed in accommodation that perpetuates restricted access to basic resources, support networks and where the informal

economy is strong, the young people may be further drawn into criminality and 'unsafe' environments. It was noted that these issues of geography, location and local resource provision were of particular significance to children and young people who may have been trafficked for sexual exploitation as they may be unfamiliar with how to access services, unaware of the distinction between the formal and informal economy and may have basic communication problems. It was felt to be important that any research addressed these issues.

The experience of professionals

Participants had very different experiences of working in a variety of care placements. Attention was drawn to the policy frameworks (such as the DCSF 2007 and 2009 Guidance) which should inform practice, and care planning processes in particular.

Practitioners had different levels of experiences of working with the police. In the main, this joint work resulted from an enquiry about the young person being suspected of committing offences. It was rarer for practitioners to have experience of working with police on joint investigations to prosecute abusers. It was felt that carers and parents may have little training in understanding how they could contribute to disrupting or prosecuting abusers. It was felt that this was an oversight in basic training and that future research should address how carers and parents can help young people to feel safe through joint work with police and other law enforcement agencies.

Models of good practice

"The more meaningful research becomes ... the more therapeutic it might be"

This quotation was taken from a practitioner who felt that research played an important role in engaging with young people to address questions of safety. They argued that this process was in itself therapeutic, as it gave a message to young people that researchers, policy makers and funders felt that the problems of unsafe accommodation needed addressing.

The discussion highlighted the striking differences in the various care placements. Some practitioners worked in highly therapeutic settings with young people while others were restricted to limited contact with young people who were placed in local bed and breakfast accommodation. There were, however, a number of concerns that emerged as common to participants. These included the need for a continuous, stable presence of supportive adults in young people's lives. They also included the need for the young person to have access to additional support at the point of placement breakdown, or when things go wrong.

1.13 Research issues

Focus of the research

There was concern amongst participants that, in view of the wide ranging nature of the topic, it was important to specify very clearly the research questions in which the project was interested. It was noted that there would need to be an active advisory group of interested practitioners and for the information from the research to be disseminated on an ongoing basis to a wide audience.

Theory

Practitioners were interested at considering potential theoretical approaches to the work. It was agreed that different practitioners and agencies worked through different theoretical approaches. Some noted the importance of attachment theory and others tended to focus on young people's access to social capital as a possible way of understanding the resilience and vulnerabilities of young people who are sexually exploited. It was noted that no one theoretical approach might be deemed as 'right' or 'wrong' but that the research would explore theoretical approaches as they emerged during the course of the research.

Ethics and the participation of young people

The question of whether a research project can protect young people from harm was also discussed. It was recognised that a research proposal would need to maintain thorough diligence in line with research ethics and be mindful of the safeguarding needs of the young people concerned. At the same time, it was noted that involvement in a research study could prove therapeutic for young people.

Participants expressed concern that a longitudinal study may be difficult to achieve as the young people's lifestyles may be chaotic, they may go missing or funding for a study beyond two years may not be achieved. However, it was noted that a longitudinal study would be welcomed to enhance knowledge of outcomes for young people. It was also recognised that a longitudinal study would need to be sensitive to the attachments that may be formed between a researcher and young person and that the design would need to safeguard the young person over the length of the study.

It was agreed that while these ethical concerns are complex, they should not detract from the importance of undertaking research in this area. It was felt that avoiding research with sexually exploited young people can make researchers complicit in marginalising their voices.

Consulting with young people

1.14 Consultation work with young people

An interest in developing work around issues relating to sexually exploited young people's experience of safe accommodation was in part influenced by previous participatory consultation projects undertaken with young people (Having Our Say 2010; Out of the Box 2009; Pieces of Me 2009).

In 2010 a national photography project involved 28 young people affected by sexual exploitation in helping to develop a book and exhibition. While highlighting the enormous diversity of issues facing this group of young people, instability and insecurity in accommodation arose as the single most recurrent theme that characterised young people's experiences. Over half (19) of the 28 participants were living away from their families and many in temporary, unstable and at times inappropriate accommodation during the course of the project. The issue of accommodation prompted lengthy discussions and became the focus for several young people's images. Concerns raised in this project around accommodation included: issues around transitions, instability of existing placements and uncertainty about future accommodation; physical safety; relationships with carers; restrictions; suitability of temporary accommodation and issues of shame and stigma associated with living conditions.

In 2009 two parallel creative writing projects with sexually exploited children and young people also highlighted a number of concerns around young people's accommodation (Out of the Box 2009; Pieces of Me 2009). These included discussions around issues of restriction, safety, concepts of home, issue around leaving care and temporary accommodation.

In addition to building on existing consultations, as part of this scoping study we agreed to speak to a group of young people who attend the quarterly '*What Works for Us*'¹ advisory group on support for sexually exploited young people. The purpose of the planned discussion was to explore whether this group of young people perceived any links between the nature of their accommodation and risks of sexual exploitation. The meeting, scheduled for February 2011 was cancelled due to cancellations of 11 out of the 12 young people due to attend. An interesting observation, with relevance for this study, was that in 6 out of the 11 cases, non attendance was the result of difficulties for or mistakes of staff who had been due to accompany young people. In the other 5 cases young people could not attend for

¹ The '*What works for us*' group is a national advisory group of young people who have received support from specialist sexual exploitation projects. The group is run by a partnership of NWG/ University of Bedfordshire with Barnardo's and ECPAT. The group meets four times per year and aims to consult with other young people about their experience of services and support and share findings and young people's perspectives with policy makers and those responsible for service development.

the following reasons: 1 had recently become a parent; 1 had been sectioned; 1 was missing; and 2 were ill. Despite this, a number of informal conversations with young people indicate interest and perceived relevance of this project among several members of the 'What works for us' group.

Some of the key lessons this experience highlights are:

- a) the dependence on gatekeepers for young people's successful engagement in research and consultation processes
- b) the need to expect 'failed attempts' at meeting with young people which need to be anticipated within planning
- c) recognition of the complexities of children and young people's lives and the need to work around this to promote the inclusion of those who wish to participate but may have barriers to doing so
- d) the importance of not interpreting a lack of attendance as a lack of engagement (as evidenced by attendance of 10 young people at subsequent meeting on March 27th).

In addition a number of other pieces of learning have arisen from previous work with the '*What works for us*' advisory group which is led by staff at the University. Key points include:

- e) the need to anticipate and plan for disclosures and wider safeguarding issues which arise as a result of the work
- f) keeping young people informed at all times about processes in which they're involved and, where possible consulting with them about these.
- g) a flexible approach to communication and data collection which is enabling of a range of difference competencies and communication styles.
- h) the interest and appetite of many children and young people to express their views and feed into wider research and consultations.

1.15 Consulting with children and young people: messages from literature

An extensive body of literature from the last two decades specifically addresses the involvement of children and young people in research, from both methodological and theoretical perspectives (Tisdall et al., 2009; Morrow, 2005; Christiansen, Alderson and Morrow, 2004; and James, 2000). Concerns about the direct involvement of children and young people in research grow from considerations of ethics, changing legal and policy frameworks relating to children, and perspectives on childhood that focus on both children's competencies and the conflict between children's lived

experiences and institutional forms of childhood (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998; Jenks, 1996).

This body of work provides a substantial number of examples on which to draw which explore the specific dynamics in relation to research involving young people looked after or in care. These predominantly address questions of method and explore the value of young people's involvement where power differentials within research are compounded not just by age but also the particularly vulnerabilities associated with the care experience (Murray 2005i; O'Kane, 2000; Schofield et al. 2000). A much more limited body of literature examines methods around the involvement of victims of abuse in research, noting the centrality of safeguarding considerations (Rees et al, 2010; Barter et al. 2004) and fewer still address research methods with those affected by sexual exploitation (Coy, 2008; Scott and Skidmore, 2006; Pearce et al 2003)

For the purposes of this research proposal relevant lessons from the literature are divided into three areas: underlying principles and motivation for involving young people in research; methods of data collection and engagement; and ethical considerations, each of which are addressed in turn.

1.16 Reasons for children and young people's direct involvement in research

Motivations for directly involving young people in research can be broadly divided into ideological, legal (or policy based) and pragmatic reasons (Murray, 2005i; Gilbertson and Barber 2002). Similarly as concepts of childhood increasingly recognise children's agency and evolving capacity, the importance of children's perspectives in their own right has been acknowledged (O'Kane, 2000).

Ideological imperatives

At an ideological level much has been made of desire to offset the disparities in power between researcher and researched. This is of particular relevance when research subjects include those who may be characterized as particularly marginalized or vulnerable. This perspective not only has consequences for decisions to directly involve young people within the research but, perhaps more importantly, the terms under which that takes place (Murray 2005i; O'Kane 2000).

Legal or policy imperatives

Legal or policy imperatives for involving young people in research are apparent at both national (Boddy and Oliver, 2010, CYPUP 2001) and international levels (Feinstein and O'Kane 2008; UN 1989) and include the statutory requirements to take account of young people's perspectives on their own safety. Legislative frameworks addressing young people in and leaving care and those affected by

sexual exploitation also echo these concerns, highlighting the importance of listening to children's perspectives as central to safeguarding and the promotion of wellbeing (DCSF 2009; HM Government 2000; HM Government 1989).

Research imperatives

From a pragmatic perspective direct and more participatory involvement of children and young people in research is cited as a means of gaining new insights into children and young people's lives (Tisdall et al. 2009; Morrow, 2005, Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Christiansen and James 2000; Boyden and Ennew, 1997; West, 1996). In particular it is recognised that structures or concepts familiar to child protection professionals hold different meaning or significance for young people (McLeod 2007). Opportunities to unpick this dissonance through direct discussions with young people has been central to research on notions of safety and risk for young people looked after such as that undertaken on peer violence (Barter et al. 2004). In keeping with these ideas both many authors highlights the value of involving young people at early stages of the research design, through exploratory conversations to map and explore key terms and concepts (Daly 2009). Morrow (2005) notes the value of building in feedback opportunities with young research participants throughout the project to further clarify meaning and offer new interpretations of data. Recent research into safeguarding adolescents has highlighted evidence from literature and primary data of significant disparities between perceptions of social professionals and young people in relation to assessments of risk and need. This provides a cogent argument for considering young people's views on issues of safeguarding and safety (Rees et al, 2010, 25).

1.17 Consulting children and young people: methods and engagement;

Eliciting children's views

As noted above, where research subjects are considered particularly vulnerable there are clear ethical reasons for adopting participatory approaches (Save the Children, 2005; Voice for the Child in Care, 2004). However what is meant by more 'active' or 'participatory involvement' in research varies although it usually denotes a commitment to increasing the choice, influence and in some cases ownership of young people over the research processes. At one end of the scale a small number of research and consultation projects position young people as researchers, either in partnership with professionals (VCC 2004; Alderson 2000; West, 1996) or to a lesser extent in processes devised and led by young people themselves (See for example work of the NYA Young Research Network). These projects tend to work with small numbers of young people and emphasise process as much as the objective of the research. More common models include the use of young people in peer led focus groups (Murray, 2005ii) in an advisory capacity (Barter et al. 2009; Hill et al. 2009)

or through the implementation of data collection methods designed to promote participant's sense of control over the process. In reality a desire to promote young people's more active involvement is often mitigated by other research needs. Woodman and Tyler (2007) note that more participatory approaches are rarely applied to research with large sample sizes or to longitudinal research, "*partly for philosophical reasons attached to positivist and post positivist research traditions but also because they are challenging to implement*" (p. 27).

In relation to methodology there is an extensive body of literature considering the use of specific techniques for eliciting children's views relating to experiences of care. This include debates about the merits of utilizing more creative methods or possible adaptations of more 'traditional' data collection methods to make them more sensitive to the needs of children and/or the discussion of sensitive topics and maximise opportunities for participant's to exercise choice and control over their involvement and representation. Extensive examples can be found alongside discussions of the various merits of different techniques which often focus on their abilities to elicit open communication, focus on stories and scenarios, involve an element of 'doing' rather than just talking or allow children to talk about sensitive topics without sharing intimate details. Methods include the use of ranking and matrices, 'decision making pocket charts', mapping, ecomaps and story-stem completions and vignettes. (Barter et al, 2009; Schofield et al, 2000; StC 2005; O'Kane 2000, Thomas and O'Kane 1999; Boyden and Ennew 1997). Where research or consultation projects draw on approaches more familiar to social or youth work settings some difficult definitional boundaries about staff roles may also be present (Coy, 2006). Despite the value of these instruments, particularly for those who lack confidence in verbal discussions or the relevant literacy skills, Murray (2005i) also cites evidence that many, particularly older young people, prefer traditional face to face interviewing and questionnaire designs to more discursive or creative opportunities.

Use of young people's advisory group.

Young people's involvement in research an advisory capacity is underpinned by increasing recognition of children and young people as active partners in creating change and their potential contribution not just to data but also the research process itself. Both Barter et al. (2009) and Hill et al. (2009) note the value of a young people's advisory group in the vetting and development of tools such as interview schedules, young people's information sheets, and consent processes in research addressing sensitive topics. A number of authors also highlight the value of young people within the analysis and others note their role in discussions about dissemination helping to ensure that potential risks of prejudice or stigma for research subjects are considered (Barter et al. 2009; Alderson and Morrow 2005). Daly (2009) also notes how involving young people who've served in an advisory capacity as research subjects "*can assist to deepen the research. Their*

contributions ... will not be their first thoughts but their considered opinion influenced by previous involvement” (462). Finally the presence and scrutiny of a young advisory group may also provide added legitimacy and credibility to the research in the eyes of gatekeepers, potential research subjects and the research audience (VCC, 2004).

Working with ‘gatekeepers’

In relation to the initial and ongoing engagement of research subjects consideration must also be given to how to engage and work with ‘gatekeepers’. One message which emerges around research with looked after young people is that gatekeepers are potentially the most significant determinant of participant’s engagement. In particular they highlight an apparent tension for gatekeeper’s, be those parents, carers or social care staff, when managing the twin responsibilities of safeguarding and supporting young people to share their views (Mudaly and Goddard 2009; Murray 2005i; Curtis et al. 2004). There are some suggestions of a tendency of gatekeepers to be over protective and contribute to the exclusion of some young people from research (Murray 2005i; Curtis et al. 2004; Gilbertson and Barber 2002) but also evidence of their ability to enable participation and provide critical follow up support for particular vulnerable individuals (Scott and Skidmore, 2006; and Pearce et al, 2003). A number of studies suggest effective strategies for involving gatekeepers in research: nurturing relationships through dedicated time, face to face contact and regular communication or through direct involvement as research participants or in an advisory capacity (Daly: 2009; Murray: 2005i;).

1.18 Messages about ethics

“A prerequisite for adults working with disaffected youth is sensitivity towards issues of power” (McLeod 2007, 285)

The development and review of ethical protocols is central to any research project design. Existing ethical guidelines addressing research with children provide a number of frameworks on which to build. These include those developed by Barnardo’s and NCB (Scott and Hayden 2005; NCB 2003) which specifically address involvement in research for vulnerable young people alongside more generic models (Boddy and Oliver, 2010). While these provide useful direction it is important to recognise some differing perspectives (in particular around parental or carers consent) and be clear that guidelines do not foreclose the need for ongoing reflection. As Morrow (2005) notes, it may be impossible to predict all possible ethical dilemmas that emerge when undertaking research with vulnerable children and young people.

There remains only limited literature exploring ethics around the involvement young people with experience of abuse or sexual violence in research. What does exist highlights the possible tension between children's rights to have the voices heard and children's rights to protection (Mudaly and Goddard, 2009). When dealing with young victims of abuse there is clear evidence of the importance of working in close partnership with care giving agencies both to assess, engage and provide follow up support to participants (see Pearce et al, 2003 for work with NSPCC and independent voluntary sector projects and Scott and Skidmore, 2006) work with Barnardo's). What is clear is that professionals safeguarding responsibilities transcend individual's role as researcher and are fundamentally about the responsibilities of adults in relation to all children (Morrow, 2005)

There is limited evidence or discussion about possible benefits or disadvantages to young people who have experienced or been at risk of abuse being involved in research. What does exist remains anecdotal and speculative balancing possible risks of re-traumatisation against the potential benefits of participation. (Mudaly and Goddard, 2009). As Curtis et al. (2004) note *"Just as a good experience of engaging in research may be a step in engaging young people [in wider support services] and helping them feel that it is possible to make a difference, a poor experience may have effects which go beyond the research process."* (173).

Discussions of ethical issues of working with young people largely centre on issues around consent and confidentiality. There is consensus that provision of informed consent must be undertaken directly with potential participants (rather than via gatekeepers) and thought given to how best to communicate the purpose and nature of the work (Gallagher, 2009). Supporting young people to dissent from the process is also highlighted as best practice. Examples cite the need to consider participant's ability to disagree and implementing processes which support young people to practice saying *'no I don't want to talk about that'* (Mudaly and Goddard, 2009; Morrow, 2005). Alderson (2005) also highlights the potential dangers for young people revealing more than they may feel comfortable with in hindsight or having a changing understanding of what it means to be involved as research progresses. These points strengthen the idea that consent is never absolute (Mudaly and Goddard 2009; Renold et al, 2008; Alderson, 2005; Alderson and Morrow 2004;) and that participants deserve ongoing negotiation about their involvement and the potential consequences of sharing information.

Ultimately there must be recognition that considerations of ethics within research with vulnerable young people goes beyond the implementation of safeguarding and consent giving processes. It must include a consideration of the finer dynamics of all interactions of young people that arise as a result of their involvement in research. In essence this means practical thinking: rapport and trust building at the beginning of each interview; repeated checking, on every return visit, *'is this okay?'*, *'are you okay with this?'*; exploring how to ensure that copies of any young people's work,

written or drawn, are returned to participants; ensuring young participants know how to work, and crucially stop, the audio recording device themselves; enabling young people to listen back to audio recordings or read transcripts when requested or appropriate; provision of refreshments; committing to feeding back research findings to all participants in a way that is meaningful; and creating opportunities for informed dissent (Detailed consideration of these processes can also be seen in research by Daly, 2009; Hill et al., 2009; Curtis et al. 2007; Morrow, 2005; Barter, 2004; O’Kane, 2000). Further considerations include the presence of other professionals within research interactions; the use of group settings; considerations about incentive or reward payment; the research setting itself; boundaries of the researchers role (Hill et al., 2009: Gallagher, 2009; Curtis et al. 2004,).

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