UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

Changing practice and values? An exploration of social pedagogy for a Council's Children's Services Workers

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Abstract

Social pedagogy is a conceptual framework which takes both an educational and social perspective to addressing social problems, and is embedded within the children's services and wider social workforce in many European countries. By contrast, England and its children's services organisations are without a social pedagogy heritage. This study fills a gap in the evidence base for, and definition of, social pedagogy in England by exploring its potential challenges and benefits within children's services settings.

The research takes an exploratory approach to the influence of social pedagogy using a Council's children's services as a case study. The study utilises convergent methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation, including questionnaires, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The results and conclusions make a significant contribution to the social pedagogy knowledge through a new model of the practice framework for social pedagogy – the 'Star Model', a proposed definition of social pedagogy, identification of social pedagogy's unique contribution to children's services and the organisational conditions necessary and a proposed approach to its development within the multiple professional fields of the children's services workforce.

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1 Chapter one: Introduction

This thesis provides new and unique insights into the potential for and challenges of social pedagogy as a conceptual framework for children's services settings in England. Presenting the findings of research within in a local authority children's service, along with evidence from the contemporary literature, over the coming chapters I make a significant contribution to the social pedagogy knowledge. Through generating new theory which defines the characteristics of social pedagogy in children's services, I propose a new model of practical framework for social pedagogy in children's services – the 'Star Model'. Furthermore, I propose a definition of a social pedagogue, what social pedagogy is, and isn't, and identify social pedagogy's contribution to children's services in the context of other models of practice in England. I also define the organisational conditions necessary to optimise the benefits of social pedagogy, and propose an approach to social pedagogy development within the multiple professional fields of the children's services workforce.

Social pedagogy is a conceptual framework which takes both an educational and social perspective to addressing social problems. The foundations of social pedagogy can be located in the educational reflections of Plato (428 – 348BC). Plato argued for educators to have a deep care for the well-being of the individuals, and identified education as having responsibility for fulfilling society's ultimate objectives. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'Émile' (1762), along with Johann Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827), Friedrich Fröbel (1782-1852) and Adolph Diesterweg (1790-1866) also impacted the formation of social pedagogical ideas through a concern for the indistinguishability of the social and educational aspects of learning.

German philosopher, Paul Natorp (1854-1924), provided an influential version of social pedagogy, providing the following description: 'the social aspects of education, broadly understood, and the educational aspects of social life constitute this science' (Natorp, 1904, quoted in Stephens, 2013 p94). In the United States of America, a contemporary of Natorp, John Dewey (1859-1952), also identified education as instrumental in social reform (Dewey,1916).

Despite such deep roots, there is no single agreed definition of social pedagogy in the literature written in English, and it is a concept which is ambiguous and open to interpretation and debate (Kornbeck, 2009, Cameron et al, 2011, Eichsteller et al, 2011, Hämäläinen, 2012 and 2013, Storo 2012 and 2013, Sandermann et al, 2014). Although there are debates regarding social pedagogy, it is embedded within the children's services and wider social workforce in countries such as Germany, Denmark, France, Sweden and other Scandinavian states (Hämäläinen, 2003, Jarning, 2006, Petrie, 2007, Cameron et al, 2007, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011, Surel et al, 2011 and Sandermann and Neumann, 2014). By contrast, unlike many European countries, England and its children's services organisations are without a social pedagogy heritage and social pedagogy is not embedded within its social and informal education workforce, or in the academic framework which trains them (Social Education Trust, 2001, Cameron et al, 2007, Petrie et al, 2008, Boddy et al, 2009). However, when outcomes for young people were compared across countries in which social pedagogy is embedded within the professional training for the young people's workforce, with the UK where social pedagogy is not embedded, young people in countries with a social pedagogy culture experienced improved outcomes for indicators such as teenage pregnancy, educational attainment and criminal activity (Cameron et al, 2007). It must be noted that such findings occurred in the context of the significantly different socio-political contexts and views of childhood in the countries studied compared to the UK, the influence of which on outcomes and experiences for young people should not be underestimated. With this caution in mind, however, I suggest that there may be merit in exploring social pedagogy further in England, and insights for children within the English social care system. Whilst there may be multiple reasons for such difference, including the policy and economic context of the countries included in the study, this study suggests there are opportunities to learn from the UK's continental neighbours.

As such, I argue that there is merit in exploring the extent to which social pedagogy may benefit the children's services workforce in England. However, as this chapter and chapter two will demonstrate, there is a paucity of evidence, research and information about social pedagogy within English children's services settings. The findings of this study, from new arguments emerging from thematic analysis of the contemporary children's literature in chapter two, to the results, discussions and conclusions in chapters four to eight, this research contributes significantly to the gap in knowledge, using a local authority children's services setting as a case study. Using data from the study to critically appraise the evidence base

identifiable within the contemporary social pedagogy literature, this research proposes a new model of practical social pedagogy in children's services settings – the 'Star Model', identifies the potential challenges and benefits of applying social pedagogy, its potential fit within the children's services workforce, and the conditions necessary for social pedagogy to achieve change.

This opening chapter commences with an introduction to social pedagogy and its main concepts, including the challenges relating to a lack of an agreed definition. The context for social pedagogy and for the research is then set, both within England, within English children's services, and within the local authority services which are the focus of this study. I describe my role as the researcher, my values and experiences, and how these have inspired my interest in exploring social pedagogy. I explain my passion for questions this research seeks to address. The rationale for this research is then described, including how the unique context and purpose of the study, which is to explore social pedagogy practice within a local authority's children's services, will make an unprecedented contribution to an underdeveloped knowledge base for social pedagogy in England.

Then this chapter describes the theoretical framework which underpins the research. This framework includes the understanding of social pedagogy and main theories which have shaped the problems and questions which this study seeks to explore and address, which is then set out in further detail within the literature review chapter. It will also describe the design of the study, introducing the main themes from the methodology chapter, and the themes which will be explored through data collection and analysis. The assumptions, limitations and scope of the study, including my role and influence as the researcher, are also set out in this chapter, along with definitions of key terms that are used throughout the thesis.

Finally, this chapter concludes with an introduction to the chapters that follow which detail how the ultimate conclusions and recommendations in chapters four to seven were reached.

1.1 Defining social pedagogy

Within the contemporary social pedagogy literature, which is explored in more detail in chapter two, the lack of consensus regarding a definition of social pedagogy is recognised, and argued to be an opportunity for many to contribute to the construction of an agreed understanding (Storø, 2013, Ezechil, 2015). The ambiguity of the term social pedagogy and the concepts it defines, and the openness to debating it within the academic community confirms a gap in knowledge which presents an opportunity for new research to make a

contribution. Despite the broad agreement that the term social pedagogy is ambiguous, there are a number of characteristics of social pedagogy that are widely agreed, as explored in depth in chapter two. Social pedagogy is always concerned with the interconnection of the educational and the social, and seeks to address social issues through education (Hallstadt and Hogstrom, 2005, Lorenz, 2008, Eriksson, 2010, Smith, 2012, Berridge, 2013). It is also widely agreed that social pedagogy is locally constructed and individual to its socio-historical context (Rosendal Jensen, 2009, Hämäläinen, 2012, Kornbeck, 2013). Another common understanding is that social pedagogy is concerned with relationships in the context of social networks (Hallstedt and Högström, 2005, Petrie et al, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012), and is a way of thinking influenced by values, and reflection on practice (Hallstedt and Högström, 2005, Smith, 2012, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2012). Hämäläinen (2012), for example, describes social pedagogy as 'not a toolbox of methods… rather, a way of thinking in which social and educational considerations are united' (p12).

There are concepts which are central to social pedagogy which are widely described in the literature, including the 'common third', '3 Ps' and 'head and heart and hands'. The 'common third' is a concept which is widely described as central to social pedagogy practice (Milligan, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Smith, 2012). It describes the use of an activity done on equal terms together by the practitioner and the child or young person, to strengthen the bond between the two. Smith (2012) suggests that the common third involves using an activity to strengthen the bond between social pedagogue and child and to develop new skills, creating a commonly shared situation that becomes a symbol of the relationship between the social pedagogue. Milligan (2009) identifies that the common third brings meaning and creativity to everyday activities such as fixing a bike, going on a trip or playing football together through the authenticity and reflection of the practitioner, in a child-centred and participatory approach.

It is not the activity itself which is the common third, rather it is the process of creating together an activity or situation which represents the relationship between the practitioner and the young person, where both are on equal terms, with equal rights and dignity (Milligan, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Smith, 2012, Vrouwenfelder, 2013). Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011a) describe the Common Third as requiring that the social pedagogue is authentic and self-reflective, bringing in their own personality as an important resource. It involves exploring activities in which the social pedagogue and the child are both genuinely interested and where both are equal contributors to every stage - as such, it is child-centred

but where both adult and child share a common potential of learning, on a basis of activity and action. It can include activities that the child might be more expert in so they act as teacher to the adult participant, or activities in which both are novice.

A further central social pedagogy concept is that of the '3 Ps' (Bengstton et al, 2008, Milligan, 2009, Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Slovenko et al, 2016). The theory of the 3Ps is underpinned by the idea that there are three elements of the practitioner's self which could be brought into a relationship with a child or young person: the private, the personal, and the professional. Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011a) argue that building trusting and authentic relationships with children is important in social pedagogy because it is through relationships that children understand they are cared about, learn from role models about how they can have positive relationships with others, and about who they are. They argue that relationships enable a practitioner to know a child, find out what they are thinking about and how they see the world so as to help them and their development. For a practitioner to interact with a child or young person, build a relationship with them, be a role model and be authentic they must be aware of three different aspects of themselves, and the balance of each.

Bengsston et al (2008) suggest that the private pedagogue is the person who is known to a practitioners' friends and family and that this private aspect of the self should not be in any relation with a child in a professional environment. The private pedagogue is the practitioner's persona outside of work. They describe the personal pedagogue as the person within the professional setting, where it is possible for the practitioner to be 'themselves'. To build a relationship with a young person, they suggest requires a practitioner to put them self into the relationship so the young person can relate to them. The professional pedagogue is the more objective element of the self, which helps the practitioner to explain the young person's actions and is what enables the practitioner to keep on offering contact even if they are being refused, as the professional pedagogue takes understanding from theory from experience to understand a child's perspective.

The following excerpt from a study of social pedagogy in children's residential homes in England (Berridge et al, 2011) describes the 3Ps in practice:

> 'One SP [social pedagogue] distinguished between the '*professional, the personal and the private*' in the way she approached her work, which helped to conceptualise what several others expressed. Social pedagogy was ultimately *professional*, drawing on

knowledge, skills and personal awareness. In residential work in England these were underdeveloped. '*Private*' details would be inappropriate to divulge. However, SPs would refer to appropriate *personal* information about their own lives, families, experiences and interests ('*Give a little bit of myself*'). SPs often commented on the importance of the '*shared life space*', which is important in the residential setting and communicating genuinely and openly was more respectful and natural. Indeed, SPs sometimes referred to their relationships with young people being '*equal*'. Clearly there were power and other differentials but it was argued that it was important for young people to recognise that relationships had reciprocal elements and that adults could learn from them too.' (p121)

The concept of 'lifespace' is also central to social pedagogy (Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Kyriacou et al, 2016). Lifespace is described by Smith (2012) as relationships 'emerging in course of everyday encounters, where the opportunities provided within the child's own context are optimised to promote social inclusion, growth and learning' (p51). The concept suggests that it is not just the times when a practitioner and a young person are involved in a planned intervention that are important, rather the time spent interacting and building relationships in everyday activities and tasks. As such, it is a concept oriented toward professional groups, in particular residential workers or foster carers who are in a shared living arrangement with children or young people. Petrie (2006) that this is a critical element of the social pedagogical relationship as it means that children and staff are not 'existing in separate hierarchical domains' (p. 22).

Linked to the other relationship oriented concepts of social pedagogy – the common third, and the 3Ps – the head, heart and hands concept underpins the planning and intervention process for working with a child or young person (Petrie et al, 2008, Milligan, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Smith, 2012, Mcdermid et al, 2016, Rothuizen et al, 2017). Mcdermid et al (2016) describe social pedagogy as a blend of academic knowledge and research (head), an understanding of emotions (heart), and practical skills and activity (hands) to help children thrive, with Eichstller and Holtoff (2012) suggesting that the concept of head, heart and hands demonstrates social pedagogy's role in linking practical skills with emotional warmth and critical thinking.

When using the head, heart and hands concept, a practitioner uses theory, the head, to understand and to reflect on what is happening in a relationship with the young person, uses theory to plan and make adjustments to enable the relationship to continue to support the young people and how this is best done. By using the heart, the practitioner demonstrates trust, hope and authenticity in the relationship with the young person, sharing genuine care for them. The social pedagogy practitioner then uses the hands to undertake activities with the child, through means such as the common third, inviting contact opportunities that build relationships with the young person. In using the head, heart and hands concept, social pedagogy practitioners seek to achieve the optimum balance of theory and reflection, emotional attachments and care for the young person, and practical and engaging tools, to support the social and educational development of the child they are working with.

Whilst there are some broadly agreed characteristics of social pedagogy, there are as many potential characteristics that remain the subject of debate. The focus of social pedagogy on work with individuals, or focused at societal level, or both is debated (Kyriacou,2009, Daskalakis, 2015). Also debated is whether social pedagogy is a discipline to be practised by an appropriately qualified professional – a social pedagogue – such as argued by Lorenz (2008) and Ezechil (2015), or an approach which could be used by a range of practitioners (Kyriacou et al, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Smith, 2012, Slovenko, 2016). These common understandings, ambiguities and debates in the social pedagogy literature are explored in greater detail in chapter two, and the results from this research, as described in chapters four to seven, contribute significantly to filling these gaps in understandings by providing a new and evidence based definition and model of practical social pedagogy.

As already noted, social pedagogy is embedded within the children's services and wider social workforce in countries such as Germany, Denmark, France, Sweden and other Scandinavian countries (Hämäläinen, 2003, Jarning, 2006, Petrie, 2007, Cameron et al, 2007, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011, Surel et al, 2011 and Sandermann and Neumann, 2014). This is in contrast to England and the wider United Kingdom where social pedagogy is not embedded within the children's services workforce or in the academic framework which trains them (Social Education Trust, 2001, Cameron et al, 2007, Petrie et al, 2008, Boddy et al, 2009). The context for and development of social pedagogy in England is explored later in this chapter, and chapter six later in this thesis describes how the results from this research suggest a potential fit for social pedagogy within the children's services workforce.

1.2 Theoretical foundations

Contemporary understandings of social pedagogy, as described above, cannot be separated from social pedagogy's theoretical roots which extend as far back as to the time of Plato, and congruence between its characteristics and educational thinking through the millennia is evident. This includes the idea of an important interface between the social and the pedagogical or educational. This concept can be found in the educational reflections of Plato (428 – 348BC) and with the passing of millennia also in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'Émile' (1762a) which expressed a concern was for the whole person and the indistinguishability of the social and educational aspects of learning. German philosopher, Paul Natorp (1854-1924), provided an influential version of social pedagogy, with a deep concern for community. As explored later in this chapter, in common with many social pedagogy thinkers (Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Hämäläinen, 2003 and 2013, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Berridge, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015), Natorp asserted that all pedagogy should be social – that there should be a strong emphasis on community and as with many of those who influenced him, on closing the gap between rich and poor.

Likewise, Swiss educational philosopher, Johann Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827) as a proponent of social justice, saw education as important to improve the social condition (Pestalozzi, 1801). Adolph Diesterweg (1790-1866) as a peer of Pestalozzi's, and also a proponent of social justice, believed that the poor could be assisted through education, and that social, economic and moral responsibility was critical to teaching (Günther, 1993). The purpose of education for Diesterweg was the development of human powers for the benefit of society.

Concurrently, a vision for education as a vehicle for achieving democracy and social reform was being formed in America, by John Dewey (1859-1952). Whilst Dewey does not use the term social pedagogy in his numerous works on education, there is little in current social pedagogy thinking that is not recognisable in his work. For Dewey (1916) education is instrumental in social reform. He argues that education's purpose is not just the gaining of knowledge, but about learning how to live, realise one's full potential and use capabilities for the greater good (Dewey, 1897).

Similarly, Natorp's social pedagogy (1904) was concerned with the role of education in society, from education within the household, through national schooling and self-education adults regardless of social class. He anticipated a close alliance between social pedagogic movements and the democratisation of public life, when the good intentions of individuals

converge into the best interests of the many. Natorp (1904) provided the following description of social pedagogy, as translated from his original words in German, 'the social aspects of education, broadly understood, and the educational aspects of social life constitute this science' (p94, quoted in Stephens, 2013). Thus, over millennia there has been a concern with how integrating the social and pedagogical might be beneficial for society, with contemporary social pedagogy thinking furthering these arguments (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Lorenz, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Hämäläinen, 2012, Storø, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Mylonakou-Keke, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016). As such critically appraising and exploring the role of a social pedagogy in settings supporting children in England remains relevant and critical, and this informed the research questions and data collection for this study.

The foundational thinkers also suggest a number of defining characteristics of a social pedagogy, significantly pre-dating the deployment of the term within the context of English children's services and much of the contemporary social pedagogy literature. The centrality of the relationship between pedagogue and learner and the nature of the pedagogical intervention is a recurrent theme, with Plato as a proponent of the Socratic teaching method which emphasised the power of dialogue and joint exploration of the subject, arguing for use of social methods to educational settings. Rousseau (1762b) argued that the educator's role is to facilitate opportunities for learning and proposed the physical engagement of learner in education – using the hands and body creatively in an activity - just as many contemporary social pedagogy thinkers do (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2013).

Pestalozzi (1801), like Rousseau, believed in the education of the whole child, and he developed a psychological method of instruction, with a balance of educational equilibrium achieved through teaching with the head, hands and heart. Pestalozzi's legacy is evident in much of social pedagogy thinking, with the 'head, hand and heart' method of working frequently cited (Petrie et al, 2008, Milligan, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Smith, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013). Friedrich Fröbel (1782-1852) was a peer of Pestalozzi's, and the originator of the kindergarten system. Like Pestalozzi, and Rousseau, Fröbel (1826) argued for an emphasis on learning through activity, in particular through play. Fröbel believed that all humans have inherent creativity, and as such, all education should involve practical works that engage with the world to develop understanding.

Like Rousseau, Dewey (1916) endorses the educational power of the shared experience, stating that 'When the parent or teacher has provided he conditions which stimulate thinking and has taken a sympathetic attitude toward the activities of the learner by entering into a common or conjoint experience, all has been done which a second party can do to instigate' (p79). This emphasis on shared activity between the educator and the client remains evident in current social pedagogy practice and theory through deployment of the 'common third' (Smith, 2012, Vrouwenfelder, 2013) as described in later chapters. Dewey warns against teaching becoming mechanical and slavish, emphasising the importance on bringing personal experiences into education, just as social pedagogy theory describes the '3Ps' as a means of introducing the personal aspects of the self into practice (Milligan, 2009, Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Slovenko et al, 2016). Evident in some educational organisations in England, such as settings influenced by Steiner (1996) and Montessori (Kyriacou et al, 2009), the need for understanding of the benefits, challenges and influence of such social pedagogical approaches in English children's services settings remains critical, and is informed by this study as described in chapters five and six.

The thinking of the Brazilian Educationalist Paulo Friere (1921-1997) has also been influential in the theory of social pedagogy. Although as with Dewey, Freire does not use the term social pedagogy, he was much concerned with informal education, and people working with each other in the sharing and gaining of knowledge and experience (Freire, 1971). Friere was emphasised the importance of praxis, described as action that is informed and linked to values, in enabling justice and the fulfilment of human potential – this suggestion is consistent with Storø's model of social pedagogy as practice influenced by theory and values (Storø, 2012) as described in chapter two. In common with Fröbel and Pestalozzi, Freire argued for situating education in the lived experience, just as much of the current social pedagogy literatures describes the concept of 'lifespace' (Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016) and observable as a result of this study as detailed in chapter four. Freire's focus of education was on liberation, for those who are oppressed and lacking in power. This focus on achievement of social justice is the thread which weaves throughout social pedagogy's theoretical foundations, and the models of social pedagogy that have emerged which are critically appraised in this study, to inform the contemporary knowledge base. Furthermore, these inform the new model of practical social pedagogy in children's services settings which this study proposes in chapter five.

From Plato to Pestalozzi and Freire, the themes of the indistinguishability of social and educational aspects of learning, and a focus on the inherent worth of the individual recur throughout the thinking of many educational philosophers with a legacy in the 21st century. Social pedagogy gained a firm foothold in some European countries, such as Denmark and Germany, where it is a professional field central to the social workforce (Cameron et al, 2011, Hatton, 2014). This is in contrast to England where it is a relatively recently imported concept without a long heritage (Kornbeck, 2002 and 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Hämäläinen, 2013).

As will be described further in the following section of this chapter, momentum and interest in social pedagogy in England began to build following a conference by the Social Education Trust (2001). The introduction of the concept of social pedagogy within the children's services workforce by the Social Education Trust initiated the increased interest that follows, and as such the literature review includes social pedagogy literature from 2001 onwards that meet the inclusion criteria described in chapter two.

As such, I suggest that there is merit in exploring the potential for social pedagogy in children's services settings in England, where outcomes for many children are poorer than in countries where social pedagogy is embedded (Cameron et al, 2007). With such deep rooted foundations in theory, and established practice in geographical neighbours, exploring the contemporary evidence base for this in the literature identified the gap in the knowledge which informed the need for this research study, as described in the sections that follow. The extent to which these themes from social pedagogy's historical conceptual roots are reflected in contemporary ideas and theories of social pedagogy in children's services settings, and substantiated in practice within the context of Yarvil [pseudonym] Council's children's services settings are then explored in chapters five to seven.

1.3   Social Pedagogy in England

The emergence of social pedagogy in England has been from European roots, in particular from Scandinavia, and Germany's 'sozialpadagogik' where there is an embedded social pedagogy tradition (Kornbeck, 2009). This is in contrast to England where it is a relatively recently imported concept without a long heritage (Kornbeck, 2002 and 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Hämäläinen, 2013).

Services for children in England have traditionally been divided between those serving educational needs through formal schooling, and those serving social needs, in particular social work and youth work. In response to high profile child protection cases, such as the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000, the Children Act (2004) united the educational and social functions under a statutory requirement for single children's services departments, with a Director of Children's Services and lead elected member responsible for education and social care. At a similar time to the development of the new Act, and the publication of 'Every Child Matters' (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2003) which provided a statutory framework across education and social care, momentum and interest in social pedagogy in England began to build following a conference and associated paper by the Social Education Trust (SET) (2001). This noted the inadequacy of training for children's residential workers. Unlike other professional groups working with children, children's residential care workers did not have defined training requirements, such as degree programmes that are associated with professions such as youth work or educational psychology, or a protected job title, such as social work. This issue proved pertinent in this research, and the fit with residential care in English children's services is explored in chapter seven. The SET suggested that the concept of the social pedagogue be adopted in the UK (Social Education Trust, 2001). At a similar time, the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the University of London began conducting research, exploring the potential for European models of social pedagogy to be used in English residential care (Hatton, 2013). Social pedagogy became cited as a potential solution to practice issues, such as the quality of care and management of physical interventions in children's homes, and dissatisfaction with training for workers with children in care, with research indicating better outcomes for children in countries where social pedagogy was embedded as a profession and within training for children's workers (Cameron, 2006, Cameron et al, 2007, Cameron et al, 2009, Boddy et al, 2009).

Through the 2000s, Social Pedagogy began being deployed in more local authority areas across professions working with children in care, particularly within residential children's homes (Jackson, 2006, Paget et al, 2007, Bengtsson et al, 2008). A national Social Pedagogy Development Network (SPDN) to support the development of social pedagogy in the United Kingdom emerged from this increased interest. Although research into the impact of social pedagogy practice in England was limited, with only one published study into social pedagogy in children's residential care homes (Berridge et al, 2011), by the early 2010s

social pedagogy was being explored or used in a number of English local authority children's residential services (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Moore et al, 2014, Kyriacou, 2015, Slovenko, 2016). Despite the study by Berridge et al (2011) providing little evidence of a positive influence on practice with or outcomes for children, interest continued to grow, and the reasons for this interest despite the lack of an evidence base is explored using results from this study in chapters five to seven.   In 2013, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) in England commissioned and released a paper which argued that European evidence for social pedagogy (Cameron, 2006, Cameron et al, 2007, Cameron et al, 2009, Boddy et al, 2009) should not be discounted when considering benefits, such as improved educational attainment and fewer teenage pregnancies, for adolescents in, or on the edge of care (ADCS, 2013). This was simultaneous to the initiation of a social pedagogy demonstration programme by The Fostering Network, which sought to evidence the potential benefits of social pedagogy within foster care settings (Mcdermid et al, 2016). However, the results of The Fostering Network's demonstration programme were not compelling, and concurred with many of those in the study by Berridge et al (2011), which are described in detail in chapter two.

Whilst there has been a groundswell of interest in and deployment of social pedagogy for children in care in residential and foster care settings by local authorities and academic institutions seeking to grow their programmes using evidence from other European countries (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Moore et al, 2014, Kyriacou, 2015, Slovenko, 2016), there has been only limited use of social pedagogy in practice in wider children's services. This includes those services other than formal education taking place in schools (Kyriacou et al, 2015), such as children's centres, youth work, social work and family support work, with no studies published in England focusing on services other than for children in care. Attempts by the university sector to establish undergraduate and postgraduate social pedagogy study programmes in England to further develop the growth in interest have been unsustainable due to insufficient interest by self-funding learners (Hatton, 2013). Furthermore, limited knowledge of social pedagogy amongst leaders and practitioners in children's services exists. The paradox of rising interest in social pedagogy within children's services despite the lack of an evidence base, and almost no testing or exploration of social pedagogy outside of services for children in care, creates an exciting opportunity for research which this study seeks to exploit, as described in the next section.

As I set out later in this chapter, despite the national context of changing interest from local authorities and universities, practitioners in the local authority which provides the case study for this research, as will be described later in this thesis, remained passionately committed to social pedagogy. Such organisations and their staff suggested that there are clear and tangible benefits to its deployment as a conceptual framework for children's services, such as improved staff morale and experience for young people in care. Reviews of approaches to adolescents on the edge of, rather than in care, by children's services leaders (ADCS, 2013) suggested social pedagogy may offer benefits to services working with young people. The research study I have undertaken pursues insights into whether these suggested benefits are substantiated by the results from this case study, and in doing so provides a valuable contribution to the limited existing knowledge into the potential for social pedagogy as conceptual framework for children's services practitioners.

1.4   Context of the Study

The context of this study is a local authority children's services workforce. Whilst there was a limited evidence base for social pedagogy in English children's services settings in the late 2000s, there was interest from Yarvil Council in its potential benefits for children based on evidence from Scandinavia and Germany (Cameron et al, 2007), whilst noting the vast differences in the social economic contexts of children's services in England compared to the countries considered in Cameron's study.

Yarvil is a large county, with a larger proportion of white people than the national average. Much of its area is rural, with many towns mainly evolved from the history of coal-mining based economies. Yarvil County Council covers the entire county, and holding responsibility for adult and children's social care, education, transport, planning, fire and public safety, libraries, waste management and trading standards.

This research project focuses on the children's services department, which has responsibilities for: supporting vulnerable families and disabled children, teenage and careers services, children's centres, sports and outdoor learning, school improvement services, school meals, schools place planning and building, special educational needs, pre-school and childcare support, safeguarding and child protection, fostering and adoption, youth offending and services traded with schools.

As will be described in further detail in chapter three, this case study explore social pedagogy's influence within care and informal education services delivered for children and families by the children's services department. These services include children's social care, which is comprised of the teams responsible for delivery of a number of Yarvil Council's statutory functions. Child protection teams include social workers who assess and respond to concerns about a child or young person's safety under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Children in need social care services and workers, under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, provide a range of specialist and safeguarding services, either for a short period of time to help a family in a crisis or as part of a longer term plan of support. This can include children with complex needs due to disability. For those children and young people for whom protection under the measures provided by section 17 or section 47 of the Act is not sufficient to ensure their safety and well-being, either through agreement with their parents, or through court proceedings, some children become cared for by the local authority. For these children, Yarvil Council provide alternative to family care, through adoption, foster care or residential care. In addition to social workers, the department employees foster carers, support workers, advocates and independent reviewing officers, to consult with children about their care.

Also within children's social care, Yarvil Council fulfils its care responsibilities for children with disabilities. This includes provision or activities, aids and equipment for life at home, support for sensory impairments, short breaks and respite for children with disabilities, specialist services and assistance with planning for independent living. These services complement educational support for special educational needs and disabilities, also delivered by Yarvil's children's services department. The education department also provide support where children and young people are not attending school or at risk from exclusion, not in education or training after the age of 16, involved in anti-social behaviour or at risk of becoming involved in crime, or are caring for other family members.

A further element of Yarvil Council's children's services department which is included within the focus of this study are early help services. These services provide support where a child or young person's needs are emerging or low level, and involve Council staff such as early years practitioners, youth workers and education welfare officers working with school pastoral teams, school health teams such as school nursing, behaviour support service, education psychologists, police safer neighbourhood team and child and adolescent mental health services. Yarvil's children's services are also part of the local Youth Offending

Service, which works with young people and their communities to tackle youth crime. It supervises and helps young people aged 10 to 17 who have committed offences, and works with them to help prevent further offending.

All of these services are overseen by the Director of Children's Services, a senior management team, and several tiers of management overseeing a workforce of hundreds of children's services practitioners. Social pedagogy was introduced to Yarvil Council by a group of children's residential workers, who were supported by their management to undertake training in social pedagogy and to develop a programme of awareness raising and development amongst colleagues in residential care. Informal evaluations of residential care since the introduction of social pedagogy were promising, with reduced staff sickness, and fewer physical interventions and missing episodes with young people reported (Moore et al, 2014).

I was introduced to social pedagogy in Yarvil in 2013, when as a senior manager in children's services I was exploring how innovation in local government might solve some of the sector's most intractable problems as part of a national programme. A colleague advised me that I should see the transformation in children's residential care, which was attributed to the introduction of social pedagogy. Residential workers in the children's homes described a compelling change in practice and living environments for the young people (figure 1a).

Figure 1a. Descriptions of life in the children's residential homes before and since social pedagogy was introduced, provided by Yarvil residential workers

Before social pedagogy	Since social pedagogy
• Kitchen and bathroom doors were kept locked to prevent residents accessing items potentially harmful to themselves or others; • There were no pictures on the walls, in case they got broken or were used as weapons; • The buildings were institutional, with	• Staff brought pets to work; • Residents were able to choose how to decorate their rooms; • There were pictures of the children and staff together throughout the homes; • Residents were taking part in a wider

impersonal décor;	range of activities;
• Activities were restricted due to concerns about health and safety;	• Gardens were developed to include allotments and tree houses developed jointly between staff and residents;
• The atmosphere was tense, with fear of allegations about conduct resulting in risk averse working practices by staff.	• Communal areas of the home were kept unlocked, and there were fewer restricted areas of the home.

The reported changes and benefits, which the residential workers in Yarvil attributed to having introduced social pedagogy in the two years previous, which although anecdotal, were interesting to me. In the early 2010s I witnessed an enthusiasm for social pedagogy by frontline staff that I had not experienced previously in children's services. I led on the development of a programme, commencing in 2013, to explore whether social pedagogy might be a beneficial approach across children's services more broadly, including in early help and family support services, youth work, children's centres, youth offending, social work and other professional groups. The programme, which had the support of the most senior management and involved a financial investment, included: the development of a new, level 4 module – 'An introduction to social pedagogy' – at a local university; the roll out of the residential workers training and awareness raising programme to professional groups in Yarvil outside of children's residential care, and a range of development activities focused on raising skills and knowledge of social pedagogy across the children's services workforce.

This approach being taken in Yarvil was unprecedented in England, with other contemporary social pedagogy programmes focusing only on children in care services, such as the Fostering Network's social pedagogy demonstration programme (Mcdermid et al, 2016) and the implementation of social pedagogy in residential care in several other local authorities (Bengtsson et al, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011). In Yarvil, training and development opportunities were provided across services for children such as in children's centres, for youth workers and social workers, in addition to children in care services, with other local authorities having not expanded social pedagogy outside of children in care. In part, the appetite for doing so in Yarvil emerged due to having a committed residential worker, from Sweden, who made a compelling argument to Yarvil leadership as to why it should be

expanded to other services, based on his experience in his home country. As both an insider to the organisation which was delivering the approach, and as someone with an interest in research to explore as yet unanswered questions regarding social pedagogy, the context of Yarvil and my role inspired the need for this research project as will be explained in the sections that follow.

1.5   The role of the researcher

I have described my role as an employee of the case study organisation, and in the development and implementation of the social pedagogy programme in Yarvil. The nature of my role as an employee and as a researcher requires that understanding the context and influence of me as the researcher, including my role in the research initiation, design and process, is critical. There inevitably is a strong autobiographical element of the research, particularly given the use of a case study approach, as argued by Lincoln and Guba (1990), any case study is a construction itself, and is a product of the interaction between respondents, site, and researcher.

To acknowledge and understand my role within the construct of the research I reflected on my experiences and influences. All my formal education from the age of 7 to 18 occurred in a private, selective fee-paying school at which I achieved an assisted place. This schooling alongside academically able and privileged pupils provided restricted understanding of those who experienced social disadvantage or exclusion.   Despite this, I was motivated from a young age to pursue a career which involved making the world a better place to live, supporting those who were most in need. My personal values, which underpin my academic and professional decisions, include making a difference to people's lives, tackling inequity and delivering excellent services that offer value for money to the taxpayer. These values directly influenced my decision to undertake a Master's in public health, a discipline which has at its core the aim of reducing inequalities in society, and to work in the public sector.

In spite of these value drivers which focus on making a difference to people, I have never held a professional role that involved working directly with children or young people, and my academic background was not oriented towards frontline practice. Rather, my professional roles, which have involved working in local government and the NHS, have always been strategic in function, with the aim of delivering against organisational priorities or ambitions,

and requirements of legislation. I have been continually motivated by a desire to find out 'what works?'

It was this motivation that inspired my interest in social pedagogy. When I was introduced to the concept of social pedagogy, as described earlier in this chapter, I found the personal change that had been experienced by the workers I met when I visited a children's home that had used the approach both compelling and intriguing. The positive influences described by the workers, which included a transformation of the physical environments of the homes, were dominated by reflections on how they had changed their perspectives on their role, and as a result had shifted their practice. They described how they were able to bring themselves – their personalities and their personal lives – into their work for the first time since social pedagogy was introduced, and had rediscovered the passion that led them to enter their professional roles in the first place. The messages were not those which would appeal strategically, as there was little in their testimony which would meet Ofsted criteria, or could be measured in statutory performance returns against the legislative framework surrounding children's services. However, my interest was stimulated, and I wanted to know whether social pedagogy worked, if so how, what had been the change in these workers and could this positively influence more widely in children's services. When I sought evidence to answer these questions, I found that there were no studies or literature which could help. This initiated my PhD proposal, which has been driven by a personal interest in answering these questions, for myself and for others in children's services with an interest in exploring the potential benefits and challenges of social pedagogy.

The criticality of my role both as a researcher, and as an employee of the organisation in a senior management within the service area being studied, is pertinent to the context of the research, and raises critical ethical considerations which are further explored in chapter three. Mitigating actions have had to be undertaken to retain the integrity and ethics of the research project to minimise researcher bias as a result of my interest in the subject (Soiferman, 2010), and my personal values and drivers, in addition to any potential influence I may have on the process due to holding a senior position in the organisation at the time of the data collection. Although I left Yarvil Council in 2015, my role as researcher, colleague and senior manager and the influences these had on the research itself are explored later in this thesis.

1.6 Rationale for the study

The development of the social pedagogy programme in Yarvil, as described in this chapter was unique, as it represented the first programme in England that explored social pedagogy in practice outside of services for children in care, an area of practice which was without any published research. Furthermore, the approaches being undertaken in Yarvil were substantially different from other contemporary social pedagogy programmes. The approach taken involved Yarvil Council workers undertaking training in social pedagogy from qualified social pedagogues, and developing local, peer-led training for colleagues, rather than employing social pedagogues to work directly in children's services settings as had been done in other programmes (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Cameron, 2013, Moore et al, 2014, Mcdermid et al, 2016). The Yarvil programme involved participants from a range of professional groups, including youth work, family support work, children's centres, foster care and educational support services, rather than the focus on children in care taken elsewhere (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Cameron, 2013, Moore et al, 2014, Mcdermid et al, 2016). Furthermore, the Yarvil approach included the development of a bespoke university module to develop knowledge of social pedagogy, which was without precedent in England. This course is still running in 2019.

As an emergent concept in England, social pedagogy has the potential to be viewed as a 'foreign fad' (Kornbeck, 2013, p4) or a potential solution to many of the challenges facing children's services in England (ADCS, 2013). The context and approach in Yarvil has multiple distinguishing aspects to inform this debate, and the approach occurs within a vacuum of evidence of and research into social pedagogy in children's services in England. It therefore presents a distinctive and exceptional opportunity to contribute to a substantial gap in the knowledge regarding social pedagogy in England. In particular, I suggest that the study provides an opportunity to contribute to debates about defining social pedagogy in England, to build knowledge about where, if anywhere, social pedagogy best fits in the children's services workforce. It also has the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to understanding the potential benefits and challenges of social pedagogy in children's services settings, to understanding any influence on workers and any change in practice in addition to the conditions necessary to realise any such benefits, as described in chapters six and seven of this thesis.

This unique contribution is the rationale for undertaking this research, using Yarvil Council as a case study. The findings from the study, as set out in chapters four to seven, contribute to expanding the body of knowledge regarding social pedagogy in England, informing policy and workforce development planning for children's services professionals, and can be used as evidence by local authority leaders across the country when planning children's services.

1.7   Research problem and questions

1.7.1   Research aims and objectives

The absence of an established evidence base for, or definition of, social pedagogy in England should not, I argue, result in the potential benefits highlighted being overlooked without further exploration. Early insights from social pedagogy in English local authority children's services (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Cameron, 2013, Moore et al, 2014, Chavaudra et al, 2015, Mcdermid et al, 2016), despite having an emphasis on children's residential care, identify that there is worth in exploring how might be deployed in practice in other children's services.

As I identified earlier in this chapter, there is a significant gap in research and published works exploring social pedagogy in English children's services, and this study responds to this gap in the knowledge by taking a focus on workers from a range of children's services, how they practice social pedagogy, how it has influenced their practice and values, and their potential to be the agents of change for the children and young people that they work with. Through this exploration of the influence of social pedagogy, the research responds to the following research questions:

a. What is the concept of social pedagogy and what are its defining characteristics?

b. What is the potential influence of social pedagogy on the values and practice of a Council's children's services workforce?

c. What are the possible challenges and benefits from applying social pedagogy as a conceptual framework for the children's services workforce?

d. Where, if anywhere, should social pedagogy fit within the current English children's services workforce?

e. What is the perceived role of social pedagogy as a change agent intervention for a Council's children's services workforce?

The methodology, as described in chapter three, is designed to most appropriately source and analyse data which can contribute to an exploration of these questions, the results of which are reported and discussed in chapters four to seven.

1.7.2   Scope and limitations

A critique of the concept of social pedagogy and its defining characteristics is undertaken in chapter two as part of a review of the literature, which was underpinned by a literature review strategy with inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure only results which align closely to the research questions were included, and that the quality of the evidence was considered. The concept and defining characteristics of social pedagogy as identified from the literature are critiqued further in chapter five, informed by the results from this research.

The remaining research questions focus specifically on local authority children's services workers, using the context of Yarvil Council for the case study. As such, the research scope includes:

- workers within children's services who are directly employed by the local authority (Yarvil Council);
- workers who have a direct role in providing services to children, as defined in statutory guidance for children's services in England (Department for Education, 2014 and 2015) to include: youth workers, children's residential workers, family workers, foster carers, social workers, practice development workers, early years practitioners and children's centre workers, including team managers in these professional groups;
- Leaders of children's services, from heads of service to corporate directors of children's services.

The research scope specifically excludes the following:

- Workers not directly employed by the local authority, including those employed by schools, academies and other formal education settings not directly delivered by the local authority;

- Workers who are not in a direct role in providing services to children, such as those in finance, human resources, and data analysts.

As such, the findings of this research, which will make a valuable and distinctive contribution to the social pedagogy knowledge in England, will also have inevitable limitations. The focus of the research using a local authority as a case study will require its limitations be understood so that transferrable knowledge can be contextualised to other settings, recognising that social pedagogy is unique to its context. The scope of the study excludes an exploration of social pedagogy on the practice and values of workers in formal education settings such as schools and academies, so will be of limited usefulness to that field (Yin, 1984). However, the research offers considerable contribution to the knowledge in the field of informal education. Furthermore, the focus on the workforce results in this research providing limited evidence of the influence of social pedagogy for children and young people who use the services which are the subject of this study, and as such this opens opportunities for future research about social pedagogy with service users.

1.8   Theoretical framework

1.8.1   Research approach

The unique context and approach to social pedagogy undertaken in Yarvil requires a theoretical framework to be applied to the research that enables perceptions and experiences to be studied and analysed. As discussed more fully as part of the methodology for the study in chapter three, the approach taken to the research is exploratory, using Yarvil Council's children's services as a case study. There is broad consensus in the literature that social pedagogy is always distinct to its social, political and economic context (Rosendal Jensen, 2009, Hämäläinen, 2012, Kornbeck, 2013). As such a methodological approach which supports the constructionist paradigm that underpins this research has been used. I considered multiple theoretical frameworks and research paradigms in designing the research approach. A case study approach is used because it will allows the breadth of experiences for a range of individuals and professional groups within Yarvil's children's services workforce to be accounted for (Yin, 2003).

1.8.2 Theoretical framework of social pedagogy

Within the case study, theories of social pedagogy which could provide the framework for the study were considered. Whilst published research on social pedagogy in England is lacking and consensus on definitions is underdeveloped, there are a range of suggested theories and models of social pedagogy within the literature (Badry and Knapp, 2003, Petrie et al, 2008, Petrie et al, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011, Hämäläinen, 2012, Mylonakou-Keke, 2015). These models of social pedagogy are explored in chapter two, and I argue that these models provide theories of social pedagogy in three distinct but interdependent categories: systemic models, disciplinary models and practice-oriented models.

I propose that practice oriented models of social pedagogy demonstrate social pedagogy theory in practice, and that this is most closely associated with my research study. As such, I critically appraise the Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011) which proposes that social pedagogy has four core aims that are closely linked: well-being and happiness, holistic learning, relationship, and empowerment in chapters two and five, and use the model to inform my own suggested model of practical social pedagogy – the Star Model in chapter five.

The review of the literature in chapter two also identifies where there is a consensus on the characteristics of social pedagogy practice, and using thematic analysis I propose ten defining characteristics of social pedagogy in the contemporary literature. These characteristics informed the content of the data collection tools used to generate new data from the Yarvil samples, as described in chapter three.

The underpinning theory of social pedagogy, as described above, informed the design of the research as described in the next section. Later in the thesis, I use the results of this study to further critique the Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011) and the characteristics of social pedagogy as proposed by Petrie (2006), and Kyriacou et al (2015), in addition to proposing new model of practical social pedagogy. This critique and new model provides a significant contribution to debates about the understanding of social pedagogy in England, and challenges current paradigms about social pedagogy in children's services settings.

1.9   Study design

1.9.1   Research approach

As will be explored in detail in chapter two, the phenomena of social pedagogy is subject to a number of models and theories which propose to describe the construction of social pedagogy, independent of the experience of the individual agents practicing it, such as the Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a). However, such theories of social pedagogy which underpin this research include subjective phenomena, such as understandings of relationships, empowerment and values. As this research project explores such phenomena associated with social pedagogy in the socio-historical context of an English local authority, specifically Yarvil Council in 2014-16, an appropriate methodological approach that enables the experiences of many individuals to be explored is required (Hammersley, 2007).

Given the criticality of the context of social pedagogy to its study (Rosendal Jensen, 2009, Hämäläinen, 2012, Kornbeck, 2013), the approach is phenomenological, and the stance taken qualitative, the research approach is non-experimental, and assumes an interpretative paradigm. A case study approach is used because, in accordance with the constructionist paradigm assumed, it will allow the diversity of experiences and contexts in which social pedagogy exists to be accounted for, and richly explored in the shaping of phenomena within the organisation (Yin, 2003) which is further argued in chapter three. As such an element of the research methodology is my self-reflection as the researcher which is explored, and the analysis of the findings of the study in chapter seven reflect these personal elements of the process.

1.9.2   Data collection and sampling strategy

The study utilises convergent methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation which are described fully in chapter three. This approach to the data provided a comprehensive analysis of the research problem, with each stage of the data collection confirming or disconfirming theories emerging from the social pedagogy literature, whilst also allowing new themes to emerge (Cresswell, 2008).

A multi-stage approach to data collection is used with a variety of approaches are used to present a more enhanced insight into the research questions, which are set out in section seven of this chapter, than using one method independently (Frels and Onwuegbuzie, 2013).

This approach also allowed emergent themes from one data collection stage to be explored, analysed and compared in greater detail. Inclusion criteria for the study participants were created, and the sample was identified purposively to include the following distinct sample groups: children's services practitioners from Yarvil; service leaders in children's services from Yarvil; and service leaders from children's services in other local authorities.

Data gathered at stage 1, which included the children's services practitioner sample, was by use of a survey to provide a standardised tool for data collection, allowing larger numbers to participate by self-completion. Surveys were self-completed, rather than by the interviewer, to reduce interviewer bias and risk of misinterpretation and to allow a larger sample to be collected. Qualitative data was gathered from the use of open questions, to allow respondents to use their own words, as consistent with the exploratory approach of the research (Cohen et al, 2007). Data from questionnaires was thematically analysed, taking grounded theory principles whilst acknowledging my role as a researcher from within the organisation being studied. This enabled comparison between different professional groups, and exploration of the influence of the types of engagement with social pedagogy experienced by different participants, which is described in chapter four. It also provided scope for respondents to consider a broad range of themes from the literature review, from which emergent ideas were explored in later data collection stages.

At stage 2, focus groups allowed group interactions by those from similar professional groups from the children's services practitioner sample, and also from the Yarvil children's service leaders' sample, based on key themes emerging from stage 1 questionnaires, to comment on those findings and share personal experiences (Powell et al, 1996). The focus group method at stage 2 was used to explore participants' experiences, attitudes, and feelings within the distinctive context of the study, in a way in which would not be feasible using other methods, such as interviews or observation. The focus groups both explored existing themes and generated new foci for further study, and generated data which were subject to a thematic analysis, as described in chapter three.

Semi-structured interviews were held at stage 3 of the data collection, with individuals from each of the sample groups. These allowed me to probe, discuss and clarify complex or challenging themes emerging from the previous data (Leech, 2002). This multi-stage approach to data collection and analysis allowed the depth of understandings revealed in the results of this study, which are detailed in chapters four to seven and describe the

experiences, influences, values, perspectives and frustrations of Yarvil practitioners with regard to social pedagogy.

1.9.3   Data analysis

As described in chapter three, the qualitative data gathered at each data collection stage was analysed thematically, iteratively and inductively to extract emergent ideas and theories (Ryen, 2002). The full results are explained in chapter four, with the details of the findings and contribution to the social pedagogy knowledge established linked to the research questions detailed in this chapter, including the influence of social pedagogy on practitioners' practice and values, the potential benefits and challenges of applying social pedagogy as a conceptual framework for children's services settings, and the potential fit in the children's services workforce. Social pedagogy's potential as a change agent, which I define as that which directly or indirectly influences change in the way the organisation is managed, or its functions conducted, is also explored. The conclusions across all research questions are described in chapter eight.

1.9.4   Ethics

Chapter three explores in detail the ethical considerations and actions that were undertaken in the course of this study. Of particular focus for this research project were ethical considerations of consent, protection of participants, confidentiality and the role of the researcher as an employee of the organisation which is the subject of the study, and a senior manager of the participants included in some of the sample groups. The chapter also explains the mitigating actions I took to preserve the ethics of the study, including methods of data collection and storage to preserve confidentiality, study design to reduce researcher bias, and choice of locations to protect participants.

1.10 Definition of terms

The term social pedagogy is used in this research to refer to a way of working with children and young people which incorporates both the social and educational, and which applies the theoretical framework described previously in this chapter. In the literature review, where the term 'social pedagogy' is used explicitly in the literature, the term will also be used.

However, both in the historical foundations and in many contemporary fields of thought, there may be related ideas or concepts that appear consistent with contemporary understandings of social pedagogy, where the term 'social pedagogy' is not used. In these cases, the ideas or concepts are described as social pedagogical.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to social pedagogy and its main concepts, the context for social pedagogy in England, within English children's services, and within the local authority services which are the focus of this study. The rationale for this research was then defined within the context of the study, and the contribution to social pedagogy knowledge has been illustrated. The chapter has defined the research problem and questions to be pursued which are explored and defined in further details over the chapters that follow.

Chapter two, the Literature Review, establishes the theoretical framework for this research, with the theoretical roots of social pedagogy explained and the literature review strategy defined. Theories and models of social pedagogy, and its suggested characteristics, along with studies of social pedagogy in England are considered and critiqued.

Chapter three, the methodology, sets out the research approach and study design. This chapter describes the research paradigms, methods and approaches that are used across multiple stages of data collection, and analyses the ethical considerations.

Chapter four presents the results of the data collection and the findings from the questionnaire and thematic analysis undertaken.

Chapter five presents analysis and discussion relating to the defining characteristics of social pedagogy, and its influence on the practice values of the children's services workforce in England, with the dominant themes identified. The findings are discussed, approaches used critiqued and the results contextualised in the established literature, through critical appraisal of emergent themes and established models of social pedagogy.

Chapter six explores the possible challenges and benefits from applying social pedagogy as a conceptual framework for the children's services workforce, building on the findings from the literature review and the results from the Yarvil study.

Chapter seven explores the potential fit of social pedagogy as a conceptual framework within the range of professional groups which constitute the children's services workforce, building on the findings from the literature review and the results from the Yarvil study. The role of a social pedagogue may is defined within the children's services context in England, and the conditions which are necessary for social pedagogy to deliver the optimum benefits in English children's services are suggested.

Chapter eight, the conclusion, reflects on the main arguments and research questions of this study. It identifies the strengths of the critical argument of this and draws together the evidence to support this hypothesis. The chapter also states the limitations of the research, and identifies future potential lines of enquiry for further research emerging from this study.

2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review chapter contextualises the introduction to social pedagogy and my research in chapter one within the contemporary social pedagogy literature and generates new insights, including of social pedagogy's defining characteristics through a thematic review of the literature to inform the methods used in my research, as described in chapter three, and as a point of critical reflection for the findings of my study as I describe in chapters four to eight. The objective of this literature review is to give a context to the theory on the subject areas relevant to this research study in order to establish the existing knowledge base regarding social pedagogy in England, in particular, in children's services settings. It seeks to establish what theories or models of social pedagogy exist, what methodological approaches have been applied, and what the influence, benefits and challenges of social pedagogy in children's services might be.

This literature review chapter presents a critical review of the contemporary knowledge base for social pedagogy in English children's services, as related to the aim of the research, to explore the influence of social pedagogy using a Council's children's services workforce as a case study, and the research questions. The literature review identifies, explores, and synthesises existing literature related to social pedagogy as a change agent for children's services workers in England. It takes a conceptual approach to exploring the literature, opening with an exploration of social pedagogy's underpinning historical theories and concepts, and the progression and development of related thinking over time. This is followed by a critical examination of the concept of social pedagogy in English children's services settings within the broader social pedagogic literature.

The chapter identifies the gaps in knowledge, which critically includes the lack of an agreed definition of social pedagogy, and the paucity of studies into the practice of social pedagogy in England from which to draw conclusions about its application in children's services. It places the research problem this study seeks to address in the context of contemporary thought on the subject, further demonstrating the need for the insights this research provides.

This review of the literature also locates and critiques arguments and debates regarding the practice of social pedagogy in children's services in England. The significance of the research problem for both practice in children's services settings, and for pedagogical academia is appraised, and the rationale for this research set out. I then suggest ten characteristics of social pedagogy, based on the prevalent themes within the literature, which I use to critique the dominant model of social pedagogy in practice – the Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a) – and identify critical areas of debate within contemporary social pedagogy thinking. Methodological insights identified from included papers are also highlighted to inform the approach taken in this study.

2.1.1 The language of social pedagogy

The term social pedagogy, due to the myriad of views within the literature, is without a unified definition (Kornbeck, 2009, Cameron et al, 2011, Eichsteller et al, 2011, Hämäläinen, 2012 and 2013, Storo 2012 and 2013, Sandermann et al, 2014). Where the term 'social pedagogy' is used explicitly in the literature, the term will also be used in this review. However, both in the historical foundations and in many contemporary fields of thought, there may be related ideas or concepts that appear consistent with contemporary understandings of social pedagogy, where the term 'social pedagogy' is not used. In these cases, the ideas or concepts will be described as social pedagogical. This includes the educational philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762a and 1762b), Pestalozzi (1894) and John Dewey (1916).

2.2 How the literature review was conducted

The concept of a connection between the social and the educational in addressing social problems pre-dates the term 'social pedagogy'. As identified by Hämäläinen (2013), 'the idea is older than the term' (p2). Such ideas can be sourced from roots in Ancient Greece and through generations and millennia of educational thinkers, as described in chapter one. Analysis of the themes emerging from the works of social pedagogy's foundational thinkers informed not only much of the contemporary consideration of social pedagogy in England and elsewhere, but also the research questions posed by this study and the scope of the review of contemporary social pedagogy literature.

Using emergent themes from the foundational thinkers, such as Plato (428 – 348BC), Rousseau (1762a), Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827), Dewey (1916), Fröbel (1782-1852), Diesterwag

(1790-1866) and Natorp (1854-1924) a search of the contemporary social pedagogy literature followed, focusing on the literature most closely associated with the aims and objectives of this research. The review of the literature, and its inclusion and exclusion criteria, were informed by the following questions:

- From the previous literature, what central concepts, theories, definitions and defining characteristics of social pedagogy with children exist, and how are these applied in practice?
- To what extent do studies of social pedagogy in children's services settings substantiate these ideas, and for which parts of the children's workforce?
- What research methods have been used to explore the phenomenon of social pedagogy, and what were the flaws and benefits of such methods?

In response to the guiding objectives and questions, criteria for inclusion and exclusion of papers were developed (see table 2a).

Table 2a: Literature Review Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria for Inclusion	Criteria for Exclusion

A. Published in 2001 or later;
 	
B. Included a focus on children's services settings;
 	
C. Included at least one of the following:
 	
    i.   Theories or models of social pedagogy
    ii. Original thought or reflection on the characteristics of social pedagogy
    iii. Exploration of how social pedagogy may be applied in practice in children's services
    iv. A study of social pedagogy practice in England
	D. Explorations or studies of social pedagogy in formal education settings.

These criteria have been selected to ensure that included documents are of the highest relevance to the aim and objectives of this research study. As social pedagogy was first considered for application in English settings in 2001 (Social Education Trust, 2001), including papers from this date ensure a contemporaneous focus. The search excludes documents with a focus other than on children's services settings, to ensure relevance, and additionally, excludes papers with a focus on formal education settings. This is because the intended sample of this study does not include formal education staff, and due to a large number of papers focusing on schools which could distort the outcomes of the literature review with less relevant insights than those focusing on other children's services settings. However, in building the context and knowledge to underpin this research project, I read many more papers and books about social pedagogy than are included in this literature review, the key points and arguments from which I recorded to shape my thinking and focus the research questions.

The search of the literature was undertaken using the following databases:

- ASSIA
- British Education Index
- Library Plus (University of Derby) which draws from the above databases

A search of references in identified papers was also undertaken, alongside use of the International Journal of Social Pedagogy as a peer-reviewed specialist journal not included within the identified databases. The search terms used were 'social pedagogy' in all text of the document, and 'social learning' in the title or abstract of the document. Using the methods and criteria described, 44 papers were identified and reviewed to inform the methodology, research questions and discussion (see appendix A). These are explored and analysed according to the following criteria in table 2a.

2.3 Models of social pedagogy in the Literature

This section synthesises, analyses and critiques the central contemporary models of social pedagogy. The literature reveals that models of social pedagogy are multiple and diverse, hence the requirement for a synthesis. However, my analysis suggests that models of social pedagogy in documents meeting the inclusion criteria can be characterised in three distinct but interdependent categories:

- Systemic models – models which demonstrate social pedagogy within a system, society and culture;

- Disciplinary models – models which demonstrate social pedagogy as an academic field of thought, research and education;

- Practice oriented model – models which demonstrate social pedagogy theory in practice.

These categories are explored, analysed and critiqued in the following sections, and key ambiguities noted.

2.3.1   Systemic models of social pedagogy

Systemic models explore social pedagogy within a system, society and culture. Two systemic models of social pedagogy were identified (Badry and Knapp, 2003 (fig. 2a), and Petrie et al, 2008 (fig. 2b) which propose a social constructionist stance, in which social pedagogy is both a product of and contributor to the context in which it is established. In each, a socio-political aspect of the educational focus of social pedagogy, and its link to practice is identified. The models both identify the distinction between the policy framework and practice, whilst identifying the interdependency of each. This argument for the link between education and achieving societal ambitions is recurrent in the literature, and is explored in later sections of this chapter.

Fig. 2a Model of Systemic Social Pedagogy by Badry and Knapp (2003)
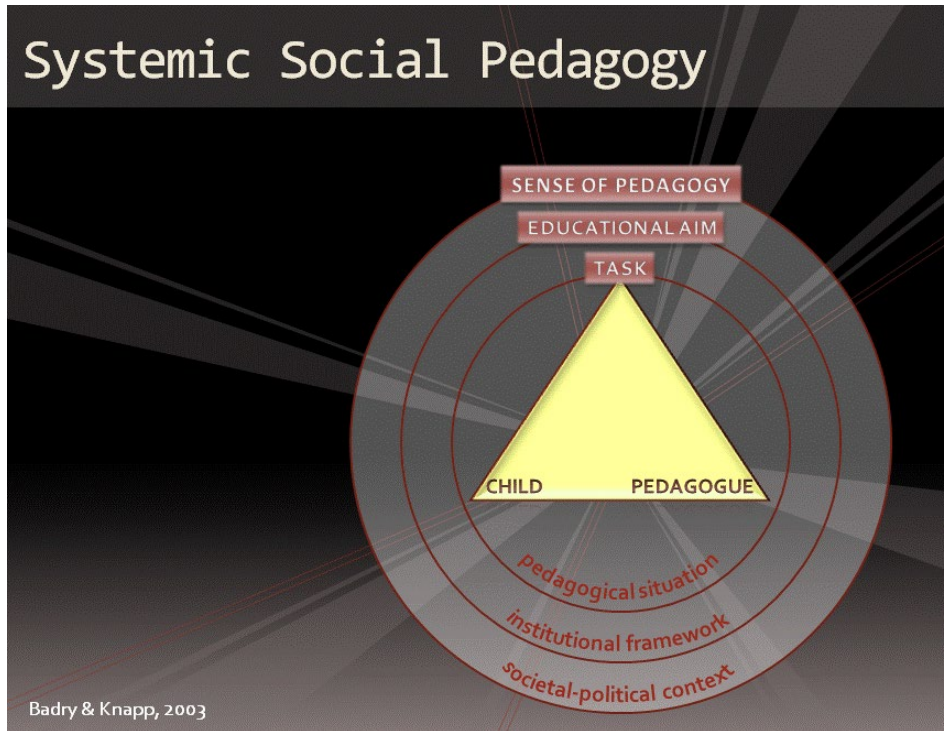
Fig 2b Model of social pedagogy by Petrie et al (2008)
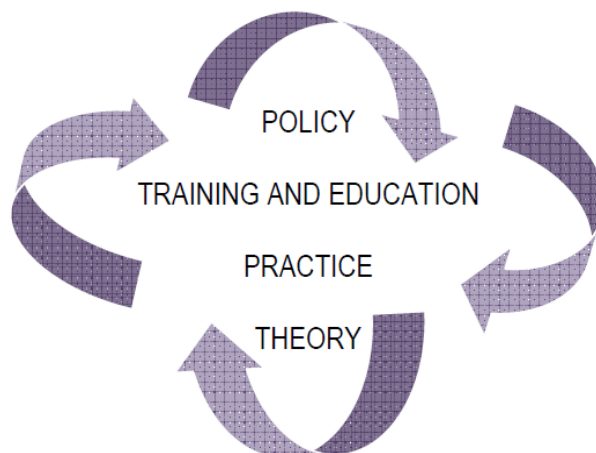
The link between policy and practice identified in the models by Badry and Knapp (2003), and Petrie et al, (2008) is also argued by many who consider that social pedagogy is unique to its socio-political context (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Hämäläinen, 2012, Smith, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Lukešová et al, 2014, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016) as described later in this chapter. Such context specific understandings of children, and the system of social welfare, with regard to social pedagogy in English children's services settings, is as yet unexplored in practice and provides a line of enquiry in the data collection methods described in chapter three.

Badry and Knapp (2003) in their systemic model suggest that social pedagogy is a perspective conducted on behalf of society by a pedagogue. The nature of what is meant by a pedagogue is undefined by the model, and is an ambiguity in their argument which is also present in wider debates about the nature of social pedagogy as described later in this chapter, and further discussed in chapters five to seven. This ambiguity is also evident in the systemic model of social pedagogy by Petrie et al (2008), in which no description of practice, and by whom, is provided and as such the model is of limited value to this practice-oriented research study.

Furthermore, the systemic models imply a requirement for social pedagogic policy framework to be in existence. The model by Badry and Knapp (2003) requires a societal-political context that includes a sense of social pedagogy, and Petrie's model suggests that social pedagogy requires policy to reflect the values of social pedagogy. Neither such systemic context as required by the two models is in existence for children's services in England, as described later in this chapter. The models are thus limited in their usefulness due to the emergent nature of social pedagogy in English children's services.

2.3.2 Disciplinary models of social pedagogy

Disciplinary models identify social pedagogy as an academic field of thought, research and education. The model by Hämäläinen (2012) (fig. 2c) suggests that social pedagogy is an academic discipline underpinning practice, delivered by way of a specific social, educational, and occupational sub-system of the modern society, concerning both the educational and social.

Fig 2c: Model of Social Pedagogy as a functional system of science, education and practice by Hämäläinen (2012, p10)

Science

Academic
Discipline

Branch of
Research

Social Pedagogy

Education

Professional
activity

Practice
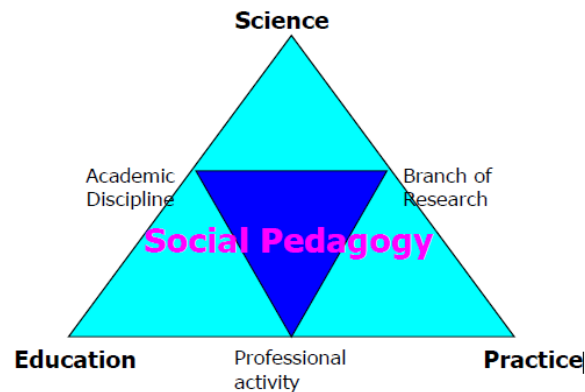
Concurring with the model by Hämäläinen (2010) social pedagogy in the literature is referred to by others as an academic discipline (Hämäläinen, 2012, Storø, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Mylonakou-Keke, 2015). However, opinions of the nature and construct of the discipline are divergent. Rosendal Jensen (2013) argues that social pedagogy can be considered an 'interdisciplinary science…an integration of many basic sciences' (p2). The interdisciplinary nature of social pedagogy is further described as a combination of social, reality and action sciences, because of its simultaneous concern with social conditions, and its orientation towards change and influence (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011, Rosendal Jensen, 2013).

However, this model does not define the type of education, practice and research and theory building, discipline and professional field leaving much about the model ambiguous – a recurring characteristic of social pedagogy which is analysed and explored in later chapters based on the findings from this research project. Also, the extent to which social pedagogy is established as an academic discipline in England is limited (Cameron, 2013, Hatton, 2013), and as such, I suggest that this model would be of limited relevance to the influence on children's services workers' values and practice. However, the extent to which this is supported in an English children's services setting such as Yarvil Council, the subject of this case study, will be explored, and is discussed in chapter five.

2.3.3 Practice-oriented models of social pedagogy

The practice oriented models demonstrate social pedagogy theory in practice. A model by Rothuizen and Harbo (2017) suggests that social pedagogy is about bonding and bridging between the individual and society, using the dynamics of the task between personal values and social integration for the learner. The Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff 2011) argues that social pedagogy has four core aims that are closely linked: well-being and happiness, holistic learning, relationship, and empowerment. Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011) assert that practice must always be underpinned by theory, thus noting the link to models of social pedagogy as a discipline.

The Diamond Model is critiqued in later in this chapter where I argue that the model does not accurately reflect the range of characteristics of social pedagogy evident in the literature. This model of social pedagogy also presents a view of an individual pedagogy, omitting the society-oriented values expressed by the other models (Badry and Knapp, 2003, Petrie, 2008, Hämäläinen, 2012). Rothuizen's 'task of the pedagogue' model (2017) is restricted in its argument to the relational and value based aspects of an intervention, rather than for social pedagogy in practice more broadly, and as such has limited relevance for this study's research questions. However, the Diamond Model in figure 2d is most closely associated with the research questions for this study and was used to inform the lines of enquiry within the research methodology in chapter three, and conclusions regarding the research questions in chapter eight. The findings of the research project will be used to critique this model, and in doing so will contribute to the knowledge of social pedagogy in English children's services settings.

Fig 2d Diamond Model of Social Pedagogy by Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011, in Cameron and Moss, 2011)

2.4   Characteristics of Social Pedagogy in the Literature

The lack of an agreed definition of social pedagogy in the English language literature and the challenges this presents are described in chapter one of this research study, and this informed an objective of this study as exploring what social pedagogy is, and defining its characteristics. Despite this lack of a consensus regarding definition, there exists much in the contemporary social pedagogy literature which describes the characteristics of social pedagogy. As such, a thematic analysis of papers included within the literature which include original thought or reflection on the characteristics of social pedagogy was undertaken (see appendix B). Five of the included papers proposed a set of the key characteristics of social pedagogy by the authors (Petrie et al. 2008, Smith, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Mylonakou-Keke, 2015). The characteristics suggested in each of the five papers were analysed for common themes and consensus, and then analysed against characteristics suggested by authors of the other papers which met the inclusion criteria (appendix B).

This analysis identified ten dominant characteristics of social pedagogy upon which there is a broad consensus in the social pedagogy literature, as follows:

- Use of education in its broadest sense to influence social change;
- A values based, way of thinking, rather than a defined set of methods or tools;

- Context specificity – for both the individual and the broader socio-political context in which social pedagogy is practiced;

- A holistic focus on the needs of the individual;

- A focus on the relationship between the pedagogue and the individual as critical to achieving change for the individual;

- A focus on activity and experience using creativity;

- Personal development and empowerment of the individual;

- Improvement of participation in, and for the betterment of, the society in which the individual lives;

- A focus on 'lifespace', and practice within normal discourse and everyday settings;

- Action based on theory.

The themes emerging from the analysis and their sources are detailed in appendix B, and are explored further in the following sections. For the purpose of data collection, the dominant characteristics identified from the literature informed the lines of enquiry in initial questionnaires, to determine the extent to which these characteristics are consistent with those identified in practice in children's settings, which is analysed in chapter five. Each of the characteristics identified above is described in the following section, to demonstrate its importance for further exploration with the Yarvil sample to inform the research questions relating to defining social pedagogy and its characteristics.

2.4.1 Education and learning in widest sense with the aim of social change

Education and learning in its widest sense with the aim of social change was jointly the most prevalent proposed characteristic of social pedagogy from the included papers in category B (papers including original thought or reflection on the characteristics of social pedagogy) (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Lorenz, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Hämäläinen, 2012, Storø, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Mylonakou-Keke, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016, Rothuizen et al, 2017).

Some papers describe the breadth of educational perspective taken by social pedagogy across learning, care and personal and social development (Hämäläinen, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015), with an emphasis on influence through social and community-based education, distinct from formal education and schooling (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Lorenz, 2008,

Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Hämäläinen, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013). Rosendal Jensen (2013) describes social pedagogy as a pedagogy which responds to social disintegration through an approach that 'integrates intellectual, moral and practical education' (p5). The educational aims of social pedagogy are summarised by Hämäläinen (2012) as being to promote citizenship, democracy, social inclusion and development, participation, communicative culture and wellbeing. This proposed characteristic was explored with the Yarvil participants (see appendix C, question B2.5), and is discussed in chapters five to seven in the context of the findings from the study.

2.4.2 A values-based way of thinking, rather than a defined set of methods or tools

Social pedagogy as values based, way of thinking, rather than a defined set of methods or tools was also jointly the most prevalent proposed characteristic of social pedagogy from the included papers in category B, with several authors proposing it as an approach underpinned by values and ethics (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Storø, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2012, Smith, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016, Rothuizen et al, 2017).

The description by Hämäläinen (2012) of social pedagogy as 'not a toolbox of pedagogical methods…. It is rather, a way of thinking in which social and educational considerations are united' (p12) is often cited in more recent social pedagogy literature (Hämäläinen, 2012). The notion that social pedagogy is about ethics and values, rather than particular methods is subject to a high degree of consensus (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Storø 2013, Kyriacou, 2015). Storø (2013) describes the need for social pedagogy to be practice which is action underpinned by values, and channelled through theory (which is a further theme explored later) – there should be a values based rationale for actions taken. Some frequently cited values include those of equality within relationships (Petrie et al, 2008, Smith, 2012, Kyriacou, 2015), and tackling social injustice or exclusion (Smith, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Morgan, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Storø 2013, Kyriacou, 2015) which could explain why social pedagogy is more prevalent in more equal societies (Cameron et al 2007). This proposed characteristic was explored with the Yarvil participants (see appendix C, question B2, and B2.6), and was strongly supported as a characteristic of social pedagogy as described in chapter four.

2.4.3 Context Specificity

The importance of context specificity – for both the individual and the broader socio-political context in which social pedagogy is practiced – was also a commonly proposed characteristic of social pedagogy in the included papers (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Hämäläinen, 2012, Smith, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Lukešová et al, 2014, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016, Rothuizen et al, 2017).

That social pedagogy takes place within a social, political and cultural context is argued as a characteristic by a number of authors of included papers (Eichsteller and Holtoff , 2011a and 2011b, Smith, 2012, Lukešová et al, 2014, Kyriacou, 2015, The critical influence of context of the cultural values in which social pedagogy is practiced is highlighted by Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011a), who argue that cultural concepts of children, societal notions about the relationship between individual and society, and the status of the welfare state in any context are significant. The context of social pedagogy within different traditions of educational thought is also highlighted by Hämäläinen (2012), and Rothuizen et al (2017) who note that social pedagogy is linked to academic and political movements, and the interdependency of social inclusion and community development with individual rights.

The context for the individual is also emphasised (Smith, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Lukešová et al, 2014, Kyriacou et al, 2016), and the need for social pedagogy to take account of the child's family, social networks, peers and organisational influences. Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011b) and Smith (2012) suggest that this be termed lifeworld or 'lifeworld orientation' (Smith, 2012, p51). As described in chapters five and six, this concept resonated with Yarvil practitioners, and contributed to my findings relating to social pedagogy's fit within the children's services workforce as I detail in chapter seven.

2.4.4 A holistic focus on the needs of the individual

Social pedagogy's focus on the individual and holistic needs of the child was also a proposed characteristic of social pedagogy in included papers in category B (Petrie et al, 2008, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Morgan, 2013, Lukešová et al, 2014, Kyriacou, 2015, Mylanou-keke, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016).

There is frequent reflection in the social pedagogy literature on the feature of social pedagogy as understanding the human holistically as part of the child's overall development (Petrie et al, 2008, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015). Some authors suggest that this holistic approach draws on Pestalozzi's view of the whole being as described earlier in this chapter, which includes three elements – the head, the heart and the hands (Petrie et al, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Smith, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013). Smith (2012) describes that the use of head, heart and hands in practice 'demands that practitioners utilise a combination of intellectual, practical and emotional qualities' (p50). This proposed characteristic was explored with the Yarvil participants (see appendix C, question B3.3), as discussed in chapters five to seven, where it is demonstrated that practitioners found that such models, linked to theory, were a benefit of social pedagogy in their practice.

2.4.5 A focus on the relationship between the pedagogue and individual as critical to achieving change for the individual

Included papers also proposed that a focus on the relationship between the pedagogue and the individual as critical to achieving change for the individual was a characteristic of social pedagogy (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Smith, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016, Rothuizen et al, 2017). The included papers emphasise the importance of both the pedagogue and the child having a strong sense of the personal self within the pedagogical relationship, which should be collaborative (Petrie et al, 2008, Smith, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Rothuizen et al, 2017). This proposed characteristic was explored with the Yarvil participants (see appendix C, question B2.2) and was a dominant theme for the participants, as discussed in later chapters.

2.4.6 A focus on activity and experience using creativity

Use of activities and creativity as a learning tool is proposed as a characteristic of social pedagogy in several included (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Petrie et al, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Storø, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rothuizen et al, 2017).

Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011a and 2011b) suggest that positive activities are critical to the practice of social pedagogy, with Petrie et al (2008) and Storø (2012) proposing that pedagogues are required to be both practical and creative. The practical characteristic of social pedagogy is proposed as the 'hands' element of the 'head, heart and hands' concept of social pedagogy, which requires all three elements to be present (Petrie et al, 2008, Smith, 2012, Rothuizen et al, 2017) – the other elements being considered later in the chapter. that the practical characteristic of social pedagogy be encapsulated in the concept of the 'Common third' (p51) - This proposed characteristic was explored with the Yarvil participants (see appendix C, question B2.4), with a change in the approach to practice using such theories featuring frequently in responses as detailed in chapters five and six.

2.4.7   Development of self-efficacy and empowerment

Many of the included papers argue that the personal development and empowerment of individuals is a characteristic of social pedagogy (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Lorenz, 2008, Cameron et al, 2011, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Hämäläinen, 2012, Storø, 2012, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016, Rothuizen et al, 2017). Central to many of the arguments for personal development and empowerment of the child as a characteristic of social pedagogy is the suggestion that this should enhance their engagement with and participation in society and their surroundings (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016). Hämäläinen (2012) describe an emphasis on social pedagogy developing a sense of citizenship in individuals. The conclusion, some argue, should be an enhanced sense that the child can influence their own life conditions (Hämäläinen, 2012, Kyriacou, 2015). This proposed characteristic was explored with the Yarvil participants (see appendix C, question B3.3 and B3.8), and identified that empowerment of the child was a potential benefit of social pedagogy, as discussed in chapters five to seven, where I identify that Yarvil practitioners considered both the empowerment of the young person and of themselves as an influence of social pedagogy.

2.4.8   Improvement of participation in, and for the betterment of, the society in which the individual lives

A focus on the links and benefits to society is also proposed as a characteristic of social pedagogy in the contemporary literature (Lorenz, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a,

Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Hämäläinen, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Rothuizen et al, 2017). Petrie et al (2008) emphasise the importance of the community have a responsibility in bringing up of children, and building links to the child's associative life in the society they live. This is consistent with the argument of Kyriacou (2015) that 'social pedagogy is concerned with the improvement of society by strengthening the pupil's sense of belonging to the community' (p430). Others also emphasise the educational role of social pedagogy in strengthening person-society relations (Lorenz, 2008, Hämäläinen, 2003 and 2013, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Berridge, 2013). This proposed characteristic was explored with the Yarvil participants (see appendix C, question B2.7), with practitioners identifying many examples of this within the Yarvil context, which are described in practitioner responses in chapter five.

2.4.9 A focus on 'lifespace', and practice within normal discourse and everyday settings

Many included papers argued that focus on 'lifespace', and practice within normal discourse and everyday settings is a characteristic of social pedagogy (Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016). The concept of 'lifespace' (Petrie et al, 2008, Smith, 2012, Morgan, 2013), is described by Smith (2012) as relationships emerging in course of everyday encounters, where the opportunities provided within the child's own context are optimised to promote social inclusion, growth and learning (p51). Lifespace in social pedagogy is underpinned by a commitment to equal relationships, where the child and the practitioner share power and coexist together rather than in separate hierarchical domains (Petrie et al, 2008). This proposed characteristic was explored with the Yarvil participants (see appendix C, question B2.6 and B3.1), and is discussed in chapters five to seven, based on the findings from the study, and these results contributed significantly to the arguments I make relating to the potential fit of social pedagogy within the children's services workforce in chapter seven.

2.4.10 Action based on theory

Social pedagogy characterised by action based on theory is argued as critical to the concept in included papers (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Cameron et al, 2011, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Mylanou-Keke, 2015, Rothuizen et al,

2017). Rothuizen et al (2017) describe this as the 'applied professionalism of the practitioner' (p7). The role of action based on theory, and underpinned by values in social pedagogy is described by Storø (2012) as the trained professional having an obligation to always consult theory to find the best possible action, and presented as set out in figure 2e.

Fig. 2e The relationship between values and action (Storø, 2012, p24)

```
┌──────────────┐
│   Values     │
└──────────────┘
        │
┌──────────────┐
│   Theory     │
│              │
│   Methods    │
└──────────────┘
        │
┌──────────────┐
│   Action     │
└──────────────┘
```
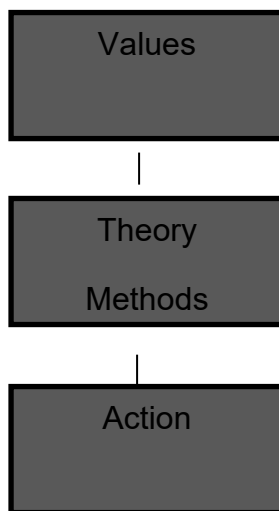
Eichstellar and Holtoff (2011b) argue that social pedagogy is characterised by a reflexive relationship between theory and practice as both are developed through the other. This argument is also made by Mylanou-Keke (2015) who describes the 'synergy of theory and practice that is created through their continuous interaction' (p5). This proposed characteristic was explored with the Yarvil participants (see appendix C, question B2.1), with the results revealing an important relationship between theory and practice for Yarvil practitioners, as described in later chapters.

2.4.11 Other, less prevalent themes

Also in the literature, other less prevalent themes were identified, including the idea that social pedagogy should have a focus on the rights of the child (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Petrie et al, 2008, Cameron et al, 2011, Smith, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Rothuizen et al, 2017), and a focus on upbringing of children (Smith 2012, Storø, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013). These less prevalent themes were not the focus of a specific question within the initial questionnaire with the Yarvil sample.

The findings from the literature review regarding the characteristics of social pedagogy expose many themes, but also many apparent debates in contemporary social pedagogy thinking, which are explored and analysed later in this chapter, used to inform the content of the data collection tools used as described in chapter three, and appraised alongside the results of this study in chapter four.

2.5   The Practice of Social Pedagogy in the Literature

Of the papers meeting the inclusion criteria (which for this category excluded those from a peer-reviewed research study as there were too few studies to extract themes based on prevalence, and those papers with a focus on formal education settings), 25 included an exploration of social pedagogy in practice, including descriptions of social pedagogy in practice, consideration which types of workers might practice social pedagogy, and the challenges and benefits of social pedagogy in practice. The following sections detail the dominant themes emerging from a thematic of the papers as follows: analysis of which types of workers might practise social pedagogy; descriptions of the practice of social pedagogy; and analysis of the benefits and challenges of social pedagogy in practise.   These themes were explored in the data collection with Yarvil samples, and the extent to which the themes identified in the literature were reflected in children's services settings appraised, to informed new knowledge about the practice of social pedagogy. The emergent findings contributed to the new model of practical social pedagogy – the Star Model – which I suggest in chapter five, as a framework for use in children's services settings.

2.5.1   The practise of social pedagogy by different professional groups in the children's services workforce

2.5.1.1 Social pedagogy as a multi-professional approach

The most prevalent theme from the included papers relating to which professional groups might practise social pedagogy was the argument that social pedagogy might offer a unifying approach and common language across professional groups (Petrie, 2006, Petrie, 2007, Petrie et al, 2008, Kyriacou et al, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, regional Youth work Unit, 2010, Hämäläinen, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Morgan, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Chavaudra et al,

2014, Slovenko et al, 2016). Social pedagogy promotes shared values, theories and skills across different fields (Petrie, 2006, Petrie et al, 2008, Kyriacou et al, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Slovenko et al, 2015). It is also an overarching professional and conceptual framework (Petrie, 2007, Morgan, 2013, Chavaudra et al, 2014, Slovenko et al, 2015).   An evaluation of a social pedagogy programme in Scotland identified that the development of a common language across professional groups was a positive influence of its introduction, particularly citing examples such as a shared understanding of concepts such as *head, heart and hands*, and *the common third* (Vrouwenfelder, 2013) as contributing to better multi-agency care planning. This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore potential fit of social pedagogy in the children's services workforce, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C, question B4.7). These themes were also explored in detail with the participants at all data collection stages, with some new and valuable insights for Yarvil practitioners generated, as described in chapters four to seven.

2.5.1.2 The role of 'social pedagogue'

Some suggest it is possible to create a workforce of 'social pedagogy practitioners' (Chavaudra et al, 2014) rather than social pedagogues, where most practitioners across mixed professional groups have some training and insight into social pedagogy theory and practice. However, others propose a need for a distinct professional role of social pedagogue underpinned by exclusive educational training for those wishing to assume the title (Lorenz, 2008, Kyriacou et al, 2009). For some, the role of social pedagogue as a distinct professional group does not alleviate a potential for social pedagogy to assume a greater role across all professional groups (Hämäläinen, 2003, Petrie et al, 2008, Kyriacou et al, 2009). Petrie et al (2008) suggest that a social pedagogue can work alongside other professionals, with other professional groups such as those from childcare, educational and welfare services benefiting from an understanding of social pedagogic principles. Others (Petrie, 2006, Hämäläinen, 2013) argue that it can be appropriate for a defined academic discipline of social pedagogy to apply across different professional groups, or to work in a range of different roles rather than a role defined by a protected title, suggesting that this would be a narrowing of the concept of social pedagogy. It is also suggested that such a broad application of social pedagogy can 'blur the lines between specialisms' (regional Youth Work Unit, 2010, p9). The issue of which types of professional can practice social pedagogy remains open to debate, and this theme also informed the research objective seeking to explore potential fit of social pedagogy

in the children's services workforce, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C). It is explored further in section 2.8, and discussed in relation to findings of this research where I argue where social pedagogy most appropriately fits within the children's services workforce in England, based on the Yarvil findings.

2.5.1.3 Social pedagogy and services for children in care

Included papers explored social pedagogy within residential children's care, and in foster care. The most prevalent profession considered with regard to social pedagogy in the included papers was children's residential care (Petrie et al, 2008, Milligan, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Kornbeck, 2013, Morgan, 2013), with Coussée et al (2010), Cameron (2013) and Berridge et al (2011) and Morgan (2013) suggesting that some of the characteristics of social pedagogy, such as the lifespace concept (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012) and building of relationships are most possible in settings where the professional and the child live together. Berridge et al (2011) describe social pedagogy as providing coherence and meaning to residential life (p256), but identified particular challenges for social pedagogy in England. These included limited opportunity to exploit the power of the group, as English children's residential care is designed to minimise the contaminating effects of the group. Others suggest that that social pedagogy could make a difference for the children's residential workforce if they were provided with more targeted training (Kornbeck, 2013), and that those trained as social pedagogues would be suitably qualified to under the role of a residential care worker (Petrie et al, 2008). For workers in residential settings in a Scottish evaluation, social pedagogy built on a complemented previous training (Milligan, 2009).

Social pedagogy and foster care was only explored in two of the included papers (Petrie, 2006, and Moore et al, 2013), along with the study by McDermid et al (2016) with all suggesting that social pedagogy could encourage foster carers to work more holistically with children by providing the carers with enhanced skills and knowledge. Petrie (2006) however cautions that when asked, foster care professionals thought it had a place in terms of its general principles, rather than as a required qualification for fostering children. Furthermore, McDermid et al (2016) whilst observing some positive impacts on practice and confidence of foster carers, the overall influence of social pedagogy was limited, as discussed later in this chapter.

These themes informed the research objective seeking to explore potential fit of social pedagogy in the children's services workforce, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C). The extent to which the findings from literature are substantiated by the results from Yarvil is detailed in chapter seven.

2.5.1.4 Social pedagogy and youth and family support work

There were comparisons and analyses of the fit of social pedagogy within youth and family support services within the included papers, mainly with regard to the professions of youth work and social work. Many identify a strong commonality of ideas and approach between traditions of social pedagogy and youth work (Coussée et al, 2010, Kornbeck, 2013, Slovenko et al, 2016) and youth mentoring (Morgan, 2013), with youth work identified as having a strong tradition in England and the wider United Kingdom (Kornbeck, 2013). Youth work is argued as having the same emphasis on informal education, holistic approaches and pedagogical relationships as social pedagogy (Coussée et al, 2010). However, Slovenko et al (2016) argue that youth work in England has moved away from informal education's principles of fairness and respect and that social pedagogy could offer an ethical alternative. Social pedagogy as an appropriate occupational system for youth work was suggested by Hämäläinen (2012).

The relationship between social pedagogy and social work was explored by Hämäläinen (2013), who argues that there are multiple perspectives, from social pedagogy being synonymous with social work, to being a particular paradigm of social work practice, to being an overlapping term in different professional fields including social work. Hämäläinen (2013) argues that this is so because of the country and context-specific nature of social pedagogy and its practise, as explored later in this chapter.

Lorenz (2008) identifies the distinctions between social pedagogy and social work, identifying the primary difference as social pedagogy taking an approach that is not 'deficit-oriented' (p636), and thus the prescription placed on training of social workers in England restricting the potential for its application in this context. Other noted distinctions were that in comparison to social work, social pedagogy was viewed as being more practical and creative (Milligan, 2009), and that the extent to which social workers are employed in settings where they have continued interaction with children is limited in England, compared with countries where social pedagogues are embedded in children's services (Petrie, 2006). Others identify commonalities with social work in England, such as both having an emphasis

on reflective practice (Milligan, 2009), a focus on a pedagogical relationship (Coussée et al, 2010, Smith, 2012, and Hämäläinen, 2013) and the lifespace concept of social pedagogy (Coussée et al, 2010).

Furthermore, some authors of included papers suggest that training in social pedagogy qualifies staff for working in the field of childcare (Petrie et al, 2008, Hämäläinen, 2012), with others suggesting that that social pedagogy could make a difference for the early years workforce if they were provided with more targeted training (Kornbeck, 2013).

As with themes from papers analysing synthesis with services for children in care, themes relating to the fit of social pedagogy within youth and family support services also informed the research objective seeking to explore potential fit of social pedagogy in the children's services workforce, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C). This contemporary view of social pedagogy's fit within the children's services workforce is appraised in chapter seven of this thesis, where I present my arguments for social pedagogy within children's services settings.

2.5.2 The nature of social pedagogy practise in the literature

2.5.2.1 Social pedagogy interventions

The most prevalent theme regarding the nature of social pedagogy practise in the included papers related to descriptions of the types of interventions undertaken (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Storø, 2012). It is carried out in everyday, ordinary situations (Coussée et al, 2010, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013). For example Storø (2012, p25) makes the following observation:

> *'When working with children and young people, social pedagogues do many things ordinarily done by adults who spend time with children and young people (for example their parents): these persons eat with them, help them with their homework, tell them to go to bed, tell them off when they have done something wrong, comfort them when they are sad, teach them skills, and play with them, to name but a few things. As the professional is doing these things and many other **ordinary activities** one could make the assumption that she is just doing the same as every other adult. But that would miss the fact that the social pedagogue is also doing **specific activities**,*

based on knowledge that is different from most parents. These activities are observing, assessing, choosing between different interventions.'

Making changes to the physical environment in residential homes helping young people to build an emotional connection to the home and increasing their involvement in meaningful ways was also described (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012). This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore influence on practice of the workforce, and its role as a change agent, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C, question B2). It was also an observable theme from the Yarvil data, and is explored in chapter four.

2.5.2.2 Risk sensible, child-focused practise

Social pedagogy is focused on enhancing well-being and human dignity and as such is the opposite of a deficit model (McDermid et al 2016), and is primarily about providing a child focused rather than procedure focused approach (Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Petrie et al, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Smith, 2012). Social pedagogy also introduces a different approach to managing risk in working with children. Some authors identified that in children's services identified that anxiety was an important determinant of practice with children in social care, with the false hope of eliminating risk leading to an increase in defensive practice which is a challenged by a perception of social pedagogy's more 'risk-sensible' approach (Milligan, 2009, Milligan, 2011, Smith, 2012, Chavaudra et al, 2014).

Some of the included authors suggest a contrast between the UK system of care, which is deemed to be dominated by concerns about risk and safeguarding procedures, and countries where pedagogues have the social pedagogy training and environment which support greater self-confidence about managing relationships and risk (Milligan, 2009). An example of concerns about risk in English children's services is physical contact with children, and Eichsteller and Holtoff (2012) describe social pedagogy facilitating a change in practise towards there being more emotional warmth and more physical contact, with 'a culture of side-hugs having been replaced by a 'culture of cuddles' (p37).

A further area of risk relating the working with children in England is that of injury or harm when undertaking physical and outdoor activities. Milligan (2011) suggests that children need to learn how to fall, not to avoid it altogether and argues that social pedagogy provided a framework to hang ideas on which had previously lacked a theoretical justification. Bird and

Eichsteller (2011, p1) describe how social pedagogy influenced risk- related practice with children:

> *'Our young people were only allowed to the beach if an extensive risk assessment was written, then the area was combed for dangerous objects, and subsequently, if all was ticked and approved… they were only allowed to paddle in the sea to knee height anyway! Yet where we were previously restrained by particularly strict risk assessment factors such as this, we have now successfully moved towards a growing confidence in our own judgement, by questioning and challenging practice and procedures to better socialise and equip our young people in today's society'*

This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore influence on practice and values of the workforce, its benefits and challenges and its role as a change agent, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C, question B2). By enabling deeper insights into the influence of social pedagogy on risk practice by children's services workers the findings from this Yarvil case study developed this theme from within the literature, and is therefore an important finding from this study, which is described in chapters in chapter 4 and in chapter 6.

2.5.2.3 Individuals and groups

Rather than working on a one to one basis, group work was identified as being a change in practise invoked by use of social pedagogy (Petrie et al, 2008, Milligan, 2009, Petrie et al, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Slovenko et al, 2016), including group work between practitioners to share key theories and principles through dialogue with colleagues and group reflection (Vrouwenfelder, 2013), and in practical activities with young people (Milligan, 2009).

There is a focus in social pedagogy on the interrelationship between the individual and the collective (Slovenko et al, 2016), allowing for richer, more productive work with children (Petrie et al, 2008). This is in contrast to the more traditionally individualised approaches of most social care interventions in England and the wider UK (Coussée et al, 2010). This theme was explored in focus groups with Yarvil workers, and the results are described in chapters five to seven.

2.5.2.4 Therapeutic and developmental interventions

Some authors note that as a result of the training they receive, social pedagogues are able to offer children activities that are therapeutic and develop their self-esteem and skills (Milligan, 2009, Petrie et al, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Cameron, 2013, Kalagiakos, 2015). Milligan (2009) notes that the purpose of the social pedagogical relationship is to work purposely and therapeutically in the broadest sense, and Hämäläinen (2013) argues that psychological theories and therapeutic approaches are widely applied in the professional activities of social pedagogy.

For Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011a) the purpose of the approaches is developing the young person's inherent resources through opportunities for learning, empowerment, positive activities and holistic learning, which Storø (2012) refers to as finding resources together with the client to think of oneself in different and ground-breaking ways . Reflecting on a review of the influence of social pedagogy on those working in residential child care and social work in a service in Scotland, Vrouwenfelder (2013) described how social pedagogy approaches had acted as a catalyst for achieving change in a young person's behaviour. Kalagiakos (2015) concurs, describing how social pedagogy was used as a developmental intervention (p103):

> *'We started our educational efforts by adapting social pedagogy as the underpinning framework for all work with students. We had concentrated on the following goals: supporting students in their development such as gaining skills, building a sense of self, and developing critical reflection; creating an ethical connection between instructors and their students emphasised by 'being there' for them; providing opportunities for the students to be involved in democratic and decision-making processes; and gaining an understanding of each student's world and challenges'.*

This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore influence on practice and values of the workforce, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C, question 2), the findings of which are explored in later chapters.

2.5.2.5 Inclusive practise

The main aim of the social pedagogical intervention is inclusion within the community, aiming to alleviate social exclusion (Hämäläinen, 2003, Petrie et al, 2008 and 2009, Storø,

2012, Morgan, 2013). In particular, some authors suggest that pedagogical activities are based on help and assistance to people in need, with the aim of their emancipation and mobilisation (Hallstedt and Högström, 2005), and should be based on the needs of the groups of children and young people being supported (Georgiou et al, 2015), whilst transcending cultural differences (Storø, 2012).

Coussée et al (2010) suggest that the pedagogical approach has the potential to bridge the stigmatising split between general educational facilities and those designed for children and young people in need. Hämäläinen (2013) concurs suggesting that social pedagogy is both a theory of citizenship education in general but also as a form of special education dealing with people's special social needs. Morgan (2013) also argues that the practice of social pedagogy should promote social inclusion through the relationship with the young person, with Storø (2012) concurring that the main aim of the work should be inclusion within the community. This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore influence on practice and values of the workforce, its benefits and challenges and its role as a change agent, and also informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C) with the results described in chapters five to seven.

2.5.2.6 The role of the self for the practitioner

In their description of the 'The Art of Being a Social Pedagogue', Eichsteller and Holtoff (2012) argue that practitioners of social pedagogy should focus on being with others, being authentic and using one's own personality, thus allowing children to see staff as real people with natural personalities, rather than paid carers. Eichsteller and Holtoff describe the '3Ps' (p36), illustrating that practitioners should bring their personal and professional selves into their practise, whilst excluding their private selves. The concept of the 3Ps is prevalent within the included papers (Milligan, 2009, Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Slovenko et al, 2016).

An example of the use of the 3Ps in practice was offered by Eichsteller and Holtoff (2012, p36):

> *'A young boy had just come into the home, away from his family for the first time. He felt very homesick and found it especially hard to settle at bedtime. One care worker therefore decided to tell him about her own experiences of going to boarding school*

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as a girl, how she felt and what had helped her to overcome her homesickness.
Through the conversation the boy and the care worker developed a connection, and
per personal life-story helped him to realise he wasn't the only child in the world that
was having these feelings.'

This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore influence on practice and values of the workforce, its benefits and challenges and its role as a change agent, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C). it was also referenced extensively in responses from Yarvil practitioners as critical to their experience of social pedagogy, which is described in chapter five where the study results relating to the influence of social pedagogy on practice and values is discussed.

2.5.2.7 Use of educational theory and methods

Social pedagogy is about pedagogical intervention, seeking to influence change for another person through relationship between the professional, the child and the topic (Hämäläinen, 2003, Hallstedt and Högström, 2005, Milligan, 2009, Kalagiakos et al, 2014), which Hämäläinen (2013) describes as a theory of citizenship education. The action is not about only about what the practitioner is doing, it must be connected to theory which must be consulted in every situation, with continuous reflection against the theory and ethics, constructing new ways of working (Milligan, 2009, Storø, 2012).

A number of included authors argue that all social pedagogical interventions should include learning goals and the means for attaining them (Georgiou et al, 2014) with educational methods deployed in strategies to correct social problems (Hämäläinen, 2003). Methods are used and chosen as a result of social pedagogical thought – the action is not social pedagogical purely because certain approaches are chosen rather because of why there are chosen (Hämäläinen, 2003). The head, heart and hands underpins the planning and intervention process (Milligan, 2009, Smith, 2012, Vrouwenfelder, 2013) linking practical skills with emotional warmth and critical thinking. This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore influence on practice of the workforce, its benefits and challenges and its role as a change agent, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C). As with the 3Ps, this model and associated experience of its application and influence was described by Yarvil workers, with the findings described in chapters five and six.

2.5.2.8 Creative problem solving

The purposeful use of activities which are both everyday and specific is described in the practice of social pedagogy (Ruškus et al, 2014). The social pedagogy concept of 'the common third' is frequently cited as an example of how creative activities connect the practitioner and the child through an activity on an equal level, allowing each to learn (Milligan, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Smith, 2012, Vrouwenfelder, 2013). Positive activities are also a component of the Diamond Model (Eichstller and Holtoff, 2011a).

Deployment of common sense in identifying solutions, such as this change in perspective (Dulai, 2014, p63):

> *'Instead of enabling a young person to learn something through means of actual experience, it seemed easier or quicker to solely explain it. Realising this frustrated me, as it is such a basic concept, yet, when stepping through the doors at work and putting on a corporate or 'work' hat, all of a sudden things that I would do normally under any other circumstances don't really occur to me as the obvious answer. I began to challenge my own practice and how I engage with the young people I work with'.*

The continuous reflection back to the theory as identified by Storø (2012), enables the practitioner to discover new ways of solving problems through deep learning (Vrouwenfelder, 2013). This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore influence on practice of the workforce, its benefits and challenges and its role as a change agent, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C). Yarvil practitioners' experience of the common third and its role in relationship building between children and their workers was a result from the data gathered, and this is described in chapters five and six.

2.5.2.9 The Haltung

A number of the included authors reference the concept of *the haltung* in social pedagogy practice, describing it as a way of thinking in which the social and educational are united, from a certain perspective on humankind and society, based on ethics and values rather than tools and techniques (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Hämäläinen, 2012, Smith 2012). Smith (2012) describes the haltung as relating to an individual's philosophical standpoint, their view of relationships and what they consider to be a good life for others, and is critical to the social pedagogues ethical stance which informs their practice.

Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011a) describe social pedagogy as an art form, which is expressed through the practitioner's haltung, which they refer to as the attitude or mindset of the practitioner. Linked to the notion of the *head, heart and hands*, and the *3Ps*, the *haltung* they argue demands social pedagogues be a whole person in their practice, rather than just a pair of hands. This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore influence on the values of the workforce, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C), and the associated findings are described in chapters five and six relating to the influence of social pedagogy and its perceived benefits for different groups within Yarvil's children's services workforce.

2.5.2.10 Political action

An element of political action within the practice of social pedagogy is suggested by a number of the authors of included papers (Lorenz, 2008, Cameron et al, 2011), with Cameron et al (20110 arguing that social pedagogy is always a political practice which can assume different political complexions and either collude or question different political regimes.

Social pedagogy acquires the characteristics of a movement, as it is linked to voluntarism and social rights – with social criticism as part of practice (Kyridis et al, 2014) Lorenz (2008) argues that pedagogy inspired intervention must identify political processes and build social policy from the ground up. This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore social pedagogy's role as a change agent, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C). In particular, the policy context for children's services was significant for Yarvil practitioners, and is discussed in the findings in chapter seven.

2.6   Challenges and benefits of social pedagogy in practice

2.6.1   Challenges of social pedagogy in practice

The most prevalent challenges identified in the included papers for social pedagogy in practice is the difficulty of measuring its impact or influence, particularly within the context of English children's services which are dominated by a culture of outcome and output measurement through the Ofsted inspection regime. Coussée et al (2010) argue that social pedagogy contrasts with current approaches which are too target driven and focused on

completing forms and ticking boxes, and as such would be difficult to implement in contemporary children's services in England. This is acknowledged by Slovenko et al (2016) who note that social pedagogic practice takes a unique approach to each individual and context, and as such is not amenable to fixed interpretations of what represents best practice. Whilst some identify the potential for social pedagogy to improve outcomes for children and young people (Coussée et al, 2010), and some identify measurable improvements such as fewer incidents within children's homes (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a and Chavaudra et al, 2015), these are unlikely to be sufficient in a policy climate such is in England's children's services (Kornbeck, 2013). For English children's services, for example, Councils are required to submit extensive statutory data returns on performance indicators such as timeliness of assessments and frequency of visits to accountable bodies such as the Department of Education.

Furthermore, many authors observed that the term social pedagogy is problematic (regional Youth Work Unit, 2010, Berridge et al, 2011, Moore et al, 2014) as it is noted that the term and concept of social pedagogy is unfamiliar to English audiences, and different countries have different emphases and use different terms (Petrie et al, 2008). The ambiguity regarding what the term represents (as previously explored in chapter one), from a means of practice to an academic framework or philosophical approach, is also a challenge for social pedagogy (Berridge et al, 2011, Moore et al, 2014). For example, surveys of practitioners in children's services in UK local authority where social pedagogy training was widely available identified that most workers were not able to provide an interpretation of the term, and did not understand it (Regional Youth Work Unit, 2010, Moore et al. 2014). Given the context specific nature of social pedagogy, an English children's services specific variety of social pedagogy would be required for it to have resonance within the children's services workforce (Regional Youth Work Unit, 2010, Berridge et al, 2011), with specific, local training (Petrie et al, 2008). The ambiguity of social pedagogy is identified as significant in the findings of this research in Yarvil, and is discussed further in chapters five to seven.

The extent to which social pedagogy provides new ideas or approaches is also identified as a challenge by some included authors (Milligan, 2011). For example, a review of social pedagogy by Milligan (2009 and 2011) identified that practitioners participating in social pedagogy training suggested that most, if not all, of the concepts were already familiar to them. Vrouwenfelder (2013) observed that most of the workers in her review already had a mind-set conducive to social pedagogy and the Regional Youth work Unit (2010) noted that

social pedagogy has always been present in good practice in the UK, without actually being labelled as social pedagogy. This finding informed the research objective seeking to explore the challenges of social pedagogy, and its role as a change agent, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C). Chapter six then describes the extent to which the findings from Yarvil substantiate the challenges identified in the literature.

2.6.2   Benefits of social pedagogy in practice

Some included papers suggested that social pedagogy can improve the quality of the workforce (Milligan, 2009, Morgan, 2013), including through reflection. Morgan (2013) suggests that it is welcomed by young people who do not perceive social pedagogic practice to be disciplinary or supervisory or designed to problematize them. Milligan (2009) and Vrouwenfelder (2013) both identified that social pedagogy had developed the practice of workers, with staff able to think and act in different ways following social pedagogy training.

Many authors noted benefits of social pedagogy for practitioners themselves including improvements in confidence and morale, and in their experience of work (Coussée et al, 2010, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Moore et al, 2014, Kontagiannis, 2015). In particular, Vrouwenfelder (2013) noted that staff in children's residential care, who perceived their profession to be a 'cinderella' service, had felt a growth in confidence, especially when working with education and social work professionals as they had a better understanding of their own value base (p52). Moore et al (2014) also identified that the acquisition of the new skills and knowledge through social pedagogy training had led to a more satisfying outcome for their roles. This can support recruitment and retention of staff in children's services professionals, as Smith (2012) suggests, these benefits are likely to appeal to those who enter social work and related professions (Petrie, 2006, Regional Youth Work Unit, 2010, Moore et al, 2014). This theme informed the research objective seeking to explore the benefits of social pedagogy, and its role as a change agent, and informed the content of the data collection tools used (see appendix C). The benefits of social pedagogy as identified by Yarvil workers are described in chapter six, and used to critique the themes from the literature based on the results of this case study.

2.7 Studies of the Practice of Social Pedagogy in the Literature

2.7.1 Results and analysis

The literature search for studies of social pedagogy in practice in English children's services settings exposed the substantial gap in the knowledge and published research on this subject, which this study seeks to contribute to, further demonstrating the distinctive contribution this research offers. Four studies met the inclusion criteria, with three of the four focusing just on children in care services (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011, and McDermid et al, 2016) - two of the included papers focusing purely on residential care for children (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011), one on foster care - and one on the wider workforce including residential and fostering staff and other practitioners working with children. Furthermore, some of the studies were limited in the rigour applied to the research process. Examples of the limitations of the research quality included: no literature review (Bengtsson et al, 2008, McPheat et al, 2017); no presentation of opposing views to the authors' (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Moore et al, 2013); no clarification of the theoretical framework used (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Moore et al, 2013); no or limited explanation of the model or understanding of social pedagogy used (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Moore et al, 2013); and limited presentation of the data collected (Bengtsson et al, 2008).

The studies by Berridge et al (2011) and McDermid et al (2016), however, were of high methodological quality, and with the limitations of the study approach, which included a small sample size of some of the study populations and purposive rather than representative samples, well described and acknowledged by the authors.

With a limited field of studies from which to draw themes, the inclusion criteria were widened to include studies of social pedagogy in children's services settings in the wider UK and neighbouring countries within the inclusion period of 2001-2016. This further search identified an additional three studies (Cameron, 2013 and Vrouwenfelder, 2013, McPheat et al, 2017). However, the limitations in the research quality of the three papers were also identified, many in common with those from the papers meeting the original inclusion criteria, including: no literature review presented (Cameron, 2013 and Vrouwenfelder, 2013, McPheat et al, 2017); no presentation of opposing views to the authors' (Cameron, 2013 and Vrouwenfelder, 2013, McPheat et al, 2017); no clarification of the theoretical framework used (Vrouwenfelder, 2013 McPheat et al, 2017); no or limited explanation of the model or

understanding of social pedagogy used (Vrouwenfelder, 2013, McPheat et al, 2017); limited presentation of the data collected (Cameron, 2013 and Vrouwenfelder, 2013, McPheat et al, 2017).

The emphasis and lines of enquiry and research aims differed across the included papers. Bengtsson et al (2008) aimed to provide a better understanding of the relevance and possible translation of social pedagogy into English residential care, compared to Berridge et al (2011) who described and compared different methods of implementing social pedagogy, and respective outcomes, including quality of care and views of stakeholders to inform development of residential care in England. Cameron et al (2013) used data from three European countries to develop understanding of day to day relationships with children in care, and to compare with England. Using seven sites across the UK, McDermid et al (2016) undertook an evaluation of a social pedagogy programme in foster care, and two studies explored the impact of social pedagogy training in Scotland only (Vrouwenfelder, 2013, and McPheat et al, 2017). Following some improvements in outcomes noted in residential care when social pedagogy was introduced in an English local authority, a study by Moore et al (2013) aimed to explore how it might be rolled out in the wider workforce and the nature of their training needs.

2.7.2   Contributions to my research

Despite the diversity of the studies analysed, some themes were identifiable that were relevant to the research questions posed by this study. Particular themes were identified with regard to: the potential benefits and challenges of social pedagogy in children's services settings; where if anywhere social pedagogy might fit in the workforce; the influence on the practice and values of children's services workers; and the potential nature of social pedagogy as a change agent for children's services workers.

Five of the included studies identified that there had been an influence on the practice of the workers (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013 and McDermid et al 2016). Authors noted increased use of reflection, the building of more positive relationships, and use of social pedagogy tools such as the common third, and head, heart and hands. Five of the included studies also identified the need for management and organisational support for the practice of social pedagogy for its potential as a change agent to be optimised (Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Moore et al, 2013, and Vrouwenfelder,

2013 and McDermid et al 2016) for social pedagogy in children's services settings. Also, five studies (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011 and Moore et al, 2013, McDermid et al 2016, McPheat et al, 2017) noted that workers had experienced increased motivation in their role since engaging with social pedagogy. However, challenges were observed such as those related to applying social pedagogy to the English context (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011) including the perception of the English system as one that is risk averse and bureaucratic. In particular, the two studies with highest standard of methodological rigour observed a limited level of positive disturbance with services, and a low level of diffusion of social pedagogy into services other than for the individuals directly participating in the programme (Berridge et al, 2011 and McDermid et al, 2016), with McDermid et al suggesting the impact was 'deep, rather than wide' (p155). A further challenged identified was a notable degree of change resistance and lack of interest in social pedagogy in some studies, including a limited sense of its novelty (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Moore et al, 2013 and McDermid et al 2016).

Useful learning for my research from the included papers included methodological insights, as each took a qualitative approach, and included a focus on the experiences of participants. In most of the studies a multi-method approach was taken, involving questionnaires, focus groups and interviews with the sample (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al 2011, Moore et al, 2013, Vrouwenfelder 2013 and McDermid et al 2016), with one using only interviews (Cameron, 2013). These approaches informed the methodology designed and used for this research study. These studies are also examined in relation to the findings from this case study, and the extent to which the conclusions are substantiated by the Yarvil experience is detailed in chapters five to seven.

2.8   Analysis of the Findings of the Literature Review

2.8.1   Reflection on the purpose of the literature review

The literature review has located this research in the context of other thinking and studies with regard to social pedagogy in children's services settings, including in England, and has provided insights in response to the research aims and objectives. Building on the theoretical foundations of social pedagogy, the learning and themes from the literature review have

informed my conclusions and arguments in response to the research objectives, which are described in chapters five and six.

2.8.2 Analysis of models and characteristics of social pedagogy in the literature

An analysis of models of social pedagogy in section 2.3 provided context to this research project within contemporary social pedagogy thinking, and informed my conclusions regarding the research objective relating the concept of social pedagogy and its defining characteristics. The identified models demonstrated the varied concepts of social pedagogy, and how its practice – which is the focus of this research - fits within the range of views, perspectives and aspects of social pedagogy, from those which place it within a whole socio-political system, to its nature as an academic and research discipline, to a form of practice underpinned by theory. The only identified practice-oriented model of social pedagogy was the Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a), which is further critiqued in response to the findings of this research project in chapter six.

The Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a) suggests a number of characteristics of social pedagogy in practice, which can be analysed in response to the findings of section 2.4 which explored the characteristics of social pedagogy in the broader related literature. By contrast to the Diamond Model which identified five characteristics of social pedagogy (aim of achieving happiness and wellbeing; positive experiences; holistic learning; relationships; and empowerment), I identified 10 prevalent characteristics emerging from the included papers.

Table 2c: Comparison of the characteristics of social pedagogy from the Diamond Model and from the literature review

Diamond Model	Both Diamond Model and from Literature Review	Literature Review
• Fulfilment of human potential/ happiness and	• Holistic learning/ use of education in its broadest sense for social change; • A focus on the relationship	• A values based, way of thinking, rather than a defined set of methods or tools; • Context specificity – for both the individual and the broader socio-political context in

wellbeing	between the pedagogue and individual as critical to achieving change for the individual; • A focus on activity and experience using creativity; • Personal development and empowerment of the individual	which social pedagogy is practiced; • A holistic focus on the needs of the individual; • Improvement of participation in, and for the betterment of, the society in which the individual lives; • A focus on 'lifespace', and practice within normal discourse and everyday settings; • Action based on theory

Both the identified models of social pedagogy and the themes related to its characteristics provide insight into one of my research objectives – to identify the concept of social pedagogy and its defining characteristics. The analysis in table 2c identifies that there is agreement on some of the characteristics, however the Diamond Model does not incorporate the range of characteristics that were prevalent in the literature, suggesting it may not sufficiently present a complete model of social pedagogy in practice. The identified characteristics from the literature review informed the key lines of enquiry in the initial stages of data collection, to allow them to be tested and explored in the context of Yarvil's children's services workforce, as described in chapter three. The extent to which the 10 characteristics from the literature review, and the 6 from the Diamond Model are verified by the experience of practitioners in Yarvil is revealed in later chapters.

Despite these areas of consensus, suggestions of the characteristics of social pedagogy in the literature expose areas where there is not broad agreement, and where there is debate. This includes the ambiguity of the definition, and the extent to which social pedagogy is a broad term which encompasses a range of ideas or approaches that have both educational and social components, or whether it is a specific and closely defined discipline.

There are broad differences in viewpoints on this issue, with some arguing that social pedagogy in practice requires a highly trained and educated social pedagogue to be its practitioner (Lorenz, 2008). Lorenz (2008) argues that for social pedagogy to adequately deal with the variety of social and psycho-social needs of people, there needs to be a specialisation in social pedagogical research, education and practice. Others suggest that social pedagogy can be practiced by a range of workers in different roles with different levels of training, with

social pedagogy providing a framework of theory and values that can permeate a diverse workforce (Petrie, 2008, Smith, 2012). This concept of social pedagogy as cohesive across children's services, rather than requiring a new professional grouping, is endorsed by Petrie (2006). Whether or not social pedagogy as a collective term for a continuum of understandings that can fit to the socio-historical context, or is a defined discipline is untested in children's services settings and remains open to debate. This debate is further explored with regard to the findings from this research study in chapter six.

The extent to which social pedagogy is a universal approach or one that is targeted at disadvantage (Lorenz, 2008, Hämäläinen, 2012, Lukešová et al, 2014, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016) also remains subject to debate.

The emergent learning from this chapter regarding the concept and characteristics of social pedagogy generated some critical questions for this research project. In particular, if it is possible to define the characteristics of social pedagogy, to what extent must all characteristics be evident if the practice can be identified as social pedagogy? Is a practitioner rightfully able to assume the title of 'social pedagogue' if all characteristics are evident in their practice? Can a practice be social pedagogical if only some of the characteristics are fulfilled, and to what extent are these characteristics unique to social pedagogy such that it is recognisable from other contemporary approaches and frameworks in children's services in England, such as restorative practice and systemic social work? My analysis of these critical questions, based on the findings of this case study research is presented in chapter six, where I argue that without a clear definition of social pedagogy, and how the term can be appropriately deployed, there is a risk that the practice, and the term itself, becomes diluted such that any conclusions about its potential benefits become unsubstantiated.

2.8.3   Analysis of the practice of social pedagogy in the literature

An analysis of explorations of social pedagogy in practice in the included literature in section 2.5 sought to provide insight in response to the following objectives of this research;

a. What is the potential influence of social pedagogy on the values and practice of a Council's children's services workforce?
b. What are the possible challenges and benefits from applying social pedagogy as a conceptual framework for the children's services workforce?

c. Where, if anywhere, should social pedagogy fit within the current English children's services workforce?

d. What is the perceived role of social pedagogy as a change agent intervention for a Council's children's services workforce?

The analysis revealed some common themes in contemporary social pedagogy thinking with regard to where, if anywhere, social pedagogy might fit within the current children's services workforce. Within the included papers explorations of social pedagogy with regard to different professional groups such as social work, youth work, foster care and early years and childcare were identified, and a broad agreement regarding the potential for social pedagogy across multi-professional elements of the children's services workforce was identified across professional groups (Petrie, 2006, Petrie, 2007, Petrie et al, 2008, Kyriacou et al, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, regional Youth work Unit, 2010, Hämäläinen, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Morgan, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Chavaudra et al, 2014, Slovenko et al, 2015, McDermid et al 2016).

However, the analysis also reveals a critical debate within the social pedagogy literature regarding the practice of social pedagogy. Is it indistinguishable from practice in other roles already in the children's workforce, as some suggest (Milligan, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Kornbeck, 2013, Slovenko et al, 2016)? Does it require a specific programme of training to become a social pedagogue (Lorenz, 2008, Kyriacou et al, 2009)? Or can it be practiced across the workforce with some level of training for workers (Petrie, 2007, Morgan, 2013, Chavaudra et al, 2014, Slovenko et al, 2015)? The extent to which these arguments are substantiated by the findings of this research is described in chapter five where I set out my analysis of these critical questions. Here I suggest that it is possible through training, support and practice development to establish a workforce of social pedagogy practitioners, across a range of different specialisms, providing there is sufficient expert support to prevent the dilution of the practical application of social pedagogy theory, and that this does not preclude the potential role for a defined and protected title of social pedagogue.

Analysis of the findings in section 2.8 also reveal descriptions of practice, and how it has changed in response to social pedagogy, which is of particular relevance to my research objectives regarding the influence of social pedagogy on workers' practice and values, and the potential for social pedagogy as a change agent. Themes such as a change towards less

risk averse practice, increased awareness and deployment of the self and the haltung concept, and the types of social pedagogical tools which workers found useful provided useful lines of enquiry which informed the content of data collection tools.

Explorations of the practice of social pedagogy also provided useful insights into a further research objective, relating to the potential challenges and benefits of social pedagogy in children's services settings which were further explored through all the data collection stages described in chapter three, and reported in chapter four. Significantly, the challenges identified exposed some further critical questions for consideration in this research project. A number of authors suggested that social pedagogy was difficult to measure – if this is so, would it be possible for it to be deployed within a children's services environment which seeks evidence-based approaches that deliver quantifiable outcomes? The policy landscape for children's services was also identified as a challenge, as requirements for workers to follow procedures, timescales and inspection targets restrict the ability to practice creatively as required by social pedagogy. The extent to which the political and policy context of England's current children's services restricts or supports social pedagogy practice was therefore explored, and the conclusions drawn are described in chapter eight.

2.8.4   Analysis of the studies of social pedagogy in practice

The paucity of high-quality, peer-reviewed studies of social pedagogy in practice in England was confirmed by the literature search and review in section 2.7, further demonstrating and important contribution to knowledge provided by this research project. The only practice studies identified related to services for children in care, which reveals the unprecedented ambition of this study, which explores social pedagogy across the children's services workforce, providing a pioneering exploration of this subject in England.

Despite the limited insights available from analysis of studies of social pedagogy in English children's services settings, an appraisal of the methodological approaches taken by different studies revealed that the chosen qualitative approach and data collection methods were appropriate and generated useful insights. As such, this informed the use of similar data collection methods for this research.

2.9   Conclusion

This literature review chapter presented a critical review of the contemporary knowledge base for social pedagogy in English children's services. It identified, explored, and synthesised existing literature related to social pedagogy as a change agent for children's services workers in England, exploring social pedagogy's underpinning historical theories and concepts, and critically examining the concept of social pedagogy in English children's services settings.

The chapter identified the gaps in knowledge, and placed the research problem in the context of contemporary thought on the subject, further demonstrating the need for the insights this research provides. I suggested ten characteristics of social pedagogy, based on the prevalent themes within the literature, which I use to critique the dominant model of social pedagogy in practice – the Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a) – and identified critical areas of debate. Methodological insights identified from included papers are also highlighted to inform the approach taken in this study, as described in chapter three.

3 Chapter three: Methodology

This methodology chapter builds on the previous chapters by providing the rationale and methodological considerations for this research project. Using methodological insights from contemporary studies of social pedagogy which were explored in chapter two which were available at the time of the study design (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011), this chapter describes how an exploratory, qualitative case study approach and thematic analysis enables the research questions detailed in chapter one to be thoroughly explored, and produce the results and findings detailed in chapters four to seven.

This methodology chapter provides the rationale and methodological detail for my research project. It opens by setting out the philosophical context for the study, including my research paradigms as the author, and the theoretical foundations for the study. Then the approaches deployed, including the study design and methods chosen are explained and the research strategy and design are detailed, including the approach to sampling and data collection. The chapter then describes how the data was analysed, the ethical considerations for the study were identified and responded to. Finally, the study's benefits and limitations are explored before introducing the chapters to follow which detail the results and findings of the study.

3.1 The philosophy of this research study

The design and methodology of this study is underpinned by my personal research philosophy and views on the nature of knowledge, as the author of the study, and the nature of the research problem, including the intended outcomes of the research (Gorard, 2010). Both have my paradigmatic stance, and the research questions have influenced what data was gathered, how it was analysed and how it is used, as is described in the sections that follow.

The aim of the research study is to explore the influence of social pedagogy on the practice and values of a children's services workforce, and so involves social phenomena. Chapter one detailed my first engagement with social pedagogy, which involved the identification of a change in perception and experience for children's residential workers in Yarvil, which required exploration and explanation thus establishing the rationale for this study. As such, the intent of the study is qualitative, as it seeks to inductively explore the experience and

perceptions of the participants from Yarvil council, to build hypotheses and theories about social pedagogy in the context of the English children's services workforce. In contrast to quantitative approaches, the relationship between the participants of the study and the researcher is important in understanding the phenomena to be explored in qualitative research, and each researcher brings a personal bias into perceptions of what is being observed (Soiferman, 2010). This is of particular importance in my research given my dual role of researcher and employment as a senior manager in the organisation which is explored in detail in chapter one, and which informed my research philosophy.

My philosophical stance is social constructionist, consistent with Hammersley (2007) who suggests that social phenomena do not exist independently of people's understandings of them. I uphold that social phenomena are culturally constituted, that immersion in the culture of the organisation being studied is important, that there is not a single reality distinct from people's experiences, and that personal bias and influences are important in understanding the phenomena being explored. As such, the experience of constructions such as social pedagogy can only be understood by understanding the process by which members of a culture identify and create the phenomena. Analysis of the literature, as described in chapter two, revealed that social pedagogy is always unique to its context (Smith, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Lukešová et al, 2014, Kyriacou et al, 2016), and is a complex social phenomena (Eichsteller and Holtoff , 2011a and 2011b, Smith, 2012, Lukešová et al, 2014, Kyriacou, 2015). Therefore this research approach requires the identification and comprehension of the complexity of individual realities in which research participants exist and experience social pedagogy, and of the values which form their social constructions and understandings.

As such, the philosophical approach taken to this qualitative research project was interpretive and inductive, to allow explorations of lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings of children's services workers from Yarvil, and leaders from Yarvil and other local authorities, as well as the organisation and culture of their context (Strauss and Corbin, 1988). From an exploration of these experiences and phenomena, inductive analysis enabled the individual experiences of participants to inform broader generalisations and theories through detecting themes and patterns (Cresswell, 2005). The requirement for a phenomenological approach that allows the subjective experience of individuals to be explored made it unsuitable for a scientific model (Pring, 2010). It was also unsuitable for use of exclusively quantitative approaches, which would require a paradigmatic stance that

upheld the existence of a single reality which could be measured validly and reliably (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005). As described within previous chapters, the context specificity of social pedagogy means that an approach underpinned by a quantitative epistemological standpoint that emphasises the objectivity of knowledge would be inconsistent with my role as the researcher in this study, and with the nature of the research problem being explored.

3.2 Research Approach

A number of theoretical frameworks for addressing the research problem, which aims to explore the phenomenon of social pedagogy, in the socio-historical context of a local authority children's services department in 2014-16, were considered. This included approaches using ethnography (Hammersley, 2007), Grounded Theory Methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Thornberg, 2011) and case study (Yin, 1984). As my study was phenomenological in approach, this research sought to gather information about experiences and perceptions of the research participants, to address the research questions, particularly regarding the influence of social pedagogy on the values and practice of the workforce, identifying challenges and benefits, and the perceived role of social pedagogy as an agent for change. As the research question aims to explore perceptions and experiences of a range of practitioners in the context of Yarvil, a methodological approach that enables the experiences of many individuals to be inductively sought and analysed was required.

The context of my study of Yarvil Council's children's services workforce at the time of the research was multifarious, with some staff groups identifiable by a defined profession, qualification and title (such as social workers, childcare workers and youth workers), some in frontline qualified roles but without a specified qualification linking them to a profession (such as residential care workers and family support workers, foster carers, and those in strategic or support roles (such as senior management, and those that provide practice-oriented support, training and advice to professionals in frontline roles). The totality of these professional groups could be defined as Yarvil's informal education workforce for children and young people. Social pedagogy was introduced to Yarvil Council by a group of children's residential workers, who were supported by their management to undertake training in social pedagogy and to develop a programme of awareness raising and

development amongst colleagues in residential care. Informal evaluations of residential care since the introduction of social pedagogy were promising, with reduced staff sickness, and fewer physical interventions and missing episodes with young people reported (Moore et al, 2014).

To explore whether the perceived benefits of social pedagogy in residential homes might extend to the broader children's services workforce, a social pedagogy development programme was put in place. This included a new, level four module – 'An introduction to social pedagogy' – at a local university, the roll out of the residential workers' training and awareness raising programme to professional groups in Yarvil outside of children's residential care, and a range of development activities focused on raising skills and knowledge of social pedagogy across the children's services workforce.

This approach being taken in Yarvil was unprecedented in England, with other contemporary social pedagogy programmes focusing on children in care services, such as the Fostering Network's social pedagogy demonstration programme (Mcdermid et al. 2016) and the implementation of social pedagogy in residential care in several other local authorities (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2010, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011). The investment in and practice of social pedagogy in the wider children's workforce, such as by youth workers, childcare workers, educational support staff and social workers made Yarvil a case of particular interest in England.

Given the distinctive approach to social pedagogy in Yarvil, the use of a case study approach was chosen to provide an appropriate vehicle for the 'thick description' which is essential to an understanding of the context and the situation (Lincoln and Guba, 1990, p54). Case study methodology is form of research which inquires and examines phenomena, and analyses specific issues within a specific environment, context or organisation. As noted by Yin (2009), it is '*an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon, set within its real-world context—especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident*' (p 18). A case study is especially appropriate in new topic areas, and provides a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within a single setting (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Case studies, which can be exploratory, explanatory or descriptive, have the advantage of providing a means of study within the context of the phenomena, which is pertinent to social

pedagogy given the criticality of its context to its application (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Hämäläinen, 2012), and in great depth. The unique context of this study, in a council where social pedagogy is being practiced by staff from professional groups providing informal education other than those working with children in care, provides a case which could be explored using an embedded design. An exploratory case study design was used, as due to the distinctiveness of the Yarvil approach to social pedagogy, there is a lack of previous research relating to workers in children's services other than those in residential settings. Therefore there existed a lack of hypotheses which could be tested, explained or described using the case of Yarvil. The case study approach also allowed multiple layers of analysis within the children's workforce as a whole, and between distinct professional groups, offering the benefit of multiple layers of analysis whilst collecting data in its natural setting (Yin, 1984).

The method provides the opportunity to undertake a single or a multiple-case study (Yin, 2009). To ensure that the richness of insights from Yarvil worker were explored at the greatest possible depth, a single case study approach was taken, with embedded sub-cases allowing different worker groups to be explored as units within the overall sample (Hamel et al 1993). This provided the benefit of data being drawn from multiple sources of evidence, within the Yarvil workforce, as described in this chapter. It allowed the multiple realities and contexts in which social pedagogy existed in Yarvil to be accounted for, and richly explored in the shaping of phenomena within the organisational, policy and national context of English children's services, as revealed in chapters five to seven. Through multi-layered analysis, existing theories regarding social pedagogy, and emergent theories from the synthesis of the literature in chapter two was tested, and new theories from the Yarvil context were generated, such as a proposed new model of practical social pedagogy as described in chapter five.

The parameters of the case explored in this study were to include workers employed by Yarvil Council as part of a contract delivering services that are the direct responsibility of the children's services department, excluding those employed in formal education settings (such as schools or pupil referral units) and in strategic support roles such as finance, human resources and performance management services. Within the case studied, different units of analysis were identified for exploration, including individual practitioners, different professional groups, and management, which are explored in more detail later in this chapter. The parameters of each unit of analysis were restricted to include only: those working directly with children and young people, or providing practice-oriented support for frontline

practitioners; and those who had participated in Yarvil Council's social pedagogy programme of practice and knowledge development (which includes: social pedagogy practice developments forums, conferences, workshops and training), or had completed an accredited programme of training in social pedagogy (in England or elsewhere).

3.3   Research Methods

As described earlier in this chapter, this study was undertaken in a qualitative research framework. However, recognising the view of Onwuegbezie and Leech (2007) that qualitative and quantitative approaches lie on a continuum that does not entirely distinguish the two, within the methods used to conduct this research a partially quantitative tool was used in the primary data collection stage. Specifically this involved the use of a questionnaire including a series of Likert items as a test instrument.

A variety of data collection approaches were used to present a more enhanced insight into the research questions than using one method independently (Frels and Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The method of analysis is described further in this chapter, and the results described in chapter four.   The convergence of findings from qualitative and quantitative data collection tools provided a comprehensive analysis of the research problem, with Likert item data confirming or disconfirming theories emerging from the social pedagogy literature, whilst also allowing new themes to emerge from the qualitative data. However, the approach taken remained interpretivist, rather than a mixed methods approach, as the responses to the questionnaire, including Likert item responses, remained subjective and interpretive, therefore not subject to statistical viability testing to be considered quantitative in approach (Cresswell, 2008).

Qualitative data collection methods, specifically a mixture of approaches, with a balance of open and close-ended questions, evaluated carefully to ensure high-quality results in a questionnaire, focus groups and interviews, sought to identify, investigate and compare experiences and understandings of social pedagogy, including intangibles such as meanings, experiences, values and beliefs, and to explore themes from the literature. The review of the social pedagogy literature identified potential hypotheses linked to the research questions. These include my conclusions from a thematic analysis of the characteristics of social pedagogy, how and where it may be practiced within the children's services workforce, and the benefits and challenges of doing so, in additional to identifying contradictions and debates

within contemporary social pedagogy thinking. These emergent hypotheses informed the approaches used in this study to avoid replication, based on strengths and weaknesses of previous studies as described in chapter two, and their methodologies and designs (Onwuegbezie and Leech, 2012). Data collection tools and content as described later in this chapter to allow the emergent themes from the literature to be tested in the context of the Yarvil children's services workforce.

Open questions and semi-structured interviews, as detailed later in this chapter, allowed complex phenomenon associated with the experience of social pedagogy to emerge from the participants (Soiferman, 2010), whilst also minimising researcher bias, as already identified as an area of focus given the significant role of the researcher in the case being studied. However, variables such as participants' perceptions of their strength of feeling or experience could be appropriately measured and analysed using a series of Likert items approach in the questionnaires.

Data from one method was evaluated against data from other methods to infer levels of trustworthiness, and provided stronger substantiation of constructs and identified themes (Eisenhardt, 2010) and validity though triangulation, and increasing the capability to generalise the results compared to only using a single qualitative designs (Caruth, 2013, Venkatesh, 2013). The combination of approaches was chosen to allow viewpoints to be gathered from the same sample using different methods to support better representation of experiences, and allow questions and themes to build from one method to inform further methods, to be elaborated upon in later data collection stages. The use of qualitative approaches over multiple data collection stages also allowed opportunities to alter data collection methods and lines of enquiry when new thinking of themes emerged to be exploited to generate new theoretical insights (Eisenhardt, 2010). This enabled the rich detail and descriptive content that informed many of the findings which are detailed later in this thesis, in particular relating to benefits of social pedagogy, such as the improved confidence of workers which could not have been gleaned using quantitative approaches.

3.4   Sampling Strategy

3.4.1   Sample criteria and identification

Implicit within the research problem this study has explored, the objectives of the research, and as required by the research design, there are a number of criteria for the study's sample, which helped to define the case to be studied, and the units of analysis. These are described within table 3a.

Table 3a: Sampling requirements linked to the research questions

Research aims/objectives	Implicit requirements	Sample requirement
To critique the concept of social pedagogy and its defining characteristics	- Knowledge from literature	
To explore the influence of social pedagogy on the values and practice of Yarvil Council's children's services workforce	- Yarvil Children's services workforce - Must be practicing	- Sample included those in practice in the Yarvil children's services workforce
To identify and explore the possible challenges and benefits from applying the principles of social pedagogy as a conceptual framework	- Knowledge of social pedagogy and its application to practice	- Sample had knowledge of social pedagogy and its application to practice
To explore where, if anywhere, social pedagogy should fit within the current English children's services workforce	- Knowledge of the structure and diversity of the children's services workforce, or the professions within it.	Sample included: - Those with knowledge of professions and practice within the children's services workforce; - Those with oversight and knowledge of the children's services workforce
To explore the perceived	- Knowledge of change	Sample included:

role of social pedagogy as a change agent intervention or Yarvil Council's children's services workforce.	approaches in children's services; - Knowledge of the process and impact of change in Yarvil children's services workforce.	- Those with knowledge of change approaches in children's services; - Knowledge of the process and impact of change in Yarvil children's services workforce.

As demonstrated in table 3a, implicit within the objectives are particular knowledge or role requirements for inclusion within the sample for the study. Therefore, using random population sampling would not have been appropriate for this research project, and as such samples were identified purposively. Purposive sampling enabled a degree of control, thus reducing any selection bias inherent in pre-existing groups, and the inclusion of potential outliers, such as those from particular professional groups less likely to respond, such as foster casers, whose views may have been missed through random sampling (Barbour, 2001). To appropriately fulfil the research objectives and questions the criteria for the sample as described in table 3a included the requirement for included participants to have certain knowledge and roles. As such, in order to fulfil the requirements of the research questions, 3 distinct samples were identified. These are identified as: those in practice with children and young people in the Council area as part of the Yarvil Council children's services workforce, and with knowledge of social pedagogy; those with knowledge of the children's services workforce and with change in those services; and those with the knowledge of the process and impact of change in Yarvil Council's children's services workforce.

These distinct samples are described as:

- Sample 1: Workforce practitioner sample (Yarvil);
- Sample 2: Workforce leadership sample (Yarvil);
- Sample 3: Children's Services leadership sample (Other Councils).

The sampling strategy was designed to represent the population from which the sample was drawn, rather than random sampling, noting that the smaller the sample size the less representative it is (Cohen, 2007). Therefore, in order to seek the greatest representation of the possible samples, the largest possible sample was drawn as a principle of the sampling strategy. However, the choice of a case study research design, has not sought findings that are representative of the wider population, as generalisability is not an aim of this study.

3.4.2 Sample 1: Workforce Practitioner Sample

Since its introduction to Yarvil Council in 2010, much of the children's services workforce would have encountered the term 'social pedagogy', as it was referenced frequently in messages from the Director of Children's Services, in newsletters including a dedicated social pedagogy newsletter, and in departmental meetings. Furthermore, some of the workforce had encountered elements of the concept of social pedagogy from the departmental induction, from informal information exchange with colleagues, or from an introductory course delivered by staff in the department. These examples of interaction with social pedagogy provide limited knowledge and insight with regard to the social pedagogy's theories and concepts. Research objectives 1 to 3 required research participants to have a degree of knowledge of social pedagogy, and to be part of Yarvil's children services workforce. As such criteria for inclusion in the workforce sample were as follows.

Participants were required to:

- Be members of the Yarvil Council's children's services workforce. As such, they had to be employed by Yarvil Council, or be employed as part of a contract delivering services that are the direct responsibility of the children's services department AND;
- Work directly with children and young people, or supporting the practice of those that work directly with children and young people AND;
- Have participated in Yarvil Council's social pedagogy programme of practice and knowledge development (which includes: social pedagogy practice developments forums, conferences, workshops and training), or have completed an accredited programme of training in social pedagogy (in England or elsewhere).

Exclusions criteria were as follows:

- Those working in administrative roles or strategic functions (such as finance or performance management), that do not involve working directly with children and young people;
- Those working in formal education settings such as schools and pupil referral units.

3.4.3 Sample 2 - Workforce leadership sample

The children's workforce sample (sample 1) were drawn from a range of services, each with their own management. All of the management of sample 1 were accountable to a head of service, and then to a member of the departmental leadership team (DLT). The DLT designed and led the departmental strategy, with heads of service developing and leading the service strategies that delivered the departmental strategy. Working to the heads of service, service managers developed operational plans which deliver on the requirements of the service strategy. These structures are detailed in Fig 3a.

To fulfil the requirements of the research questions, the study required access to a sample of those with knowledge of the children's services workforce and change that was taking place in those services. It also required the inclusion of those with the knowledge of the process and impact of change in Yarvil Council children's services workforce, to ensure the context so critical to the case study was appropriately accounted for.

Fig.3a Management Structures
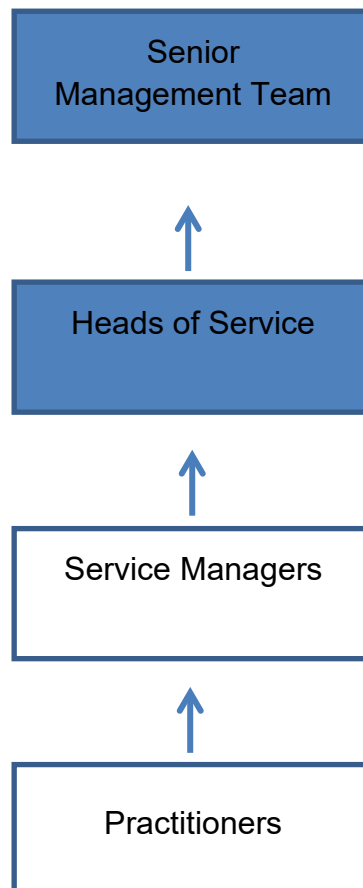
As such, the criteria for inclusion in sample are as follows.

Participants of sample 2 were required to be:

- A head of service, or more senior manager, within the children's services department;
- In the leadership job family (which requires the employee to be of a sufficiently senior grade to have leadership accountabilities for children's services);
- Accountable for services delivered to children, young people and in some cases, their families.

Exclusions were:

- Those without accountability for services delivered to children, young people and families (such as finance, management information and human resources);
- Service managers, as they are not be required, or expected, to have the knowledge of the workforce or changes to children's services as for those in the leadership job family. Furthermore, some service managers may meet the criteria for and therefore could be included in sample 1, if they fulfilled the criteria.

3.4.4 Sample 3 - Children's Services Leadership sample

Since the Children Act (2006) local authorities with responsibilities for children's services have been required to have a Director of Children's Services (DCS). The 152 local authority DCS's are represented by the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), which provides a collective voice for leaders of children's services, and is the access point nationally for central government (ADCS, 2013). It was identified that to fulfil the requirements of the research questions, the study required access to a sample of those with knowledge of the children's services workforce and with change in those services. As such, inclusion criteria for sample 3 are as follows.

Participants were required to be:

- A Director of Children's Services, either substantively or acting;
- Currently in post.

3.4.5 Access to the sample

Access to samples 1 and 2 (Workforce Practitioner sample and Workforce Leadership sample) was permitted, as this has been granted by the Director of Children's Services, subject to their willingness to participate. Furthermore, these samples were practicable as due to their employment within the research organisation they are both contactable.

Sample 3 (Children's Services Leadership Sample) were accessible via the ADCS Network of which the DCS in Yarvil was a member, for which sector-led improvement is a priority, and also through my professional networks in my paid role.

3.4.6 Sample size

The professional groups which comprised those that meet the inclusion criteria for sample 1 are: foster carers, residential care workers, children's centre workers, family support workers, youth workers and social workers, amongst others. The potential sample is estimated to comprise of 70 individuals from different professional groups within the Yarvil Council children's services. The potential sample were contacted initially by group email inviting their participation in the research providing a two week window for response, then a personal reminder email or telephone call to non-responders followed after the two working weeks, offering a further working week to respond. Non-responders, and those who declined to participate in the research were removed from the sample after three working weeks from the initial email.

Sample 2 comprised of 16 individuals from the leadership team of Yarvil children's services. The potential sample were contacted initially by group email inviting their participation in the research providing a two week window for response, then a personal reminder email or telephone call to non-responders following after the two working weeks, offering a further working week to respond. Non-responders, and those who declined to participate in the research were removed from the sample after three working weeks and three working days from the initial email.

Sample 3 included a direct invitation to two Directors of Children's Services (DCS) in other areas of the country to Yarvil, as a source of comparison to service leaders from within Yarvil, with each contacted by email in advance to advise them of the research and to seek their consent to participate in the interview.

3.5   Data collection

3.5.1   Choice of data collection tools

The research questions required not only different samples, but also different data collection methods, dependent on the nature of the research question, the sample group and the method of analysis. As such, a staged, multi-method, multi-sample approach to data collection was used, linked to the samples identified and each of the research objectives, as described in table 3b.

Table 3b: Research objectives and data collection sources and methods

Research aims/objectives	Data sources	Method of data collection
To critique the concept of social pedagogy and its defining characteristics	Knowledge from literature, and themes from analysis;	Literature review and analysis
	Workforce practitioners (sample group 1);	Questionnaires (stage 1); Focus groups (stage 2); Interviews (stage 3)
	Workforce leadership (sample group 2);	Focus groups (stage 3)
	Children's Services leadership (sample group 3)	Interviews (stage 3)
To explore the influence of social pedagogy on the values and practice of Yarvil Council's children's services workforce	- Workforce practitioners (sample group 1)	Questionnaires (stage 1); Focus groups (stage 2); - Interviews (stage 3)
	- Workforce leadership (sample group 2)	- Focus groups (stage 3)
To identify and explore	Workforce practitioners	Questionnaires (stage

the possible challenges and benefits from applying the principles of social pedagogy as a conceptual framework	(sample group 1); -	1); Focus groups (stage 2); - Interviews (stage 3)
	Workforce leadership (sample group 2); -	- Focus groups (stage 3)
	Children's Services leadership (sample group 3) -	- Interviews (stage 3)
To explore where, if anywhere, social pedagogy should fit within the current English children's services workforce	Workforce practitioners (sample group 1); -	Questionnaires (stage 1); Focus groups (stage 2); - Interviews (stage 3)
	Workforce leadership (sample group 2); -	- Focus groups (stage 3)
	Children's Services leadership (sample group 3) -	- Interviews (stage 3)
To explore the perceived role of social pedagogy as a change agent intervention for Yarvil Council's children's services workforce.	Workforce practitioners (sample group 1); -	Questionnaires (stage 1); Focus groups (stage 2); - Interviews (stage 3)
	Workforce leadership (sample group 2); -	Focus groups (stage 3)

3.5.1.1 Stage 1 data collection

Sample 1 was the largest of the 3 sample groups, and was the only sample group engaged at stage 1 of the data collection. Questionnaires were the chosen method for this stage and sample as they provide a standardised tool for data collection (Brace, 2008), thus allowing larger numbers to participate in a method that could be self-completed, to enable emergent themes from the literature review. Data from questionnaires would allow for comparison

between different professional groups, and for exploring the influence of the types of engagement with social pedagogy experienced by different participants. It also provided the scope for respondents to consider a broad range of themes, in both prompted and unprompted styles.

The questionnaire for use with sample 1 was designed with the use of open questions, and those requiring a response using a Likert item allowed unprompted responses to broader questions, in addition to questions which allowed a strength of feeling or agreement with prompted statements (see appendix C). This questionnaire design provided narrative data from which, using thematic analysis as described later in this chapter, themes emerged which were used to inform the lines of enquiry in later data collection stages and data collection with other sample groups. Use of a series of Likert items to gather quantitative data within the questionnaire has been identified to provide more objective measures, to complement the subjective measures provided by open questions in the questionnaire, and also the data collected from focus groups and interviews (Bell, 2010). As Likert-type items work better with larger sample sizes, and as such, this approach was only used with the largest sample – sample 1 (Hartley, 2014). The use of a series of Likert items also allowed sub-groups to be analysed by units, in particular by professional groups. The Likert item questions are designed with both positively and negatively worded questions to prevent a tendency towards lower or higher scores. A 4-point Likert-style series was used to confer strength of feeling and to encourage participants to commit to a certain position, rather than provide the option for indecision or neutrality provided by odd-numbered scales (Brown, 2006), with the additional option of a 'not applicable' and 'no opinion' response.

In addition to use of a series of Likert items in response to closed questions, open ended questions were also used to enable exploration of themes (Cohen et al (2007). Open questions explored participants' understanding of social pedagogy, their experience of the influence of social pedagogy on their values and practice, and how the context in which they work influenced any changes.

The types of questionnaire to be used were also considered, in particular whether to use a paper based, emailed or online approach. Consideration was given to which would be most likely to achieve a high response rate and which would enable the most authentic responses to questions asked. Use of a paper based or emailed questionnaire was that, even if instructed to do otherwise, there would be a temptation to glance through the questions, and in doing so,

identify ideas or themes that would not have been raised without the prompt from those later questions thus reducing honesty and breadth of answers. An online survey could restrict progression to later sections until the earlier open questions had been responded to – this would allow more control over the sequence of responses. However, using an online system presented particular ethical issues with regard to storage of data, ensuring that data was secure and met information governance standards. To explore which method of questionnaire distribution was most appropriate for the sample, a pilot was undertaken, with participants in the pilot data collection stage asked their views. In response, an emailed document was chosen as the primary method of distribution, with participants offered the alternative of a paper version if they preferred.

The pilot was undertaken with two participants using a draft questionnaire, and an attached feedback form seeking their views on its content, including checking that every question is: necessary and useful, unbiased, understood by the respondent, expresses the alternative regarding the point of the question, and not objectionable (Cohen 2007). The feedback form used to appraise the appropriateness of the draft questionnaire is attached as appendix D. Participants in the pilot were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements relating to the draft questionnaire. The results from the feedback forms are included in table 3d, and no additional comments relating to the content or design of the questionnaire were made by either participant. Following the feedback from the pilot, no changes were made to the questionnaire.

Table 3d: Results from pilot of draft questionnaire (numbers refer to numbers of participants who indicated that measure as their response)

	I strongly disagree	I somewhat disagree	I neither agree nor disagree	I somewhat agree	I strongly agree
Relevant					2
Time-consuming	2				
Objectionable	2				
Understandable					2

In the questionnaire used at stage 1 of the data collection process, sample 1 participants were asked whether they were willing to participate in a focus group with other professionals in similar roles. Those that accepted were invited to participate in focus groups, which were shaped according to the professional grouping of the participants, which were defined following analysis of the questionnaire data, as described in later in this chapter. The professional groupings were identified as follows:

- Professional group 1 - Children's Residential Workers;
- Professional group 2 – Child and Family Support Workers;
- Professional group 3 – Practice Development and Training Workers.

Focus groups at stage 2 enabled groups of individuals with a common professional purpose to discuss and comments on, from personal experience, the subject of the research (Powell et al, 1996). This approach allowed group interactions by those from similar professional groups based on key themes emerging from stage 1 questionnaires, to allow data and new insights to be gained produced by the interaction between participants. The use of focus groups at stage 2 was chosen so as to explore participants' experiences, attitudes, and feelings, in a way in which would not be feasible using other methods, such as interviews or observation.

Although focus groups are limited in terms of their ability to generalise findings to a whole population, and due to the small numbers of participants and the likelihood that the participants will not be a representative sample (Morgan 1988), the choice of a case study approach for this research project was not seeking high levels of generalisabiltiy from the findings. The group nature of focus groups may discourage from participants sharing personal, confidential or potentially contentious information however this risk was mitigating by complementing focus groups with one to one interviews at data collection stage 3, at which individual views were explored.

As this research was paradigmatically founded in the belief that social constructions are culturally constituted, the realities of social pedagogy experienced by participants in each sample were more likely to be revealed within the social gathering and the associated interaction, which gave me as the researcher greater insight into the contextual considerations for the phenomena being explored. The focus groups also revealed a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context, and within a focus group setting participants

took the initiative which enabled new insights to emerge, as described further in chapter five. As such, the focus groups both explored emerging themes and generated new foci. The use of a focus group also allowed the degree of consensus on particular themes between participants to be explored (Morgan and Kreuger, 1993). Furthermore, focus groups data complemented the other methods of data collection used at stage 1 and 3, especially for triangulation (Morgan, 1988) and validity checking.

3.5.1.3 Stage 3 data collection

Data collection at stage 3 involved all 3 sample groups, using a combination of focus groups and interviews, as described in table 3d.

For sample group 1, themes from the earlier data collection stages were explored in more detail through use of semi-structured interviews with representatives of the professional groups within the sample, as identified in section 3.6.1.2, and were undertaken on a one to one basis, using open-ended, pre-planned questions. The strength of this data collection tool as the final data collection stage for sample group 1 is that it provided the opportunity to probe, discuss and clarify complex or challenging themes emerging from the previous data, and to obtain individual attitudes, beliefs and feelings. Participants were able to talk in some depth and detail, explore meanings behind actions or statements with the participant is able to speak for themselves with little direction from the interviewer, thus reducing my pre-judgement as the researcher of what is important or otherwise. Structured interviews were considered, but as argued by Leech (2002), these are appropriate 'when the researcher already knows a lot about the subject matter and all possible responses are familiar, and the only goal is to count how many people fall into each category of response' (p665). As the stage 3 data collection is required to allow deeper exploration and description of themes emergent from earlier stages of data collection and analysis, semi-structured interviews were better used to generate insight.

To reduce risks associated with interviews, such as use of confusing questions, or misinterpretation by participants, the planned questions were assessed against the list of mistakes to avoid by Mitchell and Joley (2007). These are to avoid: leading questions, questions that invite the social desirability bias, double-barrelled questions, long questions, negations, irrelevant questions, poorly worded response options, long or complicated words, and ambiguous words and phrases. Reliability of interview data is also low, as it is difficult to repeat a semi-structured interview, and spontaneous questions asked of some but not others

can be seen as unfair, and makes the approach prone to interviewer bias. The validity of the data is also potentially limited, as there is no test for the truthfulness of the participant's responses. However, these risks were mitigated by the use of interviews as the third stage of data collection with the same sample group, thus providing the opportunity only to explore previously emerged themes, and for data to be compared for reliability with data collected in earlier stages.

Semi-structured interviews at data collection stage 3 were also undertaken with sample group 3, with interviews taking place with children's service leaders from 3 neighbouring Councils, to explore themes from the Yarvil experience, compare insights and consider the generalisabilty of the Yarvil experiences and findings.

Also at stage 3, focus groups took place with sample group 2 - workforce leadership from within Yarvil Council's children's services - to triangulate findings from the data from sample, and generate insights regarding emergent themes and research questions from the perspective of services leadership.

3.5.2   Data collection tools content

3.5.2.1 Questionnaire

The final questionnaire, which is attached as appendix C, was designed in 3 sections, as follows:

- Section A - characteristics of the respondents;
- Section B – exploration of respondents' experience, understanding and feelings regarding social pedagogy, linked to the research questions;
- Section C – invitation for any comment or feedback from respondents.

Section A included closed questions relating to the characteristics of the respondents, including:

- Professional role;
- Age (identified by selecting an age band, such as 29 or under, 50-59 etc);
- Gender;
- Length of employment in the same or similar roles (identified by selecting a band, such as fewer than 2 years, 11-15 years etc);

- Nature of involvement in social pedagogy (multiple answers were permittable, examples given included participation in a 2 day Introduction to Social Pedagogy Course within the department, or participation in a related university qualification).

This data was sought to explore whether there were patterns or outliers that related to characteristics such as professional role, length of service or type of involvement with social pedagogy.

Section B included both open questions, and questions requiring respondents to indicate the strength of their response using a series of Likert items, which sought to explore themes emerging from the literature review in chapter two, and linked to the research questions, as described in appendix B.   Section C concluded the questionnaire with an open question inviting any further comments or feedback from respondents.

3.5.2.2 Stage 2 focus groups

Three focus groups, to explore emergent themes from the questionnaire data were undertaken at stage 2 with questionnaire respondents from stage 1 who indicated they would be happy to participate. The focus groups were undertaken with groups of professionals from the 3 different professional groups which emerged from the questionnaire respondents which were as follows:

- Professional group 1 - Children's Residential Workers;
- Professional group 2 – Child and Family Support Workers;
- Professional group 3 – Practice Development and Training Workers.

Each focus group explored key themes from the questionnaire, in particular exploring where there were differences in response, or strength of response, between different professional groups and where there appeared to be outliers based on questionnaire responses. The results are detailed in chapters four to seven.

3.5.2.3 Stage 3 focus groups and interviews

Interviews were undertaken at stage 3 with an individual from each of the 3 professional groups, who had previously completed the questionnaire and/or participated in a focus group, and indicated they were happy to participate in a further interview. The focus of the interview was to seek richer accounts of the phenomena identified in the earlier data

collection stages, to clarify any inconsistencies, and enable individual views to inform the emergent findings.

A focus group was also undertaken with service leaders from Yarvil Council at stage 3. The focus group explored their views and experiences of social pedagogy linked to the research questions, and also explored and sought responses to themes emerging from stage 1 and 2 data collection stages. Interviews were also undertaken with sample group 3, with interviews taking place with children's service leaders from two neighbouring Councils, to explore themes from the Yarvil experience, compare insights and consider the generalisabilty of the Yarvil experiences and findings.

3.6 Data analysis

3.6.1 Data types

The data gathered varied in its type and form, dependent on the data collection tool used, and the stage of data collection. These are described in table 3f.

Table 3f: Data types by source and data collection stage

Data collection stage	Data collection tool	Data type	Data Source
Stage 1	Questionnaire	Written narrative	Open questions
		Scales	Series of Likert items
Stage 2	Focus group (sample group 1)	Verbal narrative	Open questions
Stage 3	Semi-structured interviews (sample group 1)	Verbal narrative	Open questions
	Semi-structure interviews (sample group 3)	Verbal narrative	Open questions
	Focus group (sample group 2)	Verbal narrative	Open questions

3.6.2 Analysis of Likert item series data

The data produced from the series of Likert items within the questionnaire is ordinal. As parametric tests such as standard deviations are invalid for ordinal data, non-parametric statistics were used to analyse the Likert item data (Gorard, 2010). This included descriptive statistics such as mode and median to identify the frequency, and split of distribution. This data is analysed with results presented in chapters four.

3.6.3 Analysis of narrative data

The open questions used in data collection stages 1 to 3 produced rich but complex and abstract descriptions of the experiences and views of social pedagogy by the research participants. As such a means of analysing this data, synthesising its content and information into descriptive and analytical themes inductively was required, that was consistent with a constructionist research paradigm (Ryen, 2002). Thematic analysis was selected for this purpose, as it provides a flexible tool for producing a detailed account of qualitative data through identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As this research was multi-stage, thematic analysis provided the flexibility for the research tools to develop iteratively in response to emergent findings, rather than adhering to any particular theoretical framework, such as would be required using Grounded Theory Methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

In undertaking the thematic analysis of the narrative data, themes were identified that captured something important that represented a patterned response or meaning in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The significance of emergent themes was not inferred from open questions in the stage 1 data. These were triangulated, explored and verified by comparison with data from Likert item responses, and from later data collection stages, and as such the analytic approach was inductive with the data complemented by exploring the socio-cultural context in which the participants were responding (Thomas and Harden, 2007). For example, the questionnaire data identified themes such as improved confidence for workers, increased creativity and change to risk perception in working with children, as detailed in chapters 4 and 5, which were then explored in greater depth through focus groups and interviews.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that thematic analysis provides a 'method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data' (p. 79). The six steps they prescribe (familiarisation with the data; generating initial codes; searching for codes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the report) were used to inform the approach taken to analysis of the data extracted at each data collection stage. However, the stages were not followed in a linear fashion, due to the multi-stage nature of the data collection which required an iterative approach as described below.

The first stage of handling the raw data from the questionnaire involved familiarisation with the data, through reading and re-reading of responses, then to allow greater immersion and active engagement with the data, all responses were transferred into a spreadsheet matrix which could be explored according to each question asked in the survey. For data collection stages 2 and 3, focus groups and interviews were audio recorded, and these were first listened to in their entirety, then transcribed into written documents, allowing greater comprehension of and familiarisation with each discussion point.

Each respondent was assigned a unique identifier, based on their professional role. For example, social workers were assigned the identifier 'SW' and a corresponding number (eg SW1, SW2), Residential Children's Workers were assigned the identifier 'RCW' and a corresponding number (eg. RCW1, RCW2). Using the matrix for stage 1 narrative data, preliminary codes were identified by highlighting features in the text which appeared meaningful, and a new code category in a separate document was created per feature, as described in table 3g. For the questionnaire responses, the codes assigned linked to questions asked, with the multiple responses fitting the same code identified and assigned to the identifier of the respondent, as described in table 3g. To shape units of analysis and to inform the structure of the focus groups, the professional roles were also analysed and grouped into 3 distinct groups which included those with similar roles, as follows:

- Professional group 1 - Children's Residential Workers (included staff working in a children's residential home);
- Professional group 2 – Child and Family Support Workers (included staff such as children's centre and childcare workers, youth workers and social workers, working directly with families but not in a residential environment);
- Professional group 3 – Practice Development and Training Workers (included workers who provided professional and expert advice to staff in settings, such as

teachers within the virtual school for children in care, safeguarding trainers and workforce development managers).

The analysis of the questionnaire responses was undertaken as the data was collected, rather than at one time, to allow an iterative approach to reflection on and analysis of the content of the data.

The codes became numerous, and the code document was populated with hundreds of items, with the source of the response identified using the individual codes assigned to each respondent listed adjacent to the code descriptor, so that the potential interest in each code could be tracked by both overall frequency, and the role of the respondent. Interpretive analysis of the codes was undertaken to inform preliminary themes for exploration in more detail and reviewed in later data collection stages. These themes were informed by prevalence, and where there appeared to be a relationship between one or more codes, with differences between sub-samples noted. The analysis was also completed prior to the design and undertaking of the focus groups with sample group 1. The codes were further populated with data from stages 2 and 3 transcriptions, to ensure a congruence of the themes identified across each stage, and to identify emergent themes from later data collections. The coding and theme development was also informed from focus group and interview data to include a focus on emphasis and strength of feeling, in addition to frequency, to identify where the greatest meaning was applied by participants.

Table 3g: Examples of coding of questionnaire responses

Code	Response	Respondents	Prevalence
B1 **What does the term 'social pedagogy' mean to you?**			
B1A	Difficult to answer	RCW1	1
B1B	Encouraging integration into society	RCW1/ T1/ SW2	3
B1C	Nurturing children	RCW1/ T1/ SW2/ RCW3/ RCW4/ FW1/ FW3/ FM1	8
B4 **What has been most challenging about social pedagogy for you?**			
B4A	To not lose conviction	RCW1	1
B4B	Staff not wanting to change	RCW1/ PT1/ RCW4/	6

		RCW3/ MAT1/ RCW8	
B4C	Other staff don't understand it	RCW2/ FC1/ MAT4/ FW2/ RCW7/ RCW8/ FM1	7

The prevalence of responses against codes was used to identify themes, which were identified and named. For example, themes formed from prevalent responses included:

- Social pedagogy requiring that the child's interests and personality shape the learning activities (coded against 5 respondents for question B1, 2 respondents for question B2, and 3 respondents for question B3);
- Use of creative approaches (coded against 3 respondents for question B1, and 5 respondents for question B3);
- Social pedagogy not something new (coded against 1 respondent for question B1, 5 respondents for question B2, and 1 respondent for question B4).

A theme titled 'miscellaneous' was also established, to ensure single response code data was retained within the scope of analysis for inclusion with data from later collection stages.

Upon analysis of all of the stage 1 data, initial themes were named, as described in table 4b. As detailed in chapter four, ongoing analysis at each data collection stage identified where emergent themes were reinforced by further data, and where new themes emerged. There were three iterations of this step, following the analysis of each data collection stage results. The three focus groups (one with each of the professional groups identified above) with sample group 1 explored themes from analysis of the questionnaire data, including where prevalence varied across professional groupings. Analysis of this data also commenced with immersion in the data, which included transcribing of verbal narrative accounts obtained through the focus groups. The transcriptions were then subject to the same coding approach, initially distinctly from the questionnaire data and then combined to further develop the themes, including with the insights generated about the strength of feeling from participants, rather than just prevalence, in an inductive loop (Ryen, 2002), and to allow new lines of enquiry to emerge (Thornberg and Charmaz, 2011). This was then repeated for the stage 3 data collection data. By constant comparison of codes, new codes emerged, and the most

significant or frequent initial codes will led to focussed coding which could be escalated to become conceptual categories or themes iteratively tested at each data collection stage and with the different samples to deepen understanding and increase generalizability (Miles and Huberman, 1994, and Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To relay the results of this analysis, the data is presented in chapter four, but supported by examples from the narrative and extractions from transcriptions in chapter's five to seven, to allow the significance of the identified themes to be demonstrated, linked to the research questions.

3.7 Limitations of the Methodology

A limitation of this study relates to the use of a single researcher, which limited the potential for validating data analysis and findings through challenge and scrutiny between multiple members of a research team, and their divergent perspectives (Eisenhardt, 1989, Soiferman, 2010). Use of an inductive approach to data analysis by a single researcher resulted in findings that are likely to be different to those by a different researcher (Thomas, 2003). However, comprehensive and open presentation of the data and methods used for its interpretation enable the reader of this research to validate the findings.

Generalisability of findings in a statistical sense (Yin, 1994) was not an aim of this study using a case study research. However, the findings may be transferable if the findings are credible, applicable, consistent and neutral (Erlandson et al,1993). To meet these criteria, and to provide assurance of an appropriately disciplined approach to the inquiry, the nature, sources and content of the data collected must be confirmed, and the approach to the data and its link to resulting interpretations must be confirmable so that the logic of the approach can be tested (Lincoln and Guba,1986). The description of the approach undertaken in this chapter, and the presentation of the data in chapter four seeks to mitigate the limitations of the approach taken in terms of the transferability and reliability of the findings.

A weakness of case study approaches can be that the volume of data generated can result in theory that is rich in details but lacks the simplicity of overall perspective (Eisenhardt, 1989). To mitigate this weakness, constant comparison analysis was used across each data collection stage and unit of analysis to enable themes and constructs to be focused on insights which demonstrated the greatest prevalence and strength of feeling. Furthermore, the degree of unreliability of the measures used, which related to abstracts concepts and perceptions of social pedagogy, was considered and acknowledged (Onwuegbezie and Leech,2005). As

such, the boundaries of what this study can contribute to understanding of social pedagogy are discussed in chapter five. In addition, the sample size was smaller than anticipated due to a low response rate to invitations to participate in the study.

3.8   Ethical Issues

3.8.1   Consent

The approaches and methods used in this research project abided by the University of Derby's Policy and Code of Practice on Research Ethics (2011), and the BERA guidelines for educational research (2011). Those engaging in the research only did so if they provided informed consent achieved by provision of an information sheet and consent form (attached as appendices 3c and d) thus ensuring that participation was an autonomous act. Consent to their participation was either by signed and scanned consent form, or by email confirmation of consent from their Council work email, which is via a secure email server. Participants in the questionnaire at stage 1 (sample 1) were invited to participate in the research on a voluntary basis, by letter sent by email, prior to the research being undertaken. All potential participants in sample 1 had access to email. Potential participants in later data collection stages were provided with an information sheet in advance, and consent was sought on the day of the focus group, via an information sheet and consent form.

Due to the researcher's position as a senior manager in the organisation, the voluntary nature of participation was be emphasised. Some individual participants needed to gain consent from their manager to engage in stage 2 and 3 data collection (focus groups and interviews) and as such, information materials were provided for managers upon request, although none were requested. All participants agreeing to take part did so on an informed basis, as each was provided with a comprehensive information sheet to give potential participants the opportunity to decide whether or not to participate. The information sheet is attached as appendix E. The information sheet explained the nature of the research, why they have been invited, the data collection approaches, how their data would be used and in what way and to whom the research, including their data, would be reported. The information sheet was a MS Word document, comprehensive in its content but without excessive length or complex detail or vocabulary/jargon that might have discouraged a potential participant from reading it or

taking part. A discussion in person or over the telephone with the researcher was also offered to enable any potential participant to ask further questions.

A consent sheet (appendix F) was used, with renewed consent sought for further participation in each data collection stage to ensure participation was voluntary, and consent was not assumed. In seeking consent, participants form the staff sample were given options so that they could consent, or not, to each stage of the data collection process. The return of forms by email ensured that only the intended sample that had given their consent were able to access the questionnaire.

As anticipated, issues of literacy or language did not act as a barrier to informed consent as all participants were employees of Yarvil Council or other local authorities in a role for which literacy and language capabilities are a pre-requisite, and testing in application and interview for roles.

3.8.2   Deception

The information on which participants make a decision about whether to engage in the research process will be detailed, and will include the genuine reasons for which the research is being conducted, so as to avoid deception. For example, no assurance was given that all participants would receive a copy of the final research findings, as given the term of the study over up to 6 years, retaining contact with all participants in a mobile workforce may not be possible. It was also be made clear in which circumstances their views may be disregarded, for example when there is only one person from a professional group, or where the comments did not relate to the research objectives.

Any email communications with participants were sent with anonymous recipients to protect the identities of those who wished not to have their identities revealed, and were marked as confidential. Additionally misrepresentation of data was avoided, to prevent risk of favouring a preferred hypothesis. This was be done by making anonymised data available in chapter four, to protect the confidentiality of participants, and to ensure the reader of the research can validate any findings.

3.8.3 Debriefing

All participants still working for Yarvil Council upon completion of the research are offered a debriefing to share the findings and report on the outcomes of their involvement in the form of a presentation with the opportunity to ask questions to which they would be invited. The outcomes of the report may be reported in academic journals, in conferences, in policy development settings and within Yarvil Council meetings and settings – this was be made clear to participants in the introductory letter explaining the research.

3.8.4 Withdrawal from the investigation

In the invitation letter, original information sheet and at the point of gaining each consent, participants were advised that they could withdraw up to the point at which their data is analysed. For focus groups and interviews, consent was sought for their continued participation prior to each to ensure it was not their desire to withdraw. Furthermore, as recommended by BERA (2011), the researcher will 'examine their own actions to assess whether they have contributed to the decision to withdraw and whether a change of approach might persuade the participants to re-engage' (p6). As such, any participants choosing to withdraw at any point after consent would have been asked whether they will share their reasons for withdrawal. However, no participants withdrew from the study. I also remained observant and cognisant of participants' unspoken expressions of reluctance to continue to participate, or potential irritation with data collection in face to face encounters such as focus groups to ensure all participants engage willingly.

The ways in which participants could indicate their intent to discontinue was be made clear in the information provided, and on each consent form, copies of which were kept by the participant. Methods for expressing a desire to withdraw by participants included by email, letter or by telephone to the researcher.

3.8.5 Confidentiality

Privacy is also a central principle in ethical research, and cognisance throughout the research was given to both anonymity and confidentiality. Data gathered through questionnaires and focus groups was anonymised, with each participant given a non-identifiable code, and kept

confidential with data stored in password protected files, in adherence with the Data Protection Act 1998. Codes were assigned to participants both as a professional identification, and as a number. Other details such as age, gender or working location were not be evident within the codes allocated to prevent unintended identification of individuals.

Participants were advised how their data will be stored and used in the initial information sheet and consent form.

Identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research was not disclosed (for example, references to working locations or names of others they work with), including references to others not in the sample, and relevant to the research. A pseudonym has been used to represent the Council which is the subject of the case study throughout the research to protect the identities of those involved. Caution was also used in referencing either contextual, geographical or other details that may unintentionally identify any participant. This presented a challenge if there is only one person undertaking a distinct role, which even if grouped by profession and given a number may still be identifiable, and as such professionals were grouped by similar professions from data collection stage 2. Also, professional groups numbering fewer than 2 were excluded from the analysis. Participants engaging in the questionnaire, interview and focus group stages of the data collection were protected from having their comments and information shared with their manager.

Specific information gathered during the data collection was not used if it is requested by the participant, such as off the record comments, or when a participant requested that their comment 'was not for minuting'. The only exception to the protection of confidentiality would have been in the case of disclosure that a child is being harmed, as required by Yarvil Council's safeguarding policies and procedures, and this was made clear in the information provided in the consent form.

3.8.6   Protection of participants

Researchers must make known to participants 'any predictable detriment arising from the process or findings of the research' (BERA, 2011, p7). Every effort was taken to ensure that this was so, and that participants participated voluntarily, and free from any coercion and undue influence. Due to the potential for some participants to be influenced by my dual role as researcher, and senior manager within their employing organisation, to minimise perceived influence, potential participants were advised in the initial letter and information sheet, that

they had the permission of the employing organisation but not the instruction of them to participate and that doing so was entirely of their own decision. This was emphasised in the introductory information provided to potential participants. The initial information also detailed how data would be used and stored so that each individual could consider the relative risks and benefits of participating. Every questionnaire and focus group was undertaken with an underpinning ethic of respect for each individual, and each was treated fairly, sensitively and was accurately represented.

The main risk identified to participants in this research project related to their psychological or emotional well-being. Although it is acknowledged that it is difficult to anticipate what participants might feel sensitive about, or find upsetting, piloting data collection tools (in particular questionnaires) reduced potential insensitivity of questions to participants. Participants were also be able to decline to answer any questions about which they felt uncomfortable in all stages of the data collection.

It was anticipated to be likely that the level of risk to participants' well-being would vary throughout the research process and that the point of sharing outcomes of data analysis within the organisation may be a higher risk period. This was managed by regular communications to keep participants abreast of how their data is being used and shared.

There was also a risk to the emotional well-being of the researcher. This was mitigated by regular communication with Director of Studies, garnering critical friends and careful planning of data collection and analysis to allow suitable breaks. A break from study was used in 2016 following a period of ill health to protect my wellbeing as the researcher, with the support of my Director of Studies.

3.8.7   Giving advice

The researcher offered information and guidance with regard to the data collection processes and analysis, and the structure of research. For questions asked, or advice sought, not directly related to the research project a referral was be made to an appropriate person of authority or a suitably qualified professional.

3.8.8   Research undertaken in public places

Focus groups took place in Yarvil Council buildings, including the Council's main administrative base and venues such as children's centres, to ensure privacy and safety of the setting. Use of core Council buildings preserved anonymity due to the frequency of attendance at the core buildings for multiple reasons including training, meetings and seminars. The main administrative building is centrally located, thus limiting travel time for participants who may live on the outskirts of the area.

3.8.9 Data protection

All records were kept confidential, with data stored in password protected files, in adherence with the Data Protection Act 1998. Participants were advised how their data would be stored and used in the initial information sheet and consent form. All data had pseudonyms applied and stored in a password protected file on a computer hard-drive, and on a password protected portable USB storage device. Paper records or voice recordings produced will be stored for at least seven years in a locked filing cabinet, made available only to the researcher. Email correspondence was marked as confidential.

3.9   Conclusion

This chapter has built on the previous chapters by providing the rationale and methodological considerations for this research project. My own research paradigms and role as the researcher were explored, and the chosen research design and methods were explained and justified, including the use of a qualitative, case study approach. The sampling strategy was described, along with the means by which data has been collected and analysed. The limitations of the approach used were explored, and the ethical considerations and mitigations were detailed.

The methods used, as described in this chapter, enabled themes from the literature which are detailed in chapter two to be explored, and new findings and emergent constructs related to social pedagogy to be identified. The results of the data collection, along with analysis building on the learning from the literature are detailed in chapters four to seven where the research questions are fully explored, and new theories and models are generated.

4   Chapter four: Findings

This chapter provides the findings of the data collection and analysis undertaken to explore the identified research problem - that there is an undeveloped knowledge base with regard to social pedagogy in children's services in England, in particular for services other than those for children in care. The data was collected and processed as described in chapter three which set out the methodology for the study. This chapter presents the results from each of the three data collection stages undertaken, with three different sample groups and the five research questions, as described in chapter one, explored at each data collection stage.

4.1   Data collection stage 1: Questionnaires

The first data collection stage involved the distribution of 70 questionnaires (see appendix C) by email to practitioners who met the inclusion criteria, as described in the sampling strategy in chapter 3.4. 22 completed questionnaires were received. A further seven practitioners responded to decline the invitation to participate and the reasons provided are detailed in appendix G. The breakdown of the practitioners who responded by professional group was as follows, with further information about the profile of the group, resulting from section A of the questionnaire, detailed in appendix G:

- Residential care worker (n=8)
- Educational support (n=3)
- Training/ professional support for practitioners (n=3)
- Family support worker (n=2)
- Multi-agency team workers (n=2)
- Children's centre/ childcare worker (n=2)
- Social workers (n=1)
- Foster carer (n=1)

Participants were asked in the consent form for the questionnaire whether they would be interested in participating in a future focus group. Five respondents declined this invitation (two residential care workers, one professional support worker, one childcare worker and one multi-agency team worker). For the purpose of analysing the data in manageable and comparable professional groupings, and to provide suitable numbers for focus groups, the respondents were grouped according their professional roles into one of the following groups:

1. Residential children's workers

2. Child and family support workers

3. Practice Development and training workers

4. Other professionals (those not in the above groups, which constituted one individual, who was a foster carer).

Table 4a: Professional Groupings of respondents

Professional Group	Professions included	Number of respondents
1 - Children's Residential Workers	Children's Residential Workers	8
2 – Child and Family Support Workers	Multi-agency team workers; Social workers; Children's centre/ childcare workers; Family support workers.	7
3 – Practice Development and Training Workers	Educational support workers; Practice support workers.	6
4 - Others	Foster carer	1

Every respondent was assigned a unique identifier, based on their professional role. Each response to the question was read and analysed and initial codes were generated at the most basic level, with each individual observation, comment and remark by every participant recorded systematically, and assigned a unique code, as described in chapter three.

4.1.1   Questionnaire data: characteristics of social pedagogy

Section B of the questionnaire opened with question B1, 'what does social pedagogy mean to you?' which sought a free text response. Each response to the question was read and analysed, as described in chapter 3.6. Initial codes were generated at the most basic level, with each individual observation, comment and remark by every participant recorded systematically, and assigned a unique code. From the responses, 27 individual codes were identified, which were then synthesised to identify emergent themes. Each code was also assigned to one of 5 emergent themes relating to what social pedagogy means to practitioners, and what they identify as its main characteristics, as described in table 4b.

Table 4b: B1 (characteristics of social pedagogy) - thematic analysis of narrative data by prevalence of response

Key:

Values and principles	The approach in practice	Nature of relationships	Personal development for practitioners	Context in which social pedagogy is practiced

Code	Responses from whole sample (22 respondents)	Responses from group 1 (8 respondents	Responses from group 2 (7 respondents)	Responses from group 3 (6 respondents)
It is about working with children and young people	11	5	1	5
About developing potential in a child through nurturing and investing in them	9	5	2	2
Equality, respect and dignity for everyone	6	3	3	0
A holistic approach which is about both care and education	6	2	0	4
Informal/social learning	6	3	1	2
Accepting the whole person, with their interests and attributes directing the learning	5	2	1	2
Learning together – not doing to, doing with	5	2	2	1
Reflection on practice	5	1	2	2
About relationships	5	1	2	2
Sharing activities using the common third	5	2	2	1
The child as an activator of their own development	4	1	2	1
Using theory in practice	4	1	1	2
Thinking about the self in practice using the 3Ps	4	1	2	1
The integration, engagement and contribution of children in society	3	1	0	2
Based on core principles and ethics	3	1	0	2
Freedom to think differently in practice	3	1	1	1
It is a lifestyle – a way of being	3	1	1	1
Provides a common ground and framework for all professionals	3	1	1	1
It is about being more compassionate and caring	3	0	1	2
Creativity in practice	3	1	2	0
Includes working with the family	3	1	1	1
Creating an environment where each person can develop in harmony	2	1	0	1
Provides confidence and skills	2	0	0	2
Using the head, heart and hands	2	0	1	1
Child centred	2	1	1	0
A different approach to risk by pushing boundaries	2	0	1	1
Develops professional practice	2	1	1	0

Examples of the narrative responses received to question B1 include:

'The term and its principles help me understand and describe what is needed to create an environment where human beings can live and develop together in harmony. We are all equal human beings with a great potential if given the right nurturing circumstances to develop.' Residential care worker

'Social Pedagogy to me is a strength based approach that encourages you to reflect on and seek to continually develop your professional practice by considering your own personal values and beliefs and how these influence the way you work with families, young people, children and also colleagues. It encourages you to be creative, look for solutions rather than problems and brings constructive challenge to your everyday practice…. It provides you with the opportunity to not be afraid to try something new and to actively encourage others to do the same to push preconceived 'professional boundaries' while still attending to risk and safety of those you work with. It places children strongly at the heart of the work we do and encourages us to ensure we involve them in all aspects of work that we can.' Child and Family Support Worker

'Social pedagogy is a way of being – it gives a theoretical framework for professional staff to understand the balance between their private and personal self with that of their professional persona. It gives a historical perspective to the things we do when working in children's services and hopefully the confidence and courage to do what is 'right' in terms of healthy human relationships – rather than work to rule within the risk averse framework that is pervasive in our society' Training and practice development worker

The findings relating the characteristics of social pedagogy are explored further in chapter five.

4.1.2 Questionnaire data: influence of social pedagogy

Section B2 of the questionnaire opened with question B2, 'how has social pedagogy influenced you?' which sought data to explore how, if at all, social pedagogy had influenced their practice or values since their engagement with social pedagogy. The same approach to analysis was taken as for question B1, with each response to the question read and analysed, and initial codes assigned.

20 individual codes were identified from the responses, examples of which are given in figure 4c. The codes were then synthesised to identify emergent themes linked to the research

question. Every code was initially assigned to one of the following themes, with the number of codes assigned indicated in brackets:

- Influence on practice (n=9)
- Influence on values(n=5)
- Other (n=6)

Table 4c: B2 (influence on practice and values) – thematic analysis of narrative data by prevalence of codes

Key:

Influence on practice	Influence on values	Other

Code	Responses from whole sample (22 respondents)	Responses from group 1 (8 respondents)	Responses from group 2 (7 respondents)	Responses from group 3 (6 respondents)
Platform for reflection	8	2	1	5
Provided a common language and description for how children's services works	7	1	3	3
Utilises and complements previous learning	6	1	4	1
It is just good practice and following natural instincts	5	2	1	2
Realised the importance of relationships	5	2	3	0
Social pedagogy is not a revelation	4	2	1	1
Now working with young people, not to them or for them	4	2	2	0
Enables thinking outside of the box – liberating practice	4	2	1	1
Enjoy doing things together	3	1	2	0
A new approach to risk	3	2	1	0
Feel more confident and empowered	3	2	1	0
Provided a set of principles for work with children	2	0	1	1
Prepares foster carers for their role	2	0	1	1
Provide tools for working with children	2	1	1	0
Changed how I see young people	2	1	1	0
A lifestyle	2	1	1	0
Feel better about the lives of young people in care	2	2	0	0
Initiated my interest in learning again	2	0	1	1
Personalised learning for children	2	0	2	0
Improved outcomes for young people	2	0	2	0

Many codes from responses to question B2 aligned to emergent themes from B1 responses. For example:

- The approach in practice: respondents identified social pedagogy as a platform for reflection, a common language, a new way of working with young people together, feeling more confidents, and providing tools for personalised learning.
- Values and principles: respondents identified that social pedagogy provided a new approach to risk, a set of principles, a new view of young people and that it was a 'lifestyle'
- Personal development for practitioners: respondents identified that it utilises and complements previous learning, was not necessarily a revelation theoretically, but reinitiated an interest in learning.

Examples of the narrative responses to question B2 include:

'It has re-engaged me in educational philosophy! Made me think about my own practice and that of my colleagues' Training and practice development worker

'I feel a little like Social Pedagogy is just 'good practice' and struggle at times to see how 'new' the principles and values are' Child and family support worker

'Social pedagogy has given me the belief that we can make a difference to the life of the young people's that we care for' Residential care worker.

Section B2 of the questionnaire also invited respondents to provide a response on a Likert-type scale to indicate the strength of any change in their practice or values since their engagement with social pedagogy, based on themes identified from the literature review as described in chapter two.

Frequency analysis identified that for all respondents, the strongest changes were for the following themes for the workers in the sample groups:

- they reflect on the actions of themselves and others more than before;
- they used theory in their practice more than before;
- they were more creative in their practice;
- they view children as more equal in their relationship than before;
- they considered the connection between children and society more than before;

- they avoided taking risks in their practice less than before;
- they considered education to be the role of other professionals less than before.

The greatest spread of responses was regarding sharing aspects of the personal self at work. Overall, stronger responses were received for positively worded questions, than those that were negatively worded. The data from section B2 scale responses was also analysed by professional groups. As professional group 4 ('other') included only one respondent, this group was excluded from comparison analysis of the frequencies of responses between professional groups. Professional group 3 (training and practice development workers) were most likely to respond 'no applicable' or 'no opinion', in particular to questions relating to direct practice with children. For 6 of the 8 questions relating to influence on practice and values, professional group 1 (residential care workers) gave the strongest responses, being most likely to indicate 'much more than before' for positively worded questions, and 'much less than before' for negatively worded questions, than the professional groups 2 and 3. The significance of this data regarding the influence of social pedagogy on practice and values in explored and discussed in chapter five.

Table 4d: Questionnaire section B2 scale responses for all respondents
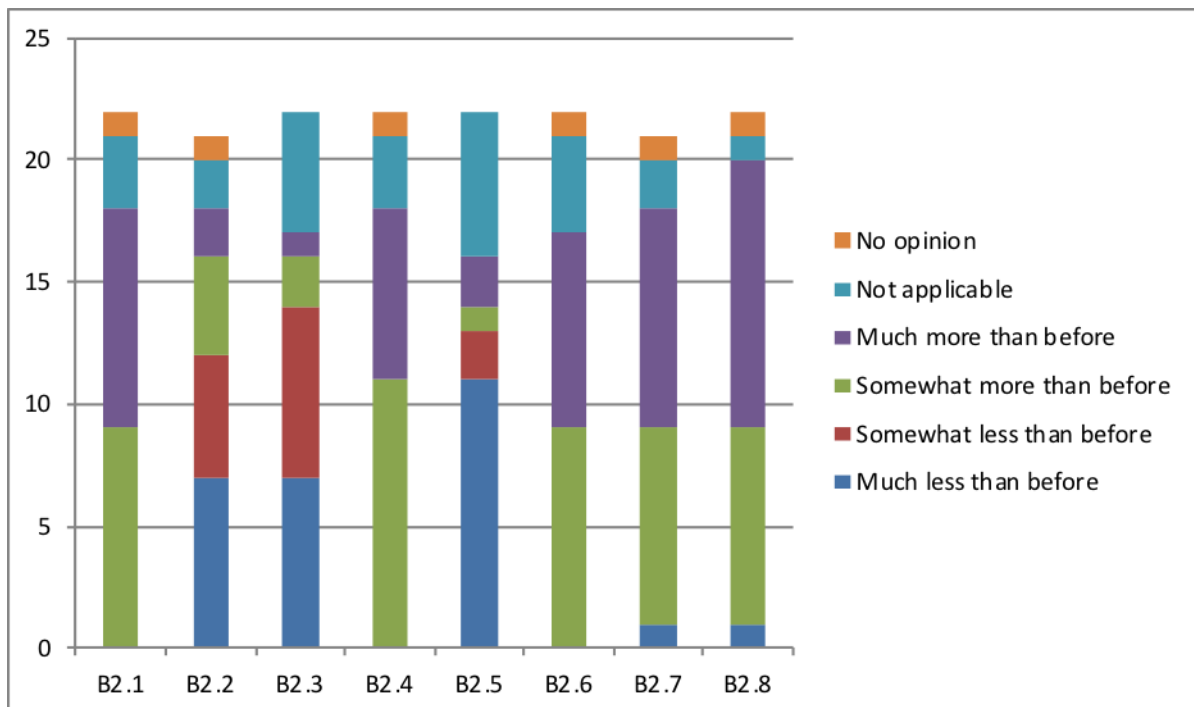
| B2.1 I use theory to inform my practice |
| B2.2 I prefer not to share aspects of my personal life with the children/ young people I work with |

B2.3 I avoid taking risks in my practice
B2.4 I am creative in my practice
B2.5 I consider education of children to be the role of other professionals
2.6 I view the children/ young people I work with as equal in our relationship
2.7 I consider the connection between children and society
2.8 I reflect on the actions of myself and others

4.1.3 Questionnaire data: challenges and benefits of social pedagogy

Section B3 of the questionnaire opened with question 'What, if anything, has been useful or beneficial about social pedagogy for you?' which sought data to explore any perceived benefit of social pedagogy. The same approach to analysis was taken as for question B1, with each response to the question read and analysed, and initial codes assigned. 18 individual codes were identified from the responses, which were then synthesised to identify emergent themes linked to the research question.

Table 4e: Question B3 (benefits of social pedagogy) – narrative data by prevalence of codes

Code	Responses from whole sample (22 respondents)	Responses from group 1 (8 respondents)	Responses from group 2 (7 respondents)	Responses from group 3 (6 respondents)
Workers are able to be more creative	5	2	1	2
Reflection improving practice	4	1	1	2
Importance of relationships	4	1	2	1
Use theory in my practice	4	2	0	2
More open to new ways of working	3	0	2	1
Workers bring more personality into their work	3	1	1	1
Valuing each child as an individual	3	1	1	1
Improved practice with children and young people	3	2	1	0
Better confidence and trust in own ability	3	2	0	1
Residential workers feel more valued	2	2	0	0
Helped to inform and train staff	2	0	1	1
Shared more with young people	2	1	1	0
Refreshed and updated knowledge	2	0	1	1
Engages people at different levels	2	1	0	1
Sense of togetherness in wider community	2	0	1	1
Department's emphasis has helped embed social pedagogy along with other theories such as systemic practice	2	1	1	0
New approach to risk	2	1	0	1

Have always worked this way	2	1	0	1

Examples of narrative responses to question B3 included:

'I've always been a reflective person however I've gained more understanding after researching reflectivity more fully and now I'm able to recognise when I use the theory in my everyday practice and not just the end of a shift or interaction but through the course of the day' Residential care worker

'Social pedagogy however cannot be considered another tool or toolbox of ideas but needs to be seen as a way of personal growth and development for the professional through their career which build confidence and experience without losing the ability to be creative and open to new ways of working and to the personality of each child or young person we support' Training and practice development worker

'Confirmation that relationship building is essential. The use of drama and storytelling as a means to allowing children to share their experiences. A refresher of the impact upon brain development of trauma and the difficulties this can pose to many children and adults that we work with' Child and family support worker

Question B3 also invited respondents to provide a scale response to indicate the strength of any perceived benefit of social pedagogy, based on themes identified from the literature review in chapter two. Frequency analysis (table 4e) identified that for all respondents, the strongest changes were for the following themes for the three sample groups:

- they felt confident in their practice more than before;
- they were more focused on the needs of the child than before;
- they engaged young people in positive activities more than before;
- their relationships with children and young people were more positive than before;
- the young people they worked with were more empowered than before;
- they viewed themselves as less skilled than other professionals, less than before.

The greatest spread of responses was for question B3.2 relating to the extent to which respondents found it difficult to work with other professionals more or less than before. Overall, stronger responses were received for positively worded questions, than those that were negatively worded. As professional group 4 (other) included only one respondent, this

group was excluded from comparison analysis of the frequencies of responses between professional groups.

Professional group 2 were most likely to answer 'not applicable' or 'no opinion' to questions relating to the benefits of social pedagogy than the other professional groups. For 5 of the 8 questions relating to the benefits of social pedagogy, professional group 1 (residential care workers) gave the strongest responses, being most likely to indicate 'much more than before' for positively worded questions, and 'much less than before' for negatively worded questions, than the professional groups 2 and 3. These findings relating to the benefits of social pedagogy are explored in chapter six.

Figure 4f: B3 (benefits of social pedagogy) - scale responses for all respondents
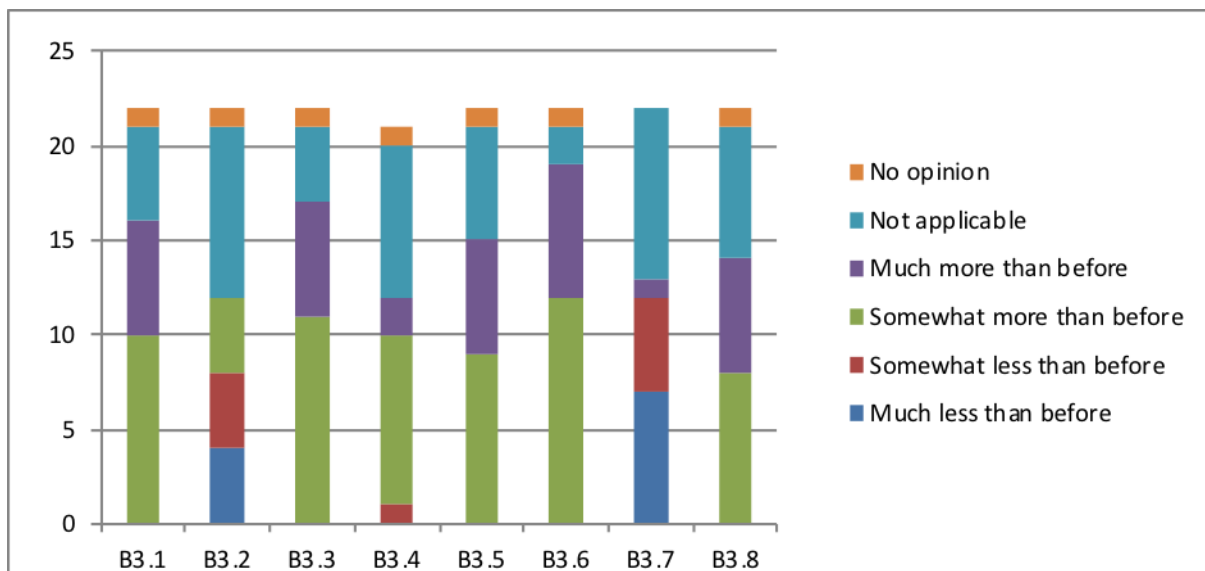
| B3.1 My relationships with children and young people are positive |
| B3.2 I find it difficult to work with other professionals |
| B3.3 I am focused on the needs of the child |
| B3.4 I treat all children in the same way |
| B3.5 I engage the children I work with in positive experiences |
| B3.6 I am confident in my practice |
| B3.7 I feel I am less skilled than other professionals |
| B3.8 Young people I work with are empowered |

Section B4 of the questionnaire opened with question B4, 'What has been most challenging about social pedagogy for you?' The same approach to analysis was taken as for question B1,

with each response to the question read and analysed, and initial codes assigned. 10 individual codes were identified from the responses which were then synthesised to identify emergent themes linked to the research question. The codes fell into 3 emergent themes relating to the challenges of social pedagogy, as follows, with the number of codes in the emergent theme identified in brackets:

- Challenge of the organisational context (n=6)
- Challenge of the national context (n=2)
- Challenges related to the concept of social pedagogy (n=2)

Table 4g: B4 (challenges of social pedagogy) – thematic analysis of narrative data by prevalence of codes

Code	Responses from whole sample (22 respondents)	Responses from group 3 (6 respondents)	Responses from group 1 (8 respondents	Responses from group 2 (7 respondents)
Staff being resistant to change	6	4	1	1
Social pedagogy needs to be the underpinning framework for practice for all staff so needs more development in department	6	3	2	1
Other services don't understand social pedagogy	6	3	2	1
Managers don't understand/ are not interested in social pedagogy	5	4	1	0
People don't take it seriously	4	2	1	1
Need to challenge the policy framework if it is to succeed	3	3	0	0
The legal framework	3	2	1	0
Having time to practice social pedagogy properly	3	2	0	1
Young people not being listened to	2	1	1	0
It is difficult to explain what social pedagogy is	2	1	0	1

Examples of the narrative responses to question B4 include:

> 'The challenge has been to keep going, not to lose the conviction when there have
> been times of lack of support from managers and some staff members working against

the idea of change. When some higher managers don't understand or have any interest in Social Pedagogy or wants it to succeed' Residential care worker

'Not all practitioners have had the light bulb moment. Trying to work with other professionals and agencies that don't understand SP can be challenging. I am of the opinion that SP will need to challenge policy thinking and when it wins (which it will) only then will we start to see the major shift in the culture of child care and development in [YARVIL] and the UK.' Training and practice development worker

Questions B4 also invited respondents to provide a response on a scale to eight questions. The questions required them to indicate the strength of their agreement or disagreement with a number of statements relating to potential challenges of social pedagogy, based on themes identified from the literature review in chapter two.

Frequency analysis of the responses was undertaken for all respondents, and by professional groupings. Not all respondents provided a response to every question, and although professional group 4 (others) included only one individual, the results for this group were included in the analysis for the whole group. This analysis identified that for all respondents, the strongest agreement or disagreement were for the following statements:

- agreement that social pedagogy can improve outcomes for children and young people,;
- agreement that social pedagogy fitted with their role;
- agreement that social pedagogy had made them feel more confident taking risks in their practice;
- agreement that social pedagogy was welcomed by their colleagues;
- agreement that policies restricted their practice;
- agreement that the culture of the organisation made it difficult for them to practice how they would like;
- agreement that they found some social pedagogy concepts difficult to understand;
- equal agreement and disagreement that they felt vulnerable taking risks in their practice.

Overall, stronger responses were received for positively worded questions, than those that were negatively worded. The differences in strength of response between different professional groups observed for questions in B4 are less for questions relating to the benefits

of social pedagogy, and there was a broadly similar spread of responses across the groups. The majority of respondents agreed that social pedagogy fits well with their role and strongly agreed that social pedagogy can improve outcomes for young people. These findings are explored further in chapter six.

Table 4h: B4 (challenges of social pedagogy) - scale responses for all respondents
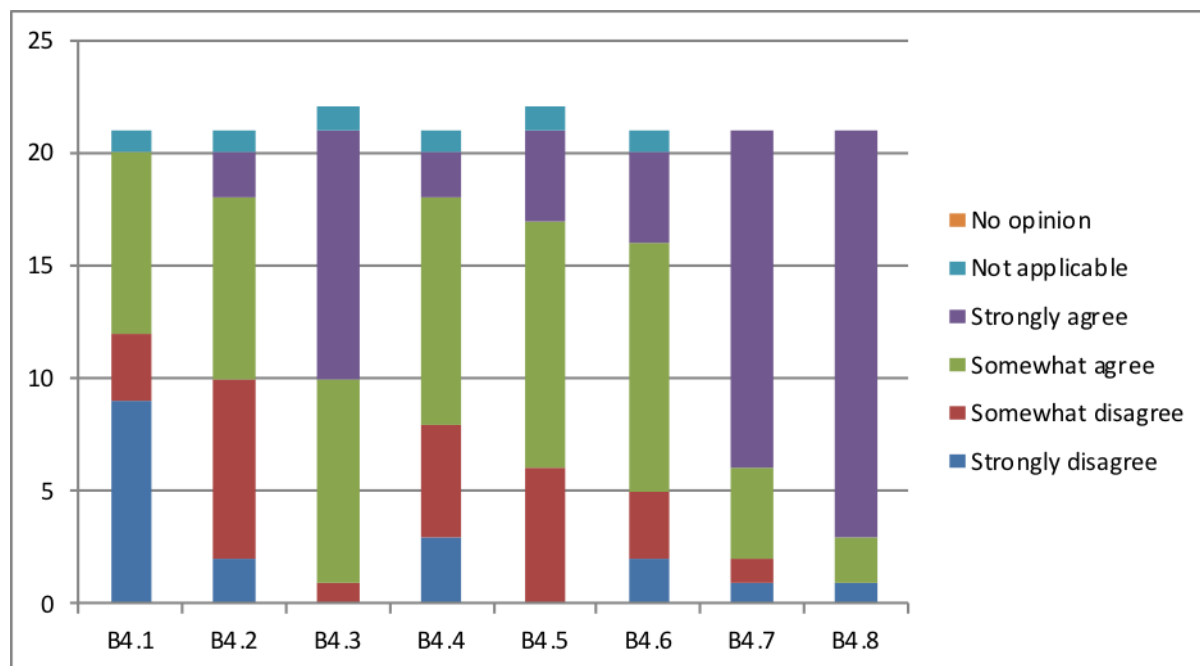
| B4.1 I find some social pedagogy concepts difficult to understand |
| B4.2 I feel vulnerable when I take risks in my practice |
| B4.3 Social pedagogy has made me feel more comfortable taking risks in my practice |
| B4.4 I find that the culture of the organisation I work for makes it difficult for me to practice how I would like to |
| B4.5 I find that colleagues welcome social pedagogy |
| B4.6 Policies restrict my practice with children and young people |
| B4.7 I feel social pedagogy fits well with my role |
| B4.8 Social pedagogy can improve outcomes for children and young people |

4.1.4 Main themes from questionnaire data analysis

Narrative responses to question B1 identified the following themes emergent from initial coding relating to the characteristics of social pedagogy for practitioners:

- It is a framework for practice;
- It is a framework of principles and values for practitioners;
- It emphasises the role of relationships in achieving change;
- It is a personal experience which develops practitioners;

- It is interdependent with the context in which it is practiced.

Responses to later questions in the questionnaire also produced codes which could appropriately be assigned to each of these emergent themes from B1, which verified their significance.

Themes relating to the influence of social pedagogy on practice included:

- Increased use of reflection in practice than before social pedagogy.
- Increasing use of creative approaches in practice more than before social pedagogy;
- More engagement in positive activities, including use of the 'common third' than before social pedagogy;
- Different approach to risk, with workers identifying that they avoided taking risks in their practice less than before social pedagogy and agreement that social pedagogy had made them feel more confident taking risks in their practice;
- Increased of theory to inform practice than before social pedagogy.

Themes relating to the influence of social pedagogy on practice included:

- Changed how practitioners view children with workers identifying that they are more focused on the needs of the child than before social pedagogy.
- Social pedagogy as a lifestyle/ way of being and an approach that permeated all aspects of the practitioner's life, rather than just influencing their professional practice.
- The child as the activator of their own development and that the children and young people they work with are more empowered than before social pedagogy
- Use of the '3Ps' with workers sharing more of their personal selves in their practice with children, and avoidance of sharing aspects of their personal selves with children was ' much less than before'.

The most dominant themes from questionnaire data relating to the perceived benefits of social pedagogy were:

- Social pedagogy provides a common framework for practice with workers identifyng that social pedagogy provides, or could provide, a common framework, language and tools for practice with children and young people across professional groups.

- Improved confidence and skills of practitioners and viewing themselves as less skilled than other professionals less than before social pedagogy.

- Development of professional practice, including building on and re-inspiring previous knowledge and learning.

- Freedom to practice differently with a perceived benefit of social pedagogy as being that it provided a more liberated and permissive approach to practice.

- Improved outcomes for children and young people.

For perceived challenges of social pedagogy, the main themes were:

- Social pedagogy needs broad development and implementation across services if it is to be effective as a common framework for practice, and a concern that some colleagues did not take social pedagogy seriously

- Culture of the organisation, in particular, social pedagogy was not prioritised or enabled by management which restricted its practice and feeling that the culture of the organisation made it difficult for them to practice how they would like.

- The legal or policy framework in which they practice restricted their ability to implement social pedagogy and practice how they would like to.

With regard to fit within the children's services workforce, the majority of respondents agreed that social pedagogy fits well with their role. Although no specific questions were included within the questionnaire to explore this research question, insights from the perspective of practitioners were generated. In particular, responses relating to the influence of social pedagogy on practice and values suggest where that had been change from practitioners perspective, such as increased use of reflection, creativity and positive activities with young people. However, a further theme emerging from the analysis of codes from all responses was that social pedagogy's role as a change agent may be limited as it was 'just good practice', and that it was not offering anything new to practitioners.

4.2   Data collection stage 2: Focus Groups

Data collection stage 2 involved three with each of the professional groups identified in data collection stage 1 (residential care workers, child and family support workers, and training and practice development workers). The focus groups explored the research question, and

emerging themes from the stage 1 data collection process, including those that were notable or distinct for the individual professional groups. The focus groups also generated new foci for consideration in later data collection stages. Each focus group was recorded, transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis as described in chapter three. The thematic analysis involved:

- Analysis of results relating to the research questions, by whole sample and professional groups;
- Analysis of results relating to themes and codes emerging from data collection stage 1, by whole sample and professional groups;
- Identification of new codes and themes, further to those identified in data collection stage 1.

The results relating to the research questions by prevalence within the focus group discussions are set out in table 4i.

Table 4i: Stage 2 data collection focus group results coded by research question and prevalence (1: residential care workers; 2: child and family support workers; 3: training and practice development workers)

Research Questions/ emergent codes by prevalence	1	2	3	Total
a. Defining characteristics of social pedagogy				
i. A theory applied in practice	10	3	4	17
ii. Social pedagogy is about agency - empowerment	7	1	2	10
iii. About principles and values	0	0	8	8
iv. Social pedagogy is about compassion	3	0	4	7
i. Social pedagogy is about learning in all situations	2	2	1	5
ii. Social pedagogy is about positive engagement with society	1	1	2	4
iii. Social pedagogy is about all stages through life	2	0	2	4
iv. Social pedagogy is universal across professions	0	0	3	3
b. (i)Influence of social pedagogy on the values of the workforce				
i. A higher level of personal engagement/ greater role for the 'self'	7	2	6	15
ii. Personal , meaningful engagement in work	6	0	7	13
iii. A personal learning journey	3	3	6	12
iv. Social pedagogy provides a deeper challenge regarding upbringing	4	1	3	8
v. Provides a deeper personal challenge regarding children's upbringing	3	0	4	7
vi. The importance of relationships	6	0	0	6
vii. Appeals to people who view working with children as a vocation	5	0	0	5
Viii.Focus on person-centredness	4	0	0	4
b. (ii) Influence on the practice of the workforce				
i. Creative practice	6	2	4	12
ii. Challenges of risks and safeguarding	7	0	3	10
iii. About doing life alongside one another	3	0	1	4
iv. Changes to the physical environment	3	0	0	3
v. About personal reflection	2	0	1	3

Research Questions/ emergent codes by prevalence	1	2	3	Total
c. (i)Benefits of social pedagogy				
i. Enabled a personal learning journey	3	1	6	10
i. Increased enjoyment/ satisfaction for workers	1	3	5	9
ii. Social pedagogy provides a universal language	1	2	5	8
iii. Provides a common language for practice	1	2	5	8
iv. Social pedagogy has value	4	1	3	8
v. Benefits for children and young people	4	2	1	7
vi. Increased confidence for workers	4	1	1	6
vii. Measurable outcomes	3	0	0	3
viii. Provides a different type of training	2	0	1	3
ix. Improves happiness and wellbeing	1	0	2	3
x. Resulted in measurable outcomes in residential setting	0	0	3	3
c. (ii)Challenges of social pedagogy				
i. Bureaucracy affects its ability to be beneficial	5	0	5	10
ii. Needs management support	3	0	5	8
iii. Safeguarding/ risk aversion	5	0	3	8
iv. Social pedagogy risks being diluted/ over-simplified	3	0	3	6
v. Knowledge/ application needs to be deep and broad	5	0	1	6
vi. It can be diluted without strong theoretical underpinning	3	0	3	6
vii. Social pedagogy will not influence everyone	1	1	4	6
viii. Won't impact everyone	4	1	1	6
ix. Some are passive/ not interested	0	0	5	5
x. Needs investment	2	0	3	5
xi. Social pedagogy is difficult to define	2	1	1	4
xii. It is perceived as 'woolly', and difficult to define	0	2	2	4
xiii. Need capacity for it to be successful	2	0	2	4
xiv. Shouldn't just be viewed as creativity/ having fun	1	0	2	3
d. Fit in the workforce – no results				
e. The role of social pedagogy as a change agent				
i. The need for breadth and depth of knowledge for sustainability	2	0	9	11
ii. Requirement for management support	4	0	7	11
iii. Requires investment of time and knowledge	5	0	5	10
iv. Involvement in social pedagogy is 'a journey'	1	1	8	10
v. Gives agency to workers	7	1	2	10
vi. Increases criticality in the workplace	0	4	6	10
vii. Adds value for workers	4	1	3	8
viii. A grassroots movement without hierarchy	3	0	4	7
ix. Social pedagogy is not new	2	1	4	7
x. Builds confidence of workers	5	1	1	7
xi. Social pedagogy has not been as deeply explored as it could be	5	0	1	6
xii. A grassroots movement	2	0	4	6
xiii. It needs to facilitate a change in organisational culture	3	0	2	5
xiv. Social pedagogy is just good practice that happens anyway	3	0	2	5
xv. Requires a change of culture	3	0	2	5
xvi. Requires dedicated resource in the organisation	1	0	3	4
xvii. Staff more motivated	1	1	2	4
xviii. Advantaged by having a dedicated resource	1	0	3	4
xix. Criticality of momentum	1	0	2	3
xx. Not the only way of working	1	0	2	3
xxi. Momentum is critical	2	0	1	3
xxii. Social pedagogy is not just creativeness and having fun	1	0	2	3
xxiii. Affected recruitment practice	1	0	1	2

These findings also further supported themes from stage 1 results. For example, themes relating to the characteristics of social pedagogy from stage 1 which were also supported by stage 2 findings were as follows:

- It is a framework for practice and social pedagogy provides a universal language as a cross cutting approach across professions.
- It is a framework of principles and values for practitioners;
- It emphasises the role of relationships in achieving change including enabling agency/ empowerment for young people.
- It is a personal experience which develops practitioners by engaging with work on a more personal level.
- Context and the culture of the organisation, the role of management and how empowered workers are to practice as they would like.

Themes relating to the influence of social pedagogy on practice and values from stage 1 which were further supported by stage 2 findings included:

- Increased use of reflection
- Increasing use of creative approaches including creative practice that pushes boundaries
- More engagement in positive activities, including use of the 'common third', the value of living alongside one another and sharing activities and learning in everyday situations
- Different approach to risk with challenging safeguarding and risk practice
- Increased of theory to inform practice
- Changed how practitioners view children including person/child centredness, increasing compassion when working with children, and increasing focus on relationships that are equal
- Social pedagogy as a lifestyle/ way of being with extensive use of the term 'personal', including providing a challenge regarding upbringing – the strongest examples came from residential care workers
- The child as the activator of their own development
- Use of the '3Ps'

Themes relating to the characteristics and influence of social pedagogy, including examples of narrative and verbal responses are included in the discussion chapter five. Stage 2 findings also supported themes relating to the perceived of social pedagogy identified at stage 1, as follows:

- Social pedagogy provides a common framework for practice
- Improved confidence and skills of practitioners (mainly from residential workers)
- Development of professional practice including the practitioner's learning journey, and influences on practices were identified relating to creativity, risk management, reflection, use of theory and positive activities
- Freedom to practice, and to having a different approach to managing risk in practice
- Improved outcomes for children and young people

However, a further theme emerging from stage 2 which was not prevalent in the coding in stage 1 relates to improvements in happiness, wellbeing and enjoyment. For example, nine references were identified in stage 2 to practitioners experiencing improved enjoyment and satisfaction with work, and three references to improved happiness and wellbeing for young people.

Themes from stage 1 relating to the challenges of social pedagogy which were also themes from stage 2 were:

- Social pedagogy needs broad development and implementation across services including management support and the need for breadth and depth of application, including investment
- Culture of the organisation including safeguarding approaches providing a challenge to social pedagogy, the attitude of staff and the inability of social pedagogy to influence everyone
- Policy framework including bureaucracy affecting social pedagogy's positive influence

Whilst the themes emerging from stage 1 relating to the challenges of social pedagogy are supported by stage 2 results, the stage 2 data collection exposed broader and deeper insights. In particular, participants in groups 1 and 3 (residential care workers, and training and staff development workers) identified that social pedagogy risks being compromised or 'diluted'

without strong theoretical underpinning, identifying a lack of theoretical insight within the organisation which therefore required support from outside of Yarvil Council, and therefore both investment and capacity. In particular, participants in groups 1 and 3 expressed concern that social pedagogy is associated with creativity and fun. These findings are explored more deeply in chapter six, with examples of narrative and verbal responses provided.

With regard to the fit of social pedagogy within the children's services workforce, the profile of responses across and between professional groups reveals insights into the different experiences of social pedagogy by differing professional groups. Stage 1 data suggested that professional group 2 (child and family support workers) were more likely to emphasise that practical influence of social pedagogy than the personal or values based emphases of the group 1 workers, which was also identifiable in the stage 2 data. For example, group 1 workers' responses were assigned to the following codes (with frequency identified in brackets), for which group 2 workers had made no reference:

- Personal meaningful engagement in work;
- Importance of relationships;
- Appeal of social pedagogy to passionate people;
- Focus on person-centredness;
- Personal reflection.

Groups 1 and 3 in the stage 2 data more readily identified benefits and challenges of social pedagogy, than group 2, consistent with results from stage 1. Analysis of stage 1 results relating to social pedagogy's role as a change agent alongside stage 2 data identified a further theme emerging from the analysis of codes. This suggested that social pedagogy's role as a change agent may be limited as it was 'just good practice', and that it was not offering anything new to practitioners. Stage 2 results provided an opportunity for deeper exploration of practitioners' views of the role of social pedagogy as a change agent, building on stage 1 results, and these findings are discussed further in chapter seven.

4.3 Data collection stage 3: Interviews, and focus group with children's services leaders

Data collection at stage 3 involved all three sample groups, as follows:

- Sample 1: Workforce practitioner sample (Yarvil);

- Sample 2: Workforce leadership sample (Yarvil);

- Sample 3: Children's Services leadership sample (Other Councils)

Insights into all of the research questions were sought using a combination of focus groups and interviews, using themes from earlier data collection stages as described in the previous section.

4.3.1 Data collection results at stage 3 with sample 1 and sample 2

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with a representative of each of the professional groups in sample 1 (group 1 residential care workers; groups 2 child and family support workers, and group 3 training and practice development workers), each of whom had not participated in the focus groups. The interviews explored in further detail the emergent themes from earlier data collection stages. The same themes were then explored with a focus group of service leaders from within Yarvil Council's children's services. The prevalence of responses against identified codes by sample and sub-group, categorised by research question and are detailed in table 4j.

Table 4j: Stage 3 data collection results for samples 1 and 2

Code	Sample 1			Sample 2: Service leaders	Total responses
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3		
a. Defining characteristics of social pedagogy					
Social pedagogy is about agency - empowerment		1	1	2	4
Social pedagogy is about learning in all settings			2	2	4
Social pedagogy is about engagement with society	1	1			2
Social pedagogy is about all stages through life			1	2	3
Social pedagogy is universal across professions	1				1
Bii. Influence of social pedagogy on values					
A greater role for the 'self'	2	1		1	4
The importance of relationships		2	2	1	5
Focus on person-centredness		1	2		3
Haltung/ mindsets		1	2	2	5
Bi. Influence of social pedagogy on practice					
Creative practice	1	2	3	2	8
About doing life alongside one another		1	2	3	6
Changes to the physical environment	1			1	2
ci. Benefits of social pedagogy					
Enabled a personal learning journey	1				1
Increased enjoyment/ satisfaction for workers	2	1		1	4
Provides a common language for practice		2		2	4
Benefits for children and young people	1	1	2	2	6
Freedom to practice differently	1	1	1	3	6
Increased confidence for workers		1			1
Measurable outcomes				2	2

Provides a different type of training			1	1	2
Improves happiness and wellbeing			1		1
Positive influence on other workers				1	1
Improves skills of workers				1	1
cii. Challenges of social pedagogy					
Safeguarding/ risk aversion	2		1	1	4
Social pedagogy risks being diluted/ over-simplified				1	1
Need for strong theoretical underpinning	2		4	2	8
Won't impact everyone			1	2	3
Needs investment				2	2
Social pedagogy is difficult to define		2			2
Need capacity for it to be successful		1			1
Shouldn't just be viewed as creativity/ having fun		1			1
Sustainability				1	1
Benefits are not measurable			2	1	3
d. Social pedagogy's fit within the children's services workforce					
Transforms all professions				4	4
Inter-disciplinary			1		1
Universally applicable	1				1
Not restricted by organisational hierarchy	1			1	2
e. Role of social pedagogy as a change agent					
The need for breadth and depth of knowledge for sustainability				1	1
Requirement for management support			1	1	2
Involvement in social pedagogy is 'a journey'			1	4	5
Increases criticality in the workplace	1			1	2
A grassroots movement without hierarchy				2	2
Social pedagogy is just good practice		1			1
Requires a change of culture		1		5	6
Criticality of momentum				1	1
Not the only way of working	1	1		1	3
Puts the organisation in control of its destiny				1	1
Need to challenge national policy	1			1	2
It is new in transforming all professionals at once				1	1
Provides permission to work differently				3	3

Results from data collection stage 3 with samples 1 and 2 (as detailed in table 4j) further reinforced the strength of the following themes from stage 1 and 2 data regarding the characteristics of social pedagogy, with the exception of the interdependency of social pedagogy with the context in which it is practiced, which was not referenced by participants:

- It is a framework for practice;

- It is a framework of principles and values for practitioners;

- It emphasises the role of relationships in achieving change;

- It is a personal experience which develops practitioners;

- It is interdependent with the context in which it is practiced;

- It has a role in engaging children with society and the community where they live, and in supporting society to engage with children.

Analysis of the results from data collection stages 1 and 2 identified the following key themes were identified relating to the influence of social pedagogy on the values of workers, with the results from data collection stage 3 with samples 1 and 2 further reinforcing them:

- Changed how practitioners view children and their relationships with them
- Social pedagogy as a lifestyle/ way of being
- The child as the activator of their own development
- Use of the '3Ps' – the role of the self
- The practitioner's role in bringing up children.

Results from data collection stage 3 with samples 1 and 2 (as detailed in table 4v) further reinforced the strength of these themes, with examples of the responses given are provided in figure 4j. No further themes were identified at stage 3 from samples 1 and 2 relating to the influence of social pedagogy on the values of the workforce.

The following are examples of responses provided in interviews and focus groups, and are further explored in chapter five:

> *'It doesn't matter how you get there, so the task or the thing you are doing is not the important bit, it's the relationship you are building and that is the important thing so you can do what you want to get there, you can walk barefoot in the mud, you can prune a tree, you can walk a dog, those things are just red herrings really.'* Child and family support worker

> *'It provides a skill set that draws on core values'* Children's services leader from Yarvil

Analysis of the results from data collection stages 1 and 2 identified the following key themes were identified relating to the influence of social pedagogy on the values of workers, which were further supported by stage 3 data:

- Increased use of reflection
- Increasing use of creative approaches
- More engagement in positive activities, including use of the 'common third'
- Different approach to risk
- Increased of theory to inform practice;
- Increase in shared living experiences between practitioners and children.

References to creativity in practice, in particular how risk averse practice had reduced, were prevalent, and these are further explored in chapter five:

> *'It is myth busting, like you can't play outdoors or touch a child or read them a bedtime story'* Children's services leader from Yarvil

Analysis of the results from data collection stages 1 and 2 identified the following key themes were identified relating to the perceived benefits of social pedagogy:

- Social pedagogy provides a common framework for practice
- Improved confidence and skills of practitioners
- Development of professional practice
- Freedom to practice differently
- Improved outcomes for children and young people
- Improvements in happiness, wellbeing and enjoyment.

Results from data collection stage 3 further reinforced the strength of these themes, adding emphasis to the improvements in happiness and wellbeing reported for workers and children and young people, and examples regarding how practice had resulted in improvements such as fewer physical interventions, and reduced staff sickness. Freedom to practice differently was also strongly emphasised in each interview/ focus group at stage 2 with both sample groups, with 3 of the 4 using the term 'permission' in particular to describe the organisation's support of increasingly creative, risk-sensible practice.

> *'It has meant we can focs on, well, really giving children roots and wings'* Training and practice development worker

Analysis of the results from data collection stages 1 and 2 identified the following key themes were identified relating to the challenges of social pedagogy:

- Social pedagogy needs broad development and implementation across services to be effective
- Culture of the organisation
- Policy frameworks
- Risk of dilution of social pedagogy's theoretical underpinning caused by a lack of theoretical insight within the organisation

- Social pedagogy is associated only with creativity and fun
- The concept of social pedagogy as ambiguous or difficult to explain.

All of these themes were reflected in the responses and emphases placed by participants at stage 3 from samples 1 and 2. There was particular emphasis on the risk of social pedagogy being diluted or 'watered down' without appropriate theoretical input to retain fidelity. There was also strong emphasis on the need for a change in culture to address embedded anxieties about safeguarding practice and risk management.

> *'I think it could quite easily dissipate into just doing nice things with kids'* Training and practice development worker

Additionally, a further theme relating to the challenges of social pedagogy emerged from the stage 3 data across both samples, which was the lack of measurability of the benefits of social pedagogy. Participants identified that the benefits of social pedagogy to children's wellbeing and experience were not statistically verifiable or measurable in the way that the data reporting and inspection requirements of government are recorded by children's services, such as educational attainment or the timeliness of assessments. The perceived benefits and challenges of social pedagogy across the samples are explored in further detail in chapter six, with further examples from the respondents' narrative provided.

Results from data collection stage 3 also provided further insights into the potential fit of social pedagogy within the children's services workforce. Both the interview with a residential care worker, and in the focus group with Yarvil children's services leaders, identified that social pedagogy had resulted in deeper engagement with residential workers as it provided them with a theoretical framework strongly linked to their professional role which had been largely absent previously.

> *'It has helped residential staff to define their own skill set'* Children's services leader from Yarvil

By contrast, child and family support workers (sample 1, group 2), in all data collection stages more frequently identified social pedagogy as not providing anything new, rather reinforcing previous learning. This finding is explored in greater depth in chapter seven.

Analysis of the results from data collection stages 1 and 2 identified the following key themes relating to the role of social pedagogy as a change agent:

- Organisational infrastructure

- Organisational workforce development

- Changes to workers values/ attitudes/ perspectives

- Changes to practice

- Limitations of social pedagogy as a change agent

- Changed recruitment approaches.

All of these themes were further reinforced in stage 3 data with samples 1 and 2. Deeper insights into the following themes were obtained at stage 3, and are explored in detail in chapter 7:

- Organisational infrastructure;

- Organisational workforce development;

- Limitations of social pedagogy as a change agent.

4.3.2   Data collection stage 3 – results from sample 3 (other Local Authority Children's Services Leaders)

In addition to a focus group with leaders of children's services leaders within Yarvil Council at stage 2, at stage 3 interviews were undertaken with leaders from 2 other local authorities (sample 3), one of which had employed social pedagogy within residential homes (other children's services leader 1), and one which had never used social pedagogy in children's services (other children's services leader 2).

There was concurrence across all children's services leaders on the importance of high quality relationships between workers and young people, and that social pedagogy is one of a number of methodologies for good children's services practice. However, there was a difference of view about its fit within the workforce, with only leaders from Yarvil inclined to apply it in services other than residential care, and other local authority leaders were less inclined to identify a clear fit with their organisations' strategic priorities. Furthermore, all the leaders identified that whilst they believed there were benefits to social pedagogy, these were difficult to measure. These findings are explored in detail in chapter seven.

4.4   Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of the data collection. The data received and its analysis was presented against the five research questions, with the dominant themes

identified. Chapters five, six and seven which follow, discuss these findings, and critique the approaches used. They then contextualises the results in the established literature, and uses the results to critically appraise emergent themes from the literature, and established models of social pedagogy, thus forming the conclusions and next steps identified in chapter eight.

5 Chapter five: The Characteristics of Social Pedagogy and its Influence on Practice and Values

This discussion chapter further examines and discusses the findings of the analysis against the research questions relating to the defining characteristics of social pedagogy, and its influence on the practice values of the children's services workforce in England, as described in chapter four. The findings are discussed, approaches used critiqued and the results contextualised in the established literature, through critical appraisal of emergent themes and established models of social pedagogy. I suggest six defining characteristics of social pedagogy in practice, and explore the framework for practice of social pedagogy in children's services, concluding with the presentation of the 'Star Model' of practical social pedagogy.

5.1 What are the defining characteristics of social pedagogy?

In chapter one I noted that despite my observations of a change in workers in children's residential homes in Yarvil, I was unable to source an explanation of the role of social pedagogy in this change due to an absence of published studies or evidence from England. I also identified that the term social pedagogy is without an agreed definition (Kornbeck, 2009, Cameron et al, 2011, Eichsteller et al, 2011, Hämäläinen, 2012 and 2013, Storo 2012 and 2013, Sandermann et al, 2014). Gogoni et al (2015) suggest that social pedagogy is characterised by a list of criteria which is so broad as to encompass almost anything in education or social care environments, to the point there is a risk that the term itself becomes meaningless. I respond to this opportunity with a new proposed model of practical social pedagogy, as described in the section that follows.

My thematic analysis of papers which included original thought or reflection on the characteristics of social pedagogy as described in detail in chapter two identified ten dominant characteristics of social pedagogy upon which there is a broad consensus in the social pedagogy literature. In this section I have critically analysed the extent to which these characteristics are consistent with the results from the Yarvil study using the themes from the literature, and emerging themes from the Yarvil sample at each data collection stage to inform lines of enquiry.

In contrast to the findings from the literature review, following analysis of the Yarvil study data collected, I argue that there are six defining characteristics of practical social pedagogy with children, as follows:

- It is a framework for practice, with theories that integrate creative, educational action, reflection and shared learning,
- It is a framework of principles and values, which shapes the way in which the framework for practice is applied;
- Its focus is on the relationship between practitioner and child as the vehicle for achieving change;
- It seeks to empower and develop both partners in the relationship – practitioner and child;
- It is unique to the context in which it is practiced;
- It seeks betterment through deeper engagement of children with, and within, society.

These proposed six characteristics of practical social pedagogy are identified through this research study, underpinned by the theory from the literature, whilst keeping the child and practitioner at the heart.

Figure 5a: The defining characteristics of practical social pedagogy in children's services
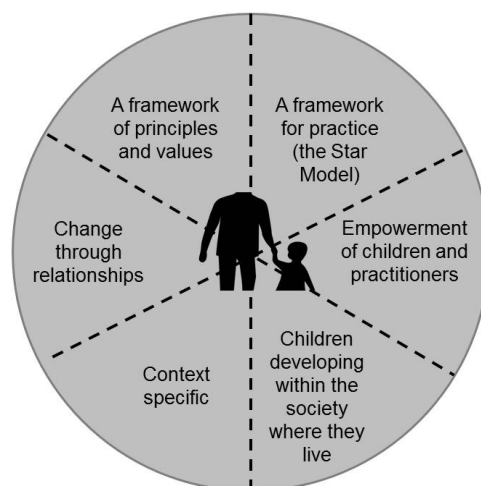
I argued in chapter one that the absence of a definition of social pedagogy in England should not result in the potential benefits highlighted by research on the continent (Cameron, 2007) being overlooked. This resulted in research question a: What is the concept of social pedagogy and what are its defining characteristics? Responses at all data collection stages

informed the suggested six characteristics of practical social pedagogy in figure 5a, and are described in the following sections.

5.1.1   A framework of principles and values

Thematic analysis of responses from Yarvil practitioners across all samples and data collection stages regarding the characteristics of social pedagogy was conducted (see chapter four). As exemplified by the quotes below, the results from Yarvil describe social pedagogy as being framed by the values of social pedagogy as an approach, and of the practitioner.

> *'It provides a skill set based on core values'* (Yarvil Council children's service leader)

> *'Social pedagogy however cannot be considered another tool or toolbox of ideas but needs to be seen as a way of personal growth and development for the professional through their career which build confidence and experience without losing the ability to be creative and open to new ways of working and to the personality of each child or young person we support.'* (Training and practice development worker)

The inclusion of social pedagogy as a framework of principles and values as a defining characteristic is consistent with the findings from the literature review which identified social pedagogy as a values based way of thinking, rather than a defined set of methods or tools (Petrie et al, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Hämäläinen, 2012, Smith, 2012, Mylanou-keke , 2015 and Kyriacou et al, 2016). One of the dominant values identified in both Yarvil and the literature is that of the practitioner bringing their personal selves, experiences and principles into their professional practice, rather than having a clear division between the professional and personal aspects of themselves:

> '*I can practice what I have lived*' (Child and Family Support Worker)

> *'Social pedagogy is a way of being – it gives a theoretical framework for professional staff to understand the balance between their private and personal self with that of their professional persona.*' (Yarvil residential care worker)

This supports the assertion by Stevens (2010) that the social pedagogic idea of the 3Ps – the three aspects of the self, identified by Bengtsson et al (2008) as the private self, known to friends and close family, the personal self which includes interests and personality, and the

professional self which is the conduct of their formal role – provides a helpful way of supporting practitioners to manage their relationships, using them positively and professionally. It also supports the importance of social pedagogy values described by Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011a) as the practitioner's *haltung* (p33), which they refer to as the attitude or mindset of the practitioner, which suggests social pedagogy is not about what is done, but rather why something is done. This is also argued by Hämäläinen (2003), who suggests than an activity does not become social pedagogy because of the choice of particular methods, but because of social pedagogical thinking.

A further value identified by Yarvil participants, and supported in the literature is that of taking a strength-based approach to practice, which values the inherent capability and value in the individual – for example, most respondents indicated that they view children as more equal in their relationship than before - both with the child and between colleagues:

> *'Social pedagogy to me is a strengths-based approach which encourages you to reflect on and continually develop your professional practice by considering your own personal values and beliefs and how these influence your work with families, children, young people and also colleagues.'* (Child and Family Support Worker)

Eichsteller and Holtoff (2012) describe this as part of their 'Diamond Model', suggesting that the use of a diamond symbolises one the most fundamental underpinning principles of social pedagogy: there is a metaphorical diamond within all human beings with a rich variety of knowledge, skills and abilities and every person has the potential to shine out. As such, the Yarvil case study supports the literature, in which a values-based approach was one of identified ten dominant characteristics of social pedagogy, as is included within the six defining characteristics of practical social pedagogy which I suggest in figure 5a.

5.1.2   A framework for practice

Based on the Yarvil findings, I argue that a defining characteristic of social pedagogy is that it provides a framework for practice for individual practitioners, which is interdependent with the framework of principles and values. The influence on practice for Yarvil practitioners is described in this section, then its implications and significant for practice exemplified in the 'Star Model', which I describe later in this chapter. In chapter 4.1 the findings reveal that most respondents from Yarvil indicated that they reflect on the actions of themselves and

others more than before, that they used theory in their practice more than before, and that they were more creative in their practice.

Yarvil practitioners described the practice of social pedagogy as being creative, using models such as the common third – using an activity to strengthen the bond between social pedagogue and child and to develop new skills, creating a commonly shared situation that becomes a symbol of the relationship between the social pedagogue and the child (Smith, 2012) – and head, heart and hands - the planning and intervention process (Milligan, 2009, Smith, 2012, Vrouwenfelder, 2013) linking practical skills with emotional warmth and critical thinking:

> *'Social Pedagogy gives a theoretical concept to explain a positive, nurturing, proactive relationship between and adult and a child/ young person .The adult being proactive in developing a relationship which assists the child to learn in an holistic sense through play, experiencing things together, doing activities together . Using head, hands and heart concept.'* (Residential care worker).

> *'Working with children with a Head,Heart,Hands Approach . Thinking about yourself and where you are 'coming from' in relating to a child or young person. Using theoretical knowledge in relating to children in a sensitive caring way that values them – coming together in sharing an activity together – thinking about 'the common third ' and by sharing an activity together building on the relationship'* (Child and family support worker)

Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011a and 2011b) suggest that positive activities are critical to the practice of social pedagogy, with Petrie et al (2008), Cameron (2012) and Storø (2012) proposing that pedagogues are required to be both practical and creative. Social pedagogy is described by Ucar (2013) as difficult to achieve without the integration of cognition, reflection, relationship and action. A focus on activity and experience using creativity was identified as a dominant characteristic of social pedagogy in the literature review, and is supported by the Yarvil experience.

The practice of social pedagogy was also characterised by participants in the Yarvil study as relating to learning through living and being together, enabling education in everyday situations:

'The term and its principles help me understand and describe what is needed to create an environment where human beings can live and develop together in harmony. We are all equal human beings with a great potential if given the right nurturing circumstances to develop.' (Residential care worker).

Cameron (2012) describes social pedagogy enabling improved positivity and well-being through developing the physical living environment, with Matthias (2015) suggesting that the solution to educational problems must be carried out in the daily lives of children, in the place where they arise. Many included papers within the literature review described this concept as 'lifespace', and argued that practice within normal discourse and everyday settings is a characteristic of social pedagogy (Lorenz, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Kyriacou et al, 2016). The concept of 'lifespace' (Petrie et al, 2008, Smith, 2012, Morgan, 2013), is described by Smith (2012) as relationships emerging in course of everyday encounters, where the opportunities provided within the child's own context are optimised to promote social inclusion, growth and learning (p51). This is consistent with the results from Yarvil.

The Yarvil study also identified that a risk-sensible approach to practice with children was critical, and chapter four describes how most practitioners indicated that they avoided taking risks in their practice less than before. The subject of greater risk-sensibility was not only prevalent in all data collection stages, but was the most animatedly discussed and described of all the themes, making it of great significance to the findings of this study. The concept of a new approach to risk that challenged traditional assumptions about what could and couldn't be undertaken in practice was key to its implementation:

'It's about being creative and thinking differently in practice and so ultimately is about being less risk adverse. Being creative requires reflective practice to explore, safely, with others how we can do things differently in a nurturing and holistic way. This model incorporates things that work for me such as talking therapies, learning through narrative, creative fun/humour and acceptance.' (Training and practice development worker)

'Social pedagogy has reinforced the need to ensure that those working with children and young people need to be allowed space for bringing creativity and personality into their work. As a professional understanding the rules and regulation although

helpful did not make my engagements with children and young people more authentic or more helpful whereas reflecting on how best to develop a relationship with a child or young person, investing time and effort in doing this and trusting the child and my own ability to explore the world and learn from experience has helped my practice.' (Residential care worker)

For the Social Education Trust (2011), the opportunity to establish a new approach to the children and young people's workforce in the UK which isn't based on reactions to scandals and measures to counter abuse was a hope behind their endorsement of social pedagogy. Within the literature review, some authors identified that in children's services anxiety was an important determinant of practice with children in social care, with the false hope of eliminating risk leading to an increase in defensive practice which is a challenged by a perception of social pedagogy's more 'risk-sensible' approach (Milligan, 2009, Milligan, 2011, Smith, 2012, Chavaudra et al, 2014). In particular risks associated with physical contact with children resulting in allegation (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012) and injury from physical activity (Milligan, 2009 and 2011) were countered by the Yarvil experience:

> *'It provides you with the opportunity to not be afraid to try something new and to actively encourage others to do the same to push preconceived 'professional boundaries' while still attending to risk and safety of those you work with.'* (Training and practice development worker)

> *'I care for a little girl who is non-verbal. I was trained not to touch a child unless absolutely necessary, but after last week I was pushing her on a swing, and I just sort of used her feet to push her on the swing, and she giggled, and I had never heard her giggle before.'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'I knew social pedagogy had made a difference when I picked a kid and threw them in the sea, like I would my own kids'.* (Residential care worker).

The experiences of Yarvil practitioners as identified in the results (detailed further in see appendices H, J and I) are significant, because they endorse the assertions in the literature that risk-sensibility should be a critical part of social pedagogy practice. Further elements of the proposed practice framework are described later in this chapter.

5.1.3   Empowerment of children and practitioners

I also argue that empowerment of both parties in the relationship should be a defining characteristic of social pedagogy, as described in figure 5a. In chapter 4.1 I note that most Yarvil respondents felt that the young people they worked with were more empowered as result of social pedagogy. In contrast to the characteristics identified in the literature (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Lorenz, 2008, Cameron et al, 2011, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Hämäläinen, 2012, Storø, 2012, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016), which were dominated by the empowerment of the individual, the Yarvil results identified strong themes related to the personal development and learning journey of the practitioner. This extended beyond professional development of skills and knowledge, into development of their own values-base, in addition to developing confidence and enjoyment in work.

> '*Social Pedagogy and its principles have greatly influenced me personally and professionally' (*Residential care worker)

> '*It empowers me with strength, explains how I feel by walking and developing compassion for myself/ families/ children.*' (Child and family support worker)

> '*Social pedagogy has given me belief that we can make a difference to the young people that we care for… I am no longer just babysitting for a young person's behaviour*' (Residential care worker)

> '*The child as an activator of their own development' (*(Training and practice development worker)

> '*Social pedagogy has given me a language and set of principles and concepts to better understand my own approach to working with children and young people and in the relationships I have in work and in my wider life. Its principals provide a platform in which to understand and reflect upon my own approaches to my former and current work. Recognising the values from which my approaches to work derive, whilst recognising the central role the child or young person has in their won development and how my role must understand and anticipate this before my work can be effective*'. (Training and practice development worker)

However, the significance of the role of social pedagogy in empowering the child was also noted. The social pedagogue is both 'helper and partner' to the child they work with

(Matthias, 2015, p26), with social pedagogy on the continent asserting that the focus is on the upbringing of the child, rather their instruction (Kornbeck, 2009) through holistic learning (Higham, 2003). Surel et al (2011) described how social pedagogy enabled a growth in self-belief and self-worth of individuals, and these assertions were also supported by Yarvil experiences:

> *'I was already an advocate for the voice of the child and trying to ensure that children and young people were involved in decision making/processes etc social pedagogy has reconfirmed the absolute importance of always ensuring we value, encourage and involve children and young people in the work that we do with them'* (Training and practice development worker).
>
> *It places children strongly at the heart of what we do and encourages us to involve them in all aspects where we can'.* (Child and family support worker)

As such, empowerment of both parties in the relationship is, I suggest, a defining characteristic of social pedagogy, as described in figure 5a, and this develops the assertions within the literature that emphasise the empowerment of the individual. This development is specific to the characteristics of practical social pedagogy I assert above.

5.1.4   Children developing within the society where they live

The Yarvil results are also consistent with the findings from the literature review which suggested social pedagogy was defined by improvement of participation in, and for the betterment of, the society in which the individual lives (Lorenz, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Hämäläinen, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015).

Yarvil participants' responses, of whom most indicated that they considered the connection between children and society more than before (see chapter 4.1), resonated with those of Surel et al (2011) who suggested that social pedagogy is about increasing opportunities for participation, and to be part of a community with skills and competencies, and those of Stevens (2010) who proposed that it should help children integrated into society, and advocate for them:

'I think pedagogy as well has made think more about sort of community activities, so I once convinced the local council and they put a disabled swing in the park. It made me think about what's about and the links that we've got.' (Residential care worker)

'To me, the term Social Pedagogy mean my entire social and practical skills my dreams and aspirations that has been passed on to me from people around me during my upbringing, this have helped me to integrate and function in several different societies around the world where I have lived and worked. The term and its principles help me understand and describe what is needed to create an environment where human beings can live' (Residential care worker)

'Absolutely a great tool to reflection on self, creating safeness for me to explore, discover and develop the importance in the process of experiencing togetherness with our families, children centre base and the wider community' (Child and family support worker)

'It allows all involved in work with young people a way of reflecting upon their work to better find the confidence and skills they need to ensure children and young people are allowed to flourish, are empower with a voice in their own lives and in their community and can effectively engage in and contribute to society.' (Training and practice development worker)

'It is concerned with the child in context and considers their family life, wider community etc'. (Child and family support worker)

Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011b) and Smith (2012) suggests that the need for social pedagogy to take account of the child's family, social networks, peers and organisational influences be termed lifeworld or 'lifeworld orientation' (Smith, 2012, p51). With prevalent references to integration, engagement and contribution of children in society across all data collection stages I propose that betterment through deeper engagement of children with, and within, society is a defining characteristic of practical social pedagogy in children's services. As such it is included within my proposed defining characteristics of practical social pedagogy in figure 5a.

5.1.5 Context specific

I also argue in figure 5a that social pedagogy is unique to the context where it is practiced, as the results from this study identified:

> *'We can't carbon copy from Germany, Denmark or Sweden, we need what works for us here, and that is what makes it so interesting. And its only us here that knows what's best for us'* (Residential care worker)

It was also identified as important that social pedagogy was designed locally, so it could be responsive to local issues and needs:

> *'Analysis suggests that we have had many children/young people that have stayed within residential that may have been able to move home. I feel that earlier interventions and edge of care services could help address this and if social pedagogy approaches can be taught to families even better outcomes could be achieved.'* (Children's services leader from Yarvil)

As noted by Ezechil (2015), the context for practitioners of social pedagogy in England is different from those in other countries as at university level the academic offer does not comprise social pedagogy as part of the qualification route to practice in children's services. In chapter 4.1, the findings from this study identify that Yarvil workers identified the organisational and national policy context as particular challenges for social pedagogy in the context where they work. This is, Petrie (2006) argues, because British approaches to policy, practice and academic development in the field of social education have been set apart from those on the continent, resulting in the advancement of social pedagogy in England being less secure and the translation of its concepts being varied across contexts (Schugurensky et al, 2013). The Yarvil finding support that of Slovenko et al (2016) who note that social pedagogic practice takes a unique approach to each individual and context, and as such is not amenable to fixed interpretations of what represents best practice. Yarvil participants identified that the culture of the service and organisation were critical, including the policy framework both nationally and locally, and the level of support from management as critical in understanding the context for practice:

> *'As with any organisation made up of a vast array of professionals with many backgrounds to their working practice and also in an organisation with many of its own initiative of good practice development social pedagogy will need continual*

reinforcement if it is to become core to the culture of work in the organisation to avoid it becoming a living process for those professional who engage in its development' (Training and practice development worker)

'I am of the opinion that SP will need to challenge policy thinking and when it wins (which it will) only then will we start to see the major shift in the culture of child care and development in [Yarvil] and the UK.' (Child and family support worker)

As described in the literature review, there is consensus that social pedagogy is unique to its socio-political context (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Hämäläinen, 2012, Smith, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Lukešová et al, 2014), and as such this characteristic is included in my proposed defining characteristics of practical social pedagogy. This is in contrast to the Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012) where the context specificity is not directly included.

5.1.6   Change through relationships

Just as the literature review identified a focus on the relationship between the pedagogue and individual as critical to achieving change for the individual as one of the most commonly found characteristics of social pedagogy in chapter two (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Smith, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016), I argue that based on the results from the Yarvil study, a focus on the relationship between practitioner and child as the vehicle for achieving change should be a defining characteristic of practical social pedagogy with children. For example, most Yarvil respondents agreed that their relationships with young people have improved since engaging with social pedagogy, and this was supported in all data collection stages as detailed in chapter four.

In particular, the Yarvil participants identified the importance of a child's interests and attributes shaping the learning approach, and of learning together rather than acting in traditional teacher and pupil roles.

'I have actually witnessed personally the benefits of having a better relationship with the young person and seeing the changes that you can help them achieve, and that's why I think it can be nailed to the social pedagogy stuff.' (Residential care worker)

Cameron et al (2007) argued that social pedagogues differ from other workers with children, such as social workers, as they are trained for work in the daily lives and activities of children and young people, which they term 'associative life' (p25). This can strengthen self-esteem and help children and young people to feel valued (Surel et al, 2011). Linked to the previously mentioned social pedagogy models of the *common third*, and the concept of *lifespace*, many Yarvil practitioners concurred, and identified the value of everyday settings and activities as vehicles for relationship building, and consequently intervention:

> *'It doesn't matter how you get there, so the task or the thing you are doing isn't the important bit, it's the relationship you are building and that is the important thing so you can do what you want to get there, you can walk barefoot in the mud, you can prune a tree, or walk a dog, those things are just red herrings really'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'There is a load of research that says social workers do their best social work when the child is sat in the back of the car. It's the quality of relationships.'* Sample 3 participant (other Council's children's services leader)

Yarvil practitioners also identified value in investing time in reflecting on relationships and how they could be strengthened to improving their practice. This is consistent with the importance of relationships for children in need of additional support as proposed by Bowyer et al (2013), and in particular for their development (Stevens, 2010), as well as relationships with others which are strengthened through reflective dialogue (Splitter, 2008):

> *'As a professional understanding the rules and regulation although helpful did not make my engagements with children and young people more authentic or more helpful whereas reflecting on how best to develop a relationship with a child or young person, investing time and effort in doing this and trusting the child and my own ability to explore the world and learn from experience has helped my practice.'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'I am investing in a young person, nurturing them, helping them to grow up'* (Residential care worker)

> *'I was already an advocate for the voice of the child and trying to ensure that children and young people were involved in decision making/processes etc social pedagogy*

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has reconfirmed the absolute importance of always ensuring we value, encourage and involve children and young people in the work that we do with them' (Child and family support worker)

The above analysis concludes that whilst there were broad characteristics about which there is consensus between the themes from the literature, and those from the Yarvil results, some differences are apparent. In particular, the literature emphasised empowerment and development of the child, which was also identified by is study, however, the Yarvil practitioners placed greater emphasis on the role of social pedagogy in their own development – for example, there were references to personal development as a benefit of social pedagogy in response to an open question, as detailed in appendix H. This is likely to have been as a result of the nature of the research enquiry, which focused on the influence on the practitioners themselves, rather than a reflection on the characteristics of social pedagogy itself.

There were also subtle, but potentially significant differences in the emphasis of characteristics relating to the role of social pedagogy in society, with the theorists in the literature identifying its role in improving society as a whole (Hämäläinen, 2012, Smith, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2013), compared to the Yarvil participants where the emphasis was on engagement of the individual child with society. For example, most respondents to the questionnaire identified that they considered the role of children in society more than before social pedagogy, but when explored in focus groups, there was an emphasis on engaging children with society, such as participating in cultural events and community activities. This compares to many of the considerations of this in the literature which focus on the role of society in bringing up children (Badry and Knapp, 2003, Petrie et al, 2008, Eriksson, 2010, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Hämäläinen, 2012, Smith 2012, Schugurensky et al, 2013), where cultural concepts of children, societal notions about the relationship between individual and society are explored. This difference may also be as a result of the practice-oriented nature of the research questions posed to the Yarvil sample, rather than a focus on social pedagogy within the broader context of the country's socio-political system.

I suggested, in chapter two that the Diamond Model does not incorporate all of the 10 dominant characteristics of social pedagogy that were commonly found in the literature, and as such it may not sufficiently present a complete model of social pedagogy in practice. The

findings of this research study have resulted in the suggested 6 characteristics of practical social pedagogy in children's services in 5a. These confirm that the Diamond Model does not sufficiently represent the characteristics of practical social pedagogy in children's services, and as such this study proposes a new and valuable set of defining characteristics - the Star Model -rooted in findings from both this study and the contemporary literature, to contribute to the consideration of social pedagogy for English children's services.

5.2   What is the potential influence of social pedagogy on the values and practice of a Council's children's services workforce?

When I was introduced to the concept of social pedagogy, the positive influences described by the workers in chapter one, which included a transformation of the physical environments of the homes, were dominated by reflections on how they had changed their perspectives on their role, and as a result had shifted their practice. However, there was a gap in the available literature and research to explain or evidence this perceived change in practice within children's services settings in England. The review of the most commonly found characteristics of social pedagogy in the literature described in chapter two, however, included social pedagogy as a values based way of thinking, rather than a defined set of methods or tools (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Storø, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2012, Smith, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016). To contribute to understanding of the phenomena for practitioners working with children, and to contribute to resolving the gap in the knowledge, research question b sought to identify the influence of social pedagogy on practice and values within the Yarvil workforce. The Star Model of social pedagogy, which I propose in figure 5b below, emerges from this analysis and provides a unique contribution to understandings of social pedagogy in English children's services settings.

5.2.1   The influence of social pedagogy on practice

The results from all data collection stages (see chapter four) identified dominant themes in descriptions of the influence of social pedagogy on the practice of workers in children's services. For this research question, the analysis focused on aspects of the practice where participants in the study noted a particular change in their practice since the introduction of social pedagogy, either observable from responses using Likert items in the questionnaire, or

in the written or verbal narrative responses at each data collection stage. A number of key findings from the results have emerged, as discussed in the sections that follow, which have informed the Star Model of social pedagogy in practice detailed in this chapter.

5.2.1.1 Increased use of reflection

An increased use of reflection in practice was the most prevalent influence of social pedagogy indicated by the Yarvil practitioners, and is consistent with findings from the literature. Studies of social pedagogy in children' services identified that increased use of reflection in practice was an influence of its introduction (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013 and McDermid et al 2016). Some authors also suggest that social pedagogy can improve the quality of the workforce through reflection (Milligan, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Morgan, 2013). Yarvil practitioners described the influence of social pedagogy on reflective practice as follows:

> *'It is as if each worker has had the light bulb moment regarding SP....constant reflection results in better relationships with colleagues and services users.'* (Residential care worker)

> *'Social pedagogy has given me a language and set of principles and concepts to better understand my own approach to working with children and young people and in the relationships I have in work and in my wider life. Its principles provide a platform in which to understand and reflect upon my own approaches to my former and current work.'* (Training and practice development worker)

Storø (2013) described reflection as particularly important for practitioners to investigate their own and others' theories, to learn about the actions and why they were taken, with group work between practitioners to share key theories and principles through dialogue with colleagues and group reflection (Vrouwenfelder, 2013). Stevens (2010) suggests that it is important to reflect with colleagues when working with human beings and establishing aims and goals for their development, and that social pedagogy should teach different methods for doing so, with Surel et al (2011) arguing that this should support the group to be sensitive to one another when using reflection. Similarly, Matthias (2015) asserts that a key concept of social pedagogy is understanding, enabled by reflective actions including watching, listening, requesting and recognising solution of challenges, transferring theory into practice and practice into theory using reflection. The continuous reflection against the theory and ethics,

constructing new ways of working (Milligan, 2009, Storø, 2012) is consistent with Freire's (1969) theory of praxis - action that is informed, and linked to certain values. These pedagogical practices, Schugurensky et al (2013) suggest, are what enables collective construction of knowledge and cooperation which leads to social transformation.

This influence on practice was identified by the Yarvil results, with some workers specifically referencing reflecting more on the theoretical underpinnings of their actions, to identify why they undertook a particular approach, and what they learned from it. :

> *'Also I've always been a reflective person however I've gained more understanding after researching reflectivity more fully and now I'm able to recognise when I use the theory in my everyday practice and not just the end of a shift or interaction but through the course of the day.'* (Residential care worker)

> '*It has made me think more about what I did and why I did it.*' (Child and family support worker)

> *'Putting a label on the way in which I aspire to work has made me reflect even more on my actions and to be less hasty and more considered – at times!!'* (Child and family support worker)

5.2.1.2 Increased use of creative approaches

Most Yarvil practitioners who responded to the questionnaire agreed that they used creativity in their practice more than before they were introduced to social pedagogy, consistent with the literature which includes a strong consensus on the importance of creativity, including engagement of children in positive activities as a learning tool, to social pedagogy practice (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Petrie et al, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Storø, 2013, Hämäläinen, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rothuizen et al, 2017). The social pedagogy concept of 'the common third' is frequently cited as an example of how creative activities connect the practitioner and the child through an activity on an equal level, allowing each to learn (Milligan, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Smith, 2012, Vrouwenfelder, 2013). Milligan (2009) identifies that the common third brings meaning and creativity to everyday activities through the authenticity and reflection of the practitioner, in a child-centred and participatory approach and positive activities are also a

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component of the Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a), which is supported by the experience of Yarvil practitioners:

> *'It is like we have permission to try new things, to enjoy and have fun.'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'It helps me in preparing carers for their role as foster carers in being more hands on with the children – enjoy activities and doing things together'* (Training and practice development worker)

> *'Being proactive in developing a relationship which assists the child to learn in an holistic sense through play, experiencing things together, doing activities together.'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'Some creative ways of working with people and being receptive to that – it is not something you can learn from a text book and then deliver because of your own traits and values. So I am not a touchy feely person, I am not an arty farty person, but I am a relationship person and there is lots in that bag for me. Hand massage and that stuff is not my bag but doing things together and looking at the good bits of someone, that's me, and so you pick the bits that are going to suit you'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'Having fun and working with the best intention possible to make it a good experience for everyone and enjoyable'.* (Residential care worker)

Cameron et al (2007), in their study of implementing a social pedagogic approach across several European countries, identified that workers in England were the least likely to report listening to young people's difficulties as a way of responding to them, with English workers more frequently referring to procedural matters and to short term behaviour management rather than listening and empathising compared to workers in countries such as Denmark. Engagement in activities as a means of relationship building was identified as a positive influence of social pedagogy on how difficult behaviours are addressed:

> *'There is a load of research that says social workers do their best social work when the child is sat in the back of the car'* (Other Council's children's services leader)

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'*Maybe do some cooking and spend some time together, or go and do some gardening together – there is much more room to create these opportunities.*' (Residential care worker)

Consistent with Steiner's (1996) assertion that 'education and teaching must become an art… it is a sculptor that must fashion the human brain' (p91), Eichsteller and Holtoff (2012) and Ucar (2013) argue that social pedagogy is an educational art with a dynamic, process oriented nature. Yarvil workers identified that creativity involved more than just engaging in fun activities, but responding in a dynamic way to meet the needs of individual children and enable them to learn:

'*Being creative requires reflective practice to explore, safely, with others how we can do things differently in a nurturing and holistic way. This model incorporates things that work for me such as talking therapies, learning through narrative, creative fun/humour and acceptance.*' (Residential care worker)

'*Within a residential setting I have used it to encourage informal learning processes contributing to children and young people's development. I have found that children that are as vulnerable or have the range of difficulties present that we support often struggle with the formal requirements of education. Social pedagogy allows us to educate in a broader sense that takes into consideration a child's needs and can be much more holistic and accepting of where they are emotionally.*' (Residential care worker)

As such, there is a congruence between the literature's assertion that social pedagogy should enhance creativity as a learning tool, and the Yarvil experience.

5.2.1.3 A different approach to risk

The results from this study confirm assertions in the literature that social pedagogy also influences a different approach to managing risk in working with children. This was the theme that incurred the greatest strength of feeling from participants within the focus groups and interviews. As described in chapter four, most respondents indicated they avoided taking risk less than before engaging with social pedagogy, and most agreed that social pedagogy had made them feel more confident taking risks in their practice. Some authors identified that in children's services anxiety-related defensive practice was challenged by a perception of social pedagogy's more 'risk-sensible' approach (Milligan, 2009, Milligan, 2011, Smith,

2012, Chavaudra et al, 2014). Most respondents to the questionnaire agreed that social pedagogy had made them feel more confident taking risks in their practice. Challenging safeguarding and risk practice the second most prevalent theme relating to the influence of social pedagogy on practice (see chapter four).

An example of risk behaviour that was identified in the literature is that of physical contact and affection with children. Eichsteller and Holtoff (2012) describe social pedagogy facilitating a change in practise towards there being more emotional warmth and more physical contact, and Yarvil practitioners also identified social pedagogy as having influenced their practice in this area:

> '*I took a load of photos and there was her son cuddled up to someone and she went, 'oh, I didn't think you were allowed to cuddle'. I think when things like that come up you can explain about pedagogy, and … it gives you the justification from understanding the theory behind it sort of, you can rationalise it.*' (Residential care worker)

> '*It is myth busting, like you can't play outdoors or touch a child or read them a bed time story*' (Children's services leaders from Yarvil)

> '*It gives a historical perspective to the things we do when working in children's services and hopefully the confidence and courage to do what is 'right' in terms of healthy human relationships – rather than work to rule within the risk averse framework that is pervasive in our society*' (Training and practice development worker)

> '*It gives a voice/ credance to what I've always believed, that treating cared for children EXACTLY the same as my own is ok! Eg letting them get in my bed if they choose, letting them sit in the front of the car!*' (Child and family support worker)

A further area of risk relating the working with children in England is that of injury or harm when undertaking physical and outdoor activities. Milligan (2011) suggests that children need to learn how to fall, not to avoid it altogether and argues that social pedagogy provided a framework to hang ideas on which had previously lacked a theoretical justification.   Bird and Eichsteller (2011) also describe how social pedagogy can influence risk-related practice.

Yarvil practitioners and service leaders gave strong views about the influence of social pedagogy on risk practice (see chapter four), including with regard to physical activities. Examples included being able to challenge myths emerging from health and safety policy that children in care couldn't climb trees, own pets or travel overseas for fear of injury or coming to harm, which Yarvil practitioners suggested harmed the child indirectly by preventing them experiencing important learning opportunities, and nurturing activities:

> *'It's give me the understanding and the ability to be up to think outside the box. As a social services worker in the past it's always been about risk assessments and not been able to do the things you really felt you wanted to for fear of repercussions. However now we wave the social pedagogy get out of here clause card high in the air and forge forward.'* (Residential care worker)

A further area of risk which Yarvil practitioners suggested had been influenced by social pedagogy was a fear of management disapproval of taking certain approaches, with workers identifying greater confidence to follow their instincts, and use theories they had learned about social pedagogy to undertake interventions in different ways. Milligan (2009) suggests a contrast between the UK system of care, which is deemed to be dominated by concerns about risk and safeguarding procedures, and countries where pedagogues have the social pedagogy training and environment which support greater self-confidence about managing relationships and risk. Practitioners from Yarvil described feeling they had 'permission' to do their job differently (see chapter four):

> *'I think the whole approach will benefit all the children and families we work with empowering them to take control of their lives and that is important to be that we are good for the family and leave them in a position they can work with leaving them heading towards independence. Giving me permission to enjoy the time with each family.'* (Child and family support worker)'

> *'Supporting a change in beliefs and the 'permission' to try new things'* (Training and practice development worker)

> *'Giving a way to enhance to families and myself wellbeing. Saying it is alright to take risks. It is ok to learn how you want. It is ok to learn new ways for yourself and*

others. It is great to be alongside other working tools, to be flexible, stepping out of the box' (Child and family support worker)

'It provides you with the opportunity to not be afraid to try something new and to actively encourage others to do the same to push preconceived 'professional boundaries' while still attending to risk and safety of those you work with.' (Residential care worker)

Whilst the literature review in chapter two identified references to changes in risk practice, particularly in Milligan (2009 and 2011) and Eichsteller and Bird (2011a and b), the prevalence and strength of responses from Yarvil on this element of social pedagogy's influence on practice was greater than its prevalence in the contemporary literature, this identifying a particular contribution to the knowledge base for social pedagogy in English children's services settings.

5.2.1.4 Increased use of theory in practice

Most respondents to the questionnaire agreed that they used theory to inform their practice more than before they engaged with social pedagogy (see chapter four), and use of theory in practice was the most prevalent code identified in all focus groups.

'*The theory has helped me to understand why things work*' (Child and family support worker)

Although Storø (2013) argued that social pedagogy theory is broad and that there are no clear guidelines regarding what social pedagogy methods are, a number of theoretical models for use in practice with children are suggested in the literature. These include the 3Ps ((Milligan, 2009, Berridge et al, 2011, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Cameron, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Slovenko et al, 2016), head, heart and hands (Milligan, 2009, Smith, 2012, Vrouwenfelder, 2013), the common third (Milligan, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Smith, 2012, Vrouwenfelder, 2013), and lifespace (Petrie et al, 2008, Smith, 2012, Morgan, 2013). Stevens (2010) suggests that those practicing these are not expected to be expert therapists, rather to be competent and understanding about the ways in which children can benefit from engagement in particular activities, and Matthias (2015) argues that practitioners must distance themselves from ready-made patterns of explanation so concepts can be developed to make reasonable offers of help. Yarvil practitioners identified value in some of

the theoretical tools they used, such as the example below which is an excerpt from a group discussion at a social pedagogy workshop in Yarvil, with two child and family support workers, a training and practice development worker and myself (researcher) present:

> 'Child and family worker (CFW) 1: *Right, so I did the social pedagogy course and it was all sort of about how you should be led by the child's interests and what they want to do. This young person what I work with is really hard to engage, but he wanted to go to Maccies (McDonalds) and so I took him and my manager went mental, said it was inappropriate, so I said, but it is what social pedagogy says.*

> Training and practice development worker (TPDW): *But is it though? If I was your manager I probably wouldn't have been particularly pleased either, but probably for different reasons. If you think about the head, heart and hands approach how might you have tackled it differently?*

> CFW1: *What do you mean? That's what I did I think.*

> CFW2: *Well going to Maccies int brilliant for their health is it? If you used your theories and your head you might have thought is this going to be good for the young person, and what are they going to learn from it? Couldn't you make something together, using the hands bit?*

> CFW1: *Like, go to the Co-op and buy stuff to make a picnic together?*

> TPDW: *Exactly – using your head to decide what is going to provide a learning situation, your hands to share an experience with him, and your heart because doing it together will be good for building a relationship, and enabling disclosure if he wants to.*

Yarvil practitioners gave examples of how social pedagogy theory had influenced their practice:

> 'For instance I was breaking down a piece of wood furniture in my back garden using a sledgehammer, my three-year-old son wished to help. Yes he was too small to hold the sledgehammer independently off the ground however positioning him in-front of me between my legs together we used it like a croquet mallet. Also I've always been a reflective person however I've gained more understanding after researching reflectivity more fully and now I'm able to recognise when I use the theory in my*

everyday practice and not just the end of a shift or interaction but through the course of the day.' (Residential care worker)

'It has brought the theoretical background to my work into a sharper focus and allowed me though the addition of reflective approaches to use theory in practice and learn from my own practice how to understand and interpret theoretical approaches.' (Training and practice development worker)

The literature review identified that social pedagogy should influence action based on theory (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Cameron et al, 2011, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Mylanou-Keke, 2015, Rothuizen et al, 2017). The Yarvil study results support that this has been an influence of social pedagogy on the practice of children's services practitioners, thus supporting the findings of the literature review.

5.2.1.5 Shared learning and experience

Characterised through social pedagogy models such as the common third and the concept of lifespace, sharing of daily living and experience changed for many Yarvil practitioners following their engagement in social pedagogy and therefore influenced the nature of their practice:

'Using theoretical knowledge in relating to children in a sensitive caring way that values them – coming together in sharing an activity together – thinking about 'the common third ' and by sharing an activity together building on the relationship' (Child and family support worker)

'It's about understanding that a young person's journey in life is always about learning, it doesn't happen in a place, with an activity, with a person, it's what humans beings have learned to do to survive. For me it's also about, I don't like the sort of divide between children and young people and adults, I think life is a continuum, and we are in it together, and you should be doing that all of the time, exploring what you are doing and learning as well as exploring alongside children and young people.' Sample 1, group 1 participant (residential care worker)

'I am much more conscious of the benefit of building relationships via shared tasks. I use this not only to build relationships between myself and service users, but to

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support attachments between parents and children attending contact, where planning an activity can diffuse tension and encourage conversation indirectly.' (Child and family support worker)

The social pedagogy concept of 'lifespace' was prevalent within the literature (Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016) and is described by Smith (2012) as relationships emerging in course of everyday encounters, where the opportunities provided within the child's own context are optimised to promote social inclusion, growth and learning (p51). Eichsteller and Holtoff (2012) suggested the lifespace approach leads to increasing involvement of children in meaningful ways, giving them choice in their lives and their surroundings, and this was reflected in examples from Yarvil, in particular for residential workers:

> *'Making a home feel and look like a inviting family orientated place, not working for the child working along side them making sure their own views are heard and their wishes are met'* (Residential care worker)

> *'It stresses the avoidance of nurture which is done for or to the child and emphasises nurture and also education which allows the child to be the lead activator of their own development'* (Training and practice development worker).

The concept of lifespace and shared experiences was more prevalent, and had stronger responses from the residential workers, than the child and family support workers, given the co-habitation nature of the role (see chapter four).

5.2.1.6 Positive relationships

The importance of relationships as a vehicle for change was prevalent in the literature relationship between the pedagogue and individual as critical to achieving change for the individual was a characteristic of social pedagogy (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Smith, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016, Rothuizen et al, 2017). Similarly, Yarvil participants also identified that social pedagogy had influenced their relationships with the children they worked with, their colleagues and with management:

'Social pedagogy has given me a language and set of principles and concepts to better understand my own approach to working with children and young people and in the relationships I have in work and in my wider life.' (Residential care worker)

'I am much more conscious of the benefit of building relationships via shared tasks. I use this not only to build relationships between myself and service users, but to support attachments between parents and children attending contact, where planning an activity can diffuse tension and encourage conversation indirectly'. (Child and family support worker)

'It has made me stop and think and look at our staff team' (Child and family support worker)

'Higher management started to listen to everyone who is working with young people. It has given me a voice.' (Residential care worker)
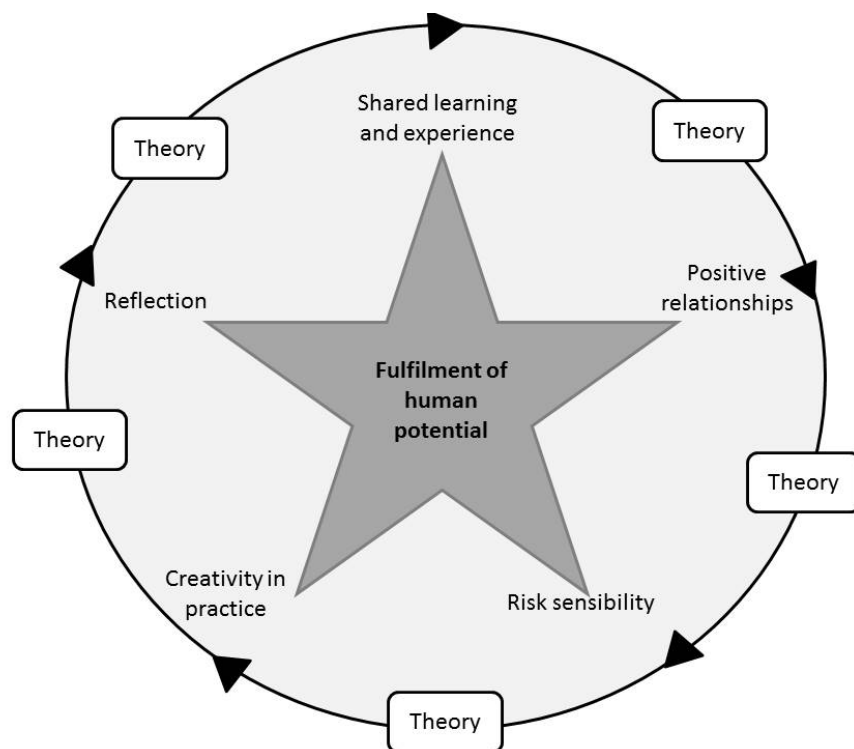
5.2.1.7 The Star Model of social pedagogy in practice

Based on this new learning from Yarvil, I present a new model providing the framework for practice of social pedagogy in children's services (the Star Model - figure 5b) which I suggest is underpinned by, and located within, the practical social pedagogy model for children's services in figure 5a. Recognising its many strengths in representing practical social pedagogy more broadly, the Star Model includes many consistencies with characteristics identified by Eichsteller and Holtoff in the Diamond model (2011a). The focus of fulfilment of human potential as the core aim is retained, as is the inclusion of relationships, experience, learning and empowerment. However, the Star Model also includes reflection, creativity and risk sensibility as key themes from the practice experience findings in this case study of Yarvil's children's services. In recognition of the emphasis on the conscious use of theory to inform practice, the 'star' is located within the framework of theory, visualised in a loop to indicate the continuing evolution of theories relating to social pedagogy, rather than a status of a static and unchanging practical discipline.

I argue that the characteristics of practical social pedagogy described in figure 5a, and the 'Star Model' described in figure 5b, provide greater clarity about what practical social pedagogy is in the context of children's services as such makes a distinctive and new

contribution to the knowledge base in England. However, there remain many debates regarding definition which are explored later in this chapter.

Figure 5b: The Star Model – the framework for practice of social pedagogy in children's services

5.2.2   The influence of social pedagogy on values

The Star Model describes the influence of social pedagogy on practice within children's services settings. As identified earlier in this chapter, further to its influence on practice, social pedagogy as a framework of principles and values was both an important defining characteristic, both from the Yarvil study, and the literature (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Storø 2013, Kyriacou, 2015).

> *'It's a way of emphasising as leaders the kind of values we want to see'* (Children's services leaders from Yarvil)

> *'Its principles provide a platform in which to understand and reflect upon my own approaches to my former and current work. Recognising the values from which my approaches to work derive, whilst recognising the central role the child or young person has in their own development and how my role must understand and anticipate this before my work can be effective'* (Residential care worker)

This section explores the influence of social pedagogy on the values of the children's services workforce. For Yarvil practitioners, the main values which social pedagogy influenced were: with regard to how they view children and their relationships with them; perceptions of their role in tackling disadvantage faced by children; and the value they placed on the role of the self in practice. These are explored in the following sections.

5.2.2.1 The practitioners' view of children

Themes from the literature relating to social pedagogy's values include those of equality within relationships (Petrie et al, 2008, Smith, 2012, Kyriacou, 2015), and most Yarvil respondents indicated that they view children as more equal in their relationship than before than before engaging with social pedagogy. This was described in written and verbal narrative responses as being characterised by giving children and greater voice in the relationship:

> *'Recognising the central role the child or young person has in their won development and how my role must understand and anticipate this before my work can be effective'* (Residential care worker)

> *'On an individual level the voice of the child can be heard and hopefully acted up'* (Training and practice development worker)

However, practitioners noted that there were restrictions as to the extent that the child's voice could influence the broader system, as discussed in chapter five. Practitioners did note that social pedagogy had influenced them to view fun and play as important in their roles, rather than following structured programmes, concurring with Eichsteller and Holtoff (2011a and 2012) who identified that happiness was an intrinsic aim of social pedagogy.

> *'Will help me enjoy activities and doing things together'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'Happier at work so work better, be more yourself'* (Residential care worker)

> *'Having fun and working with the best intention possible to make it a good experience for everyone and enjoyable. Respect for each other everyone is on the same wavelength'* (Child and family support worker)

5.2.2.2 Tackling disadvantage

A number of authors in the literature identified an aim of social pedagogy as tackling social injustice or exclusion (Smith, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Morgan, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Storø 2013, Kyriacou, 2015). This theme is supported by the results from this study, with Yarvil practitioners suggesting they have been influenced to challenge themselves more about their role in bringing up the child and giving them the best possible start in life:

> *'Actually if you take the journey further into social pedagogy it can be a much deeper challenge for you and the what the upbringing of children is all about'* (Training and practice development worker)

> *'You have to treat them almost like your own children. They are human beings, how do you think you are going to get brilliant outcomes if you aren't going to give anything. It's about giving then you'll see something flourish really.*' (Residential care worker)

These results supports the idea from the literature that social pedagogy should have a focus on the rights of the child (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Petrie et al, 2008, Cameron et al, 2011, Smith, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Rothuizen et al, 2017), and a focus on upbringing of children (Smith 2012, Storø, 2012, Berridge, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013). As argued by Kornbeck (2009), pedagogy should be about upbringing rather than education in the sense of instruction, and the acquisition of social competencies. Many Yarvil practitioners saw themselves as having a greater role in the development of these social competencies following their engagement with social pedagogy (see appendices H, J and I).

5.2.2.3 The role of the self

A key theme from the Yarvil data, which was less evident in the dominant characteristics of social pedagogy identified from the literature review, is the role of the self for the practitioner, and the extent to which their own experience and values is used within practice with children. For example, in the focus groups in stage 2 there were numerous references to the importance of sharing more of their personal selves in their practice by the practitioners (see chapter four). In particular, Yarvil practitioners described social pedagogy as being part of a lifestyle, or 'way of being', rather than just a model of practice. Practitioners referenced sharing more of their personal selves in their practice with children and in focus groups there

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was extensive use of the term 'personal', with regard to a more personal engagement with work; to a personal challenge regarding upbringing; and to a higher level of personal engagement/ role of the self as a benefit of social pedagogy. In particular, practitioners referenced the 3Ps frequently as a model which influenced this change in their approach to working with children.

> '*well yeah, cos for me it blends with who I am outside of work as well, I am a parent and am not a different person at home to at work, it has just become a bit of a way of life.*' (Residential care worker)

> '*it's haltung, mindsets. It doesn't matter who you're talking with, within your work it's about how you are doing it, and yeah, whatever it is about being cognisant of your presence and your relationship and how that affects someone else's whether they are working front line or not.*' Sample 1, group 3 participant (practice development and training worker)

> '*Being able to practice what I have lived. Share more with young people, 3Ps, knowing what to share, when and how much.*' (Residential care worker)

A number of the included authors in the literature review reference the concept of *the haltung* in social pedagogy practice, describing it as a way of thinking in which the social and educational are united, from a certain perspective on humankind and society, based on ethics and values rather than tools and techniques (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Hämäläinen, 2012, Smith 2012). Although there are limited references to the concept of 'haltung' in the literature, this concept was evident in the experience of Yarvil practitioners who described interdependencies between their person selves, experiences and values and how they practice with children in their professional lives. As such, this personal values influence is critical to the framework for practice of social pedagogy (the Star model in figure 5b). I suggest that the Star model as the framework for practice of social pedagogy is not considered in isolation of the other characteristics identified in figure 5a, of which a framework of values is one.

My previous argument, that the judgement of the practitioner in taking an informed action based on theory is fundamental to social pedagogy practice, is therefore further developed to include the values of the practitioner which inform the choice of theory, and its implementation in action as critical. As such, I propose that social practical social pedagogy must acknowledge the interdependence of values, theory and action, as described in figure 5c.

Figure 5c: Interdependence of values, theory and action in practical social pedagogy
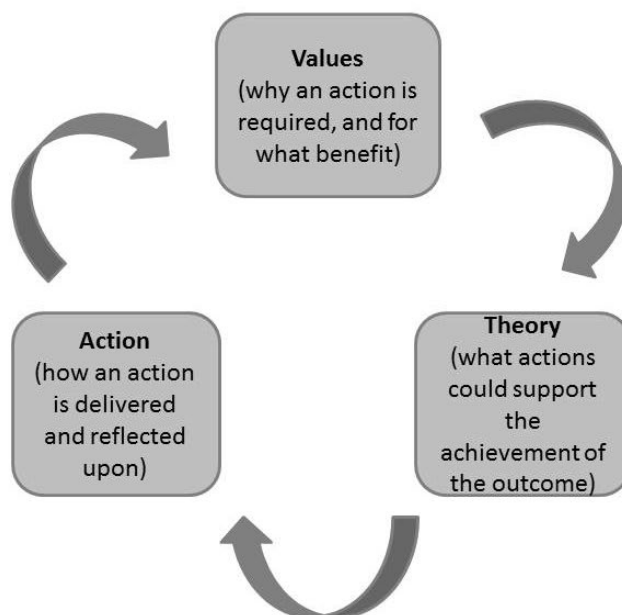
I do not suggest that this interdependence of theory, values and action is unique to social pedagogy. This concept of 'praxis' has deep roots within educational theory from Plato and Aristotle, to Frieire who defined it as reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed (1970), and Dewey's '*theory and practice, intelligence and execution, knowledge and activity'* (Dewey, 1916, p130). Rather, I suggest that from knowledge generated through the study in Yarvil, the application of the cycle in figure 5c is critical to the practice of social pedagogy in children's services settings, as defined by the characteristics of practical social pedagogy in figure 5a.

5.3   Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of the data collection and the findings of the analysis against the research questions relating to the defining characteristics of social pedagogy, and its influence on the practice values of the children's services workforce in England, with the dominant themes identified. Using the findings from the Yarvil data, and critical appraisal of emergent themes and established models of social pedagogy from the contemporary literature, I suggest six defining characteristics of social pedagogy in practice. I also propose

a new and distinctive model, the Star Model, which is the framework for practice of social pedagogy in children's services. This is first model of practical social pedagogy which has emerged specifically from children's services settings in England, and as such provides an unprecedented perspective on its potential application in practice, for use by local authorities and other organisations providing social education services for children and young people.

6   The Benefits and Challenges of Social Pedagogy

This chapter explores the possible challenges and benefits from applying social pedagogy as a conceptual framework for the children's services workforce, building on the findings from the literature review and the results from the Yarvil study. The limited number and quality of studies of social pedagogy in practice in English children's services settings, as described in chapter two, exposed the substantial gap in the knowledge and published research on the potential opportunities and challenges of social pedagogy, which this study seeks to contribute to, further demonstrating the valuable contribution this research offers. I use examples from practitioner testimony to demonstrate what benefits children's services in England might expect from implementation of social pedagogy, but contextualise these within the challenges identified within Yarvil, and the extent to which themes from the literature are upheld by the findings of this study are explored in this section.

I then argue that social pedagogy has the potential to provide benefits for practitioners, children and children's services organisations, such as improved confidence and wellbeing for workers, improved childhood experiences for children, and more consistent practice across professional groups. Most significantly, the results from Yarvil suggest that social pedagogy has the potential to support a different approach to managing risk, enabling a more 'risk sensible' rather than risk averse approach with regard to emotional support to children, physical contact with children, engagement in physical activities with risk of injury, and fear of consequences for mistakes. However, the challenges for social pedagogy, which include the national policy framework, organisational culture and lack of clarity around definition and uniqueness of social pedagogy result, I suggest, in the requirement for significant investment of time, resources and people to enable the benefits to be realised at scale within children's services settings.

6.1   The benefits of social pedagogy

In chapter five, I explored the influence of social pedagogy on the practice and values of children's services workers in Yarvil, and this analysis identified a number of perceived benefits, such as improved relationships, greater creativity and more risk-sensible practice. These are further developed and explored in this section, building in the perceptions of

benefit identified by children's services leaders both in Yarvil and in other councils to identify the dominant themes. From the Yarvil study, the primary identified benefits of social pedagogy as a conceptual framework for children's services were: improved confidence and skills of practitioners; development of professional practice; freedom to practice differently, improved outcomes for children and young people; improved happiness and wellbeing; a common framework and language for practice; and improved relationships (see chapter four). These are explored in more detail in the following sections of this chapter.

6.1.1 Improved confidence and skills of practitioners

In the literature review I noted that many authors identified improvements in confidence as a benefit of social pedagogy (Coussée et al, 2010, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Moore et al, 2014, Kontagiannis, 2015). In particular, Vrouwenfelder (2013) noted that staff in children's residential care, who perceived their profession to be a 'Cinderella' service, had felt a growth in confidence, especially when working with education and social work professionals as they had a better understanding of their own value base (p52). The results from Yarvil support this assertion, as most indicated that they felt confident in their practice more than before (see chapter four), and this was particularly notable for residential care workers:

> *'It has given me more confidence in my practice. It makes me feel better about children in care knowing that their childhood and upbringing can be as close to the 'norm' as possible'* (Residential care worker)

> *'My confidence has been increased by embracing social pedagogy and the link between my personality and my work is mow much more aligned and thus genuine.'* (Residential care worker)

> *'It is so me!'* (Residential care worker)

An increase in confidence of workers was observed in some studies of social pedagogy (Milligan, 2009, and McDermid et al, 2016), and Bird and Eichsteller (2011) identified that workers had moved towards a growing confidence in their own judgement by questioning and challenging practice and procedures. This was noted in Yarvil, again in particular by residential care workers, who identified that they felt more confident in challenging management and protocol in a positive way:

> '*If you're approaching something that might be a little bit tricky with managers, you can put it in a way that sounds professional rather than just using a form*' (Residential care worker)

> '*It has given me a voice. I am now even more open to challenge both my colleagues and Managers in a creative manner.*' (Residential care worker)

It was also the residential workers who most predominantly identified that social pedagogy had improved their skills:

> '*I've always been a reflective person however I've gained more understanding after researching reflectivity more fully and now I'm able to recognise when I use the theory in my everyday practice and not just the end of a shift or interaction but through the course of the day*' (Residential care worker)

As will be explored in chapter seven, this benefit was particularly felt by residential care workers due to the nature of their role and professional development framework. However, an improvement in confidence and skills was also experienced by some working in non-residential settings:

> '*First – I had started to gain qualification at 30 years old to improve my skills along my journey. Now 59 years old and me still learning being myself creative practice. If I can, anyone can SP is my step to the end in using compassion all these 21 years of working with children and families. At last I have come out. Life is great*' (Child and family support worker)

6.1.2   Development of professional practice

Some included papers in the literature review in chapter two suggested that social pedagogy can improve the quality of the workforce (Milligan, 2009, Morgan, 2013). Yarvil practitioners and leaders identified in this study that practice had improved following social pedagogy attributing this to it updating their knowledge, building on previous learning, using theory more in practice and use of reflection to improve the quality of practice (see appendices H, J and I). Most workers (predominantly residential care workers) identified that they felt less skilled than other professionals less than before they were introduced to social pedagogy:

> *'It feels like we have been able to forget about the titles and been able to communicate on the same level as equal human beings. This has played a massive part in the development of Social Pedagogy in [Yarvil]. I feel that the residential workers feel more valued and listen too, the profession is also slowly gaining more respect from other professionals.'* (Residential care worker)

Workers from other professional groups more often viewed social pedagogy as part of their continued professional development, identifying its link to previous learning:

> *'Social pedagogy however cannot be considered another tool or toolbox of ideas but needs to be seen as a way of personal growth and development for the professional through their career which build confidence and experience without losing the ability to be creative and open to new ways of working and to the personality of each child or young person we support'* (Training and practice development worker)

> '*It has built on previous learning I'd done, like compassion therapy*' (Child and family support worker)

These results are consistent with some of the studies of social pedagogy in children's services analysed in the literature review in chapter two, which identified that there had been benefits to the practice of the workers from social pedagogy (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013 and McDermid et al 2016). Authors noted increased use of reflection, the building of more positive relationships, and use of social pedagogy tools such as the common third, and head, heart and hands. Mcdermid et al (2016) observed that a small number of foster carers in their study were more reflective, thoughtful and intentional than prior to their engagement with social pedagogy. The results from Yarvil, offer additional insight into the benefits across different parts of the children's workforce, and these findings into the fit of social pedagogy within the different professional roles in children's services is explored in greater detail in chapter seven.

6.1.3 Freedom to practice differently

A potential benefit of social pedagogy being enabling workers to practice with more freedom is referenced minimally in the social pedagogy literature. For example, making changes to the physical environment in residential homes helping young people to build an emotional connection to the home and increasing their involvement in meaningful ways is described by Eichsteller and Holtoff (2012). However, the literature's references to change are dominated

by those impacting on the individual, rather than for the practitioner, and this is a critical contribution by this study to understandings of social pedagogy in the context of children's services settings in England. As noted in chapter four, practitioners from Yarvil identified a change in their risk practice, feeling it was acceptable to bring more of their personal selves into their work, and described a different relationship with management and health and safety protocols. Within the narrative responses, Yarvil participants referenced social pedagogy supporting a more permissive and liberated approach to working with children:

> '*It is like we have permission to try new things, to enjoy and have fun*' (Child and family support worker)

> '*I think there was a lot of fear going back 5 or 6 years ago, it was quite simplistic. It was behaviour A, consequence B with no room for feelings or interests, dealing with lots of red tape, can't do and rumours about what was allowed and what wasn't. People was hiding behind 'well it is health and safety so you can't' so that stopped us from doing a lot of things.'* (Residential care worker)

> '*It encourages you to be creative, look for solutions rather than problems and brings constructive challenge to your everyday practice…. It provides you with the opportunity to not be afraid to try something new and to actively encourage others to do the same to push preconceived 'professional boundaries'.'* (Training and practice development worker)

Many in the social pedagogy literature argue that social pedagogy offers a more risk-sensible and liberating approach to working with children, than some of the traditional process oriented practice in children's services (Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Petrie et al, 2009, Milligan, 2009, Milligan, 2011, Smith, 2012, Chavaudra et al, 2014). Results from this case study in Yarvil support this view, with practitioners identifying that social pedagogy had enabled a different approach to practice, which pushed pre-conceived boundaries that were underpinned by fear of allegation or restrictive health and safety practice. In the questionnaire most indicated that they avoided taking risks in their practice less than before social pedagogy and that social pedagogy had made them feel more confident taking risks in their practice (see chapter four). In focus groups, challenging safeguarding and risk practice the second most prevalent theme relating to the influence of social pedagogy on practice. This was particularly evident and frequently communicated by the sample made up of

residential care workers, as demonstrated by the excerpt from a focus group with residential workers:

> **RCW1**: *'Like I said earlier, it's like when I showed mum the photos of this little boy cuddled up with thumb in mouth having a lovely time and the fact that the boy is really chilled out and it was lovely, whereas 4 years ago I wouldn't have been sure if I could hold this young boy and my body language, it wouldn't have been natural.*
>
> **RCW2**: *Social pedagogy has given us permission to do it without taking a repercussion.*
>
> *Researcher: So it requires your managers to support too I guess?*
>
> **RCW2**: *That's it, it's having the permission to say this is ok.*
>
> **RCW3**: *But you can back it up with the theories. If someone puts a spanner in the works you can say this helps with development because of this, this helps with that because it helps with attachment.*
>
> **RCW4**: *We are finding new emerging theories now.'*

Workers from Yarvil described benefits to four key aspects of their practice as a result of a change in risk management enabled by social pedagogy: in relation to emotional support to children; physical contact with children; engagement in physical activities with risk of injury; and fear of consequences for mistakes. Yarvil practitioners described feeling that they had permission to care for the children they worked with, more like their own children, to go beyond viewing them as individuals and becoming more involved with the children at an emotional level:

> *'I've seen a lot of kids move on from [name of home] in the last year or so, and it's been 2 particular cases where there has been a lot of emotion, attached to them leaving from the staff and from the kids. At the farewell party staff were putting their own money and their own time doing little care packages, and baskets full of cleaning stuff and really, there is just a richer relationship there. It's an indicator of a better outcome, compared to 5 or 6 years ago when that young person would just have been shuffled off. My first day, I saw a young person walk out with bin bags full of clothes, that was the kind of system we were fighting against at the time.'* (Residential care worker)

> *'Understanding of children/young people as holistic beings...in desperate need of emotional, social, physical and spiritual care to thrive.'* (Residential care worker)

Linked to emotional attachment, Yarvil practitioners also identified that they were able to provide physical affection to children more often, and when appropriate as their understanding of attachment needs in children developed, and they felt more confident that offering a hug when a child was upset would not necessarily result in an allegation of inappropriate behaviour. This is exemplified by this example from a residential care worker:

> '*There was her son cuddled up to someone and she went, 'oh, I didn't think you were allowed to cuddle'. I think when things like that come up you can explain about pedagogy, and that you are allowed to, you know that children, and when you are working with children, that the risk element, I am more, I feel like I can justify, especially in disabled children's service, it gives you the justification from understanding the theory behind it sort of, you can rationalise it. If you're approaching something that might be a little bit tricky with managers, you can put it in a way that sounds professional rather than just using a form*.' (Residential care worker)

As with emotional attachment and physical contact with children, it was most notably residential workers (see chapter four) who identified a change in health and safety policy related restrictions as a benefit of social pedagogy. Workers described children in care as not being able to climb a tree, or go to the park, without completion of lengthy and restrictive risk assessments. Working together with colleagues from health and safety teams, residential workers were able to find proportionate ways of ensuring children were safe without compromising on the experiences their childhood offered:

> '*The kids went on site learning new skills, using power tools. It was a nightmare for health and safety'.* (Residential care worker)

> '*It provides you with the opportunity to not be afraid to try something new and to actively encourage others to do the same to push preconceived 'professional boundaries' while still attending to risk and safety of those you work with'* (Training and practice development worker).

Practitioners from Yarvil also noted that they felt more confident as they had management support to practice differently in pursuance of better childhood experiences for children, in particular those in care.

> '*I think it's good that we can make mistakes and not be slaughtered for it, you know so that is a big part of pedagogy, whereas previously kids in our care were not allowed to make mistakes without being slaughtered for it.*' (Residential care worker)

> '*It is about giving them roots so they can grow, and wings so they can soar*' (Training and practice development worker)

This experience was not universal, as will be discussed later in the chapter regarding the challenges of social pedagogy. However, there was an interdependency observed between references to happiness and good childhood, increasingly risk-sensible practice, and a shift in the perception of their role in a child's upbringing by practitioners, with the three themes occurring frequently together within an aspect of discussion in interviews and focus groups. The term 'childhood' was used frequently in all data collection responses, with practitioners reporting a shift in their personal responsibility towards the upbringing of those they support.

The experiences reported by Yarvil practitioners are consistent with those observed by those who have undertaken studies and evaluations of social pedagogy elsewhere. For example, Eichsteller and Holtoff (2012) described social pedagogy facilitating a change in practise towards there being more emotional warmth and more physical contact, with 'a culture of side-hugs having been replaced by a 'culture of cuddles' (p37). Milligan (2009) observed that in countries where pedagogues have the social pedagogy training, the environment supports greater self-confidence about managing relationships and risk, and later argues that social pedagogy provided a framework to hang ideas on which had previously lacked a theoretical justification (Milligan, 2011).

The identification of a shift in perceptions on restrictions to practice, in terms of challenging health and safety myths, and in regard to management expectations of practice, following the introduction of social pedagogy is a further valuable insight into the potential benefits of social pedagogy in English children's services settings. This validates the inclusion of risk-sensible practice within the Star model of practical social pedagogy I propose in chapter five.

6.1.4 Improved outcomes for children and young people

The research questions in this study did not seek to explore the impact or influence of social pedagogy on children and young people, rather the workers and organisations that support them, outside of formal education settings. However, the literature review revealed that some contemporary social pedagogy thinkers identify the potential for social pedagogy to improve outcomes for children and young people (Coussée et al, 2010), and some identify measurable improvements such as fewer incidents within children's homes (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a and Chavaudra et al, 2015). The Yarvil experiences in children's residential care homes which I presented in chapter one, regarding the changes I witnessed within these settings which initiated my research, such as young people being able to have pets, have choice in the décor of the home, share activities with the adults who supported them, and fewer restrictions on access to different part of the house, indicated some influence on the experience of children in care. As such, a single question requiring a series of Likert items response (out of 24 Likert item response questions in total) was included about outcomes for children and young people. Almost unanimously, respondents agreed that social pedagogy had improved outcomes for children and young people (see chapter four – most respondents agreed that social pedagogy can improve outcomes for children and young people), and this was identified as a benefit of social pedagogy in open narrative responses at all data collection stages:

> *'It is as if each worker has had the light bulb moment regarding SP has been through an upgrade, producing a better product (improved outcomes for young people)'* (Residential care worker)

> *'I have a track record of improving the outcomes of children in residential care. Social Pedagogical approaches have been critical in achieving this.'* (Residential care worker)

> *'I feel that earlier interventions and edge of care services could help address this and if social pedagogy approaches can be taught to families even better outcomes could be achieved.'* (Child and family support worker)

Yarvil practitioners identified that defining the outcomes that improved was challenging, as the benefits were not always those linked to traditional data and performance measurements used in children's services settings, and often related to providing children with a good

childhood, rather than the traditional focus on educational attainment, compliance with review timescales or school attendance:

> *'It has meant we can focus on, well, giving children roots and wings'* (Training and practice development worker)

> '*We also have to consider the other factor for them is their data collection, it is killing people. Their ability to have space and time for their workforce because we are continually asking for impact, and we are looking for impact in a really small way, ie statistics. If we do this can we get more kids to do exams, if we do this can we get less people receiving this benefit, and that's such a narrow gateway to manage our impact and our outcomes.*' (Training and practice development worker)

However, when the assertion that social pedagogy was questioned further within focus groups and interviews, practitioners were not able to give examples of how social pedagogy had benefited measurable outcomes for children, rather the emphasis was on an improved experience of childhood as a result of social pedagogy. The Yarvil children's services leaders identified benefits to the service such as fewer restraints, less staff sickness and less night waking. However practitioners and leaders identified that there were no tangible and measurable benefits for children from social pedagogy in evidence, and that this was a particular challenge for children's services with such a prescriptive inspection regime and performance management culture dominated by set key performance indicators. The immeasurability of the influence of social pedagogy on children and young people, also noted by Mcdermid et al (2016), is a challenge which is explored later in this chapter.

6.1.5   Improved happiness and wellbeing

The Association of Directors of Children's Service (ADCS, 2013) suggested that social pedagogy could both improve outcomes for children and the wellbeing and experience for staff, stating that 'where authorities have persevered with the approach initial resistance has been superseded by a light bulb moment when it became clear that this approach can bring improved outcomes for young people and a better, more satisfying, working experience for staff' (p4). Furthermore, in the studies of social pedagogy in the UK analysed in the literature review, five (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011 and Moore et al, 2013, McDermid et al 2016, McPheat et al, 2017) noted that workers had experienced increased motivation in

their role since engaging with social pedagogy. This was also observed in the responses from Yarvil practitioners:

> *'Happier at work so work better, be more yourself, result improved outcomes'* (Residential care worker)

The children's services leaders from Yarvil also noted that there had been changes in the children's residential care service since the introduction of social pedagogy that suggested workers were more satisfied with work, and having better experiences whilst in the home:

> *'Less night disturbance, less damage, you see happier staff, less sickness'* (Children's services leader from Yarvil)

> *'These things can often be felt to out of a measurable field, I think what we want is people to be happy, and within the word happy there is more than smiling at the end of the day, it is fuelling the capacity to have your own happiness, what you want to do with your life.'* (Training and practice development worker)

The Yarvil practitioners also suggested that social pedagogy facilitated greater happiness and enabling a good childhood within the children they worked with:

> *'To have memories as well, and to think back. I think it's really hard to measure what success looks like in care, but if the young person goes on to have a child, and that child has a nice childhood then that's something to do with the care we've provided, and some of the memories, and replicating that.'* (Residential care worker)

> *'I feel better about children in care, knowing that their childhood is as 'normal' as possible'* (Residential care worker)

The results from Yarvil support Eichsteller and Holtoff's 'Diamond Model' (2011a and 2012) which identifies happiness and fulfilment of human potential as the intended outcome of social pedagogy. This is of particular relevance to English children's services settings as the happiness and well-being of workers is not a performance measure associated with the sector, as will be discussed later in this chapter. A children's services leader from a different Council where social pedagogy had been used noted that Ofsted inspectors visiting residential homes observed that 'something magical had happened', but couldn't define what it was. Yarvil service leaders were not discouraged by the lack of tangible outcomes, suggesting 'the impacts will show long term, but we have to keep the faith'. There were also references to

outcomes by children's services leaders from Yarvil, and other Councils (see chapter 4.3.2). However, their focus was on organisational benefits, such as improving inspection prospects, and for key performance indicators against which the department was measured, rather than the experience of childhood which dominated practitioners' perceptions of improved outcomes. This challenge is explored later in the chapter.

This aim of social pedagogy – that of happiness, also characterised as a good childhood (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a and 2012) - is distinctive from that of other contemporary models of practice in children's services which whilst increasingly child-centred, relationally oriented and values driven, are dominated by child protection practice, structures and assessment practices. This demonstrates a fundamental paradox of practical social pedagogy for children's services– are improvements in happiness and wellbeing for staff and service users, which support a good childhood for children, but which do not contribute to the service's key performance indicators, a priority in a time of depleting resources, where extensive statutory responsibilities still need to be met? If social pedagogy is to be a priority for children's services departments then there needs to be a strong rationale, and cost/risk to benefit case made. This is considered in the sections that follow.

6.1.6   Common framework and language for practice

Consistent with findings from the literature, the assertion that social pedagogy might offer a unifying approach and common language across professional groups (Petrie, 2006, Coussée et al, 2010, Regional Youth work Unit, 2010, Hämäläinen, 2012, Chavaudra et al, 2014) was supported by the findings from Yarvil (18 open responses identified that social pedagogy provides, or could provide, a common framework, language and tools for practice). An evaluation of a social pedagogy programme in Scotland identified that the development of a common language across professional groups was the most significant finding (Vrouwenfelder, 2013), and participants in the Yarvil study suggested it enabled them to describe their practice in a way that was understood across professional groups:

> *'It affirms the way I am and gives me an additional language and theory to explain what I do to others.'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'Theory /chance to engage with like minded people / the way that SP can engage people at many different levels / creating a movement at work that people can join*

and develop through / giving a language to common sense' (Training and practice development worker)

Some in Yarvil also consistent with the literature, suggested social pedagogy provided a common set of tools and approaches to practice across children's services. Smeeton (2011) suggested that there is inherent value in social pedagogy as an approach because it brings coherence and meaning to the work that is useful and accessible to staff by providing a conceptual framework for understanding complex and sometimes challenging behaviour.

> *'I think this ability to use theory in practice and turn practice into theory needs to remain at the heart of what we do, it will support us in being truly engaged with social pedagogy practice rather than being a missed, oversimplified interpretation of an activity. It retains a sense of consistency, quality to our social pedagogy practice'* (Training and practice development worker)

Others concur, arguing that social pedagogy promotes shared values, theories and skills across different fields (Petrie, 2006, Petrie et al, 2008, Kyriacou et al, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Slovenko et al, 2015) and is also an overarching professional and conceptual framework (Petrie, 2007, Morgan, 2013, Chavaudra et al, 2014, Slovenko et al, 2015). Petrie (2006) suggested that social pedagogy could offer a unifying ethos across professions, settings and age groups, with many workers across children's services reconstructed as pedagogues, sharing common values which offered an alternative to the formal education approach. Some in Yarvil suggested that social pedagogy could be the common conceptual, values and practice framework for children's services practice:

> *'Social pedagogy can become a underpinning working culture in a team or organisation.'* (Residential care worker)

> *'EVERYONE who works with cared for children should have the opportunity to find out what Social Ped is about.'* (Training and practice development worker)

The Yarvil results and the literature concur that there is strong support for a consistent approach to practice, language and values across children's services professions. However, as discussed in chapter seven, social pedagogy is one of a number of conceptual frameworks being deployed within children's services in England, and one of several in use in Yarvil in the time of this study. Evaluations of other contemporary approaches in children's workforce development, such as systemic and Signs of Safety identified similar learning (Bunn, 2013,

Forrester et al, 2013). Furthermore, the most commonly identified challenges explored further later in this chapter) from the Yarvil samples, and leaders from other local authority children's services is the extensive organisational change and investment required to embed new approaches and common workforce development programmes across an entire children's services department. In a climate of significantly reducing resources in children's services (Hastings et al, 2015), social pedagogy is one of a number of potential workforce development approaches for children's services. Social pedagogy has some national profile with children's services leaders, such as its inclusion in the Association of Directors of Children's Services position statement 'What is Care For?' (ADCS, 2013). However, this profile is limited compared to other approaches, such as systemic social work which has been promoted by the Department for Education, and via Eileen Munro's review 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (Department for Education, 2015). This has changed multi-agency safeguarding practice nationally, and informs the Ofsted inspection framework by which children's services are judged (Ofsted, 2017). This is a critical issue for social pedagogy, and evidences the need for social pedagogy in practice to be able to define itself, using clear and evidence based terms, and thus makes the case for the value of the model of practical social pedagogy in children's services that I suggest in chapter five.

6.1.7 Improved relationships

As discussed in chapter five, the results from Yarvil identified strengthened relationships as a benefit of social pedagogy. Most practitioners indicating in questionnaire responses that they engaged young people in positive activities, which enabled social and educational learning, and that their relationships with children and young people were more positive than before more than before engaging with social pedagogy (see appendix H). In particular, Yarvil practitioners suggested that they shared more with young people:

> *'I am better at diffusing tension and encouraging conversation'* (Residential care worker)

> *'Confirmation that relationship building is essential. The use of drama and story telling as a means to allowing children to share their experiences. A refresher of the impact upon brain development of trauma and the difficulties this can pose to many children and adults that we work with'* (child and family support worker)

'Enables meaningful human beings to bring themselves into their relationships at work' sample 2 participant (children's services leader from Yarvil)

'We can work with, and learn from, young people in the home' (Residential care worker)

Practitioners described activities that were done together as positive. Also where engagement with young people when both practitioners and young people seemed less reticent about disclosing personal information, and where there was reduced conflict, this was viewed as more positive. This concurs strongly with the findings of the literature which identified a focus on relationships as a dominant characteristic of social pedagogy, and that improved relationships was a benefit of social pedagogy. Petrie et al (2006) suggested the practitioner seeing herself/himself as a person, in relationship with the child or young person was defining in social pedagogy practice, and the development of positive relationships is widely identified as critical to the positive development of young people (Bowyer et al, 2013, the Children's Society, 2013). In their evaluation of the 'Head, Heart and Hands' social pedagogy programme in foster care, Mcdermid et al (2016) noted that a small number of foster carers reported that they had been encouraged to share more personal information with their fostered children and to use their personal relationship with the child to help them to grow and develop. This also validates the inclusion of positive relationships within the Star Model of practical social pedagogy which I propose in chapter five.

The limited insights from the literature about the potential benefits of social pedagogy in children's services settings are enhanced by the findings from the Yarvil study. Both identified increased use of reflection, the building of more positive relationships, and workers experiencing increased motivation in their role since engaging with social pedagogy as a potential benefit. However, the findings from this research study provides a more detailed and comprehensive view of the potential benefits of social pedagogy, thus providing a original contribution to the social pedagogy research and evidence base. As such, I would argue that if the conditions described in this section which are required for social pedagogy's benefits to be realised in a children's services setting, through application of the Star Model of social pedagogy described in chapter five, it is possible to achieve a number of benefits, including improved experiences of childhood by children and of work by practitioners, and more risk-sensible (rather than risk averse) approaches to working with children, through use of social pedagogy as a common framework for practice. However, its limitations and use

should be further informed by findings relating to the challenges of social pedagogy addressed later in this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter has noted that there were particular benefits observable for children's residential care workers, and as such social pedagogy's potential fit within a children's services workforce should also be considered, and this is explored in chapter seven.

6.2   The challenges of social pedagogy

This chapter so far has described the potential benefits from social pedagogy's application in practice in children's service settings. However, there are challenges and limitations of social pedagogy as a conceptual framework for children's services practice, and conditions and context required to enable the identified benefits to be realised. As I described in chapter two there are a limited number and quality of studies of social pedagogy in practice in English children's services settings and therefore the literature provides minimal insight into the potential challenges of its application in children's services practice settings. However, some papers did identify challenges, such as those related to applying social pedagogy to the English context (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011), including the perception of the English system as one that is risk averse and bureaucratic, and a notable degree of change resistance and lack of interest in social pedagogy by the workforce in some studies (Bengtsson et al, 2008 and Moore et al, 2013). Building on the insights from the social pedagogy literature, this chapter now uses the results of the Yarvil study to provide a new insight into the challenges for social pedagogy in practice, which include the policy context for children's services, resistance within organisations and individuals to social pedagogy, a lack of interest, social pedagogy's lack of distinction within a plethora of potential conceptual frameworks for practice with children, its lack of an evidence base and clear performance measures, and the potential infrastructure investment required to enable its development. These are explored in the sections that follow.

6.2.1   Need for breadth and depth

The Yarvil results identified that social pedagogy needs broad development across services, and tiers of services in order to be effective. For Yarvil practitioners and leaders, this was a reflection on how social pedagogy had been implemented within their own organisation. This involved a steering group comprised of practitioners and services leaders, and a few practitioners with nine days in depth training who developed their own two day training for other workers. This was later supported by the level four, 20 credit university module

introducing social pedagogy, attended by 80 practitioners from across the range of children's services employed by Yarvil Council. Whilst it was recognised that hundreds of individuals had been trained in social pedagogy, a more detailed level of knowledge was possessed by only a few, and a very high level of commitment to its development in the hands of fewer still. This resulted in a perception that its ongoing presence and development was vulnerable, if key individuals were to leave the organisation:

> *'I think we've been quite lucky, thinking about what you said earlier about things coming and going, and looking back over the last 5 years, there are moments when pedagogy could have gone and we've been lucky that we've had certain people coming on board and others that are hanging in there cause there've been dire times, I have to say, and I have been doubtful many times, and wondering where we are going because lack of time, and we've done a lot of work in our own time, and I think without that I am not sure we'd have been here today'.* (Residential care worker)

The training and practice development workers, and the children's services leaders from Yarvil, felt strongly about the importance of having a dedicated role to the development of social pedagogy in practice. These acknowledged the risks of its existence relieving practitioners from across the organisation from owning social pedagogy's development, instead placing it in the hands of an individual:

> *'Particularly around my role, a dedicated resource to social pedagogy development, you can see the potential of people going oh right that's the job that (x) is doing, rather than it being something that they need to lead and push, that I'm a resource for that rather than the other way round, but I think we're identifying those challenges and working as conducively as possible with the workforce'* (Training and practice development worker).

> *'There is a risk that it will be considered as something new that didn't work out if there is not enough time for it'* (Residential care worker)

However, there was considerable strength of support for the dedicated role, and its function in enabling social pedagogy to develop and sustain:

> *'Bringing this post into being has been really critical to keep the momentum because I think without it, you know, with other key people moving into other roles, having that person holding it in the centre it can go in any direction, but having someone holding*

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it and focusing on it has been really important' (Children's services leader from Yarvil)

The availability of a dedicated worker required investment, and the challenge of financial and time investment into the development of social pedagogy, in order for it to be impactful, was a common theme for practitioners in Yarvil. This was consistent with the findings of Mcdermid et al (2016) for whom the lack of investment of resources to fund social pedagogy specific posts beyond the lifetime of the programme was also interpreted by the foster carers as an indicator that the senior managers at the site were no longer committed to the approach. Both time and resource investment were identified as challenges in Yarvil:

> *'Time too can be another challenge'.* (Child and family support worker)

> *'Where people, even those well versed in social pedagogy thinking have not been given support and skills or the time to reflect both individually and as team on how social pedagogy can infuse though their work this has not happed and social pedagogy remains more a good tool rather than a profound change in the professional or the work team.'* (Training and practice development worker)

There was a consensus from Yarvil participants, and with a strong degree of feeling, that in order for social pedagogy to be effective and sustainable, it needed large numbers of people spread across the organisation in terms of services, geography and management tiers to have enough knowledge and passion for it to be sustainable:

> '*Everybody who works in the authority has some understanding appropriate to their role of this way of working. And, um, and that too can happen, cultures in organisations do change. It relies on some principles of consistent backing of this from top, the consistent opening up of opportunities from people from ground to prove it can be done, working between to ensure management makes that something that can delivered*.' (Training and practice development worker)

This result from Yarvil was highly resonant with the findings of Mcdermid et al (2016) in their evaluation of the national social pedagogy programme in foster care 'Head, Heart and Hands'. Mcdermid et al (2016) identified that combined with the insights from the implementation research, which noted that the decision to limit training to just 40 carers and around eight staff in each site was simply too small a number to have substantially and positively disturbed business as usual in the larger sites. This resulted in the level of

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diffusion to the wider systems of care being low, consistent with the findings of Berridge et al (2011) who observed that impact of the social pedagogy programme they evaluated may have been greater had social pedagogy permeated more widely across staff and services. Mcdermid et al (2016) suggested that the overall impact was deep rather than wide, with a relatively small proportion of fostering households reported that the programme had reaped substantial benefits. I would suggest that this was likely to be the case in Yarvil, indicated by the limited number of responses to the questionnaire despite wide distribution to people who had participated in the social pedagogy programme, and the data provided by participants. This indicated that the knowledge and passion for social pedagogy rested in the hands of a relatively few individuals.

With regard to depth of impact of social pedagogy in Yarvil, the data reveals there was particular identified risk in Yarvil of social pedagogy being diluted or 'watered down' without appropriate theoretical input to retain fidelity. Practitioners identified that social pedagogy risks being compromised or 'diluted' without strong theoretical underpinning, identifying a lack of theoretical insight within the organisation which therefore required support from outside of Yarvil Council, and therefore both investment and capacity.

> *'I think it could quite easily dissipate into just doing nice things with kids'* (Training and practice development worker).

Some practitioners identified that the absence of qualified and experienced social pedagogues to shape social pedagogy's development risked diluting it:

> *'I think what helped us at the start was having some pedagogues on board in a guiding capacity, and perhaps it is time now to have them back in to see if we are on the right path, or have found a new path. But yeah, there is a danger that we just pluck it out of our brains and might have steered off the path a long time ago.'* (Residential care worker)

Along with the study by McDermid et al (2016), this study provides a critical insight into the conditions and implementation requirements for social pedagogy to realistically deliver the potential benefits identified in section 5.1 of this chapter, and should be of value for other Council children's services considering its development within practice settings.

6.2.2   Organisational culture

A majority of Yarvil respondents agreed that the culture of the organisation made it difficult for them to practice how they would like (detailed in chapter four). This view was further developed through focus groups and interviews with middle managers identified in particular as providing a challenge, in particular a perceived lack of interest or belief in social pedagogy, and a focus on other priorities, including inspection readiness:

> '*When some higher managers don't understand or have any interest in Social Pedagogy or wants it to succeed. Higher managements support sometimes gets watered down as it filters down the ranks to grassroots level, I feel that mid to lower management sometimes have their own agenda that creates barriers, this has not been challenged enough both from grassroots and higher management level.*' (Residential care worker)

> '*Social pedagogy will need continual reinforcement if it is to become core to the culture of work in the organisation to avoid it becoming a living process for those professional who engage in its development but abstract for other*'. (Training and practice development worker)

As asserted by the Social Education Trust (2001) social pedagogy requires a need for people in the UK to rethink their attitudes to children and young people, requiring a fundamental reframing of culture, with the use of a new language only being the first step. The scale of this challenge cannot be underestimated, as described later in this chapter, given social pedagogy's highly contextual identity, and the framework of statutory reporting and policy which surrounds it in the context of children's services settings in England.

> '*In my own role the challenge is the opening up of and changes in the mind-set of professionals. Social pedagogy ask of professional some profound questions about their values and their work and ask them to often challenge systems which they formerly relied upon in their work.*' (Residential care worker)

> '*As with any organisation made up of a vast array of professional with many backgrounds to their working practice and also in an organisation with many of its own initiative of good practice development social pedagogy will need continual reinforcement if it is to become core to the culture of work in the organisation to*

avoid it becoming a living process for those professional who engage in its development but abstract for other.' (Child and family support worker)

Pervasive health and safety culture was also a challenge identified in the Yarvil results, which practitioners looked to management to resolve. In some cases progress has been made as detailed in previous chapters and sections, but the restrictions health and safety requirements place on the culture of practice was a significant ongoing concern for practitioners in Yarvil:

'Particularly as a manager, risk assessments can be very difficult when faced with professionals with embedded ways of working and practice' (Training and practice development worker)

'But it's still a constant battle isn't it because I think there are the people on the dark side, like health and safety, coming back all the time – have you thought about this and that' (Residential care worker)

Contemporary social pedagogy thinkers identified the contrast between the UK system of care, which is deemed to be dominated by concerns about risk and safeguarding procedures, and countries where pedagogues have the social pedagogy training and environment which support greater self-confidence about managing relationships and risk (Milligan, 2009, and Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012). This concern was acknowledged also by children's services leaders both within and external to Yarvil:

'What I want to do is, what I'm concerned about is retaining staff, and them doing evidence-based assessments, but that doesn't mean there isn't space for developing a culture of social pedagogy'. (Other children's services leader)

'It needs to be the prevailing culture of risk, not using health and safety as an excuse….we expect you to do, not to find excuses not to do' (Children's services leader from Yarvil)

Yarvil practitioners and service leaders also identified that social pedagogy was not going to be appropriate or engaging for all practitioners, whose values base or interest were not consistent with it as a conceptual framework, and this resulted in it being a challenge to work in a social pedagogic way with some colleagues:

'You can give someone all the training in the world but you can't give them a personality transplant. You're either that kind of person or you're not' (Child and family support worker).

'Not all practitioners have had the light bulb moment. Trying to work with other professionals and agencies that don't understand SP can be challenging.' (Child and family support worker)

'Working with children who have disabilities it has been getting past the mindset of we already do this and looking beyond at how we can expand further with deeper concepts of social pedagogy such as social constructs and the implications this has on our young people.' (Residential care worker)

An example of how social pedagogy values were not embedded within the organisation from Yarvil practitioners, was the balance of influence within relationships and the voice of the child in shaping planning and interventions.

'There remains a frustration in the hierarchy of disciplines as some don't recognise the child and carer as expert' (Training and practice development worker)

'Sometimes the young person is not being treated as equal in Council processes eg placements' (Residential care worker)

This perception was not unique to Yarvil with the Social Education Trust (2001) identifying that research in Europe has shown that social pedagogues are as capable of being uncooperative, protectionist and compartmental as any other profession. This issue of all workers and leaders sharing the same positive mind set so as to be conducive to the successful implementation of a conceptual framework in the workforce was identified in Yarvil:

'We need to get to a point where it is just how we do things around here' Sample 2 (children's services leader from Yarvil)

'Getting other professionals on board and getting them to see the potential of social pedagogy' (child and family support worker)

'In my own role the challenge is the opening up of and changes in the mind-set of professionals. Social pedagogy ask of professional some profound questions about

their values and their work and ask them to often challenge systems which they
formerly relied upon in their work. Many professional who are not natural exponents
of reflective and critically reflective practice and where investment has been given
into time for professional reflective practice social pedagogy has been allowed its
recreation moment in peoples working practice and thus has embedded more rapidly
and thoroughly.' (Training and practice development worker)

As such, I suggest that this challenge not be one identified as particular to social pedagogy, rather one that would be equal for any conceptual or development programme which was deployed in children's services settings.

6.2.3 Policy and performance management context

Within studies of social pedagogy in children's services settings in the UK explored within the literature review, the most prevalent challenge identified was the difficulty of measuring its impact or influence, particularly within the context of English children's services which are dominated by a culture of outcome and output measurement through the Ofsted inspection regime. Coussée et al (2010) argue that social pedagogy contrasts with current approaches which are too target driven and focused on completing forms and ticking boxes, and as such would be difficult to implement in contemporary children's services in England. This is acknowledged by Slovenko et al (2016) who note that social pedagogic practice takes a unique approach to each individual and context, and as such is not amenable to fixed interpretations of what represents best practice. This theme was strongly supported by the results from the Yarvil study, with most respondents agreeing that policies restricted their practice, and multiple references in focus groups and interviews (see chapter four).

A particular concern for practitioners with regard to the policy context was a deeply embedded concern within children's services organisations about meeting the expectations of Ofsted inspections, and finding a lack of congruence between social pedagogy and inspection criteria:

> '*Well I guess they're also concerned about Ofsted aren't they, the judgements that are*
> *passed down from government agencies and having to constantly explain why we're*
> *doing what we're doing*' (Residential care worker)

> '*It isn't going to get all of your children's homes to good or better*' Sample 2
> (children's services leader from Yarvil)

> *'We need Ofsted and the government to get on board with social pedagogy'*
> (Residential care worker)

Some practitioners suggested that although social pedagogy had been gaining profile nationally, some inspectors were not well informed about its theory and concepts:

> '*At the last managers meeting the managers gave feedback in their most recent inspection, and the inspector said 'where is your social pedagogy box?'. And I was like what? And they were like where is your toolbox of arts and crafts bits, and we were like, that's not really what social pedagogy is all about*' (Residential care worker)

As discussed previously in this chapter, a distinctive potential benefit of social pedagogy identified by Yarvil participants in this study is a focus on seeking happiness and wellbeing, and for children to experience a good childhood. However, a challenge to this was that the key performance indicator requirements of English government departments and Ofsted were inconsistent with this ambition, instead focusing on more easily measurable changes or outputs, such as attendance, attainment and timeliness of reviews. A greater focus on process, particularly within social work, was identified following the Munro review and revised safeguarding policies (2015), was viewed as potentially stifling social pedagogy's potential:

> *'We are really struggling to get the power to innovate through the house of lords, and actually if you don't allow your sector to innovate, who is going to. We are only going to put in more bureaucracy every time we have a child death, because that is all we have done since whenever, child death = more bureaucracy'* (Other children's services leader)

> *'We also have to consider the other factor for them is their data collection, it is killing people… we are looking for impact in a really small way i.e. statistics. If we do this we can get more kids to do exams, if we do this we can get less people receiving this benefit, and that's such a narrow gateway to manage our impact and outcomes… what we are actually looking for is people who are becoming who they are going to be and strengthening their and our aspirations, and we need to become much more*

subtle in measuring that. A lot of this is bigger, deeper challenge' (Training and practice development worker)

This is further exacerbated by the focus on key performance indicators and mandatory reporting by children's services:

'I have to say, as yet, I haven't seen sustainable outcomes. Now it is really difficult isn't it because you are working with the most complex, you know residential homes are interesting aren't they. I don't think that has driven an outcome in terms of strategic objectives and strategic performance.' (Other children's services leader)

'So annually we report on the emotional wellbeing of children in our care and that is a mandatory thing we report on, and for those young people there will be a lot who are not happy, and will require a high level of support with their emotional wellbeing and I think until we have met that outcome we are not going to meet other outcomes, so more measurable if you like, academic or achievement outcomes so I think if you go in partnership, uncles you've got a happy child feeling safe and secure and happy to learn you can't move onto the other more traditional outcomes' (Child and family support worker.

The literature widely references the difference in national policy context and socio-economic culture in England and the UK compared to countries where social pedagogy is embedded, and the challenges in exporting it into the English context without an established social pedagogy tradition (Kornbeck, 2002 and 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Hämäläinen, 2013). A significant challenge for social pedagogy identified by the Yarvil results is the need for the national policy and inspection landscape to shift in parallel with shifts in practice if they are to be sustained:

'I am of the opinion that SP will need to challenge policy thinking and when it wins (which it will) only then will we start to see the major shift in the culture of child care and development in [Yarvil] and the UK'. (Training and practice development worker)

'It makes you more vulnerable doesn't it because you can't hide behind a rule or a policy where you have to do this, this or this, you kind of have to think outside the box' (Residential care worker).

There was also strong emphasis on the need for a change in culture to address embedded anxieties about safeguarding practice and risk management. Additionally, a further theme relating to the challenges of social pedagogy emerged from the stage 3 data across both samples, which was the lack of measurability of the benefits of social pedagogy. Participants identified that the benefits of social pedagogy to children's wellbeing and experience were not statistically verifiable or measurable in the way that the data reporting and inspection requirements of government are recorded by children's services, such as educational attainment or the timeliness of assessments. There was a congruence between all of the children's services leaders that had experienced social pedagogy that there were benefits, in terms of the experience of children and workers, however they identified as the inability to measure these using traditional data reporting methods as a challenge, which may impact on social pedagogy as priority given the externally imposed strategic objectives, such as the children's services inspection regime and mandatory data reporting.

The challenges of social pedagogy identified in the literature – that the English system is risk averse and bureaucratic, and that there is change resistance and lack of interest in social pedagogy by the workforce – were all also reflected as challenges by the Yarvil workforce. However, the findings from Yarvil present a more comprehensive insight into the potential challenges of social pedagogy in children's services settings in England, highlighting the need for strong theoretical underpinnings, leadership support and investment and an acceptance that traditional measures of success are unlikely to represent the potential benefits of social pedagogy.

As such, I argue that proponents of social pedagogy seeking to optimise its potential benefits of practice within children's services settings should be prepared to challenge and lobby at a national level to shape inspection and performance regimes, if its focus on improved childhood experiences is to be recognised.

6.2.4   Ambiguity of the concept

A large minority of participants in the questionnaire agreed that they found some social pedagogy concepts difficult to understand (see chapter four). Furthermore, many authors in the literature review observed that the term social pedagogy is problematic (regional Youth Work Unit, 2010, Berridge et al, 2011, Moore et al, 2014) as it is noted that the term and concept of social pedagogy is unfamiliar to English audiences. Different countries have different emphases and use different terms (Petrie et al, 2008, Kornbeck, 2009). The

ambiguity of its definition, as explored in chapter one, is also a challenge for social pedagogy (Berridge et al, 2011, Moore et al, 2014). For example, surveys of practitioners in children's services in UK local authority where social pedagogy training was widely available identified that most workers were not able to provide an interpretation of the term, and did not understand it (Regional Youth Work Unit, 2010, Moore et al. 2014). This was exemplified by the following responses to the question 'what are the challenges of social pedagogy?':

> *'People not taking it seriously, perceiving it as 'fluffy'' (*Training and practice development worker)

> *'Trying to understand some of the theory – the practical stuff was much more straightforward.'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'Difficult to talk to some about S.P and as you can see from my understanding of what it means I am not totally clear in being able to describe it!'* (Child and family support worker)

> '*Trying to find a clear definition – when people ask what nit is I find it quite hard to explain (though I feel I have a good understanding of what it is about).'* (Residential care worker)

> 'T*rying to explain it!'* (Child and family support worker)

As such, I argue that a clearer definition and explanation of social pedagogy is necessary, and suggest that the Star Model (chapter five) and findings from this study will support its understanding in English children's services settings. Whilst there are clear challenges emanating from ambiguity of the concept of social pedagogy, and its lack of an established and agreed definition, it must be acknowledged that this is not intrinsically a weakness, rather a symptom of its highly context specific nature.

6.2.5 Lack of novelty of the concept

Mcdermid et al (2016) in their evaluation of social pedagogy in foster care settings identified that foster carers were of the view that putting labels on things they were already doing was in itself helpful in making them more mindful of their existing behaviours. This was also a common theme in Yarvil responses, in which practitioners identified that social pedagogy, and its concepts, were not new to them, rather a re-branding of previously identified ideas:

'I feel a little like Social Pedagogy is just 'good practice' and struggle at times to see how 'new' the principles and values are.' (Child and family support worker)

'If there was an option for 'the same as before', this would have been selected for most questions – this is not because I don't think that SP has benefited young people; it is due to the fact that I have always worked in a pedagogical manner, but without knowing the title. The introduction of social pedagogy has clearly made a huge difference to colleague's practice.' (Child and family support worker)

'SP has given a language and theory to the way I have always approached my work and interactions with young people through my professional life.' (Training and practice development worker)

'I feel that I do all of the above and had these skills before I learnt about Social Pedagogy' (Child and family support worker)

This supports the suggestions in the literature that the extent to which social pedagogy provides new ideas or approaches is also identified as a challenge by some included authors (Milligan, 2011). For example, in reviews of social pedagogy (Milligan, 2009 and 2011, Vrouwenfelder, 2013) it was identified that practitioners participating in social pedagogy training found the concepts were already familiar to them and already had a mind-set conducive to social pedagogy and the Regional Youth work Unit (2010) noted that social pedagogy has always been present in good practice in the UK, without actually being labelled as social pedagogy.

Therefore, the extent to which social pedagogy is presented as a new or innovative approach should be challenged. As identified by Hämäläinen (2013), 'the idea is older than the term' (p2). Whilst I argue that the Star Model (chapter five) presents a new and evidence based model of what social pedagogy is as a conceptual framework in children's services settings, I do not argue for its novelty, and I explore its fit within children's services settings in England further in chapter seven.

6.3   Conclusion

Chapter six has presented the findings of the Yarvil study with regard to the perceived benefits and challenges of social pedagogy as a conceptual framework for practice in

children's services settings in England. I have analysed these within a critical analysis of the supporting literature and identified a number of potential benefits of social pedagogy, and how these further legitimise the Star Model of practical social pedagogy is proposed in chapter five. However, I have examined these potential benefits within the challenges for social pedagogy in this context, identifying the conditions required for benefits to be realised, the challenges to its potential effectiveness. I have also confirmed that whilst the Star Model offers a new and unique explanation of social pedagogy rooted in the evidence from this study, I am not proposing that social pedagogy offers new or unique concepts to those considering it.

7 The fit and change agent role of social pedagogy in the children's services workforce

This chapter explores the potential fit of social pedagogy as a conceptual framework within the range of professional groups which constitute the children's services workforce, building on the findings from the Yarvil study and literature review. In this chapter I identify that whilst there may be potential benefits for workers across children's services settings, the greatest fit of social pedagogy's theory and concepts is with children's residential care where there is a need for a unifying professional development approach. I also suggest how the role of a social pedagogue may be defined within the children's services context in England, and argue for social pedagogy practitioners as those lesser level of theoretical instruction, to practice under the supervision of a social pedagogue to avoid the risk of dilution of theory in practice. I argue that there would be benefits to the employment of social pedagogues to fill emergent vacancies in the residential services establishments. Furthermore, I propose the conditions which are necessary for social pedagogy to deliver the optimum benefits in English children's services

7.1 Social pedagogy's potential fit within the English children's services workforce

The approaches being undertaken in Yarvil were substantially different from other contemporary social pedagogy programmes in England, and this unique context and approach contributes to evidence of and research into social pedagogy in children's services in England.   In particular, I suggest that the study provides an opportunity to contribute to debates about defining social pedagogy in England, to build knowledge about where, if anywhere, social pedagogy best fits in the children's services workforce. The approach taken involved Yarvil Council workers undertaking training in social pedagogy from qualified social pedagogues, and developing local, peer-led training for colleagues, rather than employing social pedagogues to work directly in children's services settings as had been done in other programmes (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Cameron, 2013, Moore et al, 2014, Mcdermid et al, 2016). The Yarvil programme involved participants from a range of professional groups, including youth work, family support work, children's centres, foster care and educational support services, rather

than the focus on children in care taken elsewhere (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Cameron, 2013, Moore et al, 2014, McDermid et al, 2016). Furthermore, the Yarvil approach included the development of a bespoke university module to develop knowledge of social pedagogy in the workforce, which was without precedent in England.

7.1.1   Fit within the children's residential care workforce

One of the research questions, as described in chapter one, sought to explore the potential fit of social pedagogy within the children's services workforce and the majority of respondents to the questionnaire, across all professional groups, agreed that social pedagogy fits well with their role when responding using a series of Likert items in the questionnaire (see chapter four). As discussed in chapter six, whilst there were benefits identified by practitioners in all samples, which included residential care workers, child and family support workers (such as family support workers, children's centre workers, social workers and youth workers), and staff development and training staff, the strongest responses in terms of the degree of change in their practice and values, and perception of benefit was from the residential care workers.

Responses from residential care workers were often distinct from those of the other professional groups, in that they more frequently gave the strongest responses to Likert item questions compared to the other groups, such as for young people being empowered, engaging in positive activities and positivity of relationships (see chapter four, tables 4c and 4e). Residential care workers identified more challenges than the other groups, such as those relating to management, staff resistance and the policy framework in which they practiced. Significantly, residential care workers were more likely to reference how they felt, rather than just what they did, since engaging with social pedagogy. For example, in open questions residential care workers described more and with greater emphasis feeling more confident, better skilled, and less vulnerable. The also described how they challenged myths about safeguarding and risk practice and feeling better about the lives of children. Also reflected in the focus groups, the residential workers demonstrated a deeper understanding of and resonance with social pedagogy, a greater increase in confidence, often expressing more frustration at the challenges of its implementation than the other professional groups.

The dominance of social pedagogy in residential care compared to other professional groups experienced in Yarvil is also reflected in the prevalence of children in care services within the social pedagogy literature. In the literature review in chapter two, the most prevalent

profession considered with regard to social pedagogy in the included papers was children's residential care (Petrie et al, 2008, Milligan, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Kornbeck, 2013, Morgan, 2013), with Coussée et al (2010), Cameron (2013) and Berridge et al (2011) and Morgan (2013) suggesting that some of the characteristics of social pedagogy, such as the lifespace concept (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012) and building of relationships are most possible in settings where the professional and the child live together. Furthermore, a systematic review of the evidence relating to improving educational outcomes for children in care across multiple European countries identified that there were improved outcomes associated with social pedagogy being an approach used by the practitioners supporting the young people (Cameron et al, 2007). Eichsteller and Holtoff (2012) also suggested that social pedagogy could have a transformative effect on care practice.

Of the identified studies of social pedagogy in children's services settings in chapter two, all of which focused on staff working with children in care, five identified that there had been a positive influence on the practice of the workers (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013 and McDermid et al 2016). This increased use of reflection, the building of more positive relationships, and use of social pedagogy tools such as the common third, and head, heart and hands. Also, five studies (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011 and Moore et al, 2013, McDermid et al 2016, McPheat et al, 2017) noted that workers had experienced increased motivation in their role since engaging with social pedagogy. As such, the emphasis on residential care workers from the results in Yarvil which was expected based on the results from the literature, was apparent.

The potential reasons for the notable difference for residential workers, compared to other professional groups, was explored in focus groups and interviews (see chapters 4.2 and 4.3). This identified that social pedagogy had resulted in deeper engagement with residential workers as it provided them with a theoretical framework strongly linked to their professional role which had been largely absent previously.

> *'There is a bit of a culture in residential work of not having an academic culture of background whereas in other areas there might be so for example there is very few people in residential who have degrees so they pick things up without sort of putting into a section of the brain that says 'I'd like to study more', the brain says I can work with children in that way without it relating to anything academic'* (Residential care worker)

Whilst defined professional training existed for other professionals, such as social workers and youth workers for whom defined degree programmes existed, residential workers had not experienced the same qualification route to their role, and considered themselves to be viewed as less credible within the professional hierarchy of children's services.

>*'It has helped residential staff to define their own skill set'* (Children's services leader from Yarvil)

>*'I feel that the residential workers feel more valued and listen too, the profession is also slowly gaining more respect from other professionals.'* (Residential care worker)

A similar change for residential workers was noted by Vrouwenfelder (2013) who perceived their profession to be a 'Cinderella' service, had felt a growth in confidence, especially when working with education and social work professionals as they had a better understanding of their own value base. Moore et al (2014) also identified that the acquisition of the new skills and knowledge through social pedagogy training had led to a more satisfying outcome for their roles. Berridge (2013) noted that outcomes for children in care, including attainment, teenage pregnancy, youth offending, missing and homelessness, than the wider population, and that residential homes in England now cater for a more problematic cohort of troubled adolescents. This context, combined with what Yarvil workers and Vrouwenfelder (2013) suggest, and the financial challenge for local authorities in England, I would argue, a strong rationale for focusing the application of social pedagogy within residential children's homes services where the benefits seem to be most evident.

An inclination towards use of social pedagogy in residential services, rather than elsewhere within the children's services workforce was also indicated by service leaders from other councils, including those that had used social pedagogy, and those that hadn't.

>*'I would not be inclined to expand it any further cos actually I see it as working in a residential home because you are working with the most vulnerable, so I understand why you would need social pedagogy, I get why you'd need that higher level of supervision and why it would need to permeate everything that you do because you're 24/7 there, so why that model needs to be much more intense and much more second nature'* (Other children's services leader 1)

>*'I wouldn't start with foster carers, I would start with ressy as it's a relatively small group of staff but would need managers on side. If we could put newly qualified*

In other countries, Berridge et al (2013) argue that social pedagogy is a higher status, better trained, more autonomous profession, with qualifications at graduate level whereas in the UK to work with the most vulnerable and challenging young people who have often been neglected and abused, a lower level of qualification is required. The lack of a defined professional training route to becoming a qualified residential worker may explain the level of engagement with social pedagogy by this professional group. Furthermore, Yarvil's social pedagogy development began with residential care, and as such workers within the service had a longer and more immersive experience with social pedagogy than for some other professional groups, which may also explain the difference identified in the Yarvil results. Based on the Yarvil findings, I would suggest that the benefits of social pedagogy are most likely to be realised within the children's residential workforce. However, as I argue later in this chapter, in part this is due to the absence of an existing defined professional framework for the residential workforce, rather than due to the intrinsic value of social pedagogy, which could potentially also be replicated by other conceptual frameworks for work with children.

7.1.2 Fit within the child and family support workforce

When compared to responses from other professional groups, there were also notable differences for professional group 2 (child and family support workers), particularly with regard to their views on practice, and the fit of social pedagogy within their existing knowledge and skills framework. Child and family support workers, which included social workers, youth workers and early years practitioners, most frequently referenced that social pedagogy had built on previous learning (see chapter four). However, the child and family support workers also more frequently identified that some social pedagogy theories were difficult to understand than the other professional groups. The child and family support workers were least likely to share aspects of their personal self in their practice. For example, most residential care workers agreed that they avoided sharing aspects of their personal selves less than before, compared to child and family support workers for whom most did not identify this as an influence.

Child and family support workers also more frequently referenced with practical examples, the changes to their practice compared to the other groups, rather than any influence on their

values, perspectives of their role in the lives of children as described in chapter four. For example, workers referenced increasing creativity of their approaches, using personalised learning with children, the common third and reflective practice.

> *'It is great to be alongside other working tools, to be flexible, stepping Out of the box'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'I am much more conscious of the benefit of building relationships via shared tasks. Confirmation that relationship building is essential. The use of drama and story telling as a means to allowing children to share their experiences. A refresher of the impact upon brain development of trauma and the difficulties this can pose to many children and adults that we work with.'* (Child and family support worker)

This was in contrast to the personal or values based emphases of the residential care workers. For example, residential care workers' responses were assigned to the codes such as personal meaningful engagement in work, appeal of social pedagogy to passionate people, importance of relationships and focus on person-centredness, with child and family support workers making no reference to these themes. Residential care workers and training and practice development workers more readily identified benefits and challenges of social pedagogy, than the child and family support workers in focus groups and interviews (see chapter four).

Child and family support workers in all data collection stages more frequently identified social pedagogy as not providing anything new, rather reinforcing previous learning.

> *'I feel a little like Social Pedagogy is just 'good practice' and struggle at times to see how 'new' the principles and values are. However, I understand that I may only have brief overview of theory/practice and in Countries where Social Pedagogy is fully embedded there are improved outcomes for children. If anything my study in Social Pedagogy has underpinned the good practice values that I already held and promote within the early years settings I support.'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'Enabled me to refresh and update my knowledge and reflect on my practice. Can see how fits into [name of department] and my role within that.'* (Child and family support worker)

In the literature, some identify a strong commonality of ideas and approach between traditions of social pedagogy and youth work (Coussée et al, 2010, Kornbeck, 2013,

Slovenko et al, 2016) and youth mentoring (Morgan, 2013), with youth work identified as having a strong tradition in England and the wider United Kingdom (Kornbeck, 2013). Youth work is argued as having the same emphasis on informal education, holistic approaches and pedagogical relationships as social pedagogy (Coussée et al, 2010). This may explain why those qualified to degree level in such roles did not identify social pedagogy as providing as much added value to their professional roles as those without the theoretical training experienced by youth workers, such as those working in residential homes. However, understandings of children in English policy and the training of children's workers are embedded, and frequently less social pedagogically oriented than those of other European countries (Jackson and Cameron, 2011, Kyriacou, 2016).

The findings from Yarvil, supported by the results from the literature review, suggest that the influence of social pedagogy on professional groups with a defined professional framework which provide some commonality with social pedagogy, such as social work or youth work, is less than for those without such an existing framework, such as residential care workers. Furthermore, the nature of the role of child and family support workers, defined by a shorter interventions rather than shared living arrangements reduces the potential for application of some social pedagogy concepts such as lifespace.

However, as noted by other children's services leader 2 and the Yarvil service leaders in addition to the practitioners themselves, there is considered to be potential benefits in other services within the frontline children's workforce.

> *'It is an operating framework for all, but has challenged some professions such as youth work' 'It is new because it is transforming all services at once'* Sample 2 (children's services leader from Yarvil)

As such, an agreed understanding of what social pedagogy is, and how it can be defined and actioned is critical to debates regarding the fit of social pedagogy in the children's services workforce. The issues of definition and application in the children's services workforce, based on the findings of this study are addressed later in this chapter.

7.1.3   Social pedagogy in training and practice development

Unsurprisingly given their role in support of other professionals rather than frontline work with children and young people, professional group 3 (training and practice development

workers) were most likely to respond 'not applicable' to some questions in the questionnaire relating to practice and relationships with children. However, training and practice development workers unanimously agreed that social pedagogy fitted well with their role in responses to the questionnaire. Training and practice development workers also most frequently referred to theory in open questions, compared to other groups (see chapter four).

> *'Given that I have always use a theoretical background to my work social pedagogy has not been a theoretical revelation so much as it has brought the theoretical background to my work into a sharper focus and allowed me though the addition of reflective approaches to use theory in practice and learn from my own practice how to understand and interpret theoretical approaches.'* (Training and practice development worker)

> *'SP has given a language and theory to the way I have always approached my work and interactions with young people through my professional life. It is hopefully eclectic enough to fit a wide range of professions to help liberate people form overly restrictive working codes of practise and outmoded ways of approaching the way we work with children and young people.'* (Training and practice development worker)

The social pedagogy literature examined in chapter two did not explicitly identify training and practice development workers with regard to social pedagogy's fit within the workforce. However, the results from Yarvil suggest this professional group experienced a positive influence of social pedagogy in their roles, with regard to its potential to be a common conceptual framework across all professional groups, thus providing a common language and set of understandings.

> *'And there is a really practical side for me. It is about giving people a universal language, not a professionally bespoke language but a universal language. This can be very deeply theoretical, but the reality of it is it can be really very you know transferable, because it's about being a human being at work.'* (Training and practice development worker)

> *'Social Pedagogy principles/values could be used to provide support multi-agency working by providing common ground for professionals.'* (Training and practice development worker)

'From my perspective, the importance of social pedagogy is it being something that is known and understood by all workers appropriate to their engagement and role, is that it prioritises the values of why people work with children and young people' (Training and practice development worker)

There was also support for the values of social pedagogy having inspired what was described as a 'grassroots movement', with its strategic direction being shaped and owned by front line workers, with the support of managers, rather than as a top-down directive, and therefore strengthens confidence, wellbeing and enjoyment of work amongst the workers.

'But as a grassroots movement, that's a development for a lot of people to make, as well as the learning on social pedagogy so feeling you are both in control of your own destiny and informing the destiny of the authority, but the idea for grassroots workers is new.' (Training and practice development worker)

'creating a movement at work that people can join and develop through / giving a language to common sense!' (Training and practice development worker)

'It enables them to become personally engaged with the role they do, and therefore more motivated, more engaged, have more enjoyment and satisfaction from what they do, by enabling those people who have a passion for this to reveal that passion in their work, and it can only be an infectious thing that improves their lot, and the children and young people's lot' (Training and practice development worker)

However, the training and practice development workers also identified that whilst there were benefits to social pedagogy as conceptual framework, these were not necessarily unique to social pedagogy, rather they were benefits ascribed to an approach which could work across professions and empower the workers in their practice:

'You know that will make it more satisfying for you, because that is how things get developed and I think within our children's services here they are quite gridlocked, we are constipated by bureaucracy, there is so much, and I think the people that enter our services are so used to things being done to them or for them it might be fantastic but they become disempowered to find the change for themselves. So again, something like social pedagogy, and I am not wedded to it being the only way of working I have

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to say, but it's quite a universal language I think.' (Training and practice development worker)

'I think as an authority this isn't the only model of working is it?' (Training and practice development worker)

These insights into the experience and influence of social pedagogy on staff in training and practice development roles are new, and reflect perspectives not considered elsewhere in the social pedagogy literature. As such, this research can provide a unique contribution to understandings of social pedagogy in children's services settings for workers in practice development roles.

7.1.4 Defining social pedagogy, social pedagogues and social pedagogical actions

In chapter one I identified that the term social pedagogy is without an agreed definition (Kornbeck, 2009, Cameron et al, 2011, Eichsteller et al, 2011, Hämäläinen, 2012 and 2013, Storo 2012 and 2013, Sandermann et al, 2014), but is used in this research to refer to a way of working with children and young people which incorporates both the social and educational. I also identified that there may be related ideas or concepts that appear consistent with contemporary understandings of social pedagogy, where the term 'social pedagogy' is not used. In these cases, I suggested that the ideas or concepts be described as social pedagogical.

These assertions were made in the absence of an agreed definition, however in this chapter I have argued that there are six defining characteristics of practical social pedagogy in children's services. This new knowledge poses further questions which are discussed in this section: can any approach or tool which applies the 6 defining characteristics be described as 'social pedagogy' or 'social pedagogical? Or is an approach only 'social pedagogy' if it is practised in a certain way, and for a certain purpose? Is social pedagogy a broad term which encompasses a range of ideas or approaches that have both educational and social components, or is it a specific and closely defined discipline? Is it possible to say what is and isn't social pedagogy? If so, how is it possible to do this, and can an approach be 'social pedagogical' by encapsulating some of the values, principles or approaches of social pedagogy? The existence of a distinction between social pedagogy, social pedagogical and social pedagogical problems is suggested by Euteneuer (2014). These questions, and their

significance for developing an agreement about how practical social pedagogy is defined, are exemplified by the practice examples given in figures 4e and 4f, and the discussion that follows.

Figure 7a: Example 1 - Social pedagogy or social pedagogical?

Alevioz et al (2015) present an anti-bullying approach which they describe as 'social pedagogical'

The Interactive Educational Tool against Bullying presented by Alevioz (2015) was designed in order to be used by teachers in secondary education together with teams of students at their school. The tool presents two bullying stories, one of which takes place in a school and the other one in the cyber world. The stories are performed in natural environments by children who are amateur actors and the teacher can initiate a discussion with the students on what they have just watched and heard, and seek to jointly identify solutions. It is an educational tool with a focus on theory and practice, establishing a values system for students, the pursuit of empowerment and wellbeing and community responsibility.

Figure 7b: Example 3 – Social pedagogy or social pedagogical?

Worker A, a youth worker from Yarvil Council, takes a young person to a fast food restaurant, rather than meeting at the youth centre

Following social pedagogy training, worker A took a young person to a fast food restaurant to engage them, rather than meeting at the usual youth centre. Worker A advised that this was as a result of social pedagogy training, as it was the young person's choice to go there, thus empowering them, and was a more creative way of engaging the young person.

Example 1 appears to be consistent with the six characteristics of social pedagogy – it includes: practice that integrates educational action and shared learning; a framework of principles and values; a focus on the relationship between teacher and child to achieve change; seeks to empower both the teacher and the child; is appropriate to the context; and seeks betterment of society as whole. It is therefore social pedagogical in its design and approach.

However, I have argued in the Star Model (figure 5b) that the practice framework for social pedagogy in children's service includes a number of components, with the aim of fulfilment of human potential through shared experiences, risk sensibility, creative approaches, reflection and positive relationships through conscious use of theory by the practitioner. It is not clear whether example 1 meets the defining characteristics. I would argue that if the practitioner (in this case the teacher) is using the anti-bullying tool as a result of consulting with educational theory to determine an appropriate intervention, then the conscious use of theory with the aim of achieving the social and educational betterment of his or her pupils, alongside the other characteristics being evident, then this is an example of practical social pedagogy being practised. The critical and defining factor in defining whether the practise is social pedagogy is therefore the agency of the practitioner in their conscious use of theory, and the intent behind the action.

Example 2 was extracted from a focus group at data collection stage 2 with child and family support workers. In this example, the actions appear to neither meet all of the six characteristics of practical social pedagogy identified in fig 5a, nor the characteristics in the Star Model which defines the framework for practice. Whilst the intention of the practitioner was to empower the young person by giving them choice, and to be more creative than the usual approach of talking in the youth centre, the intervention did not integrate the social and educational. The practitioner, as revealed in the focus group discussions, had attempted to refer to theory, referencing the 'common third' and 'head, heart and hands' theories, suggesting that she had considered how to be more creative and empowering. However, through deeper discussion about the theories considered, it was apparent that the worker had used parts of different theories, rather than adhering carefully to the model she cited which was the 'head, heart and hands' theory (see section 2.6.4). She was informed by her heart (she wanted the young person to enjoy the experience and build a relationship with her), but had not considered how to include an educational and practical component in the intervention, such as required by the 'head, heart and hands' theory. In this example, the intention of the practitioner was to consciously use theory, however, I argue that a lack of theoretical insight meant that the intervention was neither social pedagogy or social pedagogical. The Yarvil sample identified a risk that social pedagogy be diluted without sufficient theoretical investment and insight by those who lead and practise it – this risk was mentioned 6 times in the focus groups with practitioners, although never by group 2 (child

and family support workers), with the potential reasons for this explored earlier in this chapter.

> *'Yeah, I think the theory is really important, it is really really important and I think to have the university course, which is just a small gem in a pool of lots of other gems but actually to keep that at the forefront. Because it's quite easy for it to dilute down into just a bit of, you know, the work creativity, and I mean that is my background and I'm not trying to minimise it, but it is not just about having fun, and I think it could quite easily just dissipate into just doing nice things with kids'* (Training and practice development worker)

I conclude, therefore, that for an approach to be social pedagogical it must comply with all of the six characteristics of practical social pedagogy in figure 5a. For, practice to be described as social pedagogy, it must further meet the criteria of the Star Model (figure 5b), with the practitioner having both the intention of the social and educational betterment of the child, and having referred accurately, and insightfully, to appropriate educational theory. This approach would mitigate the risk identified by Yarvil practitioners that without appropriate theoretical underpinnings and rigour, social pedagogy may become diluted and therefore prevent any potential benefits from being fully realised. The implications of this argument, that certain criteria must be met for practice to be described as social pedagogy, for the workforce are considerable, and this is explored in the following section.

7.1.5 Social pedagogues, or social pedagogy practitioners?

In the previous section, using examples 1 and 2, I have argued that approaches which have social and pedagogical ambitions and approaches would be consistent with a broad definition of social pedagogy that accepted a continuum of concepts and ideas that includes both care and education. However, I have argued that fidelity to evidence-based principles and theory is necessary for an approach or practise to be described as social pedagogy. Neither example 1 or 2 suggested that that the approach taken required the practice of a social pedagogue, trained in a prescribed discipline. Is a practitioner rightfully able to assume the title of 'social pedagogue' if all characteristics of the practice framework for social pedagogy are evident in their practice? Or is the title of social pedagogue only applicable for practitioners who have completed a programme of training such to assure employers that their knowledge and

practice of social pedagogy is proficient? As the need for accurate and insightful application of theory has been identified as critical to social pedagogy, and the risk of diluting its practise through insufficient theoretical fidelity or insight has been exposed, whether there needs to be a defined role of social pedagogue within children's services in England is a critical question.

This problem was posed by the Social Education Trust (2001), at the point when social pedagogy was first introduced to English children's services audience. The Social Education Trust suggested that unlike professions such as teaching and medicine, workers with children and young people have never shared an overall unity, and thus have remained fragmented. This was identified as the potential fit for social pedagogy within the children's services workforce, as a common conceptual framework to unite children's services workers. Others also argued that social pedagogy might offer a unifying approach and common language across professional groups (Petrie, 2006, Coussée et al, 2010, Hämäläinen, 2013, Morgan, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Chavaudra et al, 2014, Slovenko et al, 2016).

There are broad differences in viewpoints on this issue within the social pedagogy literature, with some arguing that social pedagogy in practice requires a highly trained and educated social pedagogue (Badry and Knapp, 2003, Lorenz, 2008, Ezechil, 2015). Lorenz (2008) argues that for social pedagogy to adequately deal with the variety of social and psycho-social needs of people, there needs to be a specialisation in social pedagogical research, education and practice. Others suggest that social pedagogy can be practiced by a range of workers in different roles with different levels of training, with social pedagogy providing a framework of theory and values that can permeate a diverse workforce (Petrie, 2006, Paget, 2007, Coussee, 2010, Stevens, 2010, Smith, 2012, Slovenko, 2016). Hämäläinen (2015), by contrast, suggests that social pedagogy can operate in both mono and poly-professional systems, and that they do not categorically exclude one another. I would argue that a social pedagogue can only assume the title following a defined, extensive and detailed education in the subject, but that those with training in the subject, albeit to a lesser level of theoretical instruction, can be termed social pedagogy practitioners under the supervision of a social pedagogue. The Yarvil results exemplify the need for robust theoretical underpinnings, with continuous refreshment to reduce the risk of social pedagogy becoming diluted to just a set of tools for practice, rather than a values based and impactful conceptual and theoretical framework:

> *'I think there is a danger of having a very unsubtle interpretation of what social pedagogy is, and that would be a real fear for me if we weren't challenging in developing the workforce. If we were just white washing people with some basic social pedagogy knowledge, but we are looking more sophisticated, in a more sophisticated way at that'* (Training and practice development worker).

> *'There is a danger that we just pluck it out of our brains and might have steered off the path a long time ago.'* (Residential care worker)

As such, the Yarvil findings strongly support the need for robust and ongoing informed theoretical input to shape social pedagogy practice in children's services settings. However, the context for children's services in England, as described previously in this chapter is one of depleting resources, and the investment requirement of social pedagogy if it is to be applied according the evidence I have already presented is significant. As such, securing additional resources to expand children's services departments by employing social pedagogues further to existing establishments is unlikely to be reasonably expected. However, I have argued that there is strong evidence to support the effectiveness of social pedagogy in residential settings for children, and therefore suggest that there would be benefits to the employment of social pedagogues to fill emergent vacancies in the residential services establishments, to both undertake the role of a residential worker and provide theoretical insight and leadership within the home environment. In doing so, the social pedagogue becomes part of the team, and could support the development of social pedagogy practitioners who could apply its principles in practice under the theoretical supervision of an appropriately qualified colleague. This approach has a critical difference to the approach taken in the Berridge (2013) study where pedagogues were imported from overseas into children's homes, an approach which was limited in its positive impact. The approach I suggest is untested, however, and would require further research to establish its efficacy.

7.2 What is the perceived role of social pedagogy as a change agent intervention for a Council's children's services workforce?

From the birth of the theoretical foundations of social pedagogy as far back as the time of Plato, to when the term was first coined by Natorp (1904), its aim has consistently included a focus on achieving social change and tackling disadvantage, in common with many

contemporary thinkers (Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Hämäläinen, 2003 and 2013, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011b, Berridge, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015). The extent to which social pedagogy was a change agent, meaning that which directly or indirectly influences change in the way the organisation is managed, or its functions conducted, was explored. The literature review in chapter two identified change as a common theme, both for society and individuals. Education and learning in its widest sense with the aim of social change was the most commonly found characteristic of social pedagogy (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Lorenz, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Hämäläinen, 2012, Storø, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Mylonakou-Keke, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016). A focus on the relationship between the pedagogue and individual as critical to achieving change for the individual was also a commonly found characteristic of social pedagogy (Hallstedt et al, 2005, Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Smith, 2012, Rosendal Jensen, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016).

The literature also suggested the ways in which social pedagogy might influence change, including descriptions of the types of interventions that might be undertaken (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Storø, 2012). Some identified that a particular change in practice might be that pedagogy becomes carried out in everyday, ordinary situations (Coussée et al, 2010, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013), rather than through specific interventions. Many also suggested that social pedagogy may facilitate a different approach to managing risk in practice with children by moving away from a deficit model toward a child-focused rather than procedure-focused approach (Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Petrie et al, 2009, Milligan, 2009, Milligan, 2011, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Smith, 2012, Chavaudra et al, 2014). Rather than working on a one to one basis, group work was identified as being a change in practise invoked by use of social pedagogy (Petrie et al, 2008, Milligan, 2009, Petrie et al, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2012, Slovenko et al, 2016). Some authors noted that as a result of the training they receive, social pedagogues are able to offer children activities that are therapeutic and develop their self-esteem and skills (Milligan, 2009, Petrie et al, 2009, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Cameron, 2013, Kalagiakos, 2015).

The literature also identified a number of challenges to social pedagogy achieving change. Some noted a degree of change resistance and lack of interest in social pedagogy in some studies (Bengtsson et al, 2008 and Moore et al, 2013). Some included studies also identified the need for management and organisational support for the practice of social pedagogy for

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its potential as a change agent to be optimised (Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Moore et al, 2013, and Vrouwenfelder, 2013).

As such, exploring the role of social pedagogy as a change agent was a theme throughout all data collection stages with all sample groups. Although no specific questions were included within the questionnaire to explore this research question, insights from the perspective of practitioners were generated across responses within questionnaires, focus groups and interviews through analysis of codes generated across the sections identified the most prevalent responses in open questions, and how these were triangulated with strength of response to Likert item questions. The data generated the following themes related to the role of social pedagogy as a change agent which are explored in the following sections:

- Changes to individual practice
- Changes to practice through social pedagogy as an approach to workforce development
- Organisational infrastructure
- Limitations of social pedagogy as a change agent
- Changed recruitment approaches.

In particular, responses relating to the influence of social pedagogy on practice and values suggest where that had been change from practitioners' perspectives, such as increased use of reflection, creativity and positive activities with young people, as described previously in this chapter. Perceived benefits of social pedagogy, such as increased confidence and skills and developed professional practice as described in response to research question c suggest the role of social pedagogy as a change agent for practitioners.

7.2.1 Social pedagogy for workforce development: a new and unique approach?
Although the data revealed change to individual practice and values for the participants in this study, a further theme emerging from the analysis of codes from all responses was that social pedagogy's role as a change agent may be limited as it was 'just good practice', and that it was not offering anything new to practitioners.

> *'Social pedagogy has not been a theoretical revelation'* (Training and practice development worker)

> *'I feel a little like Social Pedagogy is just 'good practice' and struggle at times to see how 'new' the principles and values are'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'I had these skills before, it just didn't have the title…. I react to my natural instincts'* (Child and family support worker)

In their 2010 paper, Coussée et al questioned whether social pedagogy was 'deus et machine or walking the beaten path' (p789). The extent to which social pedagogy provides new or different ideas or approaches is also identified as a challenge by others, such as Milligan (2009 and 2011). For example, Vrouwenfelder (2013) observed that most of the workers in her review already had a mind-set conducive to social pedagogy and the Regional Youth work Unit (2010) noted that social pedagogy has always been present in good practice in the UK, without actually being labelled as social pedagogy.

The results from this study, in conjunction with evidence from the social pedagogy literature, have enabled the identification of the six defin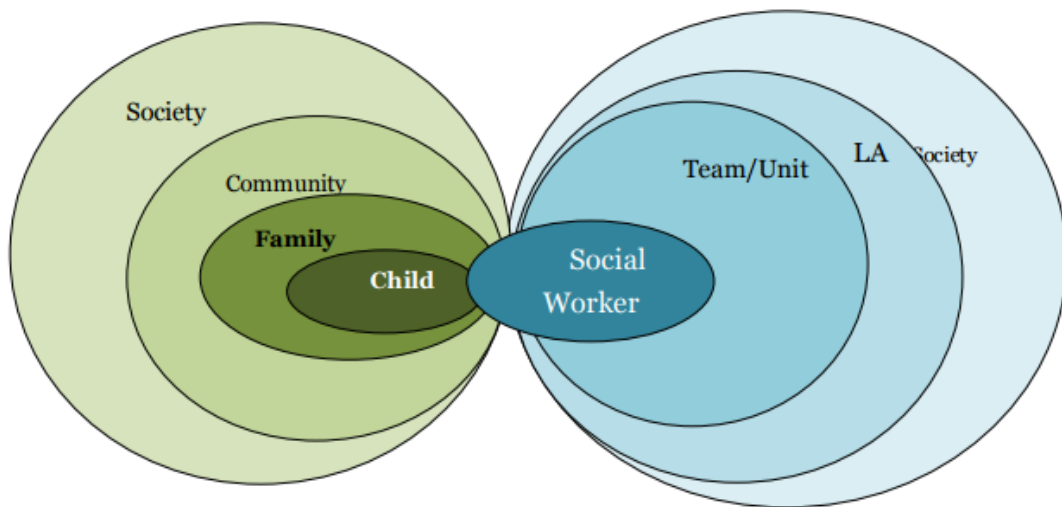ing characteristics of social pedagogy. However, I argue that these defining characteristics are not unique to the practical of social pedagogy in contemporary children's services in England. Social pedagogy's philosophical and theoretical foundations can be found from the time of Plato as described in chapter one. Furthermore, there is little in the established social pedagogy literature, or in the results from the Yarvil case study, which is not also identified within the educational and philosophical writings of John Dewey (1916) which predated the term social pedagogy. For example, the concept of a framework for practice including creative, educational action, reflection and shared learning was described by Dewey as '*making the individual a sharer or partner in the associated activity so that he feels its success is his success….things gain meaning by being used in a shared experience or joint action*' (p9) and '*thought or reflection, as we have already seen virtually if not explicitly, is the discernment of the relation between what we are trying to do and what happens in the consequence*' (p72). A framework of values is referred to by Dewey in that '*there should not be emphasis on skill or technical method at the expense of meaning*' (p151), as was the role of relationships in achieving change – ''*When the parent or teacher has provided he conditions which stimulate thinking and has taken a sympathetic attitude toward the activities of the learner by entering into a common or conjoint experience, all has been done which a second party can do to instigate*' (p79).

As such, social pedagogy is not theoretically unique or new. Furthermore, social pedagogy is one of many approaches to developing the children's services workforce in evidence during

the period covered by this study, and in the period since the concept of social pedagogy was introduced to English children's services audiences in 2001 (Social Education Trust, 2001). During this period, concerns about practice in children's services resulted from a number of high profile child protection cases, including the deaths of Victoria Climbie, resulting in the Laming Report (2003), and the death of Peter Connelly which was followed by the Munro review of child protection (Munro, 2011). Each made recommendations which included increase in the use of key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure activity and output, a focus on improved interagency working, more use of centralised inspection to enforce the implementation of such approaches and greater emphasis on practice improvement, in particular for children's social work. This resulted in a plethora of approaches being tested in children's services settings to improve the quality and safety of practice, in parallel to the introduction of social pedagogy, which took place mainly within residential children's homes and only a limited number of local authorities. In particular, in responses to research question a (defining characteristics of social pedagogy, and question e (the role of social pedagogy as a change agent) I have considered and appraised three widely used models of children's services practice to explore the distinctiveness and similarity of social pedagogy, as defined by the emergent theories from this study, in contemporary England.

One approach is systemic social work, also known as the Hackney Model, which was promoted by the Department for Education as part of its Reclaiming Social Work initiative (2014), which has been widely implemented in children's services in England in areas such as Havering, Lambeth, and Bedfordshire. The systemic model is a relational approach which sees children in the context of families and families in the context of broader systems such as the professional system, complicated living environments such as poverty, poor housing, educational limitations and other issues each of which are organised by particular beliefs (Ratzleff, 2013, Carr, 2014). Forrester et al (2013) describe this as an ecological model of working with children and families, as described in figure 7g.

Figure 7g.An ecological model of social work practise (Forrester et al, 2013)

There are evident parallels between the model of systemic social work (Forrester et al, 2013), and social pedagogy. When compared to the characteristics of practical social pedagogy I suggest in figure 5a, and the Star model of social pedagogy in figure 5b, there are mainly consistencies. Both focus on the critical relationship between practitioner and child, note the criticality of context in the relationship, are underpinned by a belief system, and identify the role of the child/practitioner as the development and betterment of the child with and for the benefit of society. There are however apparent differences in the approaches, with systemic oriented towards social workers, and with minimal evidence of pedagogically informed theory to shape practice – rather the systemic approach emphasises a therapeutic response (Carr, 2014).

Another approach which has been implemented in many children's services in England during this period is 'Signs of Safety', which is a licensed product describing itself as a strengths-based, safety organised approach to child protection casework (Turnell et al, 1997). The model provides a tool intended to help practitioners with risk assessment and safety planning in child protection cases to enable practitioners across different disciplines to work collaboratively and in partnership with families and children which focusing on strengths, resources and networks that the family have. Establishing constructive working relationships and partnerships between professionals and family members, and between professionals

themselves, are central to the approach alongside engaged in critical enquiry whilst involving the child and family as partners in defining and aims and outcomes of the intervention.

Although Signs of Safety and social pedagogy share some characteristics, including a focus on risk sensibility, the child's context and empowerment, there are clear distinctions, with Signs of Safety aiming to manage child protection risk rather than having a focus on the holistic development and education of the child.

Other approaches are evident in contemporary children's services that share characteristics with social pedagogy. Restorative approaches, for example, like social pedagogy, claim to be a social science that integrates developments from a variety of disciplines and fields — including education, psychology, social work, criminology, sociology, organizational development and leadership — in order to build healthy communities, and increase social capital.

Figure 7h Restorative approach model (Hendry et al, 2010)
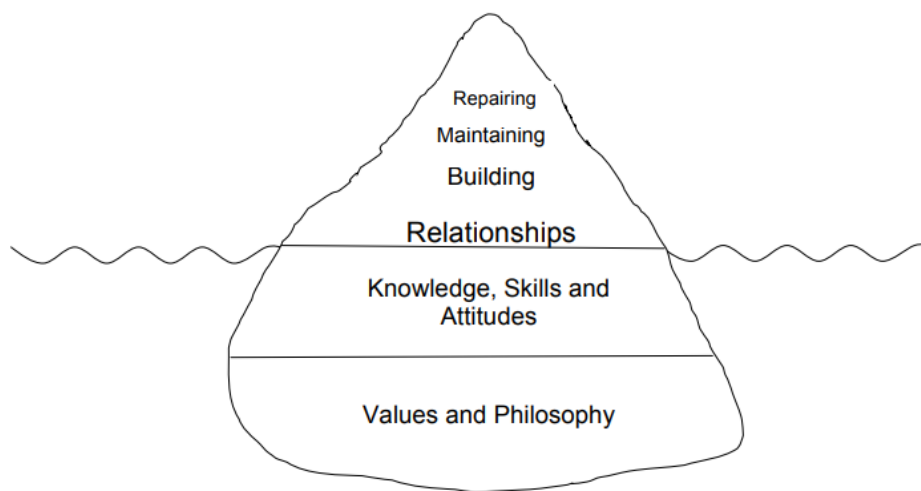
Both approaches emphasise the enabling, building, maintaining and repairing of relationships. Both also promote a philosophy that embodies a set of values and principles and a way of working with people that provides a common language and approach. The emphasis on deployment of educational theory for social goals is not apparent in the restorative approach however.

Across a vast and multi-disciplinary workforce there are many approaches and models of practice, and critiquing each in the context of the emerging knowledge about social pedagogy from this research is not possible. However, consideration of systemic social work, signs of safety and restorative practice demonstrates that social pedagogy exists in a crowded market-place of potential approaches for local authority children's services to apply, many of which have an evidence-base, share characteristics, and which are relevant to multiple professional disciplines. This was noted in the data collection from the children's services leaders from Yarvil, and from other Council children's services leaders including both those that had applied social pedagogy, and those that had not.

> *'The methodology has some impact, but I suppose that from a leadership perspective I am yet to be convinced about which particular methodology'* (Other children's services leader 1)

> *'There's a lot of evidence based programmes but if you're doing and developing the right relationships it's a lot better… it isn't the programme. There is nothing new under the sun'.* (Other children's services leader 2)

> *'part of a wider system of a strengths-based model'* which *'co-exists' and fits with systemic social work'* (Children's services leader from Yarvil)

The fit of social pedagogy with other practice development frameworks and models was also noted by Yarvil practitioners.

> *'The departmental emphasis on social pedagogy has helped staff to realise its importance, being embedded with other models like systemic social work and stronger families'* (Training and practice development worker)

However, there was a challenge noted for social pedagogy in terms of its prioritisation in a complex workforce environment such as in Yarvil's children's services.

> *'Colleagues are more concerned with systemic as it is mandatory'* (Child and family support worker)

Although not a specific line of enquiry, participants made references to how training in social pedagogy had been managed in Yarvil. The new approach to training it offered was viewed positively, as was the fact that training was led by grassroot practitioners, and that it complemented previous learning. Workers who had participated in the university-led

theoretical training valued the contributions to their knowledge, but emphasised the importance of ongoing theoretical input to support internally delivered training which they suggested needs to be owned by the workforce. All groups identified social pedagogy as one of a number of approaches, which children's services leaders described as '*part of a wider system of a strengths-based model*' which includes systemic social work, attachment approaches and person-centred planning.

> '*I don't understand why we pigeonhole certain approaches, so person centred approaches has been for some time, brilliant for working with children with disabilities, social pedagogy brilliant for working with children in acre. Can we not just look at a meeting or a review and what we want to get out of a young person, see what is the best way to approach this so it has just built my armoury really for it sits so well alongside person-centred approaches but it opens up other avenues of working with people and way of working with colleagues as well, don't put anything in the box really*' (Child and family support worker)

As such, if the potential benefits of social pedagogy identified in chapter six are to be realised, social pedagogy's distinctiveness and value needs to be demonstrated as it exists within a marketplace of multiple conceptual frameworks for children's services workers which share many characteristics. Given the greater influence of social pedagogy within the residential workforce, this professional group and service area may be the most appropriate fit for social pedagogy.

7.2.2   Social pedagogy and organisational infrastructure

The previous section identified that although this study demonstrates benefits for practitioners, its findings also expose challenges for social pedagogy as one of a number of potential approaches for workforce development in which context social pedagogy lacks distinctiveness and a clear evidence base. The findings also identified the criticality and influence of the organisational infrastructure on social pedagogy in terms of its implementation and potential for benefits to be realised.

The data analysis identified a number of themes relating to the role of the organisation in social pedagogy, which was most significant in focus group and interview data (see chapter four). A finding was that breadth and depth of knowledge of social pedagogy in the

organisation is required for it to be sustainable. Participants identified that theoretical input from experts into the organisation was necessary to prevent dilution of social pedagogy's application. They also noted that staff turnover at all levels in the organisation can threaten the viability of a discipline such as social pedagogy, if most of the knowledge and commitment rests in the hands of a few key individuals.

> *'I have only got a brief overview so not the depth as in countries where social pedagogy is fully embedded'* (Child and family support worker)

> *'I think what helped us at the start was having some pedagogues on board in a guiding capacity, and perhaps it is time now to have them back in to see if we are on the right path, or have found a new path. But yeah, there is a danger that we just pluck it out of our brains and might have steered off the path a long time ago.'* (Residential care worker)

> '*Everybody who works in the authority has some understanding appropriate to their role of this way of working. And, um, and that too can happen, cultures in organisations do change. It relies on some principles of consistent backing of this from top, the consistent opening up of opportunities from people from ground to prove it can be done, working between to ensure management makes that something that can delivered*.' (Training and practice development worker)

This finding supports assertions in the literature that social pedagogy requires embedding across an organisation (Cameron, 2012, and Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2013), and permeation through the workforce (Berridge, 2013).

A further finding was that social pedagogy requires management support for its potential benefits to be optimised, and for its culture, values and practice to permeate the workforce. This was consistent with findings from the literature which identified the need for management and organisational support for the practice of social pedagogy for its potential as a change agent to be optimised (Berridge et al, 2011, Cameron, 2013, Moore et al, 2013, and Vrouwenfelder, 2013 and McDermid et al 2016). Yarvil practitioners reported that the most senior managers were supportive, but middle managers with responsibility for operational services and inspection readiness were least involved and engaged, possibly due to their responsibility for compliance with inspection standards and performance indicators.

'because large scale strategic direction can come and go, but actually often stays the same even through that change. Our front line workers come and go and they are directed and rearranged according to what's driving middle managers. If you can win them over, and they can see the benefits, that is half the job' (Training and practice development workers)

'There is a dilution of higher management support via middle management – they have their own agendas and have not been sufficiently challenged' (Residential care worker)

Practitioners also asserted that implementing social pedagogy successfully requires investment of time and knowledge, which was also identified by Mcdermid et al (2016). Participants described difficulty with developing social pedagogy across their services if it was an add on to their day jobs, and that dedicated resources for workforce development and to procure expertise from social pedagogues was critical.

'But actually bringing this post into being has been really critical to keep the momentum because I think without it, you know, with other key people moving into other roles, having that person holding it in the centre it can go in any direction, but having someone holding it and focusing on it has been really important' (Training and practice development worker) with regard to the dedicated post for social pedagogy development

Also similar to the Mcdermid et al findings (2016), social pedagogy within Yarvil was identified as being on an organisational journey, requiring long term commitment, and an understanding that the benefits are not realised immediately.

'The impacts will show long term, but we have to keep the faith' (children's services leader from Yarvil)

'I have seen examples of where it has happened, where people have transformed their way of working, become confident in the ways they should be working at, however the challenge is that it is not impossible to find good practice that's been informed by our

journey, the difficulty is embedding it as a second nature accepted culture, and that challenge remains. You know, we've talked about in terms of particular initiatives and that continual journey.' (Training and practice development worker)

A further finding from Yarvil was the strength of feeling from practitioners about the importance of social pedagogy being owned and led by the frontline workforce, described as a grassroots movement which removes hierarchies. This was viewed as strengthening the credibility of the approach, through peer-led training and networking, rather than a management imposed fad.

'He's got a very good understanding of how this has been as a grassroots movement, and he's got the difficult job of marrying that grassroots movement with the upper echelons of management and I think the strategic steering group. At first I felt intimidated to ask for an invite to that but then I thought I needed to be there, we needed to be represented, and I think I really enjoyed that meeting. People who've got a lot of zest and enthusiasm for it, you don't feel you are sat there with someone who is on a pay grade 20 times what you are on, it's more about someone who really cares about kids.' (Residential care worker, referring to the director who supported the social pedagogy programme)

'It needs to be a bottom approach with self-appointed enthusiasts' (Children's services leader from Yarvil)

The data analysis also identified the need for social pedagogy to facilitate a change in organisational culture. Practitioners spoke favourably of the potential for social pedagogy to enable services to be more child-focused rather than procedure focused, with a culture that supported a good childhood over risk averse practice fuelled by fear of allegations. With regard to the role of social pedagogy as a change agent, the challenges of practicing in a way that pushes the existing paradigms about safeguarding and risk, particularly with regard to touch and physical activities were noted, but there was strong support for this as a benefit of social pedagogy, despite the difficulties. There was an agreement between all of the children's services leaders (from Yarvil and other councils) that had experienced social pedagogy that there were benefits, in terms of the experience of children and workers, however they identified as the inability to measure these using traditional data reporting

methods as a challenge, which may impact on social pedagogy as priority given the externally imposed strategic objectives, such as the children's services inspection regime and mandatory data reporting. The priority placed on nationally imposed performance measures also required a change in organisational culture and focus.

> *'Not all practitioners have had the light bulb moment. Trying to work with other professionals and agencies that don't understand SP can be challenging. I am of the opinion that SP will need to challenge policy thinking and when it wins (which it will) only then will we start to see the major shift in the culture of child care and development in [YARVIL] and the UK.'* (Training and practice development worker)

> *'It needs to be the prevailing culture of risk, not using health and safety as an excuse….we expect you to do, not to find excuses not to do'.* (Children's services leader from Yarvil)

> *'for me, if I had to condense why it is important its two fold, one is its absolutely political, its about wider issues about why people who work in caring professions are not properly acknowledged in their work, their satisfaction in their work and about their liberty to work as human beings, rather than in a tightly confined role with lots of rules and regulations'* (Training and practice development worker)

The findings in this section provide new knowledge about the potential successful factors and necessary conditions for practical social pedagogy to deliver benefits in children's services, therefore providing a significant contribution to the evidence base in England. Whilst social pedagogy offers a distinct pedagogical perspective, drawing on educational theory to address social issues, there is a clear challenge for social pedagogy to be relevant and distinctive in the context of children's services. Its primary challenge is therefore to demonstrate its value for organisations and children. Based on the results presented above from the Yarvil experience, I suggest that the following conditions are necessary for social pedagogy to deliver the optimum benefits as described previously in this chapter:

- Provision of suitably in depth university-based training in social pedagogy for a critical mass of practitioners to ensure sufficient internal knowledge and expertise to develop a local programme;

- Allocation of resources and commitment to a widespread training and practice development programme within the department;

- Availability of senior leadership support for front line practitioners learning and practise of social pedagogy, including time to attend training, participate in group development activities and for reflection;

- Establishment of a governance infrastructure which oversees the organisational approach, but which allows social pedagogy's development to be a 'grassroots movement' without professional hierarchies – this requires the time commitment of senior leaders;

- Assurance of theoretical expertise to ensure fidelity to social pedagogy theory, either through procured expertise from social pedagogues, or direct employment of social pedagogues;

- Provision of dedicated internal resources for project and workforce development to support its continued sustainability.

7.3 Limitations of this study

The insights generated through a review of the literature, as described in chapter two, and the results presented in chapter four and discussed in this chapter have generated new knowledge to contribute to understandings of social pedagogy in the context of children's services in England. However, the potential limitations of the study in terms of the quality of the findings and my ability to respond to the research questions are discussed in the section that follows.

This study used Yarvil Council as a case study, and the as the research question aims to explore perceptions and experiences of a range of practitioners, a methodological approach that enables the experiences of many individuals to be inductively sought and analysed was required. Given the distinctive nature of social pedagogy in Yarvil – in particular its application across a broad range of professional disciplines rather than just services for children in care as in other areas where social pedagogy had been used - the use of a case study was an appropriate enabler for the 'thick description' which is essential to an understanding of the context and the situation (Lincoln and Guba, 1990, p54). It allowed the

multiple realities and contexts in which social pedagogy existed in Yarvil to be accounted for, and richly explored in the shaping of phenomena within the organisational, policy and national context of English children's services, as this chapter has explored. With the research underpinned by my social constructionist stance, and with a research question that required the individual experiences of participants to inform broader generalisations and theories through detecting themes and patterns (Cresswell, 2005) the requirement for a phenomenological approach made it unsuitable for a scientific model (Pring, 2010). As such, there was a strong rationale for a case study approach.

However, due to the lack of studies of social pedagogy in children's services settings in England, there existed a lack of hypotheses which could be tested, explained or described using the case of Yarvil. There are also criticisms of the case study approach, such as a lack of systematic handling of data, and the lack of a basis for scientific generalisation (Yin, 1994). My research study was challenged by both these criticisms, in particular due to the low level of response to data collection stage 1 questionnaires. The limited sample size resulted in less data for analysis, and whilst the data was rich in content, its limited coverage in terms of population reduces its generalisation to broader populations. Furthermore, many of those that responded to the invitation to participate in the study were from a group of passionate and committed individuals who were part of the movement that established social pedagogy within the children's services department of Yarvil Council. As such, their contributions may have influenced the emphases within the data collected. However, the richness of the data made theoretical propositions possible, as described in this chapter.

A further challenge of this study relating to the limited sample size was group comparisons. With a larger sample, greater analysis across varied professional groups may have been possible, with sub-samples established across more defined professional boundaries. Due to the limited number of respondents, multiple professional groups (including social workers, youth workers and children's centre workers) were bundled into a single sub-sample. With a greater number of participants, greater granularity of analysis between professional groups may have generated insights which were not possible in this study. Foster carers as a professional group were ultimately excluded from later data collection stages as there was only one respondent, which presented a risk to the anonymity and confidentiality of the participant, and meant that consensus amongst others in the same professional group was not possible. This limited the breadth of insight of the study, and reduced the possibility for transference of learning to other children's services in England. Furthermore, although

interviews were conducted with leaders from other Council children's services outside of Yarvil allowed greater reflection on the Yarvil approach, the choice of a case study method rather than comparison of cases, reduced the study's insights into comparative strengths and weaknesses between areas.

This study addressed a research question which focused on the perspectives of the practitioners, and the influence of social pedagogy on their practice and values within the context of their organisation, and the national context for children's services. Although some emergent insights have been generated, the study has not sought to address the influence of social pedagogy on children who are supported by the practitioners. The knowledge generated must be considered within the context of what might be in the best interests of service users, whose perspectives were not included in this study.

The use of multiple data collection methods, including open and closed questions, and discussion through interviews and focus groups across multiple stages strengthened the research approach, allowing emergent themes and strength of feeling and perception to be explored. However, as with all qualitative approaches, there is a risk of subjectivity, which is a particular consideration for this study. As I identified in chapter one, my involvement in the research as both researcher, colleague and senior manager to many of the participants increased the risk of researcher bias. However, the subjectivity risk brings some strength to the case study approach, enabling the insights and personal experiences of the study's participants to be extracted and described. Mitigating actions have had to be undertaken to retain the integrity and ethics of the research project to minimise researcher bias as a result of my interest in the subject, and my personal values and drivers. However, I would encourage those reading and critiquing this study to consider that my conclusions do not exist in isolation from my own perspectives, and my epistemological standpoint and influences in my role as a researcher should be noted.

7.4   Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of the data collection and the findings of the analysis regarding social pedagogy's fit within the children's services workforce, and its potential role as a change agent. I have also proposed definitions for the terms social pedagogy, and social pedagogue. The chapter that follows concludes this thesis, setting out in summary the

findings, conclusions and new theories and insights which have been generated, and makes recommendations for further research.

8 Conclusion

This research sought to explore the influence of social pedagogy within a local authority's children's services and in doing so fill a gap in the knowledge base regarding social pedagogy in England. This thesis has provided new and unique insights into the potential for and challenges of social pedagogy as a conceptual framework. Using new data along with evidence from the contemporary literature, as summarised in this final chapter, I have proposed a new definition and model of practical social pedagogy as a conceptual framework, and made claims and recommendations about its application with the children's services workforce, including the conditions necessary for social pedagogy to deliver the greatest potential benefits. The study has taken a focus on workers from a range of children's services, how they practice social pedagogy, how it has influenced their practice and values, and their potential to be the agents of change for the children and young people that they work with.

This chapter will summarise and highlight the main findings and the new knowledge and theories that have been generated from the exploration of the research questions: what is social pedagogy and what are its defining characteristics; what is the potential influence of social pedagogy on the practice and values of the children's services workforce; what are the challenges and benefits of social pedagogy in children's services settings; where might social pedagogy fit within the children's services workforce; and what is the potential role of social pedagogy as a change agent in children's services. The findings have been generated from a review of the literature, as described in chapter two, and from new data, which included questionnaire, focus group and interview responses from a range of practitioners within Yarvil, and interviews with children's services leaders, including from outside of Yarvil, the findings from which are detailed in chapters five to seven. This chapter then concludes with consideration of the implications of the study for the body of knowledge regarding social pedagogy in England in the context of children's services, including for workforce development and service planning.

8.1 Overview of key research findings

These findings make a significant contribution to the social pedagogy knowledge through: generating new theory which defines the characteristics of social pedagogy in children's services; a new model of the practice framework for social pedagogy – the 'Star Model'; a proposed definition of what social pedagogy is, and isn't, and a definition of a social pedagogue; identification of social pedagogy's contribution to children's services, in the context of other models of practice in England; identification of the organisational conditions necessary to optimise the benefits of social pedagogy; and a proposed approach to social pedagogy development within the multiple professional fields of the children's services workforce. These are detailed further in the sections that follow.

8.2 Research Contributions

8.2.1 Theoretical contribution

Until the point of this research study being undertaken, little research has been conducted which examines the practice of social pedagogy in English children's services, and previous studies were dominated by its application in services for children in care (Bengtsson et al, 2008, Berridge et al, 2011). Others have undertaken evaluations of social pedagogy in children's services settings, such as youth work (Petrie, 2006, Petrie, 2007, Petrie et al, 2008, Kyriacou et al, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Regional Youth work Unit, 2010, Hämäläinen, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013, Morgan, 2013, Vrouwenfelder, 2013, Chavaudra et al, 2014, Slovenko et al, 2016). This presented a sizeable gap in the research and knowledge which this study responds to.

Having undertaken a detailed exploration of the Yarvil experience using a variety of data collection tools and multi-stage data collection, this study is able to offer a contribution to theory by demonstrating how the theory and concept of social pedagogy is applied and understood in practice. Acknowledging that there are models and theories of social pedagogy which consider it as an approach within a broader socio-economic- political system (Badry and Knapp, 2003, Petrie et al, 2008), and as an academic discipline (Petrie, 2007, Hämäläinen, 2012), my research has focused on its application in practice, and as such I have used the term 'practical social pedagogy' to define the specific field to which I contributing new knowledge.

My research builds on the consensus within the contemporary social pedagogy literature, by refining the ten most commonly identified characteristics into six defining and critical characteristics of social pedagogy. This contributes to solving the issue of a lack of a unified definition of social pedagogy in the literature. Acknowledging the risks incurred by a lack of definition (Storø, 2013, Ezechil, 2015), and of the potential dilution of social pedagogy without robust theoretical underpinnings identified by Yarvil participants, as described in chapter seven, I propose that all characteristics need to be present for an approach to be described as practical social pedagogy.

I offer an unprecedented contribution to knowledge about social pedagogy in children's services settings by suggesting that the defining characteristics of social pedagogy in children's services are: it is a framework for practice, with theories that integrate creative, educational action, reflection and shared learning; it is a framework of principles and values, which shapes the way in which the framework for practice is applied; its focus is on the relationship between practitioner and child as the vehicle for achieving change; it seeks to empower and develop both partners in the relationship – practitioner and child; it is unique to the context in which it is practiced; and it seeks betterment through deeper engagement of children with, and within, society.

A further contribution made by this research to the knowledge base is by defining what practical social pedagogy is, in the context of English children's services. I propose that for an approach to be social pedagogical it must comply with all of the six characteristics of practical social pedagogy described above. For practice to be described as social pedagogy, it must further meet the criteria of the Star Model, with the practitioner having both the intention of the social and educational betterment of the child, thus the values of the practitioner informs the choice of theory, and its implementation in action having referred accurately, and insightfully, to appropriate educational theory. This new theory should, I argue, be taken into account by local authorities considering its application in their services.

In this research study, I also suggest the criteria by which practitioners may rightly assume the title of social pedagogy, which has been a further ambiguity in the social pedagogy literature which I have sought to clarify. I used this research to examine whether a practitioner is rightfully able to assume the title of 'social pedagogue' if all characteristics of the practice framework for social pedagogy are evident in their practice, or whether the title of social pedagogue is only applicable for practitioners who have completed a programme of

training such to assure employers that their knowledge and practice of social pedagogy is proficient, as argued by Badry and Knapp (2003), Lorenz (2008), and Ezechil (2015). The need for accurate and insightful application of theory has been identified as critical to social pedagogy by Yarvil practitioners, as described in chapter seven with the risk of diluting its practise through insufficient theoretical fidelity or insight has been exposed through this research. As such, I argue that a social pedagogue can only assume the title following a defined, extensive and detailed education in the subject. However, those with training in the subject, albeit to a lesser level of theoretical instruction, can be termed social pedagogy practitioners under the supervision of a social pedagogue. My argument, however, does not extend into defining the content and detail of such training as would be required for a practitioner to assume the title of social pedagogue – this would be a useful further piece of research.

The development of the emerging theoretical position relating to the defining characteristics of social pedagogy, along with the positions I propose with regarding to defining what social pedagogy is, and how the term social pedagogue can be applied, contributes to the body of social pedagogy theory in England concerning the practice of social pedagogy with children. However, as I describe in chapter seven of this thesis, I do not conclude that the potential benefits identified in chapter six are possible due only to a unique theory or perspective offered by social pedagogy as a theoretical framework. The beneficial changes noted in Yarvil had some critical success factors – staff identified and owned the theoretical framework used, they had support of organisational leadership and investment to develop and embed it, and residential workers were able to find an identity and sense of professional status linked to theories provided. These factors could have been equally critical regardless of the theoretical framework chosen. As noted in my critique of the study by Cameron et al (2007), the socio-economic climate and culture in which social care workers in continental countries such as Denmark and Germany is less stigmatised, and perspective on childhood different to England and the wider United Kingdom – I suggest that addressing these conditions nationally could have a greater impact on the practice and values of the children's workforce than the choice of a particular model of practice within an individual organisation.

8.2.2 Implications for practice

This research is the first to propose a model of practice for social pedagogy, specifically focused on children's services settings. Alongside the contribution to theory, this research makes a strong contribution to the practice of social pedagogy, through a unique, new model for the practice framework for social pedagogy in children's services – the 'Star Model'. This model located the practice of social pedagogy with children within the 6 characteristics described above. It defines the critical components of social pedagogy practice- reflection, shared learning and experience, risk sensibility, creative practice and positive relationships – with the aim of fulfilling human potential through achievement of happiness and wellbeing, with the practice located within close adherence to theory. This model provides a new contribution to the social pedagogy knowledge, building on the Diamond Model (Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a) through exploring the extent to which its theory is supported through practice of social pedagogy within an English children's services setting. Furthermore, this research has identified three unique characteristics of practical social pedagogy, and its potential benefits, in the context of the range of approaches and practice models available and operational within English children's services: its pedagogical perspective; a focus on happiness and wellbeing; and shift towards risk sensible, rather than risk averse practice.

The first identified is that social pedagogy, whilst sharing many characteristics such as a strong values base, relational focus and empowerment of service users, is distinctive from other models of practice due to its pedagogical perspective. In contrast to other models which are dominated by methods of assessment, social pedagogy is rooted in educational theory, with the holistic development of the child enabled through an approach to learning in all situations and settings – the concept of 'lifespace' (Lorenz, 2008, Petrie et al, 2008, Eichsteller and Holtoff, 2011a, Smith, 2012, Storø, 2012, Morgan, 2013, Kyriacou, 2015, Kyriacou et al, 2016).

The second unique characteristic is that social pedagogy, rather than on safeguarding or process, has a focus on happiness and wellbeing through the achievement of a good childhood. Unlike other approaches, social pedagogy is an approach which is difficult to measure, and does not conform to standard key performance indicators such as timescales for assessment, or completion of certain processes. Underpinned by the values of the practitioner, its focus is on nurturing practice with children using educational theory to improve their experience and quality of upbringing. This is a challenging concept for

children's services practice, where inspection and reporting is dominated by a key performance indicator culture.

The third characteristic which is unique to social pedagogy is its approach to risk sensibility, in contrast to an increasing focus on risk averse child protection practice in England, following a number of well publicised national child protection tragedies (Laming Report, 2003, Munro, 2011). Specifically, practitioners observed a shift toward more risk sensible perspectives and decision making in four areas of their practice: physical contact with children, physical and outdoor activities where there may be risk of injury; emotional attachment and engagement of their personal selves in relationships with children; and freedom to use their professional judgement. This benefit of social pedagogy was transformational in the experience of practitioners of their professional roles, and sense that they were improving lives of children:

> *'Unless you've got a happy child feeling safe secure and happy to learn you can't move onto the other, more traditional outcomes'.*

> *'social pedagogy gives us permission really to do that and to fail sometimes, and to always reflect on where you've failed, and where you've not, and to try different things, and so we are working on outcomes and not very specific targets and goals'*

This shift in practice enabling a more 'risk sensible' rather than risk averse approach with regard to emotional support to children, physical contact with children, engagement in physical activities with risk of injury, and fear of consequences for mistakes, is potentially a very significant development enabled by social pedagogy. This benefit should, I strongly argue, be considered by all children's services leaders interested or responsible for ensuring children in the care of, or being supported by the state, have a positive and productive experience of childhood.

As described in this section, this research study offers contributions to practice through defining what social pedagogy in practice is, and comprises of, and describes the unique characteristics of practical social pedagogy in children's services to inform how practice developed for practitioners. In particular, I argue that the potential benefits of social pedagogy for enabling risk sensible practice with children should not be overlooked, and should be a focus for both practice leaders and policy makers in children's services, as I describe later in this chapter

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8.2.3 Implications for organisational and workforce development

This research offers a unique and unprecedented argument regarding the conditions required to optimise the potential for social pedagogy to successfully influence practice in the context of English children's services settings. The study has identified the challenges and benefits of implementing social pedagogy within a children's services department, and contributes to the knowledge base by identifying the critical components of application within an organisation. I have argued that, based on the findings from the Yarvil case study, that the following criteria are necessary for the implementation of social pedagogy in children's services:

- suitably in depth university-based training in social pedagogy for a critical mass of practitioners to ensure sufficient internal knowledge and expertise to develop a local programme;
- resources and commitment to a widespread training and practice development programme within the department; senior leadership support for front line practitioners learning and practise of social pedagogy, including time to attend training, participate in group development activities and for reflection;
- a governance infrastructure which oversees the organisational approach, but which allows social pedagogy's development to be a 'grassroots movement' without professional hierarchies;
- theoretical expertise to ensure fidelity to social pedagogy theory, either through procured expertise from social pedagogues, or direct employment of social pedagogues;
- dedicated internal resources for project and workforce development to support its continued sustainability.

I have contextualised these requirements within the reduced financial envelope available to children to children's services, and also examined the comparative benefits and limitations of social pedagogy across different professional groups. In doing so, I have identified that the benefits of social pedagogy were most evident for practitioners in children's homes, compared to other professional groups, and that this professional group is one which does not currently have a defined professional identity and theoretical, educational foundations as those in other roles with defined degree-based routes to qualification such as youth workers,

social workers and psychologists. As such I propose the focusing the application of social pedagogy within this service area, underpinned by adherence to all of the criteria identified above as required for implementation of social pedagogy. This should be noted by leaders of children's services departments, as the findings of this research provide an unprecedented insight into the conditions most likely to support the realisation of social pedagogy's potential benefits within children's services departments in England.

8.2.4 Implications for policy

The results of the research have presented a distinctive characteristic of social pedagogy in the context of English children's services as its focus on enabling a good childhood. This conclusion offers a significant challenge to national children's services policy makers. The most significant contemporary policy driver for multi-agency children's services is 'Working Together to Safeguard children' (Department for Education, 2015a), makes no mention of happiness, enjoyment or wellbeing, and only references the term 'childhood' in relation to child deaths. The Code of Practice for special educational needs and disabilities (Department for Education, 2015b), which sets out for agencies the responsibilities under the Children and Family Act, 2014, makes numerous references to wellbeing, but in the context of health and wellness. The framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (Ofsted, 2017), which determines the extent to which children's services are good or inadequate makes references to enjoyment in the standards, but the data requirements are process oriented, and the experience of childhood is there limited in the overall judgements issued. As such, I suggest that national policy shaping services for children in need of support and protection reviews its foci, with an increased emphasis on the quality of children's experiences and childhoods through increasingly risk sensible (rather than risk averse, process-oriented) frameworks for practice, rather than on measurement of outputs and processes.

The research has also identified the potential for social pedagogy to be applied as a professional development framework and discipline for practitioners working within children's residential homes. A government evaluation of training for residential workers (Department for Education, 2015c) identified difficulties in recruiting staff with the appropriate level of skills and training due to competition with other similarly low paid, entry level work, which required no previous qualifications. It was said that the alternative jobs at

this level were likely to be less demanding and more compatible with juggling work and family commitments.

I would concur with Berridge (2013), that those working directly with children in residential homes are supporting the most vulnerable and challenging young people, with the highest level of need. Despite this, and the level of interface with children residential workers have in spending all of their working hours in close living arrangements with children, there has been an underinvestment, and under-valuing of the role of residential workers. As such, I argue that social pedagogy provides an appropriate, evidence-based, theoretical and practice foundation for the future workforce of children's residential workers, underpinned by the empirical evidence presented by this study, which national policy makers should consider in future workforce planning.

8.3   Recommendations for future research

Based on the conclusions I have made already in this chapter, and in consideration of the limitations of this study described in chapter three, a number of opportunities for further research are presented.

As already noted, the generalizability of the findings of this study are limited due to the case study design. However, some elements of the study could be adapted for a larger scale qualitative enquiry, across multiple children's services departments. There may be benefit to exploring further some of the findings around fit within the children's services workforce, if there are other Councils which have deployed social pedagogy in services other than children's residential care, in order to test the findings presented in this research further.

In particular, a larger scale study using the same or similar research questions, including the challenges and benefits of social pedagogy in children's services, the fit within the workforce and its role as a change agent, would provide greater insights and allow comparability of findings with the Yarvil study. Given the limited size of the Yarvil sample, insights into the influence of social pedagogy for different professional groups were restricted, and this presents a significant opportunity for further research into practical social pedagogy, in particular for professions which have been considered in the literature, such as social work (Petrie, 2006, Lorenz, 2008, Milligan, 2009, Coussée et al, 2010, Smith, 2012, Hämäläinen, 2013) , youth work (Coussée et al, 2010, Kornbeck, 2013, Morgan, 2013, Slovenko et al, 2016) and the early years workforce (Petrie et al, 2008, Hämäläinen, 2012, Kornbeck, 2013). I argue that a social pedagogue can only assume the title following a defined, extensive and

detailed education in the subject. My argument, however, does not extend into defining the content and detail of such training as would be required for a practitioner to assume the title of social pedagogue – this would be a useful further piece of research.

Furthermore, in chapter five this research proposed two new theories of social pedagogy, one which suggests the 6 defining characteristics of social pedagogy, and the Star Model, which proposes the practice framework for social pedagogy in children's services settings. Future research which tests these models in practice, in particular in settings other than Yarvil as used for this case study would be valuable.

It has been previously noted that exploring outcomes for, and experience of, children receiving support from practitioners trained in social pedagogy as not been a focus of this study. However, assertions were made in all data collection stages by practitioners that social pedagogy improves outcomes for children, although quantifying or describing this was not forthcoming in the responses. This presents a particularly interesting opportunity for future research. Evidence from a previous study of social pedagogy in children's residential care did not identify any significant change in outcomes for residents living in care homes where social pedagogy was practised (Berridge et al, 2013). This research suggests that defining the success of social pedagogy based on measurement by traditional measures used in children's services, such as timeliness of assessments, number of missing episodes, and frequency of social workers visits, is neither possible nor appropriate. Rather social pedagogy issues a new challenge to services and policy makers to shift away from key performance indicators to a more effective means of understanding the impact of practice on enabling a good childhood. The scale of this challenge cannot be underestimated. The culture which needs to be challenged is multi-faceted, from the pattern of behaviours, activities and attitudes of staff at all levels which has emerged from their academic and professional training and through years of reinforcement in practice, to the strategic context of risk aversion and safeguarding bureaucracy resulting from high profile child deaths where neglect or organisational ineffectiveness was a contributory factor. As Johnson (1999) argues, enabling a new and different way of approaching the development of children requires us to 'unlearn historically determined habits' (p72) and that 'to advance in any innovative, creative manner, we need to be intellectually involved in imagining different existences, constructing multiple new identities, while thinking well beyond where we are right now' (p74).

Although this research had considered and compared the characteristics of social pedagogy with those of other potential practice models for children's services workforce, there exists a further opportunity to explore this in greater detail. In a crowded market place of potential workforce development approaches, further research which enables a detailed exploration of the impacts of the different approaches, to inform future workforce development planning would be invaluable for policy makers.

8.4   Concluding remarks

In conclusion, from the initial formulation of the research problem identified in chapter one, to the exploration of the five research questions, data has been generated and analysed by this study which has enabled new theories, including two new models of practical social pedagogy, which add to the body of knowledge and practice in the subject of social pedagogy.

This study has examined the social pedagogy literature related to the research questions in detail, exploring the characteristics of social pedagogy, its potential influence on practice in children's services, and the existing evidence base for its application. Using insights from the literature review, the study has developed a methodology, establishing the research paradigms, methods and approaches used across multiple stages of data collection. It defines the nature of the data collection tools, sampling strategy, and data analysis methods used in the research. The ethical considerations presented by the research questions and methodology were analysed and mitigating actions described. The case study design was defined, to explore themes from the literature the extent to which these are supported or challenged by practice of social pedagogy in a local authority children's services department. The research has generated extensive data from a variety of samples which has enabled social pedagogy's influence on practice and values, its challenges and benefits, its fit within the workforce and its role as a change agent in children's services to be analysed, and new conclusions formed. The data has enabled new knowledge to be created, to inform practice, organisational and workforce development and national policy, in addition to shaping theory about social pedagogy in practice.

All of the findings would merit further research to test the new theories I have proposed, and to expand studies beyond Yarvil and to a broader range of professional groups. However, the conclusions reached demonstrate that the objectives of the research have been met.

8.5 Personal reflection

My academic career at postgraduate level prior to undertaking this research was dominated by completing a Master's in Public Health, which was heavily oriented towards the practice of public health, underpinned by robust statistical and scientific evidence. This training had resulted in my belief that evidence was clear, and should demonstrate that one action or input should demonstrably be able to result a particular output or outcome. Furthermore, the nature of public health as a discipline had resulted in my having paid little attention to ontology and epistemology.

As such, my journey into doctoral research required a great deal of learning on my part. In particular I needed to understand my own paradigmatic stance with regard to addressing the research problem, and to realise that my social constructionist standpoint and personal bias was so significant in the shaping of the research design and conclusions if the research's contribution to defining knowledge of social pedagogy was to be valid. My findings have challenged my own beliefs about what constitutes evidence, and established for me the value and importance of understanding nebulous concepts that are difficult to measure, such as how happiness is quantifiable, and why a good childhood can be as valuable as a robust and safe process when supporting children.

Furthermore, the research journey has not been a simple one. During the period of the research, which took place over 5 years part-time and at distance from the university I faced many personal challenges. A significant illness diagnosed in 2015 has left me with a life-changing condition which affects all aspects of my functioning, and multiple changes in professional roles have brought further challenges. However, I have enjoyed every stage of the research process, from defining the research problem, to having my assertions and ideas challenged and scrutinised through academic publication and conference. I have grown academically, and personally.

Significantly, I also use the learning from this research routinely within my professional life. The theories and ideas I have generated are shaping policy and practice in the services where I have influence, and I take immense satisfaction from knowing that this new knowledge is making a difference to services for children.

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