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Analysing power dynamics in teachers' understanding of policies through storytelling about refugees in the East Midlands region

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis was to use storytelling to determine how five teachers in the East Midlands assimilated conflicting discourses into practice and whether they aligned policy with personal and professional beliefs, ultimately identifying if they felt that they could influence change through challenge. This thesis has focused on the period between November 2020 and April 2022 which saw a plethora of policy and legislation relating to refugees. It was not possible to assess the outcomes of some policies which were being legally contested after April 2022. Nevertheless, the empirical focus was to analyse *representations* and *problematizations* in policy development (Bacchi, 2009) during this period in conjunction with the five teachers' narrative accounts.

Three themes were identified:

1. A deficit model of need focusing on negative attributes of refugees, rather than affirming existing qualities.
2. The use of wide-ranging 'inclusion' policies to meet specific needs, particularly in schools. Future research into the allegiance of teachers to inclusive principles would provide additional evidence.
3. Theoretical challenge (with potential for tangible challenge) to discourse, policy and practice when using small story narratives and story completion (Clarke et al., 2019). Teachers' emotional responses to hypothetical refugee stories were seen to underpin challenge which also appeared to support personal development, evaluation of practice, and increased agency. It is postulated that teachers can achieve deeper reflections and thus develop agency, using story narratives in continuing professional development.

The final theme has the potential to support change and challenge by providing opportunity to question prevailing discourses and this research provides a method which allows practitioners to contemplate challenge through storytelling, suggesting that creating opportunities for teachers to debate scenarios within a supportive environment would be advantageous in advancing wider understanding and informing professional practice.

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Glossary

Brexit: The name given to the UK departure from the European Union

CPD: Continuing Professional Development

CSIE: Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education

DfE: Department for Education

DES: Department for Education and Science

DLUHC: Department for Levelling Up and Housing and Communities

DWP: Department for Works and Pensions

EAL: English as an additional language

EIF: Education Inspection Framework

EPI: Education Policy Institute

ESFA: Education and Skills Funding Agency

HAC: Home Affairs Committee

HC: House of Commons

HEI: Higher Education Institution

HL: House of Lords

HO: Home Office

JCHR: Joint Committee on Human Rights

LA: Local Authority

LC: Liaison Committee

LEA: Local Education Authority

LGA: Local Government Association

MoD: Ministry of Defence

MP: Member of Parliament

NGO: non-profit organisation operating independently to government

NICIE: Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

OECD: The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

ONS: Office for National Statistics

PHF: Paul Hamlyn Foundation

SEN: Special Educational Needs

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disability

SLT: Senior Leadership Team

Stakeholders: [Appendix 2](#)

UA: Unitary Authority

UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UK: United Kingdom

UAM: Unaccompanied Minor

WPR: What is the problem represented to be? (Bacchi, 2009)

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis considers ways in which *policy representations* and *problematizations* (Bacchi, 2009) relating to refugees, impact individuals and wider society in the United Kingdom (UK), with a particular focus on five anonymised teachers from the East Midlands who have provided fictional narratives ([Chapter 5](#)). During development of this thesis, I found that it moved beyond the original aim which was to consider discord between theory and practice relating to the inclusion of refugees in the school community. The aims and structure are now multifaceted and therefore, this introduction will focus on elements of this study which are now integral to its existence, some of which may seem discordant with accepted protocols in narrative research (Ely, 2007; Josselson, 2007; Kohler Riessman and Speedy, 2007; Lyons, 2007).

1.1 The seed

The seed of this study began in a lecture theatre about 10 years ago. The Coalition Government had been in power for several years in the UK and was beginning to have an impact on education protocols and procedures which were feeding into schools. I was a senior lecturer in Special Needs and Inclusion at a university in the East Midlands and spent many hours instructing students on inclusive practice in schools. Most students listened attentively to my lectures and were able to write extensively about theoretical concepts of inclusive practice. Additionally, many were able to draw on theoretical input from their placement mentors to support discussions and assignments. However, when

encouraged to give examples of inclusive practice from their school placements, many articulated that there was a discord between theory and practice and although school staff were able to articulate theory, they often struggled to put this into practice; for example, through lack of resources or because theory clashed with a curriculum that was increasingly target-based and linked to performance management. This raised issues for me in my role as an advocate of inclusionary practice – was I teaching something that students no longer saw in school? It reminded me of the story I loved as a child – *The Emperor’s New Clothes* by Hans Christian Anderson – a folktale which fictionalises the concern of stating the apparent truth when it is counter to public opinion. Were voices beginning to murmur that there was a problem?

1.2 Germination

As well as becoming aware of some challenges relating to inclusive practice in schools, it also became apparent that the ‘problem’ of refugees was surfacing in government rhetoric, media coverage and societal discourse, for example, on social media sites. Policies to manage migration into the UK became increasingly important in government strategy as subsequently seen in discourse surrounding Brexit which identified migration as problematic ([2.5.1.1](#)). Discourse began to identify increasing numbers of asylum seekers and refugees as a specific issue, often using pejorative language to label these groups ([3.2.3](#)). As part of my educator role, I was teaching students to include migrant children in their classes but was increasingly concerned as to how they were reconciling inclusive pedagogy with soundbites and concepts being advocated by groups who aimed to exclude migrants from the UK. To the surprise of some UK voters and politicians, the British public voted to leave the European Union, and many were voicing immigration as

one of the main reasons for their choice to leave. It was clear that some students I taught would have these views or, if not, they would meet people in practice who held these opinions. How would they reconcile these policy decisions with inclusive practice? Would there be challenges and would they be able to challenge? Who were making the policies and were those protocols being followed, adapted, or ignored? This encouraged me to consider, in more depth, the work of Foucault (1972; 1980; 1991) and the role of power and discourse in education ([3.5.2](#)).

1.3 The seedling

As I began to read more widely, I started to apply Foucault's (1972; 1980; 1991) theories to social constructs in education and question lecture content that I was delivering. Bringing these concepts to a personal level, I had a position of power in relation to both the students and mentors who supported them. There were advantages as I was able to deliver my preferred discourse and would rarely be challenged but there was also a personal challenge in being able to identify what was happening in practice when students and teachers grappled with different discourses and policies advocated by a range of 'powerful' groups and individuals (Ball, 2015). My PhD. supervisor signposted me to the work of Bacchi (2009) who wrote about these potential conflicts, basing her theoretical concepts on the work of Foucault but extending his theories to consider policy in terms of *policy representations* and *problematizations*. The foundations of the thesis were beginning to take shape and grow.

1.4 The plant

In constructing this thesis, I decided to focus on potential conflict between inclusive practice emanating from multicultural responses (advocated by the New Labour Government 1997-2010), refugee policy and educational practice. Initially, the aim was to consider the period after 2010, but eventually I focused on the timeframe between November 2020 and April 2022 because of numerous changes being made to address the *refugee problem* (3.2). I aimed to concentrate on policy formation which affected the East Midlands but then agreed with my supervisors that the only way I could identify impact on educational practice was to 'interview' teachers. At this point, my study started to move away from traditional formats with the aim of being creative in my research methods and presentation, as advocated by Kara (2020), using these creative methods to obtain *truth* which might be hidden by applying traditional methods.

My work circulates around power relationships (Bacchi, 2009). I am fully aware of the power that I hold as an educator and know that individuals will structure responses to take this into account, particularly in more formal situations (Denscombe, 2014). After considering a range of approaches, I decided to use story narrative as a way of gathering information (4.6.4). This is not unusual and follows traditions of narrative inquiry (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007). However, the decision I took to publish these narratives in full in this thesis is not common. The justification for this lies in a desire to limit my *power* as much as possible (Foucault, 1972; 1980). Although, as the researcher, I have analysed the narratives (Chapter 6), the reader has the opportunity to read them in full (Chapter 5) and hold these in their memory when they read my interpretation. The reader may agree (or disagree) with my analysis, nevertheless they can also identify aspects which resonate

with their understanding and contemplate these beyond this study. Additionally, they can challenge my interpretation – each *truth* has its own validity within the constructs of the narratives which contain multiple realities (Rogers, 2007) ([4.3.3](#)). Furthermore, the reader can see how each storyteller adjusts their standpoint within each story or across the range of narratives.

The photographs used to stimulate the stories are included in the thesis. These were chosen randomly from freely available images in the media at the time. Although I, as the researcher, chose photographs (placing me in a position of power) ([4.7.2](#)), the storytellers had opportunity to produce their own images and were free to tell each story as they wished ([4.6.1](#)). Many chose to tell stories which I would not have told and by providing the narratives in full, it allows the reader to consider the content and how it relates to the photographic stimulus, whilst also considering how the narratives relate to their own *representations*, developing a thought process which goes beyond the limits of this thesis.

Consideration of the emotional responses of teachers is one of the questions in this thesis and was included after reading the work of Kara (2020) as emotional responses can often underpin practical action, including challenge. Incorporating full narratives allows the emotions of the storyteller to be visible to the reader. It lets *silences* or the *unsaid* (Bacchi, 2009) to become perceptible to the reader so that they can gain knowledge beyond that held in the discourse of the researcher who holds ultimate power over the research analysis in [Chapter 6](#).

The reader can also see policy narratives which were created by the researcher ([Chapter 5](#)) after analysing policy and discourse from a range of sources and stakeholders which include all those impacted by, or associated with, refugee policy such as governing

organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGO), charities, pressure groups, legal representatives, health and education representatives and refugee groups. Stakeholders also include individual refugee/asylum seekers as well as every individual citizen who could be influenced by policy or who could influence policy choices through political pressure, for example by voting in elections. These stakeholders may have different levels of investment at various times or in relation to differing events. They may support or challenge each other depending on the content or potential outcome of different policies. Examples of these stakeholder groups and individuals can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

The policy narratives provide an alternative view of the situation and can be compared with the teachers' narratives. As the researcher, I hold power over these policy narratives in my role of narrator and although my interpretations are valid, the reader has the opportunity to consider them in full and create their own interpretations – reducing my control over the discourse and representations and thus enabling a wider understanding of my analysis in [Chapter 6](#).

1.5 Pollination

As the study progressed, I defended the decision to include full narratives hoping that they could be used to support continual professional development (CPD) in schools to encourage dialogue around subjects that can be controversial or problematic, enabling individual settings to select passages which are relevant to their situation and use these as stepping stones to improve outcomes for teachers and children ([4.7.1](#); [7.3](#)). Extracts of the narratives have been used with student teachers, outside the scope of this thesis, to enable them to begin to talk about some *problematizations* and *representations* that they face in university and the world beyond ([7.3](#)). They were able to critique viewpoints held

by others and used this to develop their own understanding of complex issues and conflicts which they may encounter in future practice, thus challenging themselves and developing strategies to challenge others. This also supported my decision to include the narratives as a separate chapter in this study ([Chapter 5](#)) as it enables me, and others, to theorise about the ability to challenge - this would have less clarity without the full narratives. The use of hypothetical scenarios provides a nuanced understanding of power which is often hidden behind the cloak of prevailing discourse but is exposed through fictionalised accounts, allowing potential for challenge to be identified and articulated.

1.6 The fruit

This thesis will not change persisting representations and problematisations surrounding refugees and inclusion. Nevertheless, as an early years practitioner, I hold a strong belief that from *little acorns mighty oaks grow*. This research has already influenced the practice of two teachers in the East Midlands ([7.4](#)). Hopefully, their responses will influence others who emulate changes they have made in practice. Additionally, in my view, the process of telling stories enabled four practitioners to challenge their own practice and develop agency ([3.7](#)) as seen in the way content changed as they told more stories and became more confident in storytelling ([Chapter 5](#)). Evidencing this process is enabled by including unabridged narratives and it will support *you*, as the reader, to see these changes and perhaps help *you* to identify which participant accepted the status quo with limited challenge and why this might be the case. This discourse analysis is the seed, held within the fruit of this thesis. It is this seed that adds, and will continue to add, to current knowledge and understanding by enabling practitioners to develop and analyse their practice through the medium of storytelling.

You may have realised from reading this introduction that I am a storyteller. It is now time to move to the full account of *this* story which takes place between November 2020 and April 2022. However, as you will discover, there is a prologue to this research held in the literature review ([Chapter 3](#) and [2.5.2.2](#)), which has its roots in the cultural, social and political circumstances of the UK after World War II.

Are you sitting comfortably? Then, let us begin...

Chapter 2

Background

2.1 Statement of research aims

This study is located in theoretical debates situated in policy research focusing on policy affecting refugee children (see definition of ‘refugee’ in [2.5.1.1](#)). This thesis focuses on the East Midlands region between the enactment of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 and the ratification of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. During this 18-month period between November 2020 and April 2022, the Government was managing repercussions of exiting the European Union whilst controlling immigration and managing Channel boat crossings. Additionally, crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine required adjustments to existing refugee policy. All these elements impacted on discourse and problematisation surrounding refugees at all levels of society; for example, policy at government level needed to be adjusted to allow refugees from Ukraine to enter the country, impacting on a range of stakeholders and organisations ([Appendix 2](#)). The aim of this thesis is to identify whether teachers in the UK have faced problems in

transferring and combining these policies into practice (2.3). Considering discourse and problematisations in this period enabled a focused analysis of policy representations which adds evidence to current knowledge by:

1. Identifying dominant attitudes towards refugees at all levels of society which have affected policy creation and enactment, taking into consideration a range of perspectives for example, cultural, political, or social.
2. Assessing how teachers use inclusive policy in school and in their 'wider role' (DfE, 2012:13) to support refugees at local level and if this influences wider responses.
3. Considering how refugee and inclusion policies impact on teachers, personally and professionally.
4. Identifying whether teachers felt able to challenge procedures and practices within this phase when refugee policy and provision for refugees was often seen as contentious and lacking in effectiveness.
5. Identifying ways in which teachers could gain agency and be empowered to challenge their understanding of prevailing discourse, power relationships and policy creation.

Although there is comprehensive research and literature addressing refugee/inclusion policy, refugees, inclusion and educational practice, the links between these are sparse and deeper connections needed to be established to answer the research questions fully (2.2). This required consideration of wider policy agendas and power relationships used to manage economic, social, and cultural *problems* (Bacchi, 2009). To understand this, a study of *problematization* was required which Bacchi (2009:31) identified as a 'critical interrogation of *assumed "problems"*' [inflection in the original text]. She continued:

...this position does not deny that there are troubling conditions that require redress. However, the emphasis is *not* on the nature of those conditions but rather on the shape of the implied “problems” in specific proposals [inflection in the original text] (Bacchi, 2009:31).

The *problematization* of policy creation, control, supervision, and administration considered in this research uses policy statements and supporting documents as ‘points of entry’ to identify *problem representations* (Bacchi, 2009:34) whilst considering wider discourse, defined by Bacchi (2009:35) as the ‘limits upon what it is possible to think, write or speak about...’ which, in the case of this thesis relates to the geneses of attitudes towards refugees influencing political responses, as well as the appropriateness, effectiveness and value of strategies operating at all levels of governance between November 2020 and April 2022. Bacchi (2009) elaborated:

The point to remember is that these “knowledges” do not exist apart from statements that constitute them. In this sense they are fictions. However, they are powerful fictions due to their commonly accepted status as truth. Calling something a “discourse” means putting its truth status into question (Bacchi, 2009:35).

In challenging these *truths*, it is necessary to consider how knowledge is endorsed by the powerful and who holds the power to legitimise these *truths*. The practitioner narratives in this research provide insight into how problematisations are internalised and articulated by teachers as well as how they transfer into *knowledge* or *truths*. This is discussed in more detail in the rationale of methods ([4.5](#)). Furthermore, the literature

review analyses policy agendas and the range of hypotheses used to underpin refugee policy, identifying the problematisations within these.

2.2 Statement of research questions

Questions one to six are adapted from Bacchi (2009) to address the policy analysis within this study, with the final two questions extending beyond the work of Bacchi (2009) to add to existing knowledge by analysing practitioners' emotional responses and their potential to challenge as shown in their narratives. These additional two questions emerged from the combination of methods used in this study ([Chapter 4](#)) and the evidence which materialised when carrying out the literature review ([Chapter 3](#)).

The thesis questions are:

- What is the problem of refugees represented to be? ([2.2.1](#))
- What are the suppositions that underpin the representations? ([2.2.2](#))
- What are the origins of the problem representations? ([2.2.3](#))
- What effects are produced by the representations? ([2.2.4](#))
- How can the representations be considered in a different way, and can the silences be identified? ([2.2.5](#))
- What discourses underpin the representations: how are they disseminated or endorsed, and are there any different or conflicting discourses? ([2.2.6](#))
- What emotional responses are generated when considering policy representations of the 'problem' relating to refugee children? ([2.2.7](#))

- Do teachers believe that they can rationalise the aims of different policy representations and are they able to influence or challenge these representations?

[\(2.2.8\)](#)

The first six questions, informed by the analytical approach of Bacchi (2009), have the aim of taking 'nothing for granted' in analysing policy (Bacchi, 2009: ix). The questions aim to establish power dynamics in policy agendas impacting on refugee children, through teachers' responses to these problematisations, by considering how the problematisations affect the children whilst taking Bacchi's overarching standpoint in relation to the analysis:

...policy fits within a particular understanding of government... policy has an undeniable cultural dimension. It takes shape within specific historical and national or international contexts. In this sense, it is appropriate to think of policy in anthropological terms, as a cultural product. This way of approaching 'policy' – asking questions about its sources and how it operates – is part of a larger product: to understand how governing takes place, and with what implications for those so governed (Bacchi, 2009: ix).

As previously stated, the final two questions, beyond those taken from Bacchi (2009), provide additional information which will add to current knowledge. Question [2.2.7](#) has been influenced by the work of Kara (2020), focusing on the emotional responses of practitioners that might instigate challenge to policy. In turn, question [2.2.8](#), looks at that potential challenge and ways in which it manifests in practice.

2.2.1 What is the problem of refugees represented to be?

This question considers issues identified as *problematic* (Bacchi, 2009) and reflects on how stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) disseminate these *problems* for example, in debates, press releases, and policy documents. The way that the *problem* of refugees is identified begins to give an indication of the pressures and priorities influencing choices. Potential *problems* considered in the literature review can be summarised as:

- Responses to wider migration.
- Numbers of refugees seeking asylum and their impact on resources.
- Political considerations, especially those linked to maintaining power.
- Multicultural strategies and racial tensions.

These are also alluded to in the practitioner narratives as they recount their experience of practice.

2.2.2 What are the suppositions that underpin the representations?

These suppositions may be presented as statements of fact by stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) or inferred through discourse to support responses to *problems*. Ultimately, they can be used as the foundation for certain decisions and presented as *truths* within policy initiatives (Bacchi, 2009). These suppositions, in this research, may have strong links to the chronosystem: this considers the influence of events throughout time which effect an individual's development ([2.5.2.5](#)) and may also underpin aspects of practitioner narratives if they have assimilated these suppositions as part of their internal dialogue. The literature review analyses the roots of these suppositions in discussing wider responses to refugees, for example, the range of societal attitudes towards migrants when

considering their impact on the local economy (Hayes and Shain, 2023), or the tendency of some groups to attribute illegal acts to refugees. This knowledge then enables analysis as to how these concepts are reflected in current policy as well as how they are signalled in the practitioners' narratives.

2.2.3 What are the origins of the problem representations?

The themes identified within the literature review focus on the origins of *problem representations* (Bacchi, 2009) (2.1), emanating from a range of stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)). These are associated with policy creation, control, supervision, and administration in relation to refugees, and link to the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) of knowledge which is fixed in time and place (2.4). The literature review has been constructed to consider responses chronologically so that layers of influence from different stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) are identified. This study then moves to consider the acceptance or rejection of past decisions and practices within the timeframe of 2020-2022. Occasionally, the origins of problem representations are discussed in practitioner narratives when teachers have assimilated them into their own understanding.

2.2.4 What effects are produced by the representations?

The effects of the representations may impact on the content, structure, interpretation, and enactment of policy (Bacchi, 2009). Equally, they could relate to aspects which are ignored or excluded (ibid). The effects are broad and do not solely impact on refugees or policymakers but on all members of society as they interpret the representations. For example, in this study, several practitioners refer to racism and its impact on refugee children. Although this is not explicitly associated with refugee populations, it impacts on

outcomes for refugees when racist responses influence problem representations of refugee groups ([5.1.4.2](#)). Consequently, in this research, the effects of different representations have a direct impact on practitioner narratives, either consciously or subconsciously. The effects have also been considered for each policy narrative but are only valid at the point in time when the analysis took place and could be reevaluated as part of ‘future knowledge’ held within this thesis ([1.6](#)).

2.2.5 How can the representations be considered in a different way, and can the silences be identified?

In answering this question, it was important to consider how these representations fit into wider factors including time and place and what was *permissible* at that point (Taha, 2019) in relation to knowledge, discourse and associated *truths* (Bacchi, 2009) ([3.5.2.1](#)). Additionally, when identifying silences in the policy development and enactment in this research, it was significant to reflect on contradictions and the viewpoints of stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)), including how their voices were heard, suppressed, contradicted, or affirmed. Occasionally, reference is made as to how voices are excluded or suppressed; for example, restricted access to government policymakers or limited consultation when agreeing policy initiatives. Sometimes, it was necessary to draw on other sources, such as the media, to identify different representations rather than to rely on institutional responses which can conceal alternative viewpoints. This influenced this study’s methodology when adopting a narrative response to represent the policy analysis ([4.5](#)). As well as considering the published documents surrounding policy creation, the analysis for this question was extended to practitioner narratives, focusing on evaluation of the language used and how this masked the *unsaid*. This was sometimes addressed in the narrative creation by the researcher changing the direction of the story to add alternative interventions, such as

deportation orders which encouraged practitioners to consider third-party involvement [\(4.6.3\)](#).

2.2.6 What discourses underpin the representations: how are they disseminated or endorsed, and are there any different or conflicting discourses?

In this study, policy discourses were collated from a range of sources including governing organisations, pressure groups, charities, the media, and published reports. Consideration of how these were shared was relevant as social media and press releases increasingly became a way of sharing policy representations and testing public opinion [\(4.5.1\)](#). Teacher narratives fed into this aspect as part of the story-mapping [\(4.6.5\)](#) and provided another perspective on the way that policies were shared, consolidated, or challenged at grassroots level. All of these were compared to theoretical underpinning in the literature review, including some aspects that had not been explicitly associated with refugee policy at the outset; for example, the impact of Brexit on public opinion towards migrants and the way that government policy tried to appeal to this discourse by silencing other voices. This was added to the literature review during the collection of the data once its relevance was identified.

2.2.7 What emotional responses are generated when considering policy representations of the 'problem' relating to refugee children?

This question is in addition to the questions adopted from Bacchi (2009) and it specifically relates to the narrative process. Kara (2020) considered the importance of emotions in identifying the origin of responses to different events. It is often these emotional responses that underpin challenges to the status quo which allow stakeholders [\(Appendix 2\)](#) to confront representations disseminated by powerful groups. This question gained

importance when it became evident that challenges are often led by individuals who have an emotional response to certain events ([5.7](#); [5.9](#)).

2.2.8 Do teachers believe that they can rationalise the aims of different policy representations and are they able to influence or challenge these representations?

Having considered emotional responses that might support challenge, this question again extends those of Bacchi (2009) in enabling consideration of ways in which teachers reconcile conflicting discourses and policy content. In this study, it also gives attention to ways in which teachers visualise challenge, and if they feel they can influence policy or if it is imposed on them with limited consultation (Ball, 2015). This struggle is also shaped by current attitudes towards education which are now often linked to a managerial and neoliberalist style of control, potentially restricting challenge ([3.4.8](#)). This can also be affected by an individual's allegiance to certain belief systems such as inclusion or social justice which are often influenced by personal or professional bonds ([3.5.2.3](#)), or training experiences ([3.4.7](#)).

2.3 Background to the research

The fundamental underpinning of this study is that refugee policy has 'given shape' to a range of *problematizations* (Bacchi, 2009:34) which teachers in the UK struggle to interpret and assimilate into practice (McIntyre and Neuhaus, 2021). Without clear guidance as to how to address the *problematization* of refugee pupils, teachers can resort to overarching inclusion policies which may not be sufficient to meet need unless practitioners have adequate understanding of specific needs (Arvanitis, 2021). The politicisation of policy creation relating to both refugees and inclusion (Lee, 2021)

complicates this further as prevalent international and national discourses influence prevailing knowledge and *truths* (Bacchi, 2009).

This study considers potential challenge to knowledge and discourse underpinning the problematisation of refugee children ([2.2.8](#)): openly, covertly or hidden within silences ([2.2.5](#)). Although consideration is given to challenge from a range of stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)), a particular focus is placed on the ability of teachers to assimilate and question policy and problem representations. Arnot, Pinson and Candappa (2009) and Pinson and Arnot (2010) commented that there was limited enquiry into teachers' ability to incorporate national, regional, and local refugee policy into professional practice and personal beliefs, which was one of my concerns when starting this research. Little has changed in the last decade, leaving a lack of evidence relating to this, especially when considering practice in the UK, raising the potential to add new information to current knowledge through data gathered in this thesis. Nevertheless, some existing research has combined certain aspects, specifically the perceived impact of policies on immigrant primary children, and the views and practices of teachers in meeting conflicting policy requirements (Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, 2009). Yet, Arar, Órúccú and Waite (2020) highlighted the need for further consideration of how inclusive policy agendas support refugees as well as the impact on teachers, professionally and personally. Current research has tended to focus on international perspectives, therefore, by considering practice within the East Midlands region of the UK, this thesis will contribute to an area lacking in evidence.

Stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) in refugee policy raise various arguments to substantiate discourse surrounding refugees, drawing on both historical and current examples to

respond to a broad range of issues ([5.1](#); [5.3](#); [5.5](#)). To answer the research questions, the data analysis evaluates examples from 2020 to 2022, whereas the literature review uses a historical lens to consider various standpoints, evaluating international responses, migration and immigration, racial tensions, multiculturalism, prejudice, dispersal, resourcing, training, and curricula which all impact on policy decisions when interested parties mediate through a labyrinth of political and procedural networks. Groups often transfer concepts and selected discourses to facilitate policy agendas (Ball, 2015) and, as this happens over time, the terminology and ideologies become interconnected and entangled. This web of conception is further complicated by a lack of understanding or a desire to confuse - some might say deceive (Refugee Council, 2021^b) - to promote a chosen agenda which benefits from ambiguity. The literature review focuses on specific examples, some of which extend beyond refugees but potentially influence far-reaching agendas which have become entwined with refugee policy. These broader concepts include British Values, the national security discourse, racism, the levelling-up agenda, and teacher training.

The literature review evaluates evidence from commentators specialising in migration or inclusion as well as reports from organisations, pressure groups, media, and government departments. Themes have been identified which support the subsequent data analysis, whilst also underpinning teachers' reflections on policy, with particular emphasis on capacity to challenge ([2.2.8](#)). The potential for challenge is reinforced by consideration of emotional responses which can give an indication of potential action ([2.2.7](#)).

Bronfenbrenner's Systems Theory (1979) ([fig.1](#)) provided a mechanism to develop a systematic analysis of how different institutions ([Appendix 2](#)) within theoretical layers of

the social environment impact on individual refugee children, enabling consideration of a range of evidence, including the effects of social structures and institutions on the refugee child. It has been used to structure the thesis which has a similar format in organising significant themes, enabling the evaluation and analysis of dominant concepts.

2.4 Theoretical frameworks

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1979) is one model of analysis that considers the impact of different social systems on a child. This model reflects a range of influences on a child's development through different ecological systems, but Bronfenbrenner also considered how the system worked in reverse as he contemplated the child's capacity to influence groups and institutions in wider society, thus informing the use of teacher narratives in this study. His theory identified layers of influence surrounding the child, with the child nested within them. He named these layers: the *microsystem*, *mesosystem*, *exosystem* and *macrosystem*. Bronfenbrenner identified an additional influence in the *chronosystem* which explained how the child was influenced by their place within a time continuum.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) believed that there was a to-and-fro across each layer of the system whilst the child could also be affected through a combination of two or more microsystems which he called the *mesosystem*: the impact of these influences could be in direct conflict with each other. An example of this could be stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) trying to operate problem-solving strategies to deal with 'sources of trouble' (Cox, 1986: 209) or *problems* within their sphere of influence and thus impacting others; for instance, by coming into direct conflict with an alternative group with a differing discourse, agenda, or interpretation of policy (Bacchi, 2009). If someone was actively involved in various

alliances which had different interpretations of policy, the conflicting aims and beliefs could create internal struggles for that individual, leading to emotional responses or challenge. An illustration of this is drawn from teachers who are recruited from diverse ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds: they can interpret policy agendas from a range of viewpoints, originating from professional identity, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender as well as economic and social status. These factors could produce inconsistent viewpoints which could be expressed overtly or concealed to meet society's expectations. Therefore, if teachers are subjected to these tensions, either knowingly or subconsciously, and are affected by them, it could determine what policy *does to them* on a practical and emotional level (Ball, 2015). These potential struggles were part of the origins of this research ([Chapter 1](#)).

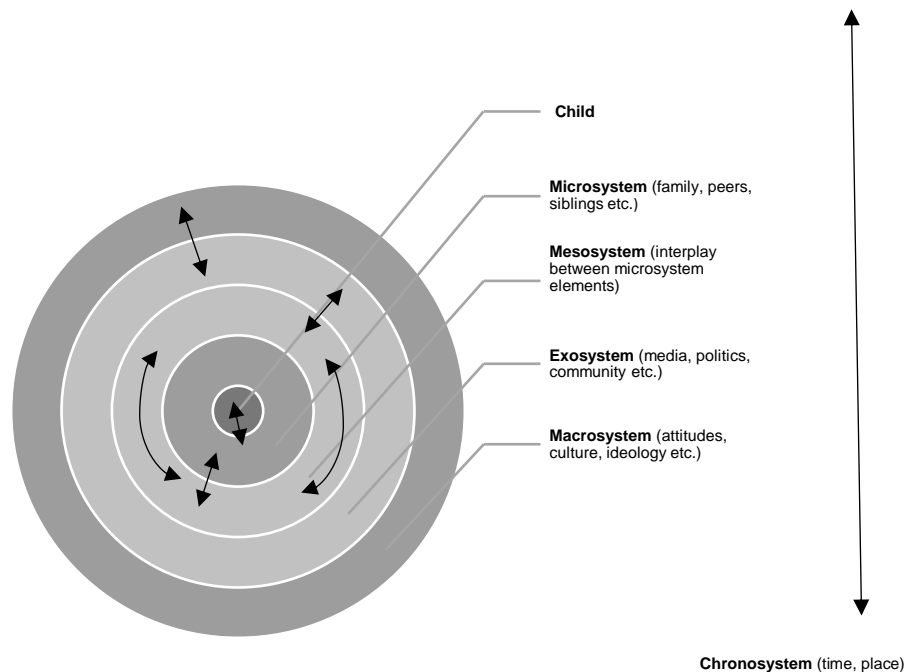


Figure 1: Summary of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (1979)

In this study, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1979) has been used in conjunction with Foucault's theories, specifically power and discourse (Foucault, 1972; 1980) ([4.5.2](#)). The

aim of this multi-layered approach is to identify where power lies in relation to the refugee child, and how different policies impact them, their families, and other stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) by using policy analysis and practitioners' narratives to answer the research questions. Consideration of power and discourse is crucial in determining policy responses and challenges (Foucault, 1972; 1980) and the analysis of how they influence different stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) is essential in determining the impact of national, regional, and local refugee policy on children and teachers and how, in turn, they influence policy. Bacchi (2009) identified discourse, knowledge and power as essential elements in defining problematisations within policy ([2.1](#)) and therefore this enables the first six research questions in this study, which are based on Bacchi's (2009) policy analysis, to be addressed ([2.2](#)).

A fundamental consideration is *opportunity for challenge* and whether this challenge is accepted or blocked to maintain the status quo ([3.5](#)). This potential for challenge provides new understanding as to how stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)), particularly teachers, are assimilating relevant policy into practice as well as ways in which they are facilitating its transfer across different layers of the ecosystem ([fig.1](#)). Whilst carrying out the literature review, it became evident that there were layers of influence which reflected Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). However, it was also evident that there were levels of influence across the policy agenda and therefore, it was possible to create a *thesis systems model* specifically related to this study ([fig.2](#)). This systems model provides structure to the analysis and enables identification of connections and correlations. It is based on identified research parameters ([4.4](#)) with the aim of testing relationships and theoretical standpoints. It has similarities to Bronfenbrenner's

Ecological Model (1979) but is distinct in considering the foci of this study. The literature review has been organised to reflect these layers of influence and considers the following:

- The refugee child
- Refugee policy
- Inclusion policy
- Challenge (meso-element/interplay between policy elements)
- Power and discourse
- Ideology, customs, and social pressure
- Teacher agency

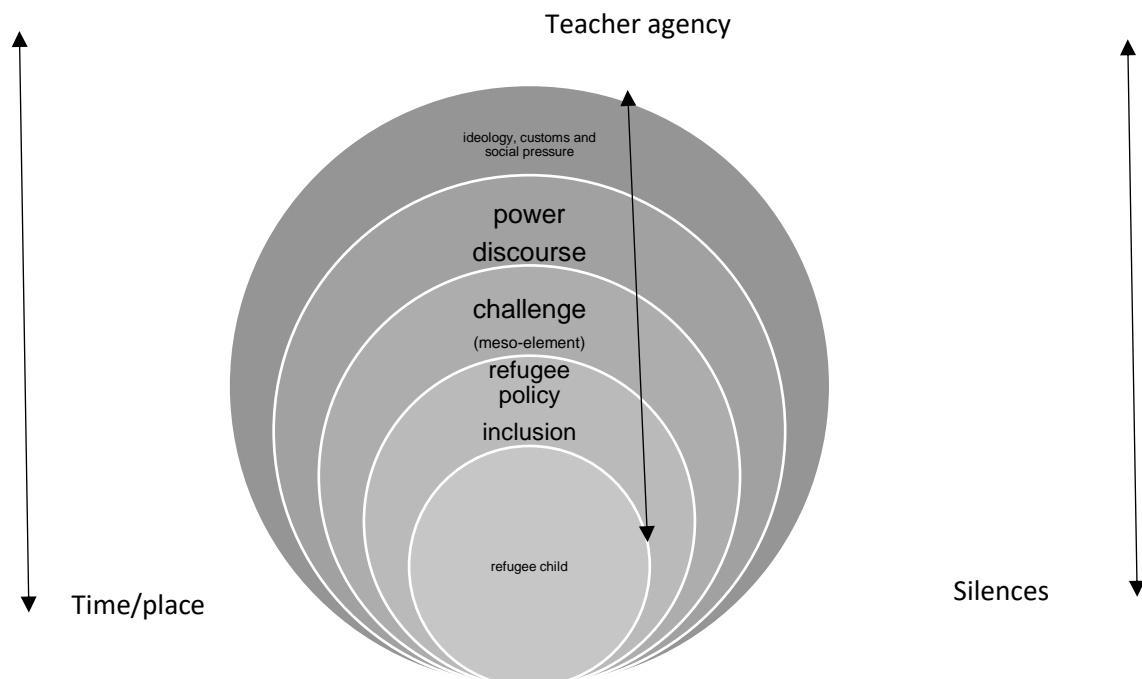


Figure 2: Summary of Thesis Systems Model

In this study, these layers are reviewed through the lens of time and place, taking into consideration silences within the process, in other words what ‘fails to be problematised’ (Bacchi, 2009:12) but needs to be identified to fully understand discourse, policy choices and power relationships. Within these layers, underlying constructs are evaluated; these aspects may not be traditionally held within discourse surrounding refugees, and may contribute to silences in the system, but they potentially influence power struggles around policy creation and enactment ([2.3](#)).

A conscious decision was made to put the refugee child at the centre of the thesis systems model ([fig.2](#)) as the child is at the heart of the policies being considered in this study whereas the teachers’ *agency* flows through and across the different layers of the system, feeding to and from the child at the centre. The practitioners’ narratives in [Chapter 5](#) are used to analyse their agency when negotiating national, regional, and local representations and problematisations, with reference to the impact on imaginary children in their stories. To explain this concept, it is useful to consider this hypothetical practice example, written in story form, which places Ali at the centre of the thesis systems model:

Ali is a refugee child, aged 8. He arrived in the UK with his parents. The Home Office has assessed their asylum application, and the family has been allocated to an East Midlands city. The relevant unitary authority has provided housing and has managed to secure places at a school which is two bus journeys away from the family home. Ali and his younger sister, therefore, travel across the city every morning and afternoon, adding over two hours to their school day. Ali’s parents are very pleased with the education and care provided at the school but feel

isolated from family and friends who have already settled in the country - they are also aware of the impact that lengthy school journeys are having on their children. They are, however, unable to move as they will lose funding, possibly find it difficult to access support elsewhere, and may not be able to find school places for their children.

Sam is Ali's teacher. Sam is aware of the impact that the extended school-day is having on Ali's schooling as well as other stresses that affect the family for example, Ali is unable to socialise with school friends outside school hours and, on occasions, is late for school because of issues with transportation. Aspects of these family pressures appear in conflict with the school's inclusive ethos but when Sam approaches Ali's parents, she becomes aware of wider policy agendas that are influencing their decisions. This contributes to Sam carrying out some investigations into the issues shaping the family's decisions. Sam is aware of some aspects from her social media accounts and the Sunday newspapers which she reads before starting her Sunday afternoon planning. Sam intends to try to discover ways to help Ali and his family to overcome some challenges in their current lifestyle but is finding it difficult to allocate time to this due to a recent school focus on amending medium term planning and assessment which is affecting her workload as the English subject leader.

This scenario shows how Sam's knowledge and influence flow through the thesis systems model as she deals with different aspects that impact her agency in addressing Ali's situation whilst negotiating the 'web' of different powers, controls and networks. Ali, however, remains at the centre of the system, exemplified by his routine at the end of the

school day when he negotiates lengthy bus journeys to a house situated away from wider family, friends and school - this has been imposed by specific national and regional refugee policies but also influences other aspects of Ali's life.

Keeping the refugee child at the centre of the analysis ensures that social justice remains a core aspect of this study (Kara, 2020) ([4.6.2](#); [4.7.1](#)). Ultimately, any child, particularly one judged as disadvantaged in some way, could be placed at the centre of this model and the policy problematisations and representations relating to *their* profile could be placed in the outer layers, but for the purpose of the analysis in this study, the refugee child resides at the heart of the discussion.

2.5 Key concepts

2.5.1 The refugee child

The refugee child and responses to them are at the centre of this research in so far as each child is affected by the system surrounding them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). However, there are many representations and suppositions relating to the attributes and status of the refugee child. This section will specifically consider these with the aim of identifying aspects which impact on policy representations, suppositions, responses, and silences which are considered in this thesis ([2.2](#)).

2.5.1.1 Definitions and dilemmas

To secure entry into the UK during the period of this research, the Government required individuals to meet the definition of a refugee as agreed within the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees which was reconfirmed in 2011 as:

A person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return to there for fear of persecution (UNHCR, 2011: online).

Once met, this status theoretically entitled the individual to certain rights within the UK; these rights were not available to those seeking asylum or having refugee status whilst waiting for applications to be concluded (Refugee Council, 2021^b). However, the UK's policy documents often combined refugees and asylum seekers within similar regulations; this was intensified by the decision to only grant refugee status for five years before review (ibid). Therefore, although there were clear definitions in relation to the terms *refugee* and *asylum seeker* (ibid), the concepts lacked clarity and were often confused. In considering the influences of these ambiguous terms, this study takes a broader definition. The term 'refugee' is therefore used to describe 'anyone fleeing persecution who is outside their country of nationality whether or not he, or she, has been granted legal asylum' (Wilmott, 2017:67).

Added complications have arisen when refugees have been confused with other migrants, in particular economic migrants. A migrant is defined as 'someone who has moved to another country for other reasons, such as to find work' (Refugee Council, 2021^b: online). Therefore, although migrants, and specifically economic migrants, do not fall under the definition of refugee used in this study, they need to be considered in so far as national refugee policy has often been created in response to wider migration issues (Home Office, 2021^d). The Home Office (HO), and specifically Priti Patel (Home Secretary, 2019-2022),

regularly began to identify refugees paying to access boat crossings as economic migrants (Taylor and Syal, 2021): this started to impact on policy responses (Syal, 2022).

Immigration policy initiatives were often seen as a response to market forces, linked to employment, which identified *any* migrant as a potential threat (Hadjisoteriou and Angelides, 2016) whilst discourse associated with ‘spin-doctoring’ confused terms depending on the aims of group rhetoric (Taylor, 2004; Anderson and Blinder, 2019). This discourse was challenged by the Refugee Council (2021^a), who suggested that powerful groups were trying to criminalise genuine refugees by linking them to illegal entry and economic migration: this is associated with the chronosystem of political doctrine and policy in determining what is legal or illegal (De Genova, 2002; 2013). An example of this approach was seen in the image of migrants used by the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in 2016 which attempted to influence the Brexit campaign (BBC News, 2016^c). There appeared to be an attempt to confuse discourse by using images of refugees with dialogue referencing the potential impact of economic migrants on the British economy (Stewart and Mason, 2016). Over time, terms have been used interchangeably to support different discourses and perceptions. These standpoints will be considered in the literature review and policy and narrative analyses, with a focus on responses that stem from these representations ([2.2.4](#)).

2.5.1.2 Rights and tensions

As individuals are shaped by their place within time, confusion around terminology guides responses in the future as well as the present (Foucault, 1972; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This can be evidenced by conflict around the rights of child refugees in the UK (Ager and Strang, 2008) which has been hidden in the silences of policy provision (Vertovec, 2007).

Examples include refugee children who have had no legal right to attend school whilst waiting for their refugee status to be confirmed (Taylor, 2016; LGA, 2022^d) despite the right to education ostensibly being a fundamental principle in the UK (UK Immigration, 2020). Additionally, there were claims by government officials that adults were posing as children on entry to the UK, with suggestions that two thirds of *disputed* cases resulted in individuals being over the age of 18 (HO, 2022ⁱ). This led some stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) to believe that most Unaccompanied Minors (UAM) were adults, rather than a minority of the total number. Concern was also raised over the 'Merton Test' which was used to determine the age of UAMs. It required two social workers to verify the applicant's background including family circumstances, education, and known history (UK Visas and Immigration, 2023). Emphasis was placed on supporting documentation which was often unavailable because of the manner of entry to the UK which contributed to documents being lost or seized during the journey (DfE, 2017; EPI and PHF, 2023). Those resisting refugee entry, including Government Ministers, added this to their discourse suggesting that applicants falsified claims, specifically in relation to their age. In response to this, some officials, including Government Ministers, recommended adoption of a medical approach to establish age, including taking fingerprints and examining dental records (BBC News, 2016^a; EPI and PHF, 2023) which again suggested an increasing tendency towards criminalisation of applicants.

There have been few legal routes available for refugee children to enter the UK. The HO issued guidance in August 2021 (HO, 2021^l) to clarify legal options available to all refugees. The policy aim for UAMs was to reunite them with their family, with an emphasis on encouraging them to remain in the region where they were from, if possible. Although not specifically stating that they were not welcome, the implication of this policy choice

indicated a reluctance to accept them into the UK. However, there were three routes officially available, with an additional option of the Refugee Family Reunion which was amended to add further restrictions as part of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 (UK Parliament House of Lords, 2022). Apart from routes available to deal with specific crises, such as Afghanistan and Ukraine which were introduced between 2021-2022, the legal options to enter the UK were:

- The **UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)** which aimed to support vulnerable refugees in refugee camps which were situated in a neighbouring country to a country identified as being unstable or suffering from conflicts. Local Authorities (LA) would be responsible for supporting these individuals, and it would rely on the regional ability to resource the required amenities, such as housing.
- The **Community Sponsorship Scheme** which had the same criteria as the UKRS but matched refugees to local community groups offering to support integration into the UK.
- The **Mandate Resettlement Scheme** which applied to any refugee who had a close family member in the UK. This family member needed to have permanent permission to stay in the UK, or temporary permission but on route to permanent permission. This family member needed to agree to support the refugee and accommodate them on arrival (HO, 2021¹).

Routes were amended during the 18-months considered in this study, and others were withdrawn (Webber, 2021). For example, in 2020, following Brexit, there was a review and ultimate rejection of the 'Dubs Scheme' leaving many UAMs with no legal way to enter the UK (Townsend, 2020, Grierson, 2021, Gentleman, 2022). Initially, the scheme

was criticised for only being used to support a small number of applicants; it was then completely withdrawn as part of the Brexit Bill in February 2020, with the Government saying that although it was committed to reunification, entry of UAMs would be addressed elsewhere (BBC News, 2020^a). The final group of children admitted to the UK under the scheme arrived in December 2021 (Grant, 2021) with many others left without a legal route into the UK (Townsend, 2021).

These policy decisions seemed to be creating barriers and arguably the criminalisation of applicants; furthermore, they appeared in conflict with international agreements such as those with UNHCR (2011) as well as with education policies at regional and local level, potentially causing conflict for stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) who tried to navigate their way through policy decisions (Haidt, 2013). In fact, an argument could be made that policies ostensibly created to accept refugees were excluding them. Teachers would be one group facing these inconsistencies, and little is known about their responses: thus, the aim of this thesis is to place a spotlight on practitioners' reactions to such issues. The direct impact on teachers could be heightened by their links to refugee communities, therefore, for the purpose of this study, it is relevant to consider the prevalence of refugee children over the last 10 years.

2.5.1.3 Refugee statistics

In 2012, there were approximately 23,000 applications for asylum in the UK with over 1,100 being UAMs under 18 years of age, having no primary care giver (Fazel, 2015). By 2015, more than four million Syrian refugees were living in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt and more than half of these were under 18 years of age; 40% were under 12 years old (Sirin and Rogers-Sirin, 2015). Following pressure from the German Government,

and public pressure in the UK, the Conservative Government agreed to resettle 20,000 Syrians during a four-year period (Hansen, 2012). This was seen to be controversial because of the selection criteria (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017) although a similar arrangement was agreed in 2021 for the resettlement of Afghan refugees (HO, 2021^a; 2021^b).

By the end of 2018, nearly 79 million people were displaced of which 3.5 million were classed as asylum seekers and 26 million were refugees (UNHCR, 2019). In the UNHCR's report 'Desperate Journeys' (2019) covering the period January to September 2019, it was calculated that 80,800 people had sought refuge in Europe with more than 25% of them being children. The UK offered protection to 18,519 people between June 2018 and June 2019 of which 25% were children (Kendall, Puttick and Wheatcroft, 2021). The expectation was that the Government would accept between 5,000 and 6,000 refugees in the period between 2020 and 2021, although it added a proviso that the number would depend on LAs providing suitable accommodation and having sufficient capacity (HO, 2021^b). The collaboration of councils remained voluntary and therefore numbers were not guaranteed. Regarding UAMs, regions were not expected to cater for more than 0.07 percent of their total child population and therefore, the East Midlands region would only expect a total of 686 UAMs in the period 2020 to 2021 (East Midlands Strategic Partnership, 2019). The number of children needing provision would nevertheless be more than this as children accompanied by family members would also be dispersed across LAs. National statistics covering recent refugee crises were still being collated during the data collection period of this thesis, nonetheless, the study specifically analyses the impact and consequences of policies relating to the Afghanistan crisis in 2021 and the Ukraine war in 2022.

2.5.1.4 Unique attributes and challenges

Fazel (2015) identified that refugee children faced many challenges during pre-migration, peri-migration and post-migration causing disrupted education (Block et al., 2021) which often contributed to mental health issues (Topalovic et al., 2021). These challenges were exacerbated by economic hardship, language barriers, social isolation, and discrimination (ibid) and without appropriate support, mental health issues linked to post traumatic stress disorder and depression would inevitably increase in adulthood (Reakes, 2007; Palmer and Bokhari, 2012; Block et al., 2014; Lee, 2021). The children would often need additional support in school as these issues could create associated conduct disorders, passivity, aggression, social isolation, anxiety, and problems with concentration (Frater-Mathieson, 2004; Block et al., 2014). However, many school staff struggled to cope with these specific needs due to lack of knowledge, resources, and skills (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017) whilst also negotiating confusing terminology and often 'hostile' rhetoric from government (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017:942). Government responses were often linked to inadequate data (Freeman and Brubaker, 1995; McIntyre and Neuhaus, 2021) leading to lack of support in enabling practitioners to understand need (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012) meaning that, for example, they could place too much focus on trauma narratives (Barber, 2021) or, alternatively, too little (Due and Riggs, 2009; Wills, 2020). To understand these responses fully, it is important to reflect on the origins and aims of policy creation and consider how it has been used to address the needs of these children.

2.5.2 National policy creation

A very simple definition of 'policy' is a *plan* that is followed by an organisation or government (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). However, by interpreting policy as merely organisational expediency, it narrows the focus of engagement and potential for challenge and change. Analysis of wider conceptualisation of policy provides opportunity to evaluate how it is used in practice and potential for challenge; and ultimately it allows focused analysis of two specific policy areas in this study's systems model: refugee and inclusion policy.

2.5.2.1 Policy definitions

The term *policy* is used by different groups to encapsulate a range of meanings and it can be understood to mean different things depending on the expectations and knowledge of stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)); there is therefore a 'struggle over meaning' (Taylor, 2004:435). At a fundamental level, Forester and Garratt (2016) stated that it is seen as a statement of intent; something that is often written down to show a plan, objective, or definition of practice. Fitzgerald and Kay (2016:2) developed this definition by giving four criteria which they believed contributed to the aims of policy creation, summarised as:

- A stated intention.
- Action taken on an issue by those with responsibility.
- An organisational or administrative practice.
- An indication of the formal status of a particular course of action.

In this wider definition, policy creation is directly linked to an organisation which has responsibility for others. It gives an indication that individuals, or groups, are expected to

respond to the policy intention by following guidance which has been agreed by the controlling group. This alludes to a power dynamic which enables the powerful elite to create and control procedures and outcomes for others. This power dynamic and the actions (including inaction) of individuals and groups to maintain control is part of the foundation of the policy analysis in this research.

Fitzgerald and Kay's (2016) definition also judged policies as constant or fixed, but this is a simplified version of what happens in practice as can be seen in Levin's (1997) definition over 20 years before. Again, he acknowledged aspects evident in later definitions by making links to common attributes, formal actions and procedures, and an agreed course of action. However, for Levin (1997), there was the additional expectation of a commitment to carry out the process which appeared to suggest longevity and consistency, implying that the policy would be adhered to by all until a specific outcome was achieved. This point raised questions when considering stresses and influences within the mesosystem of 'challenge' in this study. Indeed, Levin (1997) himself raised issues of inconsistency in policy creation and delivery by suggesting that detail may be lacking or superficial, indicating that there could be interpretations or adjustments. This was a factor in this study when analysing HO policy responses which specifically stated that officials would *interpret* regulations on an individual basis (HO, 2022^k) with the Refugee Council (2022^b) suggesting that existing and proposed policies were perceived as a method to bar refugees entering the UK, rather than to provide valid routes of entry. However, following events in Afghanistan and Ukraine, populist discourses seemed to encourage the Government to appear more flexible in their approach and accept refugees (DLUHC, 2022^c; HO 2022^f; 2022^g). This flexibility to changing events, including ambiguities and silences, provided some understanding of the scope of refugee policy within a political

framework. It is therefore important to consider the political background which contributes to the adaptability or inflexibility of policy formation in the UK.

2.5.2.2 The UK: a two-party system

Refugees have had an impact across the world, and appropriate responses became part of international discussions from the end of World War II. These led to several international agreements including the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Existing policy responses were then used to justify subsequent approaches and ongoing themes were evident in the policies analysed in this study. Therefore, when analysing UK policy creation, consideration needs to be given as to how and why it is possible to have a particular power discourse.

One of the initial aims of this study was to evaluate policy change since 2010 when the national government changed from New Labour to a Conservative-led system. The latter period of the New Labour Government saw increasing numbers of refugees world-wide (which ultimately peaked in 2015) with increasing numbers entering the UK (UNHCR, 2010). Although this was an international issue, over a decade later, Conservative politicians still attributed this influx to 'left-wing attitudes' towards migrants (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a 806 Column 192).

Traditionally, policy creation in the UK has been based on the premise of a two-party political system, which was the established base of British politics from 1945 (UK Parliament, 2021). This concept underpinned ideological responses to refugee children which are rooted in historical reactions to wider migration (HO, 2021^d); often based on economic aims of party politics (Favell, 2008). In the UK, commentators have frequently linked national policy to the *left* or *right* of the political spectrum. These standpoints have

been identified through political discourse, making it part of the communication system of political parties (UK Parliament, 2021). According to Fitzgerald and Kay (2016), conceptually, the *left* has been seen to promote strategies which aim to address social equality and justice, with redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor, generally promoting social advancement for underprivileged groups such as refugees. Alternatively, the discourse of the *right* has been shown to promote the rights of the individual and family values with a focus on national identity, whilst having the goal of reducing the control of the state and promoting free markets and competition (Rolph, 2023).

Theoretically, alterations in policy agendas have been instigated when the controlling majority has changed from one political party to another, or alternatively when different factions within political parties have gained influence and authority: consequently, the focus of policy has changed to meet the aims of the group in power (Fitzgerald and Kay, 2016; Rolph, 2023). In principle, the two-party, *left* and *right* focus, should make it easier to identify political parties from left of centre who theoretically promote the rights of refugee children as an underprivileged group, and political parties from the right of centre, who might be less inclined to accept immigration unless linked to economic prosperity (Hollifield, 2004; Favell, 2008), preferring a focus on national identity (Duncan and Van Hecke, 2008). Nevertheless, the professed divide between these different political biases is not as clear-cut as suggested, thus blurring responses to identified *problems* as political parties grapple with issues around social considerations such as welfare, economic growth, and political systems (Freeman and Brubaker, 1995; Hollifield, 2004; Favell, 2008; Natter, Czaika and de Haas, 2020).

2.5.2.3 National policy: blurred lines

Michael Gove was given responsibility for the Ukraine Resettlement Scheme in March 2022, in his role as Secretary of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC, 2022^c). It was interesting to note that this seemingly pro-active scheme welcoming refugees was moved away from the HO, leaving the HO with more hostile agendas such as the consequences of *illegal* Channel crossings. The stated aim of the DLUHC was to ‘support communities across the UK to thrive, making them great places to live and work’ (DLUHC, 2022^e: online). The creation of this department had already blurred political party lines as exemplified by the Conservative *levelling-up* agenda which appeared to realign political ideology (Jennings, McKay and Stoker, 2021), seeming to adopt discourses previously held by left-of-centre political groups seeking to improve outcomes for towns, cities, rural and coastal areas (BBC, Reality Check, 2021; Rolph, 2023), including areas supporting refugee populations.

Originally, the principles of the *levelling up* agenda were announced in the Conservative Manifesto of 2019 (Conservatives, 2019) and were subsequently revisited by members of the Conservative Party who debated proposed initiatives to improve outcomes for areas associated with economic and social deprivation, often using rhetoric previously associated with left of centre parties (LGA, 2021) in their attempt to gain or retain power in traditional Labour constituencies. These areas had high numbers of migrants who were often seen as being in competition for local jobs and resources and so, although the rhetoric of ‘levelling-up’ seemed to promote the advancement of deprived communities, it also needed to appeal to the perceived widespread regional and local antagonism towards certain migrant groups. This goes some way to explain why policy agendas

relating to migrants seemed to conflict with the social justice agenda of *levelling-up* which needed to meet the expectations of local populations in relation to employment and regional resources (Conservatives, 2021). Therefore, although the Conservative Government claimed to be promoting policy initiatives advocating the wellbeing of less advantaged groups, the response to migrants, including refugees, did not necessarily follow these principles. It is worth noting that to regain power in these political constituencies, the Labour Party would probably face similar challenges (Hollifield, 2004). It is possible, therefore, to see factors that influence political responses, leading to compromises and concessions that may not naturally align with a stated political stance, thus creating haziness around political doctrine and policy choices (Natter, Czaika and de Haas, 2020).

2.5.2.4 Policy as a process

The data analysis in this thesis relates to the period between the introduction of the 'Immigration Act 2020' and the enactment of the Nationality and Borders Bill in 2022 which was a period of adjustment following Brexit (2.1). Although the content of the Nationality and Borders Bill 2022 was supported by many under the guise of national progress and identity, it was challenged by some communities adopting an international and social equality agenda at regional level (BBC News, 2021^a). However, capacity for effective challenge was restricted by predefined parameters for example, economic capabilities, social expectations, or political aspirations to retain power (Cox, 1986; Constidine, 1994; Hollifield, 2004; Forester and Garratt, 2016). Therefore, this study has endeavoured to ascertain whether there was any justification in the claim that although political policymakers frequently spend time defining and addressing certain *truths*, often

modifications are superficial, relating to restricted ideological responses, whilst fundamental issues remain unchanged (Fitzgerald and Kay, 2016).

The static nature of policy creation and development is not a new concept. About 30 years ago, Constidine (1994) defined policy as a procedural phenomenon that changes little in practice:

In a sense everything in the policy world is just a process, the movement of people and programs around common problems such as education, transport, and employment. None of these changing (Constidine 1994:3).

If policy development is seen as a process which orbits around similar issues, consideration needs to be given as to why and how discourse is used to provide distance from previous procedures and processes. This is particularly interesting when instigated by groups who have held power for some time and find that previous policy decisions are problematic moving forward. Elements of this can be seen in the rhetoric of members of the Conservative Government from 2020 to 2022 when they tried to justify changes to Conservative policies created in the preceding 10 years. This raised challenges to the wider discourse as different policy agendas across government clashed with each other (Fitzgerald and Kay, 2016), previously exemplified in the example of the *levelling-up* agenda ([2.5.2.3](#)) which aimed to improve outcomes for certain regional populations whilst also addressing wider political issues such as education.

2.5.2.5 Education policy: meeting the needs of all

Education provision faces potential compromises in policy creation and execution (Rolph, 2023). Forester and Garratt, (2016) suggested that this conflict occurs because creation

of education policy never happens in isolation but is a moveable strategy, subject to a range of influences broadly identified as social, economic, political, technological, religious, and cultural (Hollifield, 2004); these reflect wider policy considerations and so the web of potential influence becomes evident. Added to these are an assortment of different individuals, groups, ideologies, events, and perspectives which influence the format and content of various policies (Ball, 2013). The chronosystem of historical momentum also guides the responses of participants (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as they mediate the impact of historical influences and changes (Bacchi, 2009). Therefore, all policy development, including educational policy, is fixed in the time when it is created, as well as being a reconciliation of opposing ideas and interests.

Policies are rarely stable but are in constant flux as individuals and groups manipulate discourse to meet their own aims as witnessed in speeches, media interviews, soundbites, or 'spin' (Ball, 1993; Staggs, 2012; Gillborn, 2014). Additionally, policy agendas relating to different foci often influence each other; for example, policy relating to refugee children will run alongside education policy which frequently appears to be searching for a seemingly allusive aim of *best practice* for *all* children within the education system. In determining what constitutes *truth* or *best practice* within education policy, it is interesting to consider points made by Miller and Hevey (2012). They discussed inconsistent educational strategy which placed ever-changing demands on practitioners: policies never had enough time to embed before they were revised or changed, thus making the ultimate truth of *best practice* difficult to identify or achieve. However, if policy merely circulates around ideas and changes little as suggested by Constidine (1994), there is potential for practitioners to perpetuate previous policy within new initiatives; for example, continuing theories of *inclusion for all* alongside new policy which is less

inclusive. Consequently, it is important to consider representations of policy initiatives and how they interact with previous policies, rather than accept them per se; and in this case, specifically investigate the nature of *problems* that are reputed to exist in relation to refugee children and how these are interpreted, particularly in light of previous assertions that the ideological alignment of political parties might have little impact on immigration policies (Natter, Czaika and de Haas, 2020).

This thesis reflects on how teachers integrate refugee policy into their professional and personal understanding and whether they draw on inclusive perspectives to meet the needs of children. However, this is complicated by the changing dynamics of refugee and inclusion policy agendas and how these adjustments have been integrated into discourse, knowledge and ultimately into professional practice. Analysis of this will contribute to answering the first six thesis questions, whilst emotional responses and potential challenge articulated in the narratives will add evidence to the final two questions (2.2). This will provide new knowledge and understanding in relation to teacher agency (3.7) as well as the opportunity to support CPD, enabling teachers to reflect and develop (1.6).

2.6.2.6 Education policy: moving across the systems model

The thesis systems model (fig.2) has enabled consideration of how factors impact on each other across various layers and through time. In identifying the representation of *problems*, Bacchi (2009) suggested that researchers need to challenge the boundaries of policy and discourse, and avoid the perception that policies are discrete or self-evident in purpose (2.1). Therefore, in this study, consideration has been given to economic and political environments at local, regional, national, and international levels which influence education policy (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014; Forester and Garratt, 2016). Bacchi (2009)

also considered the rhetoric of politicians and interest groups: she stressed that these should be used with care, with a focus on identifying ideas that make rhetoric possible rather than analysing the content; for example, in this thesis, to consider why it is possible for politicians to adopt a particular discourse around refugees and why it is conceivable for this to influence educational responses. This was particularly important in the period between 2020 and 2022, when politicians were contending with multiple issues, such as the repercussions of Brexit, a pandemic as well as international crises in Afghanistan and the Ukraine, all of which had potential to influence wider discourse.

When looking at education policy, Moss (2012) identified a tendency to transfer it into a technical and managerial exercise in relation to *what works*, rather than an ethical and values debate which encompasses provision for specific groups such as refugees. Therefore, in determining what is desirable from an educational point of view, policy analysis needs to consider the views of all stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)), rather than merely those of the dominant ideological group (Dewey, 1916; Ball, 2013). It is for this reason that this study adopts the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) in considering the impact of different layers of the ecosystem and how they influence each other. As a founder of the pragmatism movement, Dewey (1939) emphasised the importance of democracy in achieving socially acceptable policy: he saw democracy as a way of existing within the world; providing a way of living together whilst having certain attitudes, character traits and social relationships which are used to give purpose to everyday life. This may seem a dated response to policy creation and yet, in promoting a current and appropriate response to educational provision, Arnot, Pinson and Candappa (2009) suggested that the relationship between educational institutions and government should be redefined to reflect changes in population demographics. This would mean that areas

with higher numbers of refugee children, such as the LAs within this study, should have policies which reflect those communities and enable them to meet need accordingly. However, this can only be achieved if the policy focus is aimed at regional or local need, rather than held within remote national departments. An example of the issues faced in achieving this is taken from the centre-left of the political spectrum in the review of New Labour's vision which had a stated aim to address social disadvantage (Lister, 1998; McNeil, 2012). McNeil (2012) carried out interviews and provided evidence to show that although New Labour created policy initiatives and allocated funding to their vision of minimising social disadvantage across a range of communities, very little change was made which impacted on local services or governance at grassroot level. Although it was acknowledged that New Labour specifically addressed issues around the inclusion of different ethnic groups in society, including refugees, and funding was allocated to achieve these stated aims, McNeil (2012) claimed that any relevant changes appeared to be concentrated within central government departments in Whitehall, having little or no impact on service provision which retained inequalities. This study aims to identify the impact of relevant national policies in the East Midlands and whether adjustments are made to meet regional and local need. These potential nuances will provide a deeper understanding as to how teachers reconcile differing policies at grassroots.

The ability of policymakers to ensure that policy initiatives impact throughout the ecological system ([fig.1](#)) requires consideration: it is necessary to identify whether professed national policy relating to refugee children feeds down to regional and local levels, or whether it languishes within central government departments and has little impact elsewhere. This need not necessarily be disadvantageous to the refugee child, depending on which aspects of national policy filter into local practice: the outcomes for

the child are ultimately positive or negative depending on the choices made. As previously stated ([2.2.4](#)), this study will ascertain how regional and local policy reflects the needs of the refugee child in the East Midlands and how information feeds back to central government. This knowledge will enable a more informed approach in meeting the needs of all stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)), including the refugee child, by identifying strengths and areas for development in the current system. Another consideration has been potential for challenge ([2.2.8](#)), either directly or through interpretation of policy agendas which can result in 'silent' challenges (Miller and Hevey, 2012) which are not openly acknowledged (Bacchi, 2009). Understanding potential for challenge will help to demonstrate how teachers are interpreting discourse, knowledge and problematisation surrounding policies and their capacity to question and potentially improve the status quo, adding further evidence to resolve the thesis questions ([2.2](#)).

2.6.2.7 Silences in the system

In endeavouring to remove policy creation away from the control of the powerful few, Miller and Hevey (2012) identified the importance of understanding the impact of policy on individuals and the ability of stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) to question and challenge content. They considered elements that are absent or not addressed: the *silences*. These silences are part of the interpretation, enactment or enforcement of policies and contribute to their existence (Bacchi, 2009). An example of this has already been alluded to when reflecting on whether refugee policy aims to welcome or exclude refugees ([2.5.1.2](#)). If we consider national refugee policy which is interpreted at regional and local

level, silences within the system could potentially relate to the role of teachers, parents, and refugee children in the policy process, both in relation to policy formation and interpretation. Any marginalisation in policy creation could make them *excluded*, ‘puppets’ within the system, and limit their ability to influence procedures. Alternatively, they could manipulate policy at grassroot level and manoeuvre and influence outcomes in their own environment which could override the aims of national policy. The narratives in this study provide a straightforward way of identifying such trends, although analysis of LA and school initiatives surprisingly demonstrated approaches used by institutions to influence policy. Therefore, policy needs to be considered in broader terms, not just the written document or rhetoric; it is what is carried out or performed and this may differ from the intentions of the policy (Ball, 1994). Hence, it is possible for policy, and the interpretation of it, to be radically different at various levels of the ecological system ([fig.1](#)) as stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) exercise their control through a range of power dynamics.

2.6.2.8 Interpretation and enactment

Having considered the influence or interpretation of different groups on policy creation and procedures, it might appear that the concept of policy creation and enactment is intrinsically so inconsistent and problematic that analysis of individual policy documents serves little purpose (Considine, 1994) unless we focus on the *flow of information*. This means that the narrative accounts of teachers within this thesis are essential in identifying how information is interpreted and enacted. Policies are ‘inflected, mediated, resisted and misunderstood’ and in some cases are ‘unworkable’. They are often ‘messy, contradictory, confused and unclear’ (Ball, 2013:9). However, they provide individuals

with a way to talk about themselves within a specific organisation and offer a way to define beliefs and practices (Ball, 2015). They allow individuals to identify what *good* looks like, or what is identified as ideal within that organisation (ibid). Policy creation can be seen as a way of smoothing out problematic concepts and providing guidance to ensure consistency; how this is interpreted is fundamental in identifying power dynamics (Bacchi, 2009). Discourses are built into systems and practices of institutions and by analysing the reasons for these discourses, it is possible to begin to understand the *truths* underlying them and the factors which enforce and preserve them (Foucault, 1972). The narrative approach in this study enables practitioners to take a step back from personal experiences and reflect on broader concepts and interpretations ([4.6.4](#)).

Foucault (1972) was interested in the way that policy discourses were constructed but also in the way that they were enacted as the two are intertwined; this underpins analysis of discourse surrounding refugees in this study, as well as the policies encompassing their inclusion into society. Ball (2015:2) built on Foucault's work when he suggested that 'we do not *do* policy, policy *does* us.' [inflection in the original text]. This concept was also considered by Cox (1986:208-9) who suggested that problem-solving, or policy making:

...takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organised, as the given framework for action. The general aim of problem-solving is to make those relationships work smoothly by dealing effectively with particular sources of trouble... it aims to solve the problems arising in various parts of the complex whole in order to smooth the functioning of the whole. This aim rather belies the frequent claim of problem-solving theory to be value free.

This requires consideration of wider influences throughout the ecological system, including the chronosystem as all aspects have an influence on discourse and policy responses (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This thesis has focused on two specific policy agendas (refugee and inclusion) which contribute to meeting the needs of the refugee child in school: these were also linked to my university teaching role ([Chapter 1](#)).

2.5.3 A regional approach: the East Midlands

From the outset, this study focused on two unitary authorities (UA) in the East Midlands. Both had applied for and achieved City of Sanctuary status, possessing this at the time data was collected and therefore advocating welcome and support for refugees in their community (City of Sanctuary UK, 2017). The City of Sanctuary was established in 2005 in Sheffield. It now coordinates networks across the UK to encourage inclusivity and compassion for those who are forcibly displaced. These networks include community groups, schools, universities, and local councils. Organisations can apply, voluntarily, to become part of the City of Sanctuary network which aims to improve communication, collaboration, and support for those seeking refuge as well as providing counter-discourse to negative rhetoric (City of Sanctuary UK, n.d.). Unsurprisingly, the chosen UAs also had high numbers of migrants settled within the city boundaries and had systems that supported diverse populations originating from different ethnic, religious, and cultural groups (East Midlands Strategic Partnership, 2019). Organisations in the East Midlands created inclusion policies to meet the needs of these groups (One East Midlands, 2018) which often included refugees who settled in the area either through government resettlement schemes or through reunification with family members ([2.5.1.2](#)).

The East Midlands region includes areas of deprivation and was included in the Government 'levelling-up' agenda (BBC, Reality Check, 2021). Inhabitants expressed views implying that they were often overlooked by central government and felt pressures of social and economic deprivation (East Midlands Councils, 2020). Distribution of scarce social and economic support was seen as an issue, and certain groups in the population identified migrants as causing additional stresses on local provision by needing excessive welfare, employment, and social support (East Midlands Councils, 2020; HO, 2021^g, O' Dwyer, 2021). Furthermore, regional authorities experienced funding cuts over numerous years and were less inclined to accommodate refugees as part of resettlement schemes, in an attempt to resolve funding challenges (Easton and May, 2021). As well as these organisational challenges, local populations were less disposed to accept refugees in their communities, with confusion around different migrant groups, often linked to political posturing over wider concerns (BBC News, 2020^b), meaning that refugees were included within a seemingly homogenous group of migrant populations, sometimes associated with appropriation of local jobs and resources to the detriment of others (Hadjisoteriou and Angelides, 2016) as well as potential terror threats (HO, 2021^f; DLUHC, 2022^c; UNHCR UK, 2022). Analysis of policy documents at LA level and evaluation of practitioners' narratives endeavoured to establish whether these discourses exist and if they influence local responses.

Even if refugee children are welcomed into local communities, lack of clearly defined inclusive policies for refugee children could lead to a paucity of focused provision (Kozleski, Artiles and Waitoller, 2011; EPI and PHF, 2023) ([Chapter 3](#)). Additionally, 'hostile' central government responses towards immigration (Morphy-Morris, 2020) could be seen as a way of justifying confrontations from the local community which would

be reflected within the mesosystem. In essence, it is these compromises and modifications that are considered and analysed to answer the research questions in this thesis. The regional socio-political characteristics, enhanced by practitioner narratives, provide a critical lens to facilitate understanding of power and potential for challenge. To fully understand regional responses, however, it is necessary to consider wider influences, and this will be addressed in the literature review.

Chapter 3

Literature review

3.1 Summary of literature review themes

The major themes flowing through the literature review are also evident in the data collection and form a fundamental element in answering the research questions. They can be summarised as:

- The impact of power and discourse on refugee policy.
- Historical influences on ideology and preconceptions about refugee populations.
- Confusion in terminology which impacts on rights and entitlements for refugee children.
- Conflicting attitudes towards refugees at national, regional, and local levels.
- Racial and cultural tensions including responses to terrorist acts.
- Dispersal strategies and funding.
- A neoliberalist view of the economy and attainment in education.
- Inclusion as a concept beyond Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).
- Challenges within schools and preconceptions and expectations of teachers.

Having considered the refugee child already ([2.5.1](#)), the literature review follows the systems model ([fig.2](#)) to provide structure to the analysis whilst holding the refugee child at the centre of each aspect being evaluated. In the sections below, research evidence will be considered in relation to:

- Refugee policy

- Inclusion policy
- Challenge (meso-element/interplay between policy elements)
- Power and discourse
- Ideology, customs, and social pressure
- Teacher agency

3.2 Refugee policy

This section looks at the range of policy choices that impact refugee children. Some of these policies are ostensibly tied to other areas of provision but directly impact on refugees because of the interconnection of policy across economic, cultural, social, and political standpoints (Hollifield, 2004; Ball, 2013). As previously stated ([2.1](#)), the importance of these connections in recognising *problematizations* provides an entry point in identifying current refugee policy choices.

3.2.1. A range of standpoints

Attitudes towards migrant groups need to be evaluated to comprehend the confusion of terms which impact on refugee children ([2.5.1.1](#)) and this means that race and wider migration need to be considered to fully understand discourses linked to refugees (Freeman and Brubaker, 1995). It has already been established ([2.5.2](#)) that policies can be manipulated and adjusted to meet the needs and expectations of different groups (Foucault, 1972; Cox, 1986; Ball, 1994; Bacchi, 2009; Ball, 2015) and a key element in this study is to understand influences that have informed attitudes and provision impacting on refugee policy and teachers' understanding of this.

The chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) affecting migrant pupils exhibits potential for divergence in purpose and provision over a 70-year period which can be evidenced through conflicting policy documents at national, regional, and local levels (Castles, 2004; Crawley, 2009; Rolfe et al., 2018; Manzoni and Rolfe, 2019). Consequently, this raises questions as to how a range of stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) interact with each other to support, or hinder, these processes. This provoked uncertainties in this study when considering the effectiveness of practitioners in exercising professional agency within the policy agenda (Fuller, 2018) which was also raised as an issue by practitioners in their narratives ([5.2](#); [5.4](#); [5.8](#); [5.10](#)).

The provision for migrant pupils is often intertwined with inclusion discourse and practice, particularly in schools, as evidenced in the practitioners' narratives ([5.2](#); [5.4](#); [5.6](#); [5.8](#); [5.10](#)) and it is postulated that inclusion has unclear definitions in many settings, relying on the engagement of individuals (Rolfe, 2023). Extending this further, it is suggested that it often resembles an ethos or faith, rather than a well-defined, well-resourced protocol, (Ridell, 2009; Kozleski, Artiles and Waitoller, 2011; Hodgkinson and Devarakonda, 2011; Robinson and Goodley, 2018; Rolph, 2023). The origins and belief systems surrounding inclusive practice in schools require separate consideration ([3.4](#)), aiming to identify how inclusive provision has impacted on refugee children, as well as how it has co-existed with refugee policy which has often been judged as an ad hoc response to events (Castles, 2004) or linked to political doctrines and discourses ([2.5.2](#)), appearing inconsistent in practice (Foucault, 1972; Ball, 2013; Gillborn, 2014; Ball, 2015).

In essence, institutional policy and group discourse have potential to cause conflict and challenge as individuals respond to their own unique identities (Merton, 1968; Pearce,

2014; Easthope, 2017). The possibility of teachers becoming exposed to inconsistencies is heightened by the presence of conflicting aims and agendas (Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, 2009). Therefore, identifying chronological influences and silences provides an understanding of *problem representations* and associated *suppositions* (4.4.4). Additionally, it helped to signpost differing or conflicting discourses in the practitioners' narratives (5.2; 5.4; 5.6; 5.8; 5.10) when they considered policy in practice.

3.2.2 Refugee children in school

Educational settings often adopt a generic response to inclusive practice for all learners (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Veck and Wharton, 2021), generally linked to SEND provision (Karsli-Calamak and Kilinc, 2021). Although SEND provision is formally documented as a legal requirement in schools (DfE, 2015), broader inclusive provision is often not recorded in formal policy documents (Harðardóttir, Magnúsdóttir, and Dillabough, 2021). These informal inclusion procedures can relate to children from refugee backgrounds when they are added to the school roll, although it should be noted that there are also higher numbers of refugee children encompassed within formal SEND provision (Veck and Wharton, 2021). Often, these inclusive responses have been influenced by individual practitioners' experiences in dealing with needs attributed to refugee children (Due and Riggs, 2009; Sønsthagen, 2020; Harðardóttir, Magnúsdóttir and Dillabough, 2021; Sellars and Imig, 2021; Sutton, Kearney and Ashton, 2021; Rolph, 2023): this is supported by the practitioners' narratives in [Chapter 5](#). Practitioners' knowledge will vary depending on previous involvement and therefore, some practitioners may have little comprehension of the needs of these children and their families (McIntyre and Neuhaus, 2021); again, referred to in practitioner narratives. Consequently, some responses have been found to

be inadequate in meeting the multiple needs of children who have arrived through the asylum seeker process (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017; Nakeyar, Esses and Reid, 2018; McIntyre and Hall, 2020). This has impacted on the potential of a partnership approach across education, health, social care, and other agencies (Newbigging and Thomas, 2011; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; De Wal Pastoor, 2017; O'Higgins, Ott and Shea, 2018; Barber, 2021; Barbosa et al., 2021; Kendall, Puttick and Wheatcroft, 2021). Moreover, children and their families have been marginalised from procedures despite rhetoric promoting parental choice and stakeholder ([Appendix 2](#)) involvement (Rose and Shelvin, 2004), meaning that they lacked resources and ability to challenge decisions as they were not included in groups that held power and dominated educational discourse (Rose and Shelvin, 2004; Due and Riggs, 2009; Cefai et al. 2015; Sønsthagen, 2020). In this study, practitioner narratives provide insights and an entry point into understanding some of the issues relating to this ([Chapter 5](#)).

Descriptions given to refugees often hold negative connotations and some practitioners have associated these terms with a deficit model of engagement and achievement (Rose and Shelvin, 2004; Kelcey and Chatila, 2020; Kotluk and Aydin, 2021; Sutton, Kearney and Ashton, 2021) despite refugees often demonstrating resilience and problem-solving capacities (Sellars and Imig, 2021). This has led to lack of provision; for example, glass ceilings on academic expectations, thus exacerbating factors that contribute to these beliefs. It is suggested that these attitudes need to be confronted to create meaningful outcomes and enable comprehensive challenge to the status quo (Due and Riggs, 2009; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Sutton, Kearney and Ashton, 2021). This study has considered whether this challenge is evident in current practice, searching for a way to engage teachers in dialogue, and prompting the decision to publish narratives in full ([Chapter 5](#)),

in the hope that they can be used to support CPD which will positively impact on outcomes for refugee children.

The acceptance of refugee children has raised similar issues to those faced by other marginalised groups, such as children with SEND. The range of difference between refugee children and other children can be challenging for school leaders and staff to manage, leading to a culture of an 'outgroup' (Lee, 2021:792), 'otherness' (Vertovec, 2007: 1045) or 'othering' (Sellars and Imig, 2021:3) based on marginalisation often linked to language, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or religion (Dávila, 2021). Block et al. (2014) reflected that school staff can have a pivotal role in addressing provision for these children, with Arvanitis (2021) identifying the role of professionals in redefining 'others' as well as addressing discriminatory processes, such as the promotion of dominant 'in-groups' and relegation of minority 'out-groups'. Therefore, underlying factors which feed societal responses are relevant in ensuring that the rights of refugees are met, and that staff are equipped, and trained (Vertovec, 2007; Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017; Sønsthagen, 2020) to manage settlement effectively and successfully (Newbigging and Thomas, 2011; Hansen, 2012). The aim of this is to see refugees as individuals rather than a homogenised group (Veck and Wharton, 2021) who have inclusion (MacDonald and Smith, 2021), or alternatively, exclusion *done to them* (De Genova, 2013; Arvanitis, 2021; Harðardóttir, Magnúsdóttir, and Dillabough, 2021; McIntyre and Neuhaus, 2021). The earlier the children can be assimilated into school provision, the more likely they will reach their true potential (De Wal Pastoor, 2017; O'Higgins, Ott and Shea, 2018). Understanding the roots of provision and acceptance of refugees provides insight into practice. In this thesis, this has been considered through an evaluation of chronological discourse, policy

creation and responses towards migrant groups in so far as they impact on attitudes and interventions for refugee children ([Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 6](#)).

3.2.3 Refugee children within migrant populations

As previously stated ([2.5.1.1](#)), refugees and asylum seekers are often seen as a homogenous group (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012) and are frequently included in the larger group of migrant classifications in policy discourse (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). Consequently, the term *migrant* has often been ambiguous in public discourse, with bureaucratic systems categorising different types of migrants to blur complex factors linked to entitlements and legitimacy to certain rights (Vertovec, 2007; McIntyre and Hall, 2020). The term has been defined by individuals' birth country, citizenship, place of habitation (long or short term) or even by the citizenship or birthplace of parents (Anderson and Blinder, 2019). Therefore, it is not surprising that the term migrant has often been confused with ethnic groups, religious minorities, or asylum seekers and refugees (Taha, 2019). This has often happened when different community discourses have attached the effectiveness of local, national, and international socio-economic policies to groups who appear outside the local population (Castles, 2004; Anderson and Blinder, 2019). As previously stated ([2.5.2](#)), these socio-economic challenges have usually been linked to employment issues, health services, education, pensions, welfare rights and social housing (Ager and Strang, 2008; Hansen, 2012; Arvanitis, 2021; Lee, 2021). Consequently, it has only been a small leap for neo-liberalist rhetoric to link inadequacies in the system to the inability of schools to prepare pupils from migrant backgrounds to work within the global economy (Rogers et al, 2016; Winter 2017).

The debate around these problems has been exacerbated by policy agendas which make links to migrant populations, often leading to negative attitudes which stereotype those who settle in communities but appear to originate from other countries (Rose and Shelvin, 2004; Crawley, 2009; Manzoni and Rolfe, 2019). This has perpetuated in communities where there has been limited experience of mixing across different social or cultural groups (Lee, 2021); it is recognised that people who have more contact with migrant populations generally have more positive attitudes towards them (Rolfe et al., 2018). Policymakers have identified schools as secure environments which can model cohesive practices, allowing greater understanding of different migrant groups by using a range of inclusive interventions and positive responses to social and cultural education (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Manzoni and Rolfe, 2019; Arvanitis, 2021). However, often emphasis is placed on educating and socialising these learners as a collective group into the dominant intellectual and political expectations of the society in which they are situated (Rose and Shelvin, 2004; Cefai et al., 2015; McIntyre and Hall, 2020); for example, with a focus on learning the majority language to the exclusion of other languages (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Harðardóttir Magnúsdóttir, and Dillabough, 2021; McIntyre and Neuhaus, 2021), or priorities such as the assimilation of British Values ([3.3.3](#)). Svensson (2019:1) gave an overarching description of this when discussing the role of teachers in supporting asylum seekers in Sweden, recognising that schools offer ‘structure, stability, and social relations’, as well as learning, thus promoting integration. However, in this same study, children also identified exclusionary practices amongst their teachers and peers which created barriers to their assimilation, for example, racism and bullying. This thesis has aimed to ascertain whether similar issues are evident in the UK and if practitioners are able to articulate the strengths and weaknesses within the system ([Chapter 5](#) and [Chapter 6](#)).

Teachers are influenced in their responses to migrant populations by wider information systems beyond their professional identities. Anderson and Blinder (2019) suggested that conflating terms in relation to migrant classifications can often be linked to media reports, especially when definitions are generalised; this is particularly associated with tabloid newspapers. Public opinion is often influenced by these reports (Barber, 2021). This was illustrated by Anderson and Blinder (2019) who discussed the response to an increase in asylum seeker applications between 2015 and 2016. During this period, on more than one occasion, the term *migrant* was used pejoratively to make links to economic migrants rather than genuine refugees, confusing links between the two. This confusion intensified with the method used to estimate the UK's official migration figures which also included asylum seekers. The only individuals excluded from these statistics were those whose stay was less than one year (HO, 2022ⁱ), thus clouding definitions. This was not only an issue in the media, as these terms have also been confused in societal discourse and across different alliances (Kalisha, 2020). Groups who would like to see immigration reduced tend to focus their discourse on certain types of migrants (Arvanitis, 2021; Lee, 2021) such as 'illegal' immigrants (De Genova, 2002; 2013) or asylum seekers, extended family members, and low-skilled workers (Anderson and Blinder, 2019). Although there seem fewer concerns about high-skilled migrants (Favell, 2008; Lee, 2021), terms can be used interchangeably to suit the rhetoric and discourse of the group. For example, as previously highlighted, Priti Patel (Home Secretary 2019-2022), explicitly called refugees (who were paying to cross the Channel) 'economic migrants', claiming that they were using economic means to move further up the refugee 'queue', ultimately suggesting that they should be refused entry to the UK (HO, 2021^f) which is identified by some stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) as fundamental to the creation of recent UK policy (Refugee Council, 2021). Within this

thesis, analysis of such policies will provide a gateway to these problematisations, should they exist ([2.1](#)).

3.2.4 Assimilation of migrant groups

Refugee policy in the UK has been influenced by international immigration policy as well as historical influences which have shaped public discourse, rhetoric and the *representations* and *suppositions* underpinning policy. Thus, policy decisions relating to overseas settlers have been influenced by the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Meer et al., 2021), at international, national, and local level (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014). Considerable changes were evident following World War II; this was exemplified in 1948, when the British Nationality Act recognised members of the Commonwealth as British subjects, entitled to enter, work, and settle in the country. However, some groups in society saw this as a threat to British culture (Freeman and Brubaker, 1995; Leung, 2016) and so, policy at the time positively encouraged assimilation into British culture, with the aim of making the ‘immigrant child become “invisible”’ (Leung, 2016:160). However, the education system found this problematic to achieve and often the children of these workers remained on the edge of the community (Jones, 2016). Future responses to education agendas would seek to address this, with this thesis focusing on the legacy of the inclusion agenda promoted by New Labour after 1997 (Hodkinson, 2012).

Previously, the Albemarle Report (Hansard HL, 1960) found that there was partial success in integration. It was evident that there was some assimilation of migrant groups into British society, including movement across class boundaries and changes in cultural attitudes (Ager and Strang, 2008; Kawalerowicz, 2021). Nevertheless, it was also identified that the young often found this assimilation problematic (Kawalerowicz, 2021), being

unable to achieve expectations signposted to them whilst in education. The aims of the education system often conflicted with the practicalities of breaking through glass ceilings or struggling against undisguised prejudice that manifested itself throughout society (Rolph, 2023). This created additional problems in maintaining expectations across communities which potentially continues to be an issue for refugee groups ([4.8](#)).

The integration model used in the UK during the post-war period favoured recognition of all economic, political, cultural, social, and physical differences on an equal basis, failing to develop a focus on common values which would enable different communities to bind together (Freeman and Brubaker, 1995; Cattle, 2007; Ager and Strang, 2008). There were additional challenges in the education system when managing cultural and linguistic difference (Ager and Strang, 2008; Kawalerowicz, 2021); therefore, a decision was taken to disperse the children so that it would be easier for children and families to assimilate British culture (Chessum, 1997). However, in response to this proposed dispersal, Headteachers expressed reluctance in accepting additional pupils from ethnic communities in case it impacted on their schools' culture. The proportion of migrant children within each school was therefore limited to 30% of the total school population. This dispersal was carried out without parental consultation and community groups began to see it as a way of removing the children's cultural and national identity (Grosvenor, 1997). In analysing this approach, Cattle (2007) suggested that it was not viable to move to total integration or assimilation (Ager and Strang, 2008), as if cultural identity was to be preserved, a minimum number of each community group was necessary to support cultural community structures such as places of worship, shops, and social facilities, thus creating a clustering effect which was contrary to the aims of the policy (Vertovec, 2007). Many of these approaches continued to influence distribution of refugee families in 2020-

2022 as LAs negotiated their duty to meet relocation expectations from central government whilst addressing housing, schooling and welfare needs within different communities (H. M. Government, 2021; Meer et al., 2021; LGA, 2022^d).

3.2.5 Racial tensions

Although racial attitudes were not a focus of this study originally, subsequently their impact became evident in policy responses towards refugees, and they were identified as a specific factor during the Ukraine crisis when the media commented on positive responses by the British public towards Ukrainians in contrast to reactions to other refugees (Bayoumi, 2022). Furthermore, racism was raised as an issue in practitioner narratives ([Chapter 5](#)). Racial tensions have been an undercurrent in managing immigration policy and challenges have emerged over the last 60 years (Vertovec, 2007). Towards the end of the 1960s, cultural groups, such as the Caribbean parents in Haringey, arranged protests attesting that there was an assumption being made, at institutional level, that Black children were uneducable, and that assimilation required them to give up their own cultural traditions (Carter and Coussins, 1986). These were the first organised protests and resistance which created the foundations for future educational reform, requiring schools to adopt a new cultural response (Jones, 2016).

The 1966 Local Government Act and subsequent Plowden Report in 1967 (DES, 1967), recommended greater resourcing to facilitate the education of migrant children. Stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) were beginning to recognise the value that migrants could bring to a community, including schools. However, there continued to be a struggle in certain discourses linked to populist responses. In 1968, Enoch Powell gave his 'Rivers of Blood' speech (Internet Archive, n.d.), politicising issues of race within British culture.

Additionally, Black pupils continued to be disproportionately represented in SEN provision due to racialised assumptions that they had special educational needs, a feature that continues to be seen in relation to provision for refugee children (Gillborn, 2014). For many LAs, dispersal strategies continued to be a challenging policy response, creating local resentment towards new migrant arrivals. Local communities continued to show reluctance to welcome these new families, claiming they were placing a burden on communities and over-using local resources (Carter and Coussins, 1986), factors which continue to influence acceptance of refugees by local communities ([5.1](#)).

In the 1970s, there continued to be a struggle between education provision for migrant children and political and social responses of different communities to immigration (Jones, 2016). Dispersal policies continued to be a strategy used by LAs when managing a range of migrant groups, such as asylum seekers, with similar resentment being shown by local communities (Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, 2009). In turn, this policy choice placed considerable demands on LAs, especially where there were concentrated numbers of migrants. Often, procedures for these new arrivals were linked to existing education policies relating to admissions, free school meals, learning English and SEN provision (Reakes, 2007) rather than new and more apposite policy responses. This has been a continuing criticism, as seen in policy responses dealing with Afghan relocations in 2021 (HO, 2021^d; Atkins, 2022) and the Homes for Ukraine scheme (DLUHC, 2022^b) which were advocated nationally but ostensibly lacked a joined-up response at regional level. Historically, there was evidence of poor coordination between different departments with inadequate preparation to meet the needs of the pupils and their educators (Reakes, 2007) and resourcing and finance continued to be problematic as seen in current discourse around LA provision ([5.3](#); [5.5](#)).

Norman (1977) stated that the political attitude towards migrant groups in the 1970s gave some insight into the treatment of these populations in the UK. The multicultural views of the centre-left, later underpinned by the work of Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor (1992), were based on a belief that Britain was a pluralist society which could accommodate different cultural beliefs and traditions (Castles, 2004). The centre-right, however, adopted a populist response which felt that traditional structures, including education, were being undermined and attacked by multiculturalism. This would become the foundation of the political response of the centre-right towards education policy from that point onwards (Jones, 2016). In 1975, the Bullock Report (DES, 1975) considered options available to educate children arriving from overseas, although it took over 10 years for the principles and conclusions to be evident in policy and practice (Leung, 2017). Subsequently, the Rampton Report (1981), identified significant underperforming within the population of West Indian pupils in comparison to White British and Asian children. This supported the general view that the school system was failing a large majority of minority ethnic students (Jones, 2016). Previously, this had been attributed to issues with language development (DfES, 1971), however, there were signs that there was still unintentional racism from teachers, unsuitable curricula and discrimination in the employment market, affecting pupil outcomes (Rampton, 1981; Leung, 2016; Fuller, 2018). Adoption of the English language by new arrivals including refugees, continues to be seen as a priority (H.M. Government, 2021) with explicit statements in policy documentation which state that children will be required to learn English ([5.1](#)), whereas other aspects, previously identified as impacting on outcomes, do not have the same emphasis in policy agendas.

3.2.6 A multicultural response

Policy initiatives dating back nearly 40 years continued to be advocated at regional and local level with terms such as ‘multiculturalism’ (3.2.5) being favoured by New Labour to describe responses to minority groups such as refugees (Cheong, et al., 2007; Vertovec, 2007). Many date back to the Swann Report (DES,1985) which appeared to be a turning point in confirming that a cultural shift was required, giving recognition to the background of ethnic communities, using terms such as ‘integration’ instead of ‘assimilation’ and ‘ethnic minority’ instead of ‘immigrant’, as well as adopting a multicultural approach (Vertovec, 2007; Ager and Strang, 2008; Leung, 2016). Specialist teachers and advisers began to be part of educational provision, endeavouring to adopt multicultural practice rather than demanding assimilation. This fed into education policy at LA and Trade Union level. English Local Education Authorities (LEA) appointed advisers on multicultural education and two thirds had produced policy statements by the mid-1980s (Jones, 2016). However, the London Association for Teaching of English issued a statement in 1982 which stated that racism was widespread and preserved in laws, everyday life, school curricula and organisation, the way teachers taught, and curriculum content. They advocated changes to admissions, exclusions, and curriculum content (Jones, 2016). Nevertheless, the Conservative Government’s response to the Swann Report (DES, 1985) did not endorse its findings. To the centre-right, the recommendations seemed to confirm the belief that educational institutions, including LEAs, were consistently adopting centre-left rhetoric which did not meet expectations of a neo-liberalist government. The incumbent Conservative Government proposed that the curricula promoted by Swann was breaking British tradition and it used the national press to suggest that the proposals were un-

British, bureaucratic, politicised and lowering educational achievement (Jones, 2016). Many of these LEA initiatives have disappeared due to lack of funding and influence in school provision. However, many inclusion policies/discourses used in schools to promote appropriate education for refugee children rely on the premise of inclusive education and relevant resourcing. This thesis has considered if inclusive beliefs continue to challenge schools when resourcing fails to support policy ideals.

3.2.7 Controlling the curriculum

One of the main factors influencing educational provision has been the focus on standards and outcomes which have often been measured as part of a managerial exercise (Moss, 2012; Rolph, 2023). English language acquisition has been a continuing focus and a fundamental aspect of policy relating to migrant populations (Cheong et al., 2007); for example, being evident in policies relating to Afghan and Ukrainian refugees (H.M. Government, 2021; DLUHC, 2022^b). Potentially, focus on language acquisition could impact other aspects of provision and directly influence academic 'glass-ceilings' which were supposedly addressed through wider educational policy (Ofsted, 2019).

Historically, a major change in educational provision occurred with the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988 (Education Reform Act 1988 c.40), stressing the importance of a national approach to education. Margaret Thatcher (Prime Minister 1979-1990), in her speech to the Conservative Party Conference in 1987, stated:

Too often our children don't get the education they need - the education they deserve. And in inner cities – where youngsters must have a decent education if they are to have a better future – that opportunity is all too often snatched from them by hard-left education authorities and extremist teachers (Thatcher, 1987).

The fundamental views underpinning this rhetoric were extended to teacher education by John Major (Prime Minister 1990-1997) in his 1992 Conservative Conference speech (Major, 1992), when he declared his intention to reform teacher education and return to subject content. This emphasised the concept of a dominant power group, favouring the middle classes, who controlled curriculum content and delivery, promoting a range of layers and value differences within the educational offer which favoured, or excluded, different groups (Leung, 2016). Additionally, by not adjusting curricula to meet the needs of minority groups, opportunities for them to share their culture and reduce discrimination were missed, whilst their increased socio-political consciousness gained through academic studies, allowed them to analyse and critique factors that were contributing to inequalities within the system (Kotluk and Aydin, 2021). This thesis has considered potential issues through practitioners' narratives.

It was recognised by many educationalists that the strongest teacher education programmes were not necessarily those that avoided evaluation of predominant educational practice, but were ones which critiqued it, addressing political and ideological responses (Beyer and Zeichner, 1987). This reinforced the concept of change and progression within the profession, rather than allowing it to succumb to pressure from dominant groups, often supporting the status quo (ibid). This is the seed of this research (1.1) - the ability to evaluate, assess, address and challenge educational practice and policies – together with the fruit of ongoing development through storytelling (1.6).

3.2.8 Continuing prejudice and institutional racism

As previously discussed (3.2.5), willingness to accept other ethnic groups has been problematic in the UK, with examples of institutional racism and prejudice being shown

overtly or unconsciously (Vertovec, 2007). Following the death of Stephen Lawrence, the MacPherson Inquiry (HO, 1999) urged the creation of curricula which valued diversity and addressed racist attitudes. It stressed that the system needed to be coordinated and underpinned by explicit aims for all agencies, specifically identifying that diversity and racist attitudes should be tackled through education from pre-school onwards. To achieve this, attention focused on amendments to the National Curriculum (DES, 1988) and reporting of racist incidents at school level which would be monitored through Ofsted inspections. However, resistance continued at local level in acknowledging or tackling racism and therefore issues persisted: these were attributed to inadequate curricula, the teacher workforce, school policies and police presence in schools (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020). On-going issues persist, with questions being raised about the public response towards Ukrainian refugees who originate from White European backgrounds as opposed to the acceptance of other refugees, such as those from Syria and Afghanistan (Howden, 2022; Hayes and Shain, 2023). These attitudes to different national and ethnic groups may be part of the silence within current policy but also are fundamental in understanding policy response and challenge, meaning that they need to be addressed within the scope of this thesis.

Manzoni and Rolfe (2019) researched methods used to integrate migrant pupils into English schools and their recommendations covered multiple needs. They identified that:

- Migrant pupils originated from multiple countries and cultural groups and had individual experiences: they should be assessed individually and given appropriate personalised support.

- Although migrant pupils might have SEN and should receive appropriate support, weaker linguistic skills should not be treated as SEN under the SEND Code of Practice 2015 (DfE, 2015).
- Often schools provided additional support to families, and this should be recognised officially, enabling them to get extra help from organisations, such as LAs.
- Information should be provided about the education system when migrants arrive in the UK to avoid multiple transfers to different schools.
- Schools should receive adequate funding to support migrant pupils, including appropriate technology.
- Stronger relationships with parents should be developed, including English teaching, if required.
- Social events should be used to stimulate engagement in the community, together with extra-curricular activities to encourage additional mentoring.
- Schools should promote positive community responses through on-going education.
- Training should include knowledge about diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- There should be a focus on CPD for teaching staff which should include cultural and linguistic training.
- The teaching community should include staff speaking home languages to enable development of a supportive team around the child.
- Conscious efforts should be made to ensure that migrant pupils develop friendship groups.
- Home languages should be seen as an asset, not a deficit.

- Use of home language in school should be encouraged and appropriate resources provided.

Thus, it appeared that inclusive practice was still seen as the foundation of the elusive term of *best practice* within school. This inclusive provision was linked to the wider community and good quality resourcing of equipment, training, and time. However, at other levels, this focus was not evident; for example, the revised Education Inspection Framework (EIF) (Ofsted, 2019^b) made no reference to provision for pupils who had English as an additional language (EAL), which would encompass most refugee children, and merely acknowledged legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. Practitioner narratives ([Chapter 5](#)) signalled challenges in achieving *best practice* in East Midlands schools, reinforcing the standpoint of many student teachers who I worked with in my role at the university ([Chapter 1](#)). This thesis, therefore, hopes to advance CPD opportunities using storytelling which will potentially enable staff to reflect on Manzoni and Rolfe's (2019) recommendations and thus, develop professional agency.

In the same year as Manzoni and Rolfe's (2019) study, Svensson (2019) identified a 'policy gap' between the pupils' entitlement to education and individual adjustments to compensate for specific need. She added that there was conflict in meeting need and obeying rules or policies that did not fit individual profiles. Previously, Sidhu (2017), researching education in Australia, suggested that some teachers faced conflict in trying to balance their responsibilities. This study has contemplated whether there are issues for practitioners in the East Midlands ([Chapter 5](#)) in reconciling conflicting agendas with their professional identities.

3.2.9 Communities and dispersal

After riots in 2001, it was felt that many communities in the UK were living parallel lives (Cantle, 2001) with UA1 (a focus area of this study) being lauded as a strong example of community cohesion and subsequently cited in a range of government reports as an example of best practice. It was argued that there should be a national answer, at policy level, to establish greater cohesion between groups, and this became a strategy of many LAs in response to the 2001 crises. Notwithstanding these responses, there were riots in 2005 following the London bombings which created tension within community groups (Ager and Strang, 2008). These were a national and local reflection of international tensions relating to terrorist attacks globally and ensured that racism and diversity moved up the political agenda (Cantle, 2005; Rolph, 2023). Security remained a fundamental principle within the Nationality and Borders Bill 2022 and government policy between 2020 and 2022. At national level, addressing security through on-going discourses and policy initiatives was a priority of powerful groups. This thesis has explored how this discourse transferred into knowledge and *truth* at other layers of the ecological system ([fig.1](#)).

Putnam (2000) considered appropriate responses to community conflict and commented that trust between diverse communities required dialogue and an exchange of information. Subsequently, Cantle (2007) built on this by stating that the concept of nationality, as opposed to national identity, needed to be part of discussions relating to cohesion and community issues, allowing broader discussion at international level. Meanwhile, Yousuf (2007) reflected that by the start of the millennium, allegiances had become complex, crossing national boundaries and various social and political groups. The

Home Office Departmental Report of 2005 provided a contrasting view and suggested that there were over-arching institutions, beliefs, traditions, and values which bound people together, however, this official view was unrecognisable to many community groups (Kawalerowicz, 2021) and commentators (HO, 2005; Yousuf, 2007). In fact, conflicts were regularly identified between different migrant groups, as well as towards migrant groups, causing additional stresses on communities and governing organisations (Cantle, 2007; Kawalerowicz, 2021). Additionally, often insufficient notification by the relevant LA of the arrival of migrant groups, such as asylum-seekers, caused problems in providing suitable support due to lack of available resources (Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, 2009; Pinson and Arnot, 2010). This remained an ongoing issue (EPI and PHF, 2023) exemplified by reports of lack of joined-up thinking in relation to dispersal of Ukrainian refugees in March 2022 (UK Parliament, 2022). However, despite the potential lack of support, community groups were essential in helping refugees, whilst also mediating between government and residents (Vertovec, 2007; Kelcy and Chatila, 2020; Meer et al., 2021). This thesis has endeavoured to identify associated strengths and weaknesses by analysing the flow of information, resourcing, and provision across the layers of the ecological system ([fig.1](#)).

3.2.10 Weaknesses in the system

Consideration has already been given to the emphasis on academic outcomes ([3.2.7](#)), often enforced through performance-management targets for teachers (Rogers et al., 2016), which pervades UK educational provision (Rolph, 2023). However, Svensson (2019) discussed obstacles arising from insufficient teacher training which created challenges in the English education system when ensuring adequate provision for refugees. She

highlighted dilemmas faced by professionals when reconciling education policy and immigration policy. Previously, Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, (2009) considered predicaments teachers faced in showing compassion to migrant groups. It appeared that barriers lay in inherent weaknesses within the system, rather than with the children themselves (Popkewitz, 1987; Reakes, 2007) or, at school level in a 'mismatch between the students' skills and the skills required by the school' (DeMatthews and Izquierdo, 2016:279). This is discussed by one practitioner in this study (5.8), however, all narratives in this thesis provide insights into disparities, weaknesses, or silences in the system, as well as a glimpse of professionals mediating between children's profiles and educational expectations.

The MacPherson Report (HO, 1999) has already been considered in relation to overt or hidden racism within the system (3.2.8) and its conclusions were developed further by the Ajebo Review in 2007, which called for education in both the formal and 'hidden' curricula to address culture, language, ethnicity, religion, and multiple identities. Cattle (2007) emphasised the importance of groups being part of the political entity at national level and thus influencing the direction and development of the state. This is reflected in the creation of charities, such as 'Cities of Sanctuary' which were established in 2005 to raise awareness and understanding of what it meant to be a refugee within different communities (Kendall, Puttick and Wheatcroft, 2021) (2.5.3). However, in 2010, the Coalition Government gave an alternative approach to these policy initiatives. In response to neo-liberal policies of individual self-interest and free market systems, there was a withdrawal of some state-funded provision and a focus on privatisation (Rolph, 2023). This, in turn, influenced assumptions about race and racism within society which were already part of many discourses (Vertovec, 2007). The legislative changes that followed

the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (HO, 1999), which aimed to be the beginning of a new focus on race equality, became linked to rhetoric implying that multiculturalism was unfair to the White indigenous population (Cheong et al., 2007; Kawalerowicz, 2021). Education reforms were cited as increasing inequalities in society (Gillborn, 2014). This discourse developed as part of right-wing policy within other Western cultures as well as the UK, and it was unproblematic to extend this to support policy which associated immigration with a threat to national safety (Arar, Órúicú and Waite, 2020). Ultimately, this has become a predominant discourse in the UK's national policy agenda towards refugees (HO, 2021^b; f; k; l; m) and thus, a focus of this study ([5.1](#)).

In 2015, The Casey Review (Casey, 2016) found lack of community cohesion in certain areas of the UK, notwithstanding the diverse nature of the population and the length of time that immigration had been part of the cultural climate. Deprived areas which had increases in refugee populations were particularly vulnerable as local populations became concerned with economic issues, terrorism, immigration, and the future of public services (Hollifield, 2004; Vertovec, 2007; Ager and Strang, 2008). The European Union Referendum Act, 2015 and associated rhetoric also created a sense of unease, with increased reports of racism and xenophobia. However, as MacDonald and Smith (2021) reiterated, discourses linking refugees to terrorism were flawed and were underpinned by misconceptions even though they continued to be a core element of government discourse ([5.1](#)).

The Casey Report (2016) considered a wide range of groups that had arrived in the UK since World War II. In doing this, common factors were identified. Higher rates of immigration since the 1990s had affected public attitudes by 2011, with 60% of the

population viewing immigration negatively in relation to the economic and cultural impact. Since 2000, plans to develop cohesion and integration had not been implemented effectively and policies had become confused in practice (Ager and Strang, 2008). This lack of clarity meant that communities did not fully engage with new initiatives and practices. It was clear that communities were unable to differentiate between migrant groups nor understand reasons for their presence in local communities (Kawalerowicz, 2021).

It seemed that the UK's model of integration had failed to develop a common focus to bind communities together by concentrating on economic, political, social, cultural, and physical *differences* (Cantle, 2007; Casey, 2016; Hadjisoteriou and Angelides 2016; Kawalerowicz, 2021). This appeared to be exacerbated by the popular belief that migrants would undermine social structures with their language, culture, or religious traditions, affecting employment prospects of the local population (Lee, 2021). Consequently, some migrant groups carried out self-segregation, preferring to live in a community based on shared values and often moving to areas or districts with people who had similar backgrounds, beliefs, and cultures (Kawalerowicz, 2021). This applied to some refugees who sought cultural and community links. The Government recognised this and stopped these families from receiving LA support, with funding being withdrawn from those moving away from the allocated LA (H.M. Government, 2021), causing additional pressure on local budgets. Although providing social and cultural support, this clustering allowed these communities, as well as other external groups *looking in*, to perpetuate certain discourses, creating a distorted view of groups outside their own community (Vertovec, 2007). Nevertheless, it would be too simplistic to consider Britain as being made up of isolated communities. It is a society of individuals and communities with links and connections weaving through (Parekh, 2013): sometimes people act as individuals and

sometimes as members of a community, or group. These groups and individuals could have conflicting rationales and the duty of the governing power would be to reconcile these, thus creating common values which would be substantive and effective in maintaining cohesive thought (Durkheim, 2003; Cattle, 2007; Parekh, 2013; Casey, 2016). The aim of creating a cohesive response to being part of a 'British community' remained a stated aim of the Government during 2020-2022 being encapsulated in the British Values policy (3.3.3) and was, therefore, a focus of the analysis in this thesis (Chapter 6).

3.2.11 International responses

Although those in government have generally reflected positively on Britain's record of supporting refugees (HO, 2021^f; Atkins, 2022; DLUHC, 2022^d), others have stated that the system within the UK could learn from other countries (UNHCR UK, 2022). Consideration of international responses sheds light on the successes and inadequacies of approaches in the UK. Not only have there been stresses within the UK system caused by confusion in terminology and the right to enter the country (2.5.1.1), but there have also been challenges directed towards educational responses targeted at refugee children. Reakes (2007), Arnot, Pinson and Candappa (2009) and Pinson and Arnot (2010) all commented on lack of evidence relating to effective social justice for asylum seekers. It can be problematic to define this (Rolph, 2023), however, DeMatthews and Izquierdo (2016:280-281) defined social justice leadership as:

The process of identifying the various educational and social needs of diverse student and family populations, and acting in an inclusive, fair, democratic, and consistent manner to address those needs despite challenges or obstacles.

They added that three aspects needed to be addressed to ensure inclusion of marginalised groups: distributive, cultural and associational facets. These specifically relate to equitable allocation of resources, cultural justice, significant recognition, and full participation in political decisions (Karsli-Calamak and Kilinc, 2021). Arar, Órúccú and Waite (2020) also drew attention to lack of research informing leadership roles in education and highlighted a paucity of data and evidence for those influencing policy as well as for those managing practice and procedures within different institutions (Freeman and Brubaker, 1995). Without adequate resources, not only do families struggle to achieve but they also lack opportunity to challenge decisions (Rose and Shelving, 2004). These anomalies in provision and practice continued to be ongoing challenges in England ([Chapter 5](#)) and were an essential element of the analyses ([Chapter 6](#)), contributing to *knowledge* and *truths* associated with refugee populations.

From an international viewpoint, Hadjisoteriou and Angelides (2016) considered the Cypriot policy agenda and its aim to integrate migrants into the school system. They too noted a growing tendency for policy initiatives to perpetuate a perception of the immigrant as the ‘other’ and as a potential threat to the settled population. In considering a range of approaches to meet the needs of children in Cyprus, they noted that the British model of multicultural education focused on market-based responses linked to employment, whereas other countries had, or aimed to have, broader responses reflecting language, religion, and geographic identities. This was also identified by Taylor (2004:434) who recognised that the multicultural approach did not take into consideration the type of language used in societal analysis, with limited reflection on the new forms of discourse and group identities often linked to ‘spin-doctoring’. This thesis, therefore, adds evidence by focusing on discourse underpinning policy ([2.1](#))

Cuevas and Cheung (2015) noted that encompassing strategies were not always evident internationally which Hadjisoteriou and Angelides (2016) confirmed when they considered narrow policy responses relating to immigrant pupils in the USA. They discussed dilemmas of competing and contradictory policies encompassing undocumented students and their education. This was also considered by Ubani (2013) in relation to Finland when he commented on increasing challenges if policies adopt a top-down approach. These challenges heighten when stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) fail to consider implications of practical responses to theoretical policy. Hadjisoteriou (2013) raised similar concerns in an earlier paper when analysing teaching responses in Cyprus, stating that teachers' views were heavily influenced by the socio-political context and unresolved political issues, an aspect which is explored in practitioners' narratives in [Chapter 5](#). This means that schools can be seen as places of inclusion and marginalisation at the same time (Pinson and Arnot, 2010; Ubani, 2013; Cuevas and Cheung, 2015) with teachers facing constraints of limited time and poor understanding of potential issues due to lack of training (Hadjisoteriou, 2013); a factor held within the *fruit* of this study ([1.6](#)). Additionally, DeMatthews and Izquierdo (2016) stressed that to build teachers' capacity to meet students' needs, there was a requirement to value teachers as professionals. However, this potential development is aggravated by a managerial style of governing educational practice, often linked to neo-liberalist policies which emphasise performance-management targets, mandatory staff development and accountability objectives, contributing to educational leaders becoming intrinsically tied to state policy (Rogers et al., 2016; Rolph, 2023). These aspects have already been identified as part of the UK system ([3.2.10](#)) and underpinned the decision to use narratives as a way of exploring viewpoints in a non-confrontational environment.

DeMatthews and Izquierdo (2016) suggested that leaders' commitment to social justice and inclusivity sets the example for the rest of the institution and establishes ground-rules for engagement with pupils, parents, and the community. However, leaders often follow policy which counters educational interests of ethnic minorities, even though they might be using their cultural identities and resources to prioritise children's needs (DfE, 2014^c; Fuller, 2018; DfE, 2021^c) which is alluded to in some of the practitioners' narratives ([Chapter 5](#)). Therefore, networking between school and the community would need to be strengthened to support individuals, families, and practitioners to create a shared understanding of need, ensuring appropriate responses (Block et al., 2021). Identifying such issues was an intrinsic part of this study, with the aim of evaluating whether the system provides appropriate support, whatever the stated representations or suppositions. Key to this understanding is the ability of stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) to challenge policies and procedures. Understanding teachers' ability to reconcile problematisations and challenge the status quo adds to current knowledge ([2.1](#); [2.2.8](#)) and provides opportunity to develop future CPD opportunities ([1.6](#)).

3.3 Refugee policies: challenges and conflict

3.3.1 Resourcing

Inclusion of marginalised groups relies on adequate resourcing (Booth and Ainscow, 2000; 2002; 2011). Pinson and Arnot (2010) and Arar, Órúicú and Waite (2020) identified that many refugee students experience problematic learning environments, often linked to poor resourcing, segregation (intentional or unintentional) and high teacher-pupil ratios. Teachers felt uncomfortable in discussing concerns surrounding pupils' legal status (Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, 2009) leading to charities providing educational resources

to support teachers in addressing these issues (Amnesty International, 2023). The politicisation of policy also raised challenges (EPI and PHF, 2023) although Pinson and Arnot (2010) and Arar, Órúicú and Waite (2020) noted that it is important that research should not be limited by political agendas which often have narrow visions or aim to achieve quick solutions. This influenced the use of Bacchi's (2009) methodology as a starting point in this thesis so that it would be possible to dig deeper into underlying tenets of refugee policy (4.3.2).

Political agendas can be problematic for all stakeholders (Appendix 2) but cause specific challenges for those seeking asylum who can find it difficult to access the system and argue their case (Refugee Council, 2022^a). They face uncertainty around their eligibility to remain in the country, making it harder for them to integrate into society (Nakeyar, Esses and Reid, 2018; EPI and PHF, 2023). Additionally, refugees sometimes view teachers as representatives of hostile authorities (Veck and Wharton, 2021). This is often heightened by political rhetoric which criminalises refugee groups (2.5.1.1). When these discourses become *truths*, they can influence outcomes for refugees unless there is informed challenge. This thesis has considered such discourses, including ways in which their *truths* can be questioned by using supportive processes such as storytelling.

3.3.2 Discourse and challenge

Hadjisoteriou and Angelides (2016) stated that it is important for teachers and policymakers to think of ways to challenge practices which are seen to promote monoculturalism, generally recognised as a culturally deficit model (Hadjisoteriou, 2013). Enabling teachers to reflect through narrative dialogue has been shown to give insight into possible strategies to develop multicultural approaches, such as the promotion of

increased family involvement; openness to challenge prejudice and promote social justice; as well as pedagogical responses focusing on success for all (Rustemier, 2004) ([2.5](#)). This thesis used this approach to consider strategies used by practitioners and thus gain insight into practice ([4.6](#) and [Chapter 6](#)) whilst creating a chapter of narratives to enable wider discussion as part of CPD opportunities for educationalists ([Chapter 5](#)).

Pinson and Arnot's (2010) research identified three LEAs which, at the time, promoted holistic policies. They suggested that in doing this the LEAs appeared to be consciously taking a stand against a hostile media, exclusionary national immigration policies (De Genova, 2013) and education policy that seemed to favour individual achievement over children's holistic development. Within the same period, Burnett and McArdle (2011) discussed responses in Australia and suggested that there was a need to alter political and educational vocabulary to enable a universally agreed response to policy initiatives impacting refugees. Wills (2020) built on this when discussing UAMs, with both sources suggesting that certain terms have, or gain, negative connotations which affect responses: this is often at the mercy of external pressures and influences. An example of this is immigration policy, with Pinson and Arnot (2010) highlighting contradictions between national immigration policy designed to control immigration at the macro-level, and LA policy which is more concerned with costs of immigration at a micro-social level. This impacts responses at school-level and educational options available to the practitioner as national policy feeds through to local level (EPI and PHF, 2023). Evaluating these interconnections was fundamental to this thesis and it was for this reason that policy and narrative analyses were presented concurrently in [Chapter 5](#), demonstrating the juxtaposition of different responses.

3.3.3 British Values

Much of the national policy relating to refugee groups refers to national safety (HO, 2021^f; ^{k;l;m} HO, 2022^{c;h}) and, therefore, policy created to address potential acts against the state, with a focus on terrorism, requires consideration ([3.2.9](#); [3.2.10](#); [3.5.2.2](#)). When considering historical approaches promoting national safety and cohesion, it is necessary to reflect on how policy feeds across the ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). One notable example is the policy advocating 'British Values'. Generally, in the UK and specifically in England, the state has encouraged dissemination of information in educational settings to be a community of ideas, rather than personal viewpoints (Thatcher, 1987; Cheong et al., 2007): this is exemplified by the inclusion of 'British Values' in the curricula (DfE, 2014^b).

A brief overview of the policy gives insight into challenges encountered within education and conflicts facing teachers and refugees. Seen by some as part of a contentious policy (Lockley-Scott, 2019) and introduced in 2011 as a feature of the Prevent Strategy, this programme ultimately became a formal part of school policy from 2014, being assessed as part of the EIF (Ofsted, 2019^b). The initiative was a direct response to terror attacks in London and was part of an alternative discourse around prevention of extremist behaviours. Although individuals may have felt unease in promoting certain aspects of the policy as part of an obligatory discourse, it was a required element of education from nursery provision upwards, with the stated aim being:

...to ensure children become valuable and fully rounded members of society who treat others with respect and tolerance, regardless of background (DfE, 2014^b).

Rather than being seen as an acknowledgement of values, not necessarily British, it was intrinsically associated with an alternative agenda around terrorism and extremism (Rolph, 2023), being closely linked to CONTEST (HO, 2018^a). Therefore, this ‘shared voice’ was directed towards groups who fell outside the definition of *Britishness* and was supported by policy initiatives from central government, encompassing a range of discourses identifying what it meant to be part of the British community (Holohan, 2014; EPI and PHF, 2023). Refugees fell outside these definitions of Britishness being often linked to safety issues and potential terror attacks (HO, 2021^f; DLUHC, 2022^c; UNHCR UK, 2022).

British Values were internalised by smaller collective groups such as LAs or schools and appropriated into their discourse. Dominant power groups (Foucault, 1991) required this central policy to be consolidated in all forms, practical and theoretical, to ensure allegiance from all members of the community, despite their origins and journey into that community. Children were often pressurised to accept the dominant social culture and reject aspects of their own culture to fit into the prevailing ethos (Dávila, 2021) and thus become *valued* members of British society. This relied on a consistent message being assimilated by all groups. It is incongruous therefore, that education leaders were encouraged, by national policy, to exclude some refugee children who had not been given the right to remain permanently in the UK from the school community (Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, 2009; UK Immigration, 2020; EPI and PHF, 2023) which appeared in direct conflict with a desire to promote ‘British Values’ as a cohesive policy. This raised questions as to how teachers reconciled these standpoints to work effectively with refugee families. This reconciliation is reflected in this study through practitioner narratives which provide evidence to show how they interpret and potentially challenge prevailing discourses.

3.3.4 The role of the teacher

The teachers' role is complex in structure with distinct facets; these relate to the subject being taught; the responsibilities of the teacher within the classroom, or organisation; and the role of the teacher in meeting the needs of students and wider group membership (Bernstein, 2003). Additionally, teachers *bargain* between their numerous *identities* as they move across different geographical and social spaces at personal or institutional level (Fuller, 2018). Social integration in school, therefore, is open to instability and conflict (Durkheim, 2003). The teacher relies on the pupils' desire to cooperate and learn from each other and to value the opinions and thoughts of others. This collaboration can be affected by smaller collective opinions influencing the pupils, such as religious affiliation or other moral influences. Without collaboration, it would be rare for the teacher to be able to motivate and educate to the required levels (Hooks, 2003). Additionally, many teachers in the UK, originate from White Middle-Class backgrounds and therefore have little in common with many children in their care (McIntyre and Neuhaus, 2021) which means that educators can face conflict in relation to moral and cultural beliefs as well as managing those of their pupils. This could contribute to detachment from collective beliefs, unless teachers have secure knowledge in how to meet the needs of diverse groups of pupils, including refugees (EPI and PHF, 2023). This thesis placed a spotlight on the *knowledge* of participating teachers, considering how they obtained *knowledge* and whether it was based on discourse linked to alternative agendas and *truths* ([Chapter 5](#) and [Chapter 6](#)), ultimately reflecting on how this *knowledge* could be articulated through storytelling.

Arnot, Pinson and Candappa (2009) described the response of teachers when pupils faced deportation, and they claimed that pupils often took the initiative supported by their teachers, rather than teachers leading, and politicising debates. Pearce (2014) reflected on conflicts arising between different groups as they tried to find a collective response to tensions placed on them by wider policy objectives. One aim of this thesis was to add more evidence to the discussion around these challenges and develop teachers' empowerment, as well as their capacity to challenge and promote different outcomes, with an additional aim of influencing future understanding and potential challenge through professional dialogue (1.6). An example of this would be mediating between professional responses to refugee policy and a potentially vague inclusion agenda promoted by schools and teacher training programmes. This review now proceeds to consider inclusion as an ethos and practical response to resolve refugee children's needs.

3.4 Inclusion policy

Inclusion policy has been used to address the needs of various marginalised groups (EPI and PHF, 2023), arguably, through a one-stop policy initiative at setting level, often held in a general inclusion policy or in less formal structures such as the *ethos* of the setting. Many schools do not have inclusion policies but use a range of policies to meet inclusive principles and protocols promoted by the setting. This section considers the origins of inclusive practice and how inclusion policy has been adapted to meet diverse needs, including those of refugee children, leading to generalised approaches which can fail to address needs sufficiently or take into account individual circumstances (3.2). Overall, this thesis has sought to ascertain the role of inclusive pedagogy in schools and its effectiveness in supporting refugee children. To establish its efficacy, practitioners in this

study were guided to analyse their *knowledge* and understanding of inclusive provision and reflect on its value in meeting refugee children's needs, thus, adding evidence to support understanding of provision in the East Midlands region ([2.3](#)).

3.4.1 Inclusive provision: a resource

Schools and regional policymakers have used general inclusion policies to meet refugee children's needs ([2.5.1.4](#)). This is not dissimilar to the Government's endeavour to use existing immigration policy to deal with refugee *problems*, such as the Ukraine crisis (BBC News, 2022^c). The use of inclusion policies to meet refugees' needs does not preclude the creation of focused policies but often means that general inclusion principles form the basis of provision. To fully understand policy creation and provision for refugee pupils, it is important to consider the origins of inclusive practice and if, or how, it has been adapted to meet the needs of this specific group of children.

3.4.2 The origins of inclusive education

Education systems have been created around complicated threads linking international and national agreements, legislation, and regulation which have influenced local plans and rules, ultimately impacting on organisational constructs of everyday practice (Magnússon, 2019). This is no different for the range of inclusive practice within education. Qvortrup and Qvortrup (2018) theorised that inclusion policies centre around values systems which hold significance within society and associated organisations. Inclusive practice ultimately considers interactions between these values: it essentially reflects a study of the relationship between exclusion and inclusion (Robinson and Goodley, 2018). However, when reviewing literature, it became clear that there is no

universal institutionalised definition of inclusive practice (Haug, 2017; Magnússon, 2019). Nevertheless, as inclusion or access to equal opportunities and social justice are often referred to in schools' documentation and policy, it is helpful to gain some insight into possible aims and objectives (DfE, 2013; DfE, 2014^c; DfE, 2019; Ofsted, 2021) and to establish how the term has developed and changed over time, moving from its roots in SEND to a broader definition often linked to the 'protected characteristics' of the Equality Act 2010.

3.4.3 Education as social inclusion

Education and access to it, has been seen as a primary measure of social inclusion in many areas of national policy such as employment, healthcare, and reduction of social deprivation (Hilt 2017) and therefore, should be an underlying benefit for refugee children despite the potential lack of access associated with other policy agendas (Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, 2009; UK Immigration, 2020; EPI and PHF, 2023). Inclusion has been a central part of the UK's educational discourse since the Warnock Report in 1978 and the subsequent Education Act 1981. Debate over the following four decades led to the consideration of the role of mainstream schools in developing an inclusive approach and providing education for children identified as having SEND (Norwich, 2014).

Policy initiatives at international, national, and local levels have moved across the spectrum of expectation during this period, with for example, the European Court of Human Rights moving from a fairly cautious approach of integration to an implicit expectation of positive discrimination to ensure access to education and to improve attainment for *all* learners (O' Nions, 2015). The practice of integration did not eliminate segregation in mainstream schools but merely aspired to see an improvement in teaching

and learning for those students who were able to take advantage of any pedagogical changes (Haug, 2017). This included wider social groups such as refugees who, as previously stated, were rarely referenced specifically within policies but became part of the homogenised group (EPI and PHF, 2023) who had inclusion *done to them*.

3.4.4 Inclusion: national responses to international policies

Refugees often have disproportionately higher numbers within SEND provision (Veck and Wharton, 2021) and paradoxically, the roots of inclusive philosophy stem from the critique of the disabled community, dating back to the 1950s when groups began to criticise policies of segregation and exclusion in educational practice (Hodkinson, 2012). This fed interest in providing a more integrated and equitable approach to education for children with SEN as seen in the Warnock Report 1978, as well as encouraging other groups to seek equality of opportunity within the educational system.

At an international level, a concept of inclusion was postulated in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which identified principles of non-discrimination; best interests of the child; right to life; and survival and development. It continues to advocate that the views of the child are taken into consideration in practice (UNICEF, 1989). Consideration of how this would apply to England's education policy was finally beginning to be addressed in 2010 after the UK signed the Convention in 1990 and ratified it in 1991. However, as Magnússon (2019:678) highlighted, inclusive education perpetually faced 'contradicting political ideals and goals as well as the room for interpretations.' For example, in pursuing a neo-liberal policy agenda (Exley and Ball, 2014), Prime Minister, John Major made the following announcement at the 1992 Conservative Conference:

I want reform of teacher training in this country. Let us return to basic subject teaching and get rid of courses in the theory of education... Our primary teachers should learn how to teach children to read, not waste their time on the politics of gender, race, and class (UKPOL, 2019).

This statement followed the 'Education for All' report of 1990 (UNESCO, 1990) which appeared to have had little impact on the policy drive of John Major, if judged by his speech. Therefore, there was always potential for a range of views amongst those who held power, despite various international agreements.

The 'Salamanca Statement' (UNESCO, 1994) was a distinct project, focusing on SEN (Magnússon, 2019) and did not revisit the earlier Education for All project (UNESCO, 1990) which, in turn, was reviewed and extended in April 2000 (UNESCO, 2000). The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), was agreed by representatives of 92 countries and 25 international organisations and identified the following aims:

- Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given opportunity to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of learning.
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
- Education systems should be designed to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
- Those with special educational needs must have the access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs (UNESCO, 1994: viii).

The claim that *all* children could be served equitably by similar systems has been contested on many levels (Magnússon, 2019) and the UK was not particularly keen or active in assimilating such policies, but the Government accepted the contents of the statement and from this point, inclusion became part of government rhetoric and gained status in education (Hodkinson, 2012). However, the status of children's rights continued to be a concern in England as seen by the Children's Commissioner's comments in 2018:

Our country's record on children's rights is already patchy. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), despite being the most universally accepted of all UN human rights and the UK ratifying it in 1991, is not incorporated into our domestic law. That makes it even more important that children do not lose the rights they are currently entitled to under the Charter of Fundamental Rights (Children's Commissioner, 2018: online).

It is noteworthy that the mapping exercise relating to the Rights of the Child agenda (DfE, 2010) started by the New Labour Government was never completed by the Coalition or successive Conservative Governments. Following the loss of power by New Labour in 2010, this policy document was rejected and archived with most education policy documents from that period, demonstrating fluid responses in adhering to international understandings, with responses often based on party politics. However, the international discourse around the 'Rights of the Child' was identified as a continuing aim in Goal 4 of Education 2030 (UNESCO, 2016), and was reiterated in the summary of meta-international policy aims on the UNESCO website:

Reaching excluded and marginalized groups and providing them with quality education requires the development and implementation of inclusive policies and

programmes... In this context, UNESCO promotes inclusive education systems that remove the barriers limiting the participation and achievement of all learners, respect diverse needs, abilities and characteristics and that eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment (UNESCO, 2021).

Nevertheless, yet again, the Children's Commissioners from all four UK nations, expressed concerns in 2019 about the way that children's rights were being managed in the climate of Brexit. In an open letter to the Government Minister, Stephen Barclay, the Commissioners jointly raised issues in relation to vulnerable groups and asked for explicit guidance as to how needs would be managed within government policy (Children's Commissioner, 2019^b). Although these types of negotiations are transient, as parties gain and lose influence, the concern expressed by the Commissioners in 2019 demonstrated that these international agreements are not rooted in English policy and therefore, inclusive practice is not a fundamental and immovable expectation of English educational strategy.

3.4.5 Inclusion: diverging from special educational needs

Many schools have continued to advocate inclusive provision and see this as part of current policy, often not formally recorded in written policy documents, but nevertheless encompassing refugee children (EPI and PHF, 2023). The concept of inclusion in England appeared to take a firm grip in policies of the New Labour Government which came into power in 1997. New Labour identified mainstream teachers as key protagonists in developing strategies to meet the needs of *all* children within mainstream settings (Hodkinson, 2012). This influenced rhetoric and policies, for example in the key policy document *Every Child Matters*, presented to Parliament in 2003, in which the stated aim

was to reform and improve childcare (H. M. Treasury, 2003). These goals fed into the proposed ambitions of the UK's education systems across the devolved powers as they began to adopt this type of discourse into education policies and guidance (NICIE, 2014; Welsh Government, 2016; Education Scotland, 2021).

The extension of inclusion beyond SEN can be clearly identified in policy responses during the period of the New Labour Government and were specifically discussed in *The Index for Inclusion* (Booth and Ainscow, 2000; 2002; 2011). This guide aimed to provide schools with a format for inclusive approaches and curricula which would enable *all* children to be taught effectively and appropriately at their preferred local school, reducing, if not eliminating, the need for specialist provision. Its general aims were:

...to support the self-review of all aspects of a school, including activities in playgrounds, staff rooms and classrooms and in the communities and environment around the school (Booth and Ainscow, 2011:9).

The extension of inclusion to meet the needs of all groups within mainstream schools was linked to inclusive approaches which reached out to communities and environments beyond the school, extending systems and interventions beyond educational policy and practice into the macrosystem and exosystem of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; EPI and PHF, 2023). The New Labour Government provided a copy of the first edition (2000) to all primary, secondary, special schools and LAs in England and the second edition (2002) was distributed to all schools in Wales, suggesting that the 'inclusion lobby' had developed a strong voice in influencing policy decisions. However, there was limited guidance as to how inclusive practice should, or could, be achieved and much depended on the belief-systems of individual teachers or groups within a specific setting (Florian and Spratt, 2013;

Barber, 2021) as I witnessed in student feedback from a range of settings ([1.1](#)). For this reason, narrative accounts were used to establish the belief systems of the practitioners in this study. However, to avoid conflicting agendas stemming from professional roles, the practitioners used a narrative stance that allowed them to talk about their own experiences within a fictional scenario, enabling *plausible deniability* in distancing them from professional allegiances or dilemmas ([4.6.1](#)).

During the period of the New Labour Government, there had been attempts to define inclusion as well as to alter the structure of the institutions themselves. For example, the British Psychological Society issued a Position Paper in 2002 supporting the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE); a charitable organisation advocating inclusive practice. The aim of the Position Paper was to add support to the demand for inclusive practice to meet the needs of different groups across society. This message was still being disseminated in education forums discussing refugees, over 20 years later (EPI and PHF, 2023). The Position Paper stated:

The recent drive to inclusive education is about more than ‘special educational needs’. It reflects changes in the social and political climate wherein a new approach characterises thinking about difference... It is about...

Rejecting segregation or exclusion of learners for whatever reason – ability, gender, language, care, status, family income, disability, sexuality, colour, religion, or ethnic origin.

Maximising the participation of all learners in the community schools of their choice.

Making learning more meaningful and relevant for all, particularly those learners most vulnerable to exclusionary pressures.

Rethinking and restructuring policies, curricula, cultures and practices in schools and learning environments so that diverse learning needs can be met, whatever the origin or nature of those needs (British Psychological Society, 2002: online).

The term inclusion stemmed from the academic 'social model of disability', as opposed to integration which had political origins and had been the idiom used for over 25 years. The change in terminology seemed to indicate a desire to not only accept identified groups within education and society, but to alter the structure of institutions. The aims were that policies and practices allowed *all* individuals access to *all* aspects of the organisation without any exclusionary or discriminatory procedures, either explicit or implicit (Hodkinson, 2012). However, this was a simplistic view of the situation as already alluded to in the complexities surrounding refugee status ([3.2](#)).

3.4.6 Education, education, education: competing tensions

The concept of inclusion adopted by the New Labour Government and advocated by Tony Blair (Prime Minister 1997-2007), repeatedly gave a commitment to '*education, education, education*' as well as more far-reaching claims for inclusive practice (The Guardian, 2001: online). However, critics felt that the policy agenda of New Labour did not always reflect the rhetoric of the administration, causing contradictory responses and, on occasions, a dichotomy of expectations (Gillborn, 2008) which caused confusion for stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)). The concept of inclusion therefore became somewhat problematic, and discourse was open to interpretation depending on group or personal beliefs.

Initially associated with SEN, inclusion subsequently became an eclectic term encompassing many groups within society, with an often-expressed desire to address the needs of *all* children. Identified groups have been linked to the named ‘protected characteristics’ in the Equality Act, 2010 (CSIE, 2021) although some advocates of inclusive pedagogy hoped to reduce if not eradicate labelling specific needs or characteristics (Arishi, Boyle and Lauchlan, 2017). Their ambition would be to meet the needs of individual children and consider each child’s unique profile, allowing responsive teaching in highly resourced settings (Booth and Ainscow, 2011). Additionally, and seemingly in support of this, Standard 5 of the Teachers’ Standards (2012) seemed to require teachers to ‘adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils’ and to ‘set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities, and dispositions’ (DfE, 2012:10-11). This expectation encouraged many school leaders and staff to create inclusion policies that referred to the inclusion of all pupils, rather than specifically identifying adjustments required for those with recognised and named needs. This meant that explicit groups were not identified within inclusion policies, avoiding any criticism of labelling individuals (Magnússon, 2019) and, thus, avoiding exclusionary language (Broomhead, 2013). It is highly likely, therefore, that provision for many refugee pupils has been held within general provision in schools, rather than in specific policies which focus on their unique needs ([2.5.1.4](#)).

This generalisation was frustrating for those seeking specific responses, particularly in relation to SEND and so, following the Lamb Inquiry (DCSF, 2009) and the subsequent SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015), schools were required to publish specific statements of provision relating to children with SEND. These statements, however, would not include provision for refugees unless an individual’s diagnosis of need was encompassed within

the definitions of SEND in the Children and Families Act 2014 c.6 part 3. As well as this, and in potential conflict to previous interpretations of Standard 5 of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012), some schools, academies and trusts have interpreted the Education Inspection Handbook (Ofsted, 2021) as moving away from a differentiated approach to meet individual learners' needs to whole year group delivery (Cognita, 2020) based on a discourse of 'cultural capital' (Moylett, 2019; McTavish, 2019; Rolph, 2023) rather than inclusive practice. These measures have aimed to address children's educational needs whilst creating a range of responses from different institutions that could be interpreted as divergent.

3.4.7 Inclusion as an ethos

Those teachers now reaching retirement age have spent a large part of their careers trying to meet an inclusion agenda and therefore, practitioners in this study were asked to give short professional biographies which might give some indication of their allegiance to inclusive philosophy. As previously discussed ([3.2.1](#)), teachers' responses to refugees have been linked to their understanding or interpretation of need (EPI and PHF, 2023) as well as their educational philosophy which was often formed as trainees. In the period of the New Labour Government, inclusive practice became an intrinsic part of many teacher training programmes, linked to terms such as social justice and education for all (Symeonidou, 2017). Syllabuses were often created in an ad hoc manner and there was disparity in practice (Hodkinson and Devarakonda, 2011). Therefore, although identified as a subject on teacher training programmes, the elusive nature of inclusion meant that it became less of a subject and more of an ethos; for example, within Higher Education Institutions (HEI), the way it was defined varied depending on the interpretation of

individual settings, tutors, and students (Florian and Linklater, 2010; Florian and Spratt, 2013). Examination of school practice between 1997 and 2010, indicated that there were significant variations in the interpretation of inclusive practice although most practitioners generally understood the language of inclusion (Hodkinson and Devarakonda, 2011): this was confirmed through my own experiences ([Chapter 1](#)). These perceptions were exacerbated by the interpretation of the term inclusion by influential groups including government departments, Ofsted, and LAs. Definitions changed over time and as previously illustrated ([3.4.5](#)), continued to remain ill-defined across different groups, leading to inconsistent approaches across educational practice (Hodkinson and Devarakonda, 2011; Kozleski, Artiles, and Waitoller, 2011). The consistency of practice has been evaluated in this study by using evidence from two schools and five practitioners to identify whether approaches remain ad hoc or have uniformity.

During the New Labour administration, the term inclusion and associated ideology, was seen by some as merely an attempt to be 'politically correct' or to have a clear 'social norm', (Lüke and Grosche, 2018:39). Educationalists appeared to have more positive attitudes towards inclusion than other groups in society, possibly because it became a stronger social norm for them to argue for an inclusive approach through professional cohesion (ibid) rather than advocating exclusionary practices. Robinson and Goodley (2018:247) discussed responses to 'out-group characterisation', and postulated that the allocation of labels indicated, within a specific timeframe and social construct, whether a group would be accepted or rejected - included or excluded - the dominant 'in-group' identifying the features of the minority 'out-group' (Arvanitis, 2021; Lee, 2021). It appeared to be politically correct to advocate inclusion for all and, therefore, it was accepted as the protocol by many, at both a conscious and unconscious level. Having said

that, it is not clear how much this merely related to approved social discourse and how much social change was evident in practice (Hodkinson and Devarakonda, 2011; Kozleski, Artiles and Waitoller, 2011; Magnússon, 2019). Consequently, it is now difficult to determine whether institutions were influencing individuals or, alternatively, whether individuals were influencing institutional responses (Lüke and Grosche, 2018). However, at the time, and based on observations of different interest groups, these decisions arguably appeared to be made on objective grounds based on societal norms, without reference to personal bias or social pressure (Robinson and Goodley, 2018). Evaluation of such discourse was intrinsic in this study to identify *knowledge*, *truths*, and *silences* within the period 2020-2022 (2.1).

Following the demise of New Labour in 2010, it was claimed that inclusion still had a place in the aims of the Coalition Government which was in power from 2010 to 2015. However, the concept appeared to be undergoing a change in emphasis and meaning, with David Cameron (Prime Minister 2010-2016) commenting in the Conservative Manifesto of 2010 (UK Politics, 2019: online), on a 'bias to inclusion' which he linked to the previous government, perhaps beginning to undermine the term by suggesting a pejorative discourse. Although Cameron's comments were ostensibly aimed at provision for SEN, the wider concepts of inclusive practice also seemed to be under critique and challenge, and the underlying tenets started to be questioned (Runswick-Cole, 2011).

As Hilt (2017) pointed out, when systems have different criteria for inclusion, those individuals who do not meet these criteria can be excluded and, as pedagogical strategies and expectations become limited, inclusion itself becomes a vision that is also limited and can turn into merely a *buzz word* to justify responses, whether or not needs are actually

met (EPI and PHF, 2023). In this study, consideration of this type of response was important in evaluating attitudes towards refugees to ensure that ‘nothing [was taken] for granted’ (Bacchi, 2009:ix) (2.1). Additionally, an inclusion mantra could be used to justify responses which do not correlate to other policy agendas such as refugee policy, justifying procedures which practitioners adopt but which deviate from given agendas (EPI and PHF, 2023). Rustemier (2004) identified issues that can cause lack of clarity and misunderstanding within education which are exemplified by changes in government priorities. She stated:

...fundamental obstacles remain to the development of restructured, genuinely inclusive schools. The adoption of the term ‘inclusion’ into common education language signifies in many instances a desire to improve the experiences of all learners. At other times, it seems a concept misunderstood or even deliberately distorted. The confusion masks a deeply contradictory education system in which efforts to increase inclusion are continually beset by initiatives which promote exclusion through legislation and policy (Rustemier, 2004:23).

Hansen (2012) summarised this by stating that as pedagogical strategies are increasingly restricted, inclusion, as a vision, has very limited potential. This thesis has endeavoured to see if inclusive policy still has a place within provision for refugee children and if so, whether there has been conflict in meeting other policy initiatives, creating a professional quagmire for teachers in school.

3.4.8 Inclusion: a neo-liberalist approach

By 2012, the Coalition Government was beginning to use different language and discourse adopted a social justice approach. The Government produced a new policy document

called 'Social Justice: Transforming Lives' (DWP, 2012). The stated aim was to get to the root causes of poverty and make society function better. The inclusive language of the previous New Labour Governments began to disappear, both in policy documents and rhetoric. Education policies including the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) appeared to focus on academic knowledge rather than the 'hidden curriculum' which had previously supported inclusive practice: this was alluded to in practitioner narratives in this thesis ([Chapter 5](#)). However, this was not necessarily reflected in all settings where inclusive ideals continued to be advocated in discourse, school policies and teacher training programmes. This reluctance to promote an inclusive programme at government level reflected general global responses, which had roots in prejudice and anger, following various violent acts linked to terrorist groups in the early 2000s (Pigozzi, 2006; Holohan, 2014; Barber, 2021). These could potentially have impacted teachers through their multiple identities (Fuller, 2018) and were explored in practitioners' narratives in this thesis ([Chapter 5](#)).

As part of the Education for All initiative, UNESCO introduced 'Four Pillars of Education' through the Delors Report (Delors et al., 1996:24). The 'Third Pillar' considered the essential elements of 'learning to live together' (Delors et al., 1996:91). Delors built on this in his speech to the International Congress on Lifelong Learning in 2011 (Delors, 2013). He explained that learning to live together is an essential part of school education, developing relationships between schools and communities and improving the understanding of cultural and religious experiences (School A:[5.7](#)). Delors (2013) also identified that a dominant ideology of 'market forces' was taking over responses to diverse groups within society and inclusive approaches were becoming lost in a dominance of economic and financial responses; concepts also linked to migrant

populations ([2.5.1.1](#)). Pigozzi (2006) previously identified that to achieve the aims of 'education for all' and mutual understanding, there needed to be commonly held values. These needed to encompass the full range of human advancement: values, knowledge, attitudes, and skills which were held within the aims of inclusive practice. These were coming under attack across the globe, following international responses to economic and political assaults (Barber, 2021). In analysing problematic responses to the concept of inclusive practice, Hilt (2015) identified that the limits to its implementation and effectiveness lay at policy level. This was caused by exclusionary processes becoming integral to the inclusive process. Qvortrup and Qvortrup (2018) added to this by stating that there were three dimensions to consider in inclusive practice: the different levels; the different arenas and the different degrees - all impacting on refugees within the UK. These three dimensions were used to evaluate discourse surrounding refugee policy in this thesis to pinpoint *knowledge* and *truths* emanating from such discourse.

In 2015, the Coalition Government came to an end with the Conservative Government under David Cameron obtaining a majority in Parliament. It is interesting to note that the social justice policies previously in operation also came to an end and, although the phrase was used in election manifestos and Queen's speeches, the subsequent Conservative Governments' foci were consumed by Brexit negotiations (Lloyd, 2019) which are an intrinsic part of discourse surrounding the policy decisions evaluated in this thesis. Therefore, the term 'inclusion' largely disappeared at national level. An example of discourse around inclusive practice in this period is exemplified by The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2025 (HO, 2018^b). Although outside the scope of education, it contained the term inclusion, embracing a different meaning in its aim to make the HO more inclusive. Its definition of inclusion was 'ensuring it gets the best from everyone'

(HO, 2018^b:4). This appeared to be less about what the organisation gave to inclusive practice and more about what it gained economically and in the labour market.

3.4.9 Inclusion: in decline?

The Education Committee's Special Educational Needs and Disability Inquiry in October 2019 (Parliament UK, 2019) highlighted that provision for pupils with SEN was deficient. As the provision for SEND pupils has often been linked directly to wider inclusion programmes, this implied that the chance for good quality education for all children was also lacking, possibly linked to lack of resourcing, contradictions within the system and teachers' ability to address the range of challenges within the classroom (Magnússon, 2019; Arvanitis, 2021; Dávila, 2021), factors which were identified as issues to be considered within this thesis. Meanwhile, teacher training programmes, particularly those based at universities, still contained modules relating to 'inclusion' and 'social justice', although provision varied in content (Florian and Camedda, 2020) and many schools continued to develop policies, or promote discourse, identifying inclusive provision as a fundamental aim of the setting. Although inclusion policies were not a legal requirement, as in the case of policies and provision relating to SEND (DfE, 2015), many schools produced and disseminated policies relating to inclusive practice although often under the guise of different policy agendas such as *citizenship, equality or personal, social and health education*, as seen in the schools considered in this thesis. Legally, there were clear expectations relating to provision and the rights of the child within the education system under the Statutory Guidance (DfE, 2019). However, reports by the Children's Commissioner in England identified issues which demonstrated that systems were not meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children, despite aims and objectives which

stated a proactive response (Children’s Commissioner, 2019^a). This was not just an issue for England; for example, in discussing the inclusion of Roma across Europe, O’ Nions (2015) summarised seven shortcomings at international level. Although they explicitly related to the inclusion of a specific ethnic group often linked to refugee populations, the points correlate with arguments made by advocates of general inclusive policy. O’ Nions (2015:105) identified the following weaknesses:

- Overly ambitious mission and vaguely defined priorities
- Inadequate resourcing
- Lack of enforcement mechanism
- Failure to address structural discrimination
- Sporadic and inadequate monitoring, evaluation, and reporting
- Certain shortcomings in its structure
- The existence of parallel initiatives

She commented that these deficiencies, shown at international level, were reflected in responses of national governments struggling to pass concepts down to local and community levels and to individual children. This was acknowledged in this study by adopting Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model (1979) which enabled evaluation of refugee and inclusion problematisation and rationalisation across the ecological system.

3.4.10 Inclusion: the refugee child

Ridell (2009) identified that as inclusion discourse was malleable, the term could be used by different groups to describe completely different concepts. Inclusion has been

assimilated as a system within practice, with an individual explicitly acknowledged within it; those who do not meet requirements are excluded (Hilt, 2017). This can be complicated for migrant populations, including refugees (EPI and PHF, 2023). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2010) identified that such pupils have had reduced access to good education, have left school earlier and have poorer academic achievements. Traversing systems, at international, national, or local level can increase the risk of multiple exclusions (Hilt, 2017). In considering local responses, Kozleski, Artiles and Waitoller (2011) stated that inclusion has always been problematic in schools because interpretations have changed over time and are inconsistent. Such inconsistencies were evident in this study and provide evidence relating to teachers' ability to reconcile different agendas and policy initiatives.

At a local level, teachers' personal beliefs will be reflected in inclusion models and will influence the way they interact with pupils, including the way that they speak to them (Florian and Rouse, 2009; Barber, 2021). For this reason, full narratives have been included in [Chapter 5](#) to enable closer examination of these personal beliefs exemplified through theoretical interactions in storytelling. Rouse (2009) suggested that effectiveness of inclusion at mesosystem level will depend on teachers knowing about theoretical policy and legislative issues and believing that they have capacity to support all children: these standpoints are not easy to identify, define or interpret ([3.2](#)). Florian and Spratt (2013) added that capacity to support effectively requires belief that human diversity is a strength, and that inclusive pedagogy holds an open-ended view of children's capacity to learn. This becomes an overwhelming issue when powerful groups set up boundaries and create discrete categories which suggest deficits or reasons for exclusion from the system (De Genova, 2013; Robinson and Goodley, 2018; Magnússon, 2019; Arvanitis, 2021; EPI

and PHF, 2023). Capacity to support and manage restrictions relating to practice were an essential element in analysing the narratives in [Chapter 5](#). My analysis in [Chapter 6](#) provides additional evidence to current understanding of provision, but also each readers' analysis will add to their own unique understanding ([1.6](#)).

3.5 Challenge and conflict across policy agendas

3.5.1 The refugee child: homogeneous or heterogenous?

The inclusion agenda has influenced responses to refugee children when they are assimilated into the homogenous group of *all* children. Nevertheless, there are limitations in research relating to the inclusion of migrant groups (Reakes, 2007; Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, 2009; McIntyre and Neuhaus, 2021) reflecting lack of responses from educational establishments to support the increasing numbers of refugees. As previously considered ([3.2.1](#)), Pinson and Arnot (2010) claimed that research into the education of migrant groups was minimal, generally focusing on inclusion discourses which attempted to identify *best practice*. This narrow focus has done little to develop knowledge into social justice for these groups, and even less to identify and explore challenges posed for teachers and so this thesis aims to add evidence to this aspect. Several commentators have considered internal conflicts that arise when teachers' views are heavily influenced by the socio-political context and unresolved political issues (Ubani, 2013; Hadjisoteriou, 2013; Hadjisoteriou and Angelies, 2016). Some would argue that to compensate for this, we can see a didactic approach creeping into potential strategies for school staff and trainee teachers, particularly around pedagogy and behaviour management. This often advocates a formulaic approach to deal with issues instead of considering individual needs and inclusive responses (DfE, 2011; 2014^a; 2021^a; Klassen, 2021). Consideration of these

conflicting expectations and range of procedures gives some insight into the response to refugees. This thesis has aimed to add to this through storytelling which considered discourse and power relationships across different levels of the ecosystem ([fig.1](#)).

3.5.2 Power and discourse: meeting the needs of refugees

3.5.2.1 *Policies as truth*

Power and discourse encircle refugee and inclusion policy responses. Policies, by their nature, have an ideological intent (Ball, 2013), and are therefore constructed to conform to specific philosophical principles (Forester and Garratt, 2016) which can depend on group priorities at certain points in time; these are influenced by social and cultural constraints and desires and are usually controlled by a powerful alliance within the social construct. Foucault (1980), in considering social control through shared institutions, reflected on the structure of ideology and defined it in these terms:

[Ideology is a] thing of the world: it is produced only by multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regular regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth – that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1980:131).

Therefore, when considering responses to refugees, it is necessary to identify where power lies in constructing, interpreting, and implementing relevant policies (Kalisha,

2020): this enables *truths* to be identified and *silences* to be uncovered. This needs to be considered with reference to the chronosystem in which these responses occur and so, historical responses to migration and inclusion previously discussed provide background to the *regime of truth* underpinning current responses and decisions in aspects such as national security, entitlement to local resources, language acquisition and the right to enter the UK.

Foucault (1972) was keen to interpret the history of spoken statements on discursive practices. He endeavoured to identify how, and why, it is possible to say certain things and how this becomes *knowledge* within a specific ecological system:

Knowledge is that of which one can speak in a discursive practice... there is no knowledge without a particular discursive practice; and any discursive practice may be defined by the knowledge that it forms (Foucault, 1972:182-183).

Knowledge, therefore, is reinforced by discourse that is permissible within a specific society and it influences other existing discourses as well as those yet to come (Taha, 2019). It is controlled by a set of 'anonymous, historical rules' that are affected by 'social, economic, geographical or linguistic' influences (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014:180). These then influence the individual through the ebb and flow between different power structures as reflected in the ecological system of Bronfenbrenner (1979). Strengthening this critique, Dean (1999) identified factors that can blur the understanding and belief systems of the governed. He stressed that the role of language in governance should not be underestimated as it enables concepts to be constructed and problems and people to be manipulated by the controlling group.

Policy formation and implementation is the underlying principle of discursive practice: groups, or individuals, endeavouring to make collective decisions from the range of standpoints that contribute to their 'cognitive maps' and by doing this exerting power over others (Shapiro, Bonham and Heradstveit, 1988:397). In this thesis, examples have been identified which demonstrate misinterpretation, and often misuse, of terms around migrant populations leading to misunderstandings by the general population which, in turn, have influenced policy creation, allowing dominant political parties to gain or retain control. Additionally, the vagueness of terms surrounding inclusion have also been considered. When these two policy constructs meet within the mesosystem, there is potential for misunderstanding and confusion but also for challenge. The ability to question these concepts is important in adapting practice and ensuring that misinformation does not maintain a deficient status quo. Again, it is for this reason that full narratives have been included in [Chapter 5](#), to allow them to be used in CPD and empower practitioners to adapt and improve practice.

3.5.2.2 Conflicting interests and hidden agendas

There are conflicting interests within policy creation (Ball, 2009) as different groups and individuals use their power to influence content. Power fluctuates depending on a range of factors, and without power, there is little opportunity to influence policy formation (Gunter, 2012; Forester and Garratt, 2016); for example, in the UK, one political party and Prime Minister usually hold executive control for five years and therefore, it is important to have access to these individuals to influence policy creation. This access was highlighted as an issue at all levels of the system when stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) reflected on refugee policy and, on occasions, it was openly challenged ([Chapter 5](#)).

Power relationships can be identified by considering which groups have access to certain kinds of discourse within the relevant institution or society as well as how they gain admission to this arena (Foucault, 1991). Foucault (1991) also considered limitations of discourse, including ways that institutions manage the delivery of approved discourse by the controlling power; for example, releasing information via social media or leaking proposed initiatives to influence public opinion and maintain control. This can be evidenced by the open publication of a letter by Boris Johnson (Prime Minister, 2019-2022) to Emmanuel Macron (President of France, 2017-) in response to the deaths of refugees in Channel crossings which caused the French to 'disinvite' Priti Patel (Home Secretary, 2019-2022) from talks with Macron. The French stated that this was not an appropriate way to conduct negotiations with a foreign power (Syal and Henley, 2021). Macron added that the tactic aimed to win popularity at national level, rather than addressing issues through established international negotiation protocols. Extending this idea of discourse control, Foucault (1991) tried to throw a light on the struggle to control discourse between different classes, nations, ethnicities, cultures, or linguistic groups. He suggested that often these struggles are hidden behind conventions or excepted practices (Castles, 2004) and consequently, they can become part of the dominance of power groupings as they suppress alternative opinions or viewpoints. It could be argued, therefore, that Macron was trying to maintain this status quo by his reluctance to accept the letter from Boris Johnson who was trying to take control of the discourse.

It is possible for a discourse to become outdated, or overshadowed, by an alternative discourse as societies change. This was evident in the first few weeks of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, when the Government was seen to be hindering acceptance of Ukrainian refugees into the UK (D'Urbino, 2022; Hansard HC, 2022^b), possibly due to a

general reluctance to accept refugees which had been policy for nearly 10 years. However, the discourse changed when a group of Government Ministers advocated for higher numbers of Ukrainians to enter the country which influenced public opinion (an alternative interpretation could be that they were being influenced by public opinion themselves), creating a positive discourse towards this group of refugees even though problems in processing applications continued (BBC News, 2022^c).

Changes in viewpoints can be obscured and complicated by other factors, for example when different policy aims conflict with each other, or when different groups try to gain or retain power: these are often silences within the discourse (Bacchi, 2009). This can be exemplified by reflecting on two examples linked to the inclusion agenda which demonstrate that it is possible for a well-defined discourse to have a hidden agenda (Castles, 2004). The first example shows that established discourses can be undermined by alternative viewpoints such as the economic issues arising from 'Brexit' (Liaison Committee HC, 2022). Discourse surrounding the departure of the UK from the European Community became intrinsically linked to economic migration and then, in turn, to wider immigration issues ([2.5.1.1](#)). As different power groups tried to influence voters and extend their powerbase, they used the opportunity to appeal to a range of viewpoints, some which could be seen as racially motivated (Vertovec, 2007). Although not specifically identified in the rhetoric, the influence of this discourse could be seen in negative responses to inclusion agendas (Manners, 2018) and consequently, this arena also became dominated by power struggles influencing the views of the population towards marginalised groups (EPI and PHF, 2023), sometimes being actualised in racial attacks or rejection of migrant groups. Even within government departments, this type of discourse was included in policy documents, such as the Home Office Diversity and Inclusion

Strategy 2018-2025, which identified ways in which the department aimed to adopt inclusive approaches, with the mission statement declaring:

Our mission is to protect the UK by keeping citizens safe and our borders secure.

Our priorities are to prevent terrorism, cut crime, control immigration, promote growth and transform the Home Office. Creating a diverse and inclusive Home

Office is imperative to achieving these objectives (HO, 2018^b: online).

Although ostensibly promoting an inclusive agenda in latter sections, the mission statement clearly identified aspects and individuals contributing to an outgroup and these could easily be linked to refugee groups, specifically through the mission of *controlling immigration*.

A more procedural response which attracted criticism can be identified in this second example. An additional question on the English Proficiency Data Collection (DfE, 2020) was withdrawn by the DfE after the initial collection in 2018, following suggestions that data was being shared with the HO to support immigration control (Weale, 2019). The DfE requested settings to collect data to improve outcomes for pupils with EAL. However, some suggested that it was being passed to the HO to police immigration. The decision to stop using this data collection method indicated that the Government felt under pressure to reclaim the discourse around the policy initiative, avoiding challenges in relation to possible exclusionary practices. However, although this specific policy decision was challenged ultimately leading to its withdrawal, in general, it can be problematic to raise concerns if the issue is not clear-cut or transparent. Understanding whether there is opportunity to challenge policy at different levels of the ecosystem is considered in

question 8 ([2.2.8](#)); specifically, awareness of contentious elements, the ability to influence, and evidence of the possibility to challenge.

3.5.2.3 Potential for challenge

Cuban (1988) reflected on tensions in education when professionals try to cope with managerial directives, especially when these conflict with broader philosophy (Fitzsimons, 2014). This can lead to clashes as stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) negotiate accountability systems. It is essentially a 'question of whether we are measuring what we value, or whether we are valuing what is being measured' (Biesta, 2017:316). This can be exacerbated by the need to reflect a school in a positive light against external measures which allow 'governments to control at distance' (Niesche, 2015:136). A focus on performance and accountability can be used to 'fulfil the broader ambition of government to tame and direct' (O' Brien, 2015:841). Reflecting on the numerous educational initiatives, measures, and external control of schools, it is not surprising that there is great similarity across schools both in educational content and political compliance (Fitzsimons, 2014) and this study has aimed to ascertain how far teachers accept the political status quo in relation to provision for refugee children, and whether they feel they have power to challenge. Their interpretation of concepts and terms such as inclusion, migrants and refugees were relevant as they explained how they circumnavigate a range of policy responses ([Chapter 5](#) and [Chapter 6](#)).

In essence, many professional responses have rested on whether individuals feel that they have had the capacity or capability to challenge those in power. Foucault (1980) suggested that power circulates and rests with different groups at different times: power shapes who we are as individuals. Rose (2000) added to this by stating that liberal control, or

authority, is achieved through the production of political individuals, or groups, who *imagine* themselves to be free and who respond to this presumed freedom by treating the controlling power as a benevolent force. This then, allows them to accept the direction of those in power who guide the understanding of *problems* which need to be resolved. As power and discourse are entwined, policymakers lead responses to discursive practice within the location, culture, social and historical concepts of the time in which the decisions are being made. However, we can also see that historical factors influence how the populous accepts different discourses and how those who wish to retain power move within these accepted parameters to retain control (Bacchi, 2009). These compromises and challenges provide evidence to identify the scope of the *representations* within policymaking and demonstrate the differing or conflicting discourses which have been an integral part of the analysis within this thesis.

3.6 Ideology, customs, and social pressure

The literature review has shown that policy decisions reflect ideological ideas, customs, and social pressures which become a melting pot of ideas as different groups aspire to influence practice and gain or maintain power. The UK is not a homogeneous zone but is home to a range of different social groups who echo or reject policy responses. This will be reflected in the regional and local approaches towards refugees, and this thesis provides a spotlight on responses to policies in the East Midlands region of the UK ([2.5.3](#)).

3.7 Teacher agency

The literature review has used the thesis systems model ([fig. 2](#)) to consider each layer surrounding the child whilst reviewing chronological events and silences held within and

across each layer. This penultimate section of the literature review considers the agency of teachers which flows through and across each layer (2.4), influencing the refugee child's experiences and outcomes, and potentially allowing practitioners to advocate for the child. As previously stated (2.3), Arnot, Pinson and Candappa (2009) and Pinson and Arnot (2010) reflected on limited enquiry into teachers' agency when incorporating national, regional, and local refugee policy into professional practice and personal beliefs and this thesis aims to add evidence to this aspect of academic understanding. Therefore, to achieve this, an understanding of *agency* needs to be gained from consideration of wider research beyond that of refugee and inclusion policy. Nevertheless, similar themes are evident as can be seen by references to wider influences such as belief systems, social and cultural influences as well as the *problematizations* surrounding policy agendas and institutional pressures.

Initially, it is helpful to define teacher *agency* from a range of academic standpoints to understand its scope and complexity. Nguyen et al. (2022:667) stated that:

Teacher agency has been described as teachers' intentional efforts to act in accordance with their beliefs, goals, and knowledge as they engage with their various working contexts.

In this definition, we can see that agency is built on a similar structure to that previously discussed in relation to inclusive practice and its resemblance to an ethos or faith (3.2.1).

However, Juutilainen et al. (2024:178) extended this to:

...being able and willing to determine one's professional positions and the contents of one's work in relation to the community and the wider social world.

In this definition, it is possible to see how teacher agency flows through the various layers of the thesis systems model, extending beyond the initial layer of refugee and inclusion policy to the layers of challenge, power, discourse as well as ideological, social and cultural contexts ([fig. 2](#)).

This thesis needs, however, to consider this agency beyond these layers to emotional responses and challenge and thus answer thesis questions [2.2.7](#) and [2.2.8](#). The explanation provided by Miller et al. (2022) gives an understanding as to how teacher agency can be extended to answer these thesis questions and provide further evidence to theoretical knowledge and understanding of agency. Miller et al. (2022) stated that teacher agency extends beyond teacher efficacy to encompass strategic actions which give the capacity to impact wider systems, ‘pushing back’ and challenging through communication and action. They added that as well as incorporating self-reflection, it also extends to collaboration with others. These concepts can be developed by consideration of the earlier work of Toom, Pyhältö and O’ Connell Rust (2015:615) who stated that:

Teachers’ professional agency refers also to teachers’ ability to act in new and creative ways, and even to resist external norms and regulations when they are understood to contrast or conflict with professionally justifiable action.

Agency, therefore, could be seen to extend to the promotion of professional responses when these are based on sound and valid rights and values even when these responses conflict with accepted policy at national and regional levels.

However, these attempts to define agency confirm that it cannot be explained as a single behavioural attribute, but it is a combination of factors (Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini, 2015) as can be evidenced throughout the literature review which has identified a range

of factors that influence teachers in practice. Molla and Nolan (2020:68) suggested that teachers have true agency when they have ‘voice and autonomy’ in their professional practice, choosing what to value as well as how to meet these principles in their professional lives. These values and beliefs would often be based on previous experiences (Nguyen et al., 2022) and their *voice and autonomy* would be achieved by expressing preferences, pursuing interests and applying influence through:

- **Inquisitive agency** – requiring expert professional knowledge and skills
- **Deliberative agency** – critical reflection on practice and theories and the assumptions that underpin these
- **Recognitive agency** – being valued and respected professionally
- **Responsive agency** – meeting diverse needs appropriately
- **Moral agency** – having sound judgement and ethical responses (Molla and Nolan, 2020).

It is these elements that are considered and reviewed within the practitioners’ narratives to provide new evidence to current understanding and thinking ([7.5](#)).

Nonetheless, it is relevant to consider how such agency sits within a neo-liberalist approach to education. Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015) suggested that some policymakers view teacher agency as a weakness when controlling educational settings and prefer evidence-based, data driven methods, often associated with neo-liberalist agendas. Teachers’ professional development in cases such as this, often focuses on ‘knowledge’ and it is postulated that the *problematization* of ‘knowledge’ restricts the understanding of teacher agency (Wallen and Tormey, 2019) which, in turn, potentially could restrict social justice (Pantić, 2017). The creation and advancement of certain neo-

liberalist policies has not only influenced teachers' work (Nguyen et al., 2022) but arguably has led to de-professionalisation, challenging teachers' autonomy, performance and creativity by removing agency and increasing bureaucracy and managerial control and regulation (Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022) which is additionally constrained by the curriculum (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015; Oolbekkink-Marchand et al., 2017), qualification outcomes, completing syllabus content in a timely manner (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015) and therefore affecting the *performativity* of teachers (Molla and Nolan, 2020). Thus, school organisational structures have the capacity to restrict, expand or empower teacher agency (Toom, Pyhältö and O'Connell Rust, 2015; Oolbekkink-Marchand et al., 2017; Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021) and thus, teachers can find that they are negotiating or resisting the constraints of policy and leadership (Molla and Nolan, 2020). This can be affected by how leadership encourages involvement or controls the impact of bureaucratic procedures (Hilal and Akar, 2023).

Nevertheless, the teacher is not only a 'product' of the social system but is also a 'shaper' within the environment (Wallen and Tormey, 2019:130) and there is a continuum of practice between those who view teachers as technicians who should apply procedures and practice uncritically, accepting standard protocols, and those who see settings as potential environments to promote social change (Pantić, 2017). Taking into consideration all these viewpoints, it is postulated that teacher agency provides opportunity to develop meaningful education (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015) when there is a moral driver to teacher agency and teachers reflect on their moral responsibility to avoid marginalisation of pupils (Hilal and Akar, 2023), using their professional agency to advocate and recognise the potential of pupils, regardless of their origins or personal and social circumstances (Molla and Nolan, 2020). Establishing moral purpose and a sense

of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989) can enable confidence in the ability to make changes (Wallen and Thorney, 2019).

In general terms, professional agency can be viewed as a relational interaction between resources, social conditions and power relationships on one side and individual beliefs, interests, values and professional identity on the other (Pantić, 2017; Wallen and Thorney, 2019; Molla and Nolan, 2020; Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021; Juutilainen et al., 2024); these influence how individuals are enabled or constrained by social and material environments (Tinn and Ümarik, 2022). An individual's constructs of their professional identity help to support meaningful career and life choices, with certain personal, relational and contextual factors supporting or restricting agency regulation (Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021). Power relationships and distribution of authority in educational settings affect agency as well as the norms of the setting, the tasks that are required, and available resources, with Juutilainen et al. (2024) drawing on earlier research which identified narratives as a useful way to examine the power relationships that are embedded in the social world of a practitioner: this supports the choice of methodology in this research ([Chapter 4](#)).

Trust, emotional safety and safe working environments are also significant factors (Molla and Nolan, 2020; Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021) and teachers often showed a dominant 'we' voice as practitioners (Hilal and Akar, 2023) which has been seen as a collective agency (Bandura, 2006), with research indicating that collaboration with colleagues enables agency (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015; Pantić, 2017) and Tinn and Ümarik (2022) adding that it is this collective that reproduces social structures which, in turn, can

lead to social change. Thus, professional agency also needs to consider professional identity. Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du (2021:3) stated that this is based on four factors:

- The influence of multiple contexts
- Relationships with others, including emotional factors
- Change, instability and complexities
- The influences of the construction and reconstruction of meaning over time

All these are considered by using small story research in this thesis ([4.6.4](#)) and provide evidence which adds to current knowledge and understanding in relation to teachers' agency. Additional aspects which impact on professional identity are historical (Hilal and Akar, 2023), and social and political factors (Tinn and Ümarik, 2022), making professional identity dynamic, complex, culturally embedded and consistently reshaped (Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021). Agency should therefore be understood as having 'influences from the *past*, orientations to the *future* and engagement with the *present*' [inflection in the original text] (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015:626), thus reshaping patterns of behaviours (Nguyen et al., 2022) as an on-going process (Toom, Pyhältö and O'Connell Rust, 2015; Miller et al., 2022). This can be elucidated by the following detail:

- Past – personal/professional biographies
- Future – short-term and long-term perspectives
- Present – enactment which is influenced by cultural, material and structural resources (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015).

These influences help individuals to define and position themselves in different situations and in relation to others (Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021). They draw on their beliefs, values, ethics, commitments, ideals and goals (Toom, Pyhältö and O'Connell Rust, 2015;

Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022) in a continuous process (Miller et al, 2022; Juutilainen et al., 2024) which reflect multiple situations and environments (Miller et al., 2022).

Teachers often articulate that they are committed to social justice, drawing on the fact that this is an underlying reason for their commitment to the profession, being part of their belief system (Pantić, 2017) and yet, they can unintentionally contribute to inequitable outcomes for some learners, such as refugees, because of the institutional context or their own assumptions which lack self-scrutiny (ibid). Alternatively, they can struggle to adapt to tensions between their beliefs established in training and institutional practice (Miller et al., 2022). Often there is a basic assumption that teachers act as agents of social justice, believing that this is part of their role (Pantić, 2017) but their expressed beliefs may differ to their practice or competence, especially as there are varying and competing interpretations of the term (ibid) (3.4.2). It is important, therefore, to understand how teachers enact their agency and understand their experiences in 'self-stories' (Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021:3) such as those within this thesis when they can voice experiences through opportunities which enable them to articulate their *internal voice* which has been found to be a key factor in developing agency (Tinn and Ümarik, 2022). Use of narratives in research has shown that they can support teachers in uncovering challenges they 'previously internalised and normalised' (Hilal and Akar, 2023:9) as well as posing new questions on familiar topics (Molla and Nolan, 2020), enabling teachers to become aware of the context and power relationships that influence them (Wallen and Tormey, 2019) and thus developing the context of their learning, helping them to enhance and implement their own expertise (Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini, 2015). This suggests that the *master narratives* which appear to be culturally

expected and are often used to frame *normal* or *typical*, can be contested and challenged through *counter-narratives* (Juutilainen et al., 2024).

Teachers can find it difficult to actualise change or articulate genuine intentions into actions because of limited professional experience (Hilal and Akar, 2023). However, if we consider professional space as the *area* where teachers can act using their expertise and goals (Nguyen et al., 2022), teachers can often visualise their ability to influence outcomes (Toom, Pyhältö and O'Connell Rust, 2015), for example in the classroom. However, they can find it harder to see a role outside their autonomous zone (Wallen and Tormey, 2019). Thus, their perceptions of *space* are important in underpinning their agency when they consider the school context and *space* and how this influences their own personal goals (Molla and Nolan, 2020; Tinn and Ümarik, 2022) which may be different to those of the institution in which they work (Oolbekkink-Marchand et al., 2017).

Pantić (2017:220) postulated that teacher agency is founded in:

- Sense of purpose - belief that a certain practice is worthwhile to achieve a certain outcome
- Competence - knowing how to influence a desired outcome in practice
- Scope of autonomy - power to make a difference within given structural environments
- Reflexivity - a capacity to monitor and evaluate actions and structural contexts

However, as previously identified, agency is seen within its time and affected by the complexities of cultural and institutional contexts (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015; Pantić, 2017) although strong relationships within the school community can underpin efficacy, trust, support, shared values and a supportive environment (Pantić, 2017), with

agency being continually negotiated in and through these relationships (Juutilainen et al., 2024). Pantić (2017) identified that teachers' reflections largely mirrored mechanistic views based on institutional routines and policy language (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015) or the concept of being a 'typical' teacher (Juutilainen et al, 2024:189), often influenced by a deficit opinion of children (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015) which limited agency (Nguyen et al., 2022), but Pantić (2017) also suggested some procedures which enabled practices and environments to be transformed. These transformative aspects were associated with wider participation, including families, colleagues and other professionals which could often enable (Molla and Nolan, 2020), (or sometimes further constrict) their practice (Pantić, 2017).

There are consistent calls for further research into the dimensions of agency (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015; Pantić, 2017; Wallen and Tormey, 2019; Molla and Nolan, 2020), including aspects relating to identity and emotions, as research is scarce (Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021). This evidence would enable an understanding of teachers' professional lives and development needs to promote effective agency (ibid). This thesis supports the view that teacher agency can be promoted using school-based activities which encourage reflection amongst teaching professionals (Hilal and Akar, 2023), being responsive to their needs and giving voice to their knowledge, experiences, preconceptions and values as resources (Wallen and Tormey, 2019) as well as giving a sense of ownership (Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini, 2015; Wallen and Tormey, 2019) with leaders *developing people* within their organisation (Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini, 2015) rather than facilitating the 'standard' version of CPD where an *expert* disseminates information and instructs practitioners on how *problems* should be addressed (Wallen and Tormey, 2019). It is argued that teachers are better served by reviewing and clarifying

personal understandings (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015; Pantić, 2017) and thus valuing their own knowledge and potential by considering the relationships in the ecological environment that informs their practice (Wallen and Tormey, 2019), using critical analysis (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015) and active learning (Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini, 2015; Toom, Pyhältö and O'Connell Rust, 2015). It is suggested that this can help them to accept certain policies and challenge others, especially in supporting disadvantaged pupils (Pantić, 2017), such as refugees. Potentially, this could help them to develop actions of agency such as instructional approaches, student-centred strategies, collaboration and community connections (Miller et al., 2022). This type of professional development should be constructed through contemplation of dilemmas and professional activities, such as the storytelling in this thesis, which enable teachers to recognise contexts in which they can challenge or resist dominant discourses, practices, demands and regulations but also support accepted norms (Toom, Pyhältö and O'Connell Rust, 2015) when these are justified and fully understood.

3.8 Summary of literature review

Analysis of the literature encapsulated in this literature review affirmed the decision to use Bacchi's (2009) method of policy analysis in this thesis to evaluate policy in relation to refugees ([2.1](#)). As can be seen throughout the literature review, policy is built on discourse which has its foundations in historical responses which influence *knowledge* and *truths*. However, to fully understand the *problem representations* held within the relevant policy documents and supporting discourse, it was also necessary to evaluate the impact on practitioners at grassroots level. This means that the narratives are an essential part of this thesis in establishing how practitioners were influenced or manipulated by discourses

which informed their *knowledge* and understanding of *truth*. It also enables this thesis to provide evidence to fill gaps in knowledge in relation to:

- Teachers' ability to incorporate national, regional, and local refugee policy into practice (Arnot, Pinson and Candappa, 2009; Pinson and Arnot, 2010).
- Ways in which inclusive policy agendas support refugees.
- The impact of policy and discourse on teachers, professionally and personally (Arar, Órúccú and Waite, 2020) (2.3), and how they articulate professional agency (3.7).

The literature review has analysed factors through the lens of the chronosystem.

Chapter 4 moves to describe the methodology used to measure impact of power and discourse relating to refugees in or entering the UK between 2020-2022.

Chapter 4

Methodology and data collection methods

4.1 Research design

This chapter gives an overview of the methodology and strands of the study, illustrated in fig.3. [Appendix 4](#) contains a list of all sources used in the analyses.

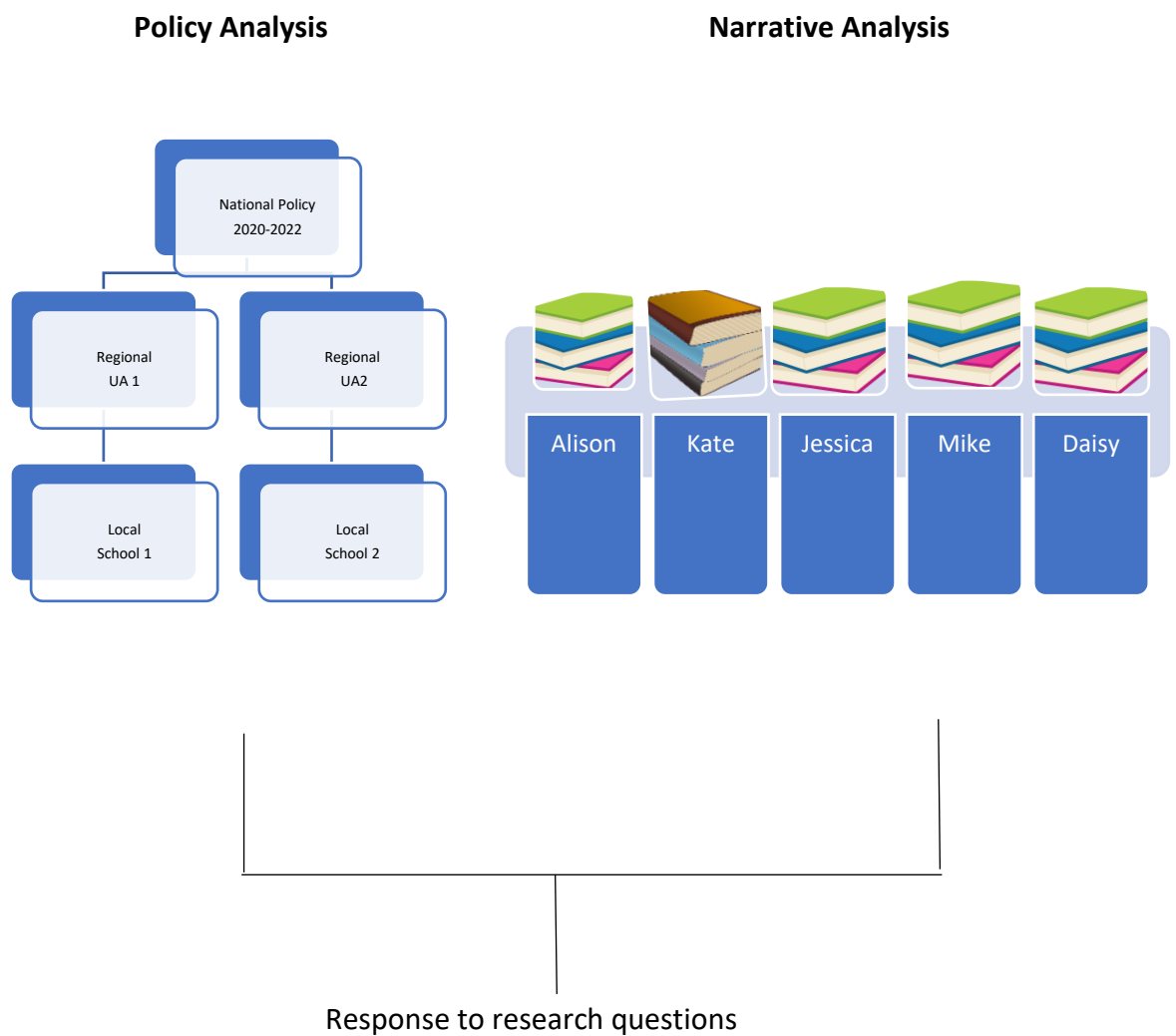


Figure 3: Data Analysis Model

The literature review was undertaken prior to the narratives being compiled, continuing throughout the research as new factors emerged ([3.2.5](#)). Some policies were identified,

but not analysed before the meetings with practitioners, with the full policy analysis underpinned by Bacchi's (2009) approach (4.5) taking place alongside, and after the meetings (4.6). This enabled new policies to be considered without needing to arrange further meetings with participants but also reduced researcher influence when compiling the practitioner narratives (2.3). The aim was to establish the essence of practitioners' understanding, emotions and potential to challenge rather than obtaining accurate reflections on policy content (4.6.2). This being the case, *no comparison* was made between different narratives (4.5.5).

As the policy narratives were based on the 'What is the problem represented to be?' (WPR) approach (Bacchi, 2009), they concentrated on *problematizations*: discourse and power were integral to this. However, as previously stated, policies are manipulated and adjusted by individuals (Ball, 2013), and in this study, practitioner narratives provide insight into these aspects. Popkewitz (1987) stated that no theory, ideology, or in the case of this study, policy, is practised without some modification as different organisations, groups and individuals reject aspects of administrative ideologies. Therefore, although the policy can appear fixed, it will be adjusted in practice. This can be influenced by three components, identified by Van de Mierop (2019) as:

- **Cognitive:** awareness of the group by individual members
- **Evaluative:** the degree of positive association within the group
- **Emotional:** emotions towards membership of the group

These components cannot be scientifically reproduced with consistency and therefore, it is not possible to apply these to discourse in general terms, as outcomes are affected by idiosyncratic responses (ibid) making each response unique within time and place (Taha,

2019), leading to the decision not to carry out comparative analysis (4.5.5) in relation to all narratives. This also contributed to the decision to include the content of the stories in full (Chapter 5) and then analyse them (Chapter 6) (4.6).

4.1.1 Coding system

In analysing the policy and practitioner narratives, coding systems were used whilst following the story structure approach of beginning, middle and end (4.4). Positive (P), negative (N) and ambiguous (A) language was identified in both strands whilst additional coding relating to inclusion (I), immigration/refugee policy (Po) and challenge (C) were used to analyse the practitioners' narratives. Additionally, emotional responses were identified, cautiously, avoiding researcher bias, by noting when individuals expressed an emotional response directly. These were held within the main coding and selected to add depth to the analysis rather than being a separate entity.

Analysis Type	Story Structure (Western)	Type of Language Used Positive/Negative/Ambiguous	Relevant Thesis Questions
Policy analysis	Beginning	P/N/A	Q 2.2.1 , Q 2.2.2 , Q 2.2.3
	Middle	P/N/A	Q 2.2.4 , Q 2.2.5
	End	P/N/A	Q 2.2.6
Narrative analysis	Beginning	P/N/A I/Po/C	Q 2.2.7 , Q 2.2.8
	Middle	P/N/A I/Po/C	Q 2.2.7 , Q 2.2.8
	End	P/N/A I/Po/C	Q 2.2.7 , Q 2.2.8

Figure 4: Coding System

Each policy narrative starts with a timeline which identifies a selection of evidence used to identify *representations*. The nature of the evidence is noted next to each statement. In total, 137 sources were analysed across national, regional and setting levels with the distribution reflecting evidence that was open access to the public.

Level	Policy documents	Guidance	News releases	Committee reports	Debates	Statements	Media
National	14	14	5	4	6	10	30
Regional UAs 1/2	6	15	2	1	0	12	4
Schools A/B	6	0	1	0	0	0	3
In addition, 4 statutes were analysed which, although held within national analysis, were applicable to all levels of governance							
See Appendix 4 for relevant sources							

Figure 5: Scope of Data

The structure of the policy narratives follows a similar system to practitioner narratives and a coding system (P, N, A) was used to identify broad themes. These were then used to answer the first six research questions (2.2). Additionally, to reflect the structure of practitioner narratives, the policy narratives have a beginning, middle and end with subheadings linked to questions one to three answered in the *beginning*, four to five in the *middle* and question six at the *end*. Practitioner narratives are placed in between policy narratives and are written in full. They are organised into a beginning, middle and end. These all inform and guide the analysis in [Chapter 6](#).

4.2 Underlying principles and aims

The WPR approach (Bacchi, 2009) required analysis of national, regional, and local policies pertaining to refugee children to understand how these policies supported or conflicted with each other. Additionally, it considered how they coexisted within a wider definition of inclusion policies and discourse (3.4.9) as well as associated agendas. Alongside this, five anonymised teachers worked with the researcher to create personal narratives which described their understanding and responses to such policy agendas. These narratives have been presented concurrently with the policy analysis to provide an alternative viewpoint. This means that each policy narrative is followed by a practitioner narrative

which provides an alternative voice to power and discourse ([Chapter 5](#)). The policy and practitioner narratives have been written in the present tense and follow a story structure so that they portray a lived experience.

The research is underpinned by a desire to identify how refugees are *problematized* within policy and how this influences the perceptions of teachers through their multiple identities (Fuller, 2018). Internalisation of these *problem representations* by teachers might impact their ability to challenge problematisation (Ubani, 2013; Hadjisoteriou, 2013; Hadjisoteriou and Angelies, 2016) and thus impact on inclusive responses to refugee children in practice. To identify these issues, this thesis has focused on three periods of change in the UK:

1. The national policy discourse following the end of the New Labour Government in 2010 which moved to a Conservative agenda and officially adopted a more aggressive approach to immigration: a hostile environment (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021; Webber, 2021).
2. Policy responses in a post-Brexit climate with new immigration legislation being introduced in November 2020 in the form of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020, leading to groups raising social justice agendas and challenging government policy.
3. The period following the introduction of the 2020 legislation, focusing on policy surrounding the creation of the Nationality and Borders Bill which was enacted in 2022.

The literature review provides a historical account of how these periods were influenced by preceding events whilst also considering the first two periods. These

are also discussed in policy narratives and are occasionally alluded to in practitioner narratives. During the data collection, the research sharpened and concentrated on the third period which covers 18 months between 2020 and 2022, when stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) grappled with the potential outcomes of seemingly aggressive government policy towards refugees. It is this period that is the focus of the narratives with the data being used to answer the research questions. In essence, however, there are three elements which enabled the research questions to be answered and as previously discussed, these were determined when establishing the scope of the thesis ([2.1](#)):

1. Identification of how refugee policies integrate with inclusive philosophies.
2. Analysis of the responses of five teachers towards child refugees, including their reactions to immigration/refugee policy and inclusive principles.
3. Consideration as to whether teachers align different policy aims and personal beliefs and whether they can influence change through challenge.

4.3 Epistemology and ontology

The research epistemology combines postmodernist and phenomenologist approaches to identify meaningful social experiences. The decision to use these two approaches was based on two strands of the study, policy analysis and narrative enquiry, which were then combined to answer the research questions. The choice was based on the ontology that although it was possible to identify some facts from the research, it was not possible to provide lasting certainty through analysis of this snapshot of change and response (Butler, 2002). The combined approach aimed to challenge philosophical and political principles as well as prevalent philosophies (ibid), such as inclusion, which have generally been seen

as consistent and well-defined but have often been intertwined and interpreted to create a web of responses lacking in consistency (Ball, 1994; 2013). This enabled tentative challenge to current thinking, expressly relating to the ability of practitioners to question political rhetoric and policy pertaining to refugee children, as well as their ability to reconcile inclusive practice with these policy expectations.

4.3.1 Postmodernism

Postmodernism arose as a reaction against modernism and *grand narratives* which had an idealistic vision of human existence, believing in a utopian view of progress and innovation. It challenged predominant principles that there was an absolute truth and saw people as subjected to social and political forces (Morgan-Fleming, Riegle and Fryer, 2007), linking this to the use of ideology to maintain power in politics/economics (Butler, 2002), but also in research (Punch, 2014). Foucault was seen as an advocate of this approach, although he challenged this perception (Butler, 2002), which ironically, is the essence of the postmodernist approach.

Postmodernism can be applied to ethical and social problems and held within it is a scepticism of holistic explanations. It holds potential to consider narratives as valid to individuals rather than needing to extend them into general themes (ibid). Therefore, this thesis moves slightly away from the purist postmodernist stance (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007) by identifying some common themes across the policy and narrative evaluation ([Chapter 7](#)). The postmodernist perspective reflects many of the standpoints attributed to Foucault's theories relating to power and discourse (Foucault, 1972; 1991) being highly critical of overarching philosophical or political doctrines and challenging ideologies that maintain the status quo (Butler, 2002). This also underpins the decision to include full

narratives to reduce the power of the researcher in determining *truths* held within them ([Chapter 1](#)).

Postmodernism enables reflection on the identity of self and how this is affected by discourses of the powerful (Morgan-Fleming, Riegle and Fryer, 2007): the inner conflicts in rationalising and internalising these discourses determine the self-identity of an individual (Rogers, 2007), requiring analysis through a historical and social lens (Morgan-Fleming, Riegle and Fryer, 2007). Butler (2002) reflected that Foucault's concepts fail to consider relevance of individual agency in assessing social constructs and responding to them. The concept of reflection and individual agency permeate narrative accounts within this thesis and the results reflect both aspects in answering the questions ([2.2](#)). The analysis of practitioner narratives considers the conflict and rationalisation of teachers as they evaluate different discourses and problematisations, but also looks to their individual agency and how they use this to challenge discourses permeating society.

4.3.2 Applying the 'what's the problem represented to be?' approach (WPR) (Bacchi, 2009) within postmodernist epistemology

The underlying tenets of Bacchi's (2009) analytical approach are described in the background to this research ([2.1](#)), whereas this section considers links between postmodernist epistemology and WPR. WPR considers the coexistence of various forms of regulation and aims to identify underlying aspects and effects on the governed, whilst also recognising power imbalances (ibid). Therefore, social and cultural constructs need to be acknowledged within the analysis, leading to identification of prevailing discourses which permeate certain *knowledge* and *truths*. All these facets are held within the epistemology of postmodernism ([4.3.1](#)) as the analysis considers how meaning is created

through specific language which informs ‘assumptions, values, presuppositions and accompanying signs... [or] conceptual logics’ (Bacchi, 2009:7). The WPR approach also requires consideration of the following three aspects which are encompassed within the postmodernist approach when it challenges overarching doctrines:

- **Binaries:** Bacchi (2009:7) identified these as ‘A/not-A relationships’ which in the case of this thesis would be aspects such as legal/illegal, British/foreign. Challenging these constructs would fall within concepts of postmodernist scepticism in relation to power dynamics which support such dichotomies.
- **Key concepts:** Bacchi (2009) identified these as abstract concepts that are contentious as they are so broad that they hold different meanings to different people. Often, they are grounded in historical events and culture whilst being embedded into government practice, thus raising issues in challenging them. Again, such challenges to the status quo fall easily into the postmodernist approach and in this thesis would relate to terms such as inclusion, security, immigration, foreign.
- **Categories:** Bacchi (2009:9) identified these as ‘concepts that play a central role in how governing takes place’. Bacchi (2009) asserted that these are often imaginary categories which are created to define and control people. Again, challenging these categories would be held within the postmodernist approach of challenging concepts of the powerful who often determine these categories. Within this thesis, terms such as migrant, refugee and asylum seeker were identified as categories (see [Chapter 3](#) for definitions).

Bacchi (2009) also considered the importance of *text selection* for the analysis, including the complexity of documents and interpretation of them which should not be biased towards the researcher's constructs. Equally recognising the context - where it fits in time and place - is essential when analysing policies which was a consideration in limiting this thesis to a period of 18-months. Finally, Bacchi (2009) highlighted the importance of identifying how *policy representations* 'nest' or embed within each other; for example, in this research the concepts of *refugee* and *migrant* nest within each other and both are grounded in different viewpoints. Again, this type of analysis is easily encompassed in the postmodernist approach which recognises that there are different interpretations which impact on those subjected to them.

4.3.3 Phenomenology

Phenomenology emphasises subjectivity, description, interpretation, and agency, with a focus on individuals' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and emotions (Denscombe, 2014) and therefore it underpins the practitioners' narratives in this study. It is suited to small scale research, such as in this thesis when it allows participants to develop their stories, giving authentic accounts of complexities surrounding refugees whilst telling stories through a compassionate and humane lens (ibid). However, the approach has been criticised for lacking in scientific rigour, being too descriptive and making generalisations about mundane events whilst also allowing participants to move away from reality into aspects that are not realistic (ibid). Therefore, these issues needed to be considered when developing the research parameters (4.6).

Phenomenology spotlights human experiences, concentrating on authentic awareness rather than on-going analysis. Through this, it aims to obtain clarity in relation to things

that have been encountered, rather than theorising about them (Rogers, 2007), concentrating on lived experiences and so their representation in the research needs to be as near to the original as possible (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007) which is why the practitioners' narratives are included in this thesis as unabridged versions ([Chapter 5](#)) and then analysed in [Chapter 6](#). This enables the reader to see authentic narratives which hold meaning and significance (Mattingly, 2007) and not sections which have been interpreted through the eyes of the researcher (Rogers, 2007).

As phenomenology views participants as holding agency in their own experiences (Punch, 2014), the narrative approach allows them to articulate their experiences, perceptions and understanding. As well as telling authentic stories, the second element of the phenomenology approach is the sharing of events which is held within this thesis through the standalone element of the narratives ([Chapter 5](#)), allowing others to use them to develop understanding for personal and professional purposes ([2.5](#)). The approach recognises multiple realities (Rogers, 2007) which is evidenced in this thesis through the different interpretations of each practitioner, all of which hold validity. All elements of each narrative are included even if they appear contradictory or inconsistent.

Although this thesis draws on the European model of phenomenology in considering 'the essence of human experience' (Denscombe, 2014:100), it also focuses on 'the ways in which people interpret social phenomena' (Denscombe, 2014:101), which is adopted from the North American approach. This allows participants to draw on their emotions to describe what things *feel like* rather than trying to identify the 'essence of what is meant by the term' refugee (Denscombe, 2014:101). This enables the final two questions to be answered ([2.2.7](#) and [2.2.8](#)), providing new evidence to inform current thinking.

4.3.4 Combining the postmodernist and phenomenologist approaches

Foucault (1991) suggested that findings are strengthened when taking an epistemological stance of tentative challenge, and this has been reinforced by theoretical underpinning, including concepts discussed by Ball (1994; 2013), Bacchi (2009) and Lee (2021), which advocated consideration of different viewpoints in a desire to reach a more authentic result (Denscombe, 2014). In this study, it also strengthened an experimental view of current thinking relating to the ethical stance of inclusion by acknowledging that participant teachers had a range of influences on their actions and beliefs including, in this case, refugee policy which could shape their attitudes towards inclusive provision and vice versa. As this research, in part, addressed belief systems, it was also important to use rigorous research methods to consider researcher bias when evaluating data as this could have impacted on the results (Denscombe, 2014). This was a focus when constructing the research protocols ([4.5.4](#)).

The expectation that the focus might move during the study, particularly when addressing changes in discourse, challenges within the system and adjustments to policy, was built into the construction of the research methods, anticipating that political, educational, and social considerations would fluctuate during the timescale of the research (Punch, 2014). This was actualised during the data collection when the focus of the policy analysis became the 18-month period between 2020 and 2022 which saw the creation of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and the responses to the Afghanistan and Ukraine crises. By adopting a postmodernist approach, the shifts in the paradigm were absorbed within the scope of the research (ibid) allowing individual narratives to hold *truth* whilst acknowledging that they were not valid to all teachers, and merely reflected a particular

moment within the chronosystem of the individual narrator. The situation was changing when narrative accounts were being collated but this did not affect their validity as the study was created to be adaptable and to encompass the fluid nature of the narratives (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) which were influenced by events both in the past and present; for example, the narratives clearly reflect interpretations of policy relating to migrants crossing the Channel, whereas they do not cover the Ukraine crisis which was not as prominent in the media at the time.

4.4 Systems analysis and presentation of findings

As previously stated ([4.2](#)), the design of the research was influenced by the work of Foucault (1972; 1991) who considered the impact of discourse and the location of power on the structure of society. Foucault postulated that knowledge is strengthened by discourse that is legitimised at a specific point in time and that this influences contemporary debates and future discourses (Taha, 2019). A review of discourse surrounding refugee policy and inclusive education has been discussed in the literature review ([Chapter 3](#)) through a chronological lens to support evaluation and analysis of current policies. This has identified the extent that historical *rules* have influenced perceptions which originate in geographical, social, economic, or linguistic factors (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014). As well as being guided by Foucault's concepts of power and discourse (Foucault, 1972; 1991), the research has drawn on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), to create a system of analysis to determine the effects of power and discourse ([fig.2](#)) with a focus on:

- The refugee child
- Refugee policy

- Inclusion policy
- Challenge (meso-element/interplay between policy elements)
- Power and discourse
- Ideology, customs, and social pressure
- Teacher agency

Although these provide structure to the literature review, they also supported the policy and narrative analyses in enabling a structured approach to consider and evaluate findings.

Presentation of the policy narratives was adjusted during the process of collating data, whereas the format of practitioner narratives was established prior to the meetings so practitioners were clear about expectations ([4.6.1](#)). Following the compilation of the practitioners' narratives, a decision was made to use the same small story structure for policy narratives. This is based on the Western story-telling approach which tells the story of one central character/theme with a beginning, middle and end ([4.5.4](#)). Although this is a unique way of presenting policy findings, it was felt that it would reflect the narrative model and, as narratives are presented concurrently, would provide consistency. Presenting policy narratives in this way was enabled through the postmodernist and phenomenologist approaches which recognise that there will be inconsistencies, conflicts and unpredictability and that it may not be possible to identify all intentions accurately, especially when there are hidden agendas (Castles, 2004) which may not be fully appreciated until there is a change in power; for example, the proposed policy to send refugees for offshore processing was being legally contested throughout the period of

data collection and therefore, it was not possible to fully evaluate influencing factors which were often masked by political rhetoric.

4.5 Policy analysis: rationale of methods

The WPR approach has been considered in sections [2.2](#) and [4.3.2](#). However, to apply this approach effectively in this study, wider reading was undertaken to fully understand the complexities of adopting analysis of problematisations. Following this, documents were identified by trawling the internet to discover relevant policies. Using words and phrases within these documents, a further search was carried out to identify wider discourse ([Appendix 4](#)) which was essential in carrying out the WPR approach (Bacchi, 2009) ([4.5.4](#)).

Ball (2009) considered conflicting interests in policy creation and suggested that there is a hierarchy within structures that develop policy initiatives: stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) use different capabilities and exercise various powers simultaneously. Those who have alternative viewpoints to dominant ideology are often ignored or identified as being self-interested or inexperienced; their ideas labelled as out-dated or impractical. Therefore, the powerful and dominant group act as gatekeepers to policy formation (Gunter, 2012; Forester and Garratt, 2016). Struggles that emanate from this control have been identified as:

- *Discursive effects* – the limits of what can be said or done.
- *Subjectification effects* – how topics or subjects are organised in the way that the problem is represented.
- *Lived effects* – the impact of the *problem representations* on lives of relevant stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) (Bacchi, 2009).

Consequently, it was important to track manifestation of policy and control at different levels of the ecological system in critiquing the struggles and strategies used by groups to influence refugee and inclusion policy. This was achieved by exploring discourse and problematisation beyond the policy and looking for the range of interpretations, challenges or silences as the policy flowed through different ecological strands ([fig.1](#)).

Additionally, three aspects identified by Trowler (2003) were considered in developing a deeper rationale for the analysis of *problem representations* (Bacchi, 2009):

- Conflict between the intentions and enactment, or rhetoric and practice.
- Variations in discourse, potentially contributing to multiple interpretations impacting on practice.
- Consequences of different interpretations which could have created outcomes that were very different to initial intentions.

This enabled an understanding that policy is not just the written document or rhetoric but is what is carried out and this may differ from the intentions of the policy itself (Ball, 1994).

The impact of these potential conflicts and interpretations needed to be identified throughout data collation and analysis. These were collated on spreadsheets by identifying themes across the discourse ([fig.4](#)). This contributed to interpretations of what constituted as a *problem* needing to be addressed by policy.

4.5.1 Identifying problem representations

Analysis of reputed *problems* generating refugee policy creation required deep consideration of *representations*, rather than 'face value' acceptance of stated aims or objectives (Fitzgerald and Kay, 2016) as political influences were often at play. In doing this, it was important to challenge the stated boundaries of relevant policies created

between November 2020 and April 2022 as well as associated discourse and avoid perceptions that were discrete or self-evident (Bacchi, 2009); for example, not accepting processing of refugees in Rwanda as the response of a *hostile environment* or a procedural response but looking for other motives and explanations lying within wider reactions to migrant populations.

In considering discourse and policy agendas, attention was given to the economic and political environment which would influence choices (Bacchi, 2009; Bacchi and Bonham, 2014; Forester and Garratt, 2016); for example, press releases from politicians and interest groups on publicly available forums were used as part of the policy analysis. This gained importance during the data collection when the Government increasingly introduced policy through social media, rather than using formal structures. Reviewing press releases and speeches ([4.5](#)) allowed investigation of alternative discourses and specific attention was given to ideas that made the rhetoric possible (Bacchi, 2009). It was, therefore, important to consistently reflect on the ebb and flow of influences across Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (1979) ([fig.1](#)) and how these impacted on discourse and policy responses from stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) at different levels of the system.

The policy responses of selected UAs, and schools, provided examples at regional and local levels, but these needed consideration within a wider framework; for example, Popkewitz (1987) recognised that disparities in social conditions in schools often do not relate to the schools themselves but to geographical, racial, class and religious conditions in which they sit. Haug (2017) widened this further when considering inclusive practice, stating that disparities also have a direct impact on international responses and vice versa, especially

when countries have competing initiatives, traditions, and reluctance to introduce challenge.

In summary, when identifying *problem representations*, the WPR approach was an evaluation tool whilst also providing structure to the thesis questions, considering discourse, power, and the impact on practitioners, as well as the refugee child who sits at the heart of this study. Central to the analysis was evaluation of where power lay during this period and how this impacted on policy representations.

4.5.2 Analysis of power

Foucault (1980) suggested that power circulates and rests with different groups at different times, and power shapes who we are as individuals. This is influenced by the acceptance of the controlling power as a benevolent entity (Rose, 2000) which shapes the way that policies are accepted, rejected, or challenged. Policymakers *guide* understanding in relation to issues which need to be *resolved*, linking responses to discursive practice within the location, culture, social and historical concepts of that timeframe (Bacchi, 2009). Within this research, the transfer of policies across layers of the policy system ([fig.2](#)), the mediation of policy within each layer, and challenges towards the policy agenda enabled an understanding of how stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) reacted to different agendas. This was strengthened by the teachers' narratives which complemented published responses of organisations, institutions, and government.

Policymakers often claim that they are trying to *fix* problems, and, by implication, this suggests that there is a problem to *fix* (Bacchi, 2009). When new power groups take over, problems are often identified as errors in previous dominant discourses. However, policy creation does not remain static when groups hold power over an extended period. In

cases such as this, it is rare that the dominant group identifies problems within their own earlier discourse, and they may attempt to address such issues without identifying what the problem actually is (Castles, 2004): ‘policies give shape to “problems”; they do not address them’ (Bacchi, 2009: xi). Thus, policy creation often determines the nature and extent of the *problem* rather than being a response to an identified problem. Adopting a structured examination of policy creation is key to understanding the impact on affected parties ([4.1](#)).

4.5.3 The scope of policy analysis

The term *policy* has been used in broad terms and is not restricted to written policy documents. Consideration of what is carried out is as important as the policy documents themselves (Bacchi, 2009). Thus, interpretation of a range of sources ([Appendix 4](#)), such as policy documents, discourses, press releases, media reports and commentaries, at different levels of the ecological system has provided an understanding of the policies (Ball, 1994, Tosh and Lang, 2006). Identifying *problem representations*, as well as *silences* (Bacchi, 2009), has enabled a deeper understanding of the impact of a range of policies on refugees and supporting agencies as they mediate different priorities, such as entry requirements, eligibility, resourcing, provision, disbursement, and deportation orders. Identifying which groups had access to the discourse, how they gained admission and any limitations placed on them, as well as the dissemination of content by controlling powers, enabled an even deeper understanding of the impact it had on different classes, ethnicities, cultures, or linguistic groups (Foucault, 1991).

Consideration of whether discourse had become outdated, or overshadowed by alternative discourses, was also important as it often indicated *silences* in the system

(Bacchi, 2009). This can be exemplified by organisations using statistics to support policy when they are subsequently judged to be flawed, outdated, or inconsistent. Therefore, the scope of evidence collated within this study ([Appendix 4](#)) needed to be sufficient to enable checks and counter checks and thus validate findings.

4.5.4 Applying the methodology to specific policies

When using the WPR approach, a range of sources were accessed to complement and support the analysis of formal policies ([Appendix 4](#)). These included:

- Wider legislation
- Published press releases
- Debates
- Media responses
- Interest group publications

These sources were chosen because of their influence across the ecological system. A timeline is included before each policy narrative ([Chapter 5](#)), so the chronology of policy creation and response is clear. The content is presented in narrative form, reflecting the structure of practitioner narratives with a beginning, middle and end, as well as a ‘stem’ statement to provide a starting point for the *story*. Although an innovative way of presenting policy analysis, this storytelling approach enabled opportunity to speculate about underlying reasons for policy choices. This was important as the consequences of these policy decisions were unclear during analysis and were still part of government and institutional practice and debate. Therefore, the rationale, hidden agendas and silences became part of the narrative. The underpinning of this narrative structure is explored in

more detail when considering narrative inquiry ([4.6.1](#)) as it originates from narrative research methods (Clarke et al., 2019). The opportunity to use story-mapping was facilitated by creating policy narratives, meaning that the research questions were answered by combining, but not comparing, the data from the policy and narrative strands using the same mapping structure, thus providing a stronger response to the research questions. However, it also means that there are frictions and discordant themes which provide evidence to support future dialogue and CPD ([1.6](#)).

Whilst using a traditional story structure of beginning, middle and end, each part of the policy analysis also answered questions adopted from the work of Bacchi (2009). Moreover, these questions were an echo of the main research questions and therefore when results were combined, it enabled a deep and comprehensive response which addressed the aims of the study. The following questions were considered for each policy:

- *What is the problem of refugees represented to be?* (Beginning)
- *What are the suppositions that underpin the representations?* (Beginning)
- *What are the origins of the problem representations?* (Beginning)
- *What effects are produced by the representations?* (Middle)
- *How can the representations be considered in a different way, and can the silences be identified?* (Middle)
- *What discourses underpin the representations: how are they disseminated or endorsed, and are there any different or conflicting discourses?* (End)

The scope of each question is explored in [section 2.2](#).

4.5.5 Selection of policies

Policies were selected at national, regional, and local level and considered discretely. However, connections across the ecological system ([fig.1](#)) were also evaluated. Initially, the aim was to research the impact of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 on policy representations at all levels, with consideration given to its place within time and space: the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The original focus came from a desire to understand how this act was influencing wider *representations*, including responses to refugees. The reason for this analysis originated from government discourse which highlighted the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 as a priority of the UK Government, following the withdrawal from the European Community, with its aim to end the right to free movement previously held within European law. Subsequently, a decision was taken to focus policy analysis on the period from the passage of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 to the enactment of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, which covered a period of 18-months. It became necessary to concentrate on a specific timeframe to ensure a focused response as there were major events in Afghanistan and Ukraine initiating a wealth of policy responses. In the background, there were also some controversial decisions linked to the passage of the Nationality and Borders Bill through Parliament.

This thesis does not aim to compare different policies but to understand how they exist within the ecological system ([fig.1](#)) and the impact they have on practitioners and therefore, ultimately, on the refugee child. However, to interpret the data and identify themes, some level of comparison naturally occurs (Punch, 2014). For example, in this

thesis, this is evidenced by allocating facets to the WPR questions ([4.5.4](#)) and the open coding (Punch, 2014) used to theme narrative responses ([4.6.5](#)). This comparison, however, was not explicit in the research in the sense that it was not a comparative study in its aims, but merely occurred when allocating responses to data codes. The result was acknowledgement of some aspects of conformity as well as differences which naturally occurred through mediation, inflection, resistance, and misunderstanding (Ball, 2015) ([2.4.2.8](#)). These were fundamental in supporting the identification of practitioners' emotional responses and their ability to challenge *problem representations*: these reactions would be individualistic and hold validity as such ([4.3.3](#)).

4.5.6 Selection of unitary authorities (UA) and schools

The study is situated in the East Midlands and two city councils' policies were chosen for analysis because of relatively high numbers of long-term, non-UK born populations within each city - UA1 54.9%; UA2 26.2% (ONS, n.d.). Both had been awarded government funding to support refugee populations within the timeframe of the study (HO, 2021^f) and both were Cities of Sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers (City of Sanctuary UK, 2017) ([2.5.3](#)). They operated this system in different ways, with UA1 making direct reference to the City of Sanctuary in council policies, and UA2 having distinct roles and policies with fewer direct links between the City of Sanctuary and council policies.

Two anonymised schools were identified, having been selected from the possible 118 settings in UA1 and 109 settings in UA2. Only two schools were selected to allow detailed and deep consideration of policies and documents. The analysis included all published policies as well as other publicly available documents, such as press releases. It also considered published procedures of the two settings relating to their formal and informal

policies using the Bacchi (2009) WPR approach ([4.3.2](#)) as well as links to community projects and resources. The schools were identified because of their media and online presence highlighting work with refugees:

- School 1, in UA1, advertised its status as a Sanctuary School and had a discrete policy relating to inclusion which referred to refugees and asylum seekers. It is relatively unusual for primary schools to apply to be Sanctuary Schools and when selecting schools for this thesis, this setting was the only school in the East Midlands with this status identified during internet searches. Although more schools might have applied, or will be applying, for this status as numbers of refugees increase within the region, this setting had already had the status for approximately four years and therefore theoretically, had established secure links to refugee groups and policies, potentially providing a wealth of material to be analysed.
- School 2, based in UA2, was not a School of Sanctuary, nor did it have a formal policy relating to refugee or asylum seeker inclusion, however, it took part in legal action supporting a child refugee facing deportation, details of which were publicly available and again were easily identified during internet searches. This setting provided an alternative response to provision for refugees outside more formal approaches such as those advocated through School of Sanctuary status. As previously stated, it is not unusual for a school *not* to have this status and the actions of the school community were the focus rather than official recognition by established organisations.

The similarity between the schools was an online and media presence which proactively identified the needs of refugees and sought to improve outcomes for these children. Again, these were individual approaches at setting level which would be considered as unique responses, like the practitioners' narratives, and would hold validity within the combined epistemology of postmodernism and phenomenology. Linking these to the practitioners' narratives enabled consideration of emotional responses which could potentially support challenge, adding evidence to current knowledge and providing CPD materials to enable personal reflection of prevailing discourse and representations ([1.6](#)).

4.6 Narrative inquiry

As previously stated, most narrative meetings took place before the policy analysis. This decision was taken consciously with the aim of the researcher not influencing narrative content unnecessarily (Norton and Early, 2011; Punch, 2014; Reissman, 2015; Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019) by having a deeper knowledge of the *problematizations* beyond the literature read to compile the literature review ([4.6.6](#)), but also because policy was being adjusted to meet changing requirements, such as the Afghanistan and Ukraine crises ([2.1](#)).

4.6.1 The structure of the narrative

The aim of the narrative creation was to enable participants to explore ideas as well as possible outcomes for refugee children in a secure and non-threatening environment. Refugee policy was a contentious area in UK policy at the point of data collection and a format needed to be used which allowed participants to express or challenge commonly

held ideas and processes. In determining how to structure the discussions, a narrative research procedure was identified based on *story completion*. This narrative approach has its roots in psychology research but is gaining influence within the wider research community (Clarke et al., 2019). Based on a similar structure to small stories, the use of *story completion* allows individuals to consider hypothetical situations and create a story plot. Ambiguous stimuli (often a stem sentence) allow participants to create their own responses, linked to motivations, feelings and behaviours which arise through the provocations, allowing them to externalise these and express concerns and actions through imaginary replies (Kitzinger and Powell, 1995; Clarke et al., 2019). These can often be more insightful than reflections on real events (Bamberg, 2011) as they allow the participant to postulate and explore aspects which are outside their personal experience, as well as to build on personal experiences. It enables release of subconscious thought and addresses unconscious viewpoints, or aspects which the participant may not want to admit due to personal reservations; for example, conflict with socially desired responses (Clarke et al., 2019). It also creates opportunity for the participant to feel less accountable for their response by drawing on *plausible deniability* linked to the social constructions of the topic (Clarke and Braun, 2013; Clarke et al., 2019). By having several opportunities for participants to create different narratives and thus, repeat the procedure, it allowed them to build on each experience and reposition themselves within the narrative creation, changing elements as they became more familiar with the topic and potential dilemmas (Bamberg, 2011; Georgakopoulou, 2013); for example, Alison makes explicit references as to how she is positioning herself within the story and how this allows her to empathise with the characters (5.2).

In this thesis, stem sentences and photographs were used to provide a foundation and initiate the storytelling. Initially, the aim was to use photographs without a stem sentence but in piloting the process (Bell, 2010; Denscombe, 2014; Punch, 2014) ([4.6.3](#)), it became evident that participants might find it difficult to construct the story within the parameters of the study without having a *hook* on which they could *hang* the story content. Without this support, it may have become problematic to address the research questions fully. It was also important to consider the best use of the photographs to ensure quality narratives (Rose, 2014). Therefore, in the first two meetings which enabled the telling of two or three stories, photographs were shown, and a simple stem sentence ([fig.6](#)) was given to each participant to enable them to structure their story. Subsequently, the choice of photograph was negotiated, with each participant having the opportunity to bring their own photograph(s) or to choose from eight examples which were sent to them prior to the meeting (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) ([Appendix 1](#)). In encouraging them to view the photographs before the meeting, the intention was to allow deeper discussion (Rose, 2014) and to permit them to create their own *hook* and stem sentence once they were secure in the storytelling process. The aim was to allow each participant to create a dialogue around the photograph and share their own story which might be factual (Cresswell and Poth, 2016), or hypothetical (Kitzinger and Powell, 1995; Clarke et al., 2019).

Publicly available photographs were selected on the basis that the media was identified, by both Foucault (1972) and Bacchi (2009), as having a major influence in shaping discourse (Holohan and Featherstone, 2003), often promoting agendas which are adopted or utilised by political activists (Wilmott, 2017) or political parties (Mancini et al., 2021): see [4.7.2](#) for ethical considerations in relation to their use.

Stem sentences summarising the newspaper description of the content of the photograph but also making additional links to the East Midlands.

Photograph 1 (Duley, 2017)

Excluded material: see statement on title page

Stem sentence: *The individuals in the photograph have extended family who live in the East Midlands. Tell me their story.*

Photograph 2 (Fuller, 2020)

Excluded material: see statement on title page

Stem sentence: *The child in photograph 2 is a lone child arriving on UK soil. Tell me their story.*

Photograph 3 (Juarez, 2020)

Excluded material: see statement on title page

Stem sentence: *Photograph 3 shows a group of children who might be siblings. One is holding a photograph of a blown-out window. These children have not been granted asylum and need to return to their country of origin. Tell me their story.*

Participants chose their own stem sentences for subsequent stories (photographs 4-11: [Appendix 1](#)).

Figure 6: Summary of Stem Sentences

Photographs from the media aimed to stimulate storytelling whilst discovering links that participants made to policy agendas, with the potential to identify humanitarian issues, possible threats, or organisational management (Mancini et al., 2021) as well as inclusive policy agendas (Phillimore et al., 2021) and position their place within these (Shuman, 2015). Details of the stem sentence and photographic stimulus were included and agreed as part of each narrative account to provide background to the subsequent narrative and analysis. The photographs, originating from media outlets, were freely available online, reflecting the type of photographs used in diverse publications with different discourse positions; for example, photographs taken by Powell and Hilaire (2016); Duley (2017) and Juarez (2020), professional photographers who shared their work relating to refugee journeys in the UK media ([fig.6](#)) ([Appendix 1](#)).

After piloting the study and establishing structures, the meeting format adopted the following pattern:

- At the first meeting, all participants were shown photograph 1 and given the same stem sentence ([fig.6](#)) which placed the storytelling around asylum seekers with young children trying to join extended family in the East Midlands.
- At the second meeting, participants were shown two photographs ([fig.6](#)) and were able to choose whether they narrated one or two stories. Participants were told that photograph 2 showed an unaccompanied child hoping to join extended family in the East Midlands, whereas photograph 3 showed unaccompanied children who needed to return to the country of origin because their asylum application was refused.

- In preparation for the third meeting, participants were sent eight photographs ([Appendix 1](#)) and asked to build a story around one, or more, of the photographs. They could opt to select their own photograph(s) from a publicly available source. However, each participant used the given photographs rather than sourcing their own. In this instance, a stem sentence was not provided, and each participant created their own story around their selection.
- All narratives were agreed and finalised with each participant throughout the procedure.

As previously stated, when discussing the photographs, it was important to reflect on the three dimensions of narrative enquiry: temporality, personal and social issues, and place, as these would impact on the ever-changing nature of the narrative (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Downey, Schaefer and Clandinin, 2014). This was particularly important during the period of narrative collection as refugee issues were often headline news in relation to Channel crossings, the Afghanistan crisis and the Nationality and Borders Bill 2022.

4.6.2 Recruitment

Five teachers were recruited from the East Midlands; the restricted number allowed deep, thoughtful and meaningful narratives to be obtained (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) ([4.3.3](#)) also ensuring that those who were recruited were able to devote time to lengthy meetings and engage fully with the research (Bell, 2010). This limited number is consistent with small story research (Georgakopoulou, 2015). As previously stated, the East Midlands region was selected because several cities in the area have high numbers of non-UK residents ([3.6.1](#)), including refugees and asylum seekers ([UA1] City Council, 2016^b) and

there was a gap in research as to how relevant policies affected teachers in the area. Developing practitioner narratives from the same region as the policy narratives ensured that participants had familiarity with regional and local issues and that they were drawn from similar social and cultural areas (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Additionally, when arranging meetings, it seemed easier to carry out face-to-face discussions with a short commute, especially when travel restrictions were introduced as part of covid health and safety guidance (The National Archives, n.d.). In practice, a national lockdown was in force when meetings took place which meant that they were organised online rather than in person, thus meeting ethical guidelines for the thesis (Keele University, 2020) ([Appendix 3](#)).

During the recruitment process, teachers were asked if they had connections with the two schools in the study or if they had contributed to policy creation at regional or national level. None of the participants made any declarations of interest and therefore were recruited to the study. This initial scrutiny ensured that the teachers were not influenced by being part of a collective group directly linked to the policy creation being evaluated and therefore potentially biased towards the institutions. This allowed them to draw on personal and wider collective beliefs, rather than on their loyalty to a specific group or establishment. It also supported the postmodernist and phenomenologist epistemology of the study with the aim of not being critical or judgemental towards any educational establishment, group, or individual, but to improve social justice for all groups and avoid detriment to any participants or any identified group (Kara, 2020).

A fundamental aim of the process was to develop thoughtful and deep narratives which reflected the essence of participants' individual and collective beliefs and values

(Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). To achieve this, the wellbeing of each contributor was of paramount importance throughout the study (4.7) both to uphold the validity of the discourse as well as maintain the interest and engagement of participants throughout (ibid). Participants were asked to commit to the study for 8-10 months to allow time for meetings, to write and agree narratives and for follow-up meetings if required. This necessitated a high level of engagement and so the aim was to approach people who expressed a willingness to offer time to the study (Bell, 2010) as this was crucial to success. Flexibility was required in timing the discussions, to allow participants to meet their professional commitments whilst also supporting the research (Denscombe, 2014). As the participants were recruited through personal links, it was easier to find individuals who were prepared to engage in extended dialogue, negotiate several narratives, and reflect on emotional aspects, as addressed in the ethical considerations (Spatz, 2017). It also meant that two people who were approached felt confident to withdraw at the outset after becoming aware of the level of commitment required. There were no withdrawals once the process began as the final group of contributors were fully engaged in the process. When carrying out the procedure, it became evident that it was easier to work with a maximum of two participants at one time, rather than try to work with five people at the same time (Denscombe, 2014). This enabled a focused response and time to create the narrative and share it with the relevant participant soon after the initial storytelling. The first two participants were keen for meetings to take place regularly and for completion to be within two months. This concise timescale enabled the process to be reviewed and adjusted in time for the next group of participants to begin their narrative process.

Participants were not recruited based on age or gender although it was anticipated that it would be easier to find female participants as there are more females in the teaching profession (DfE, 2021^c). This proved to be the case, as four out of five participants were female. The target was to recruit participants with a range of experience from diverse educational settings (Denscombe, 2014); four were recruited from primary education and one from secondary education. Each participant provided a brief professional biography as part of their first narrative. The biographies demonstrated that they had distinct professional profiles: different lengths of service; a range of roles and responsibilities in various settings including maintained, private, trust or academy provision. All were given detailed information about the research aims and their role, and provided the necessary consent (Keele University, 2020).

4.6.3 The narrative process

To establish the structure of the narrative process, a small pilot was carried out with a trainee teacher who agreed to test the online format of a narrative discussion and tell stories around some of the photographic content. The aim was to address any issues and ensure that meetings would be effective, provide usable data and avoid any problems for participants (Bell, 2010; Denscombe, 2014). Minor issues were identified, such as the need for a stem sentence to support the narrative, and these were addressed immediately which supported the effectiveness of the storytelling ([4.6.1](#)).

Although there was an option to carry out interviews face-to-face or online, all interviews were carried out using Microsoft Teams as this element of the research took place during national restrictions for the coronavirus pandemic between March 2020 and December 2021 (The National Archives, n.d.). In meeting changing guidance on social distancing, it

was easier to plan to use online systems (Denscombe, 2014). Anecdotally, it became evident that some individuals felt more comfortable talking in their own homes, away from pressures of the workplace, and at a time which was convenient and allowed them to meet their wider commitments (ibid). As contributors were away from the workplace, it helped to address potential challenges in obtaining detached responses as they were able to create stories outside their work environment (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). The online format altered the expected structure of a face-to-face meeting; meetings appeared to be shorter and the number of questions that potentially could have been asked seemed fewer. On reflection, it seemed that the power dynamic had altered, placing more control with the narrator, and allowing them to determine the structure of the process (Downes, 2021). As each participant had access to a computer, or similar device, and were comfortable with the technology, it proved an effective way of storytelling and obtaining relevant recordings to support written narratives (Denscombe, 2014).

Three meetings took place with each participant - see [4.6.1](#) for details on the content of the meetings and the structure of the narrative. Recordings of the discussions were used to create a narrative report which was co-constructed between each participant and the researcher. A transcript of each recording was automatically created by the Microsoft Teams application and, although there were some typographical errors in each transcript, it allowed the narrative to be transcribed quickly as a basic structure had already been created, enabling gaps between meetings to be shorter. It also ensured that each participant had a recording of the meeting and therefore, could clarify the exact narrative content. The focused structure meant that three to four stories were created with each participant in three meetings, rather than the six initially envisaged, although all

participants agreed to further meetings, if required. No participants withdrew from the study once they had agreed to start, and all actively took part in co-constructing the narratives (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Downey, Schaefer and Clandinin, 2014; Cresswell and Poth, 2016) with some stating that it was enlightening as it allowed them to consider their experiences and vocalise previously unconsidered aspects of practice (Denscombe, 2014).

As previously discussed, it was important to see the practitioners as both individuals and part of the collective of education practitioners (3.3.4), and to use storytelling to enable them to explore conflicts between different aspects of their conscience and socialisation. The process placed emphasis on subjectivity, description, interpretation, and agency and considered their feelings, beliefs, and perceptions (Denscombe, 2014). Although they were encouraged to tell their own stories and ultimately decided whether they felt the ending was positive, negative, or ambiguous, it was possible to alter the narrative arc by asking questions or adding information about policy interventions, such as deportation orders, which enabled participants to dig deeper into their understanding, beliefs, and values. These interjections became part of the final narrative and were agreed as final versions. The epistemology of this approach was based on an interpretation of narrative accounts which suggests that there is an element of profound knowledge which can be understood through emotional responses and stories (Ellingson, 2017; Kara, 2020).

Traditionally, narratives are available in a variety of forms and are embedded in a range of experiences; for example, social, professional, organisational, and interactional (Atkinson and Delamont, 2006). Nevertheless, each narrative needed to be analysed to ascertain how each narrator constructed a particular event, how they justified specific

actions, and how they evaluated others within their narrative: the accounts were not accepted at face value but interrogated to identify meaning beyond the surface of the narrative arc (Atkinson and Delamont, 2006; Norton and Early, 2011); for example, when Kate was constructing her third narrative (5.4.3), she alluded to some personal experiences. Questioning enabled her to expand this further and this was added to her story as an example of how she had seen policy enacted in practice. It was accepted that the accounts were provisional and that narratives were open to change depending on life events, as well as how these life events changed individual experiences (Freeman, 2015). Each piece of knowledge generated its own truthfulness and authenticity of experience fixed in time (Reissman, 1993; Gabriel, 2015) which is held within the epistemology of this thesis (4.3).

As the narratives were collated over four months, they were open to change, but it was also acknowledged that they only held true validity within that period as individual viewpoints could change after the narrative was agreed. The situation was constantly changing; for example, during the period of the research, record numbers of migrants attempted the Channel crossing (BBC News, 2021^c, 2022^a) and issues arose in relation to how this increase was to be managed (Gillett, 2021). Additionally, the UK Government created a scheme to support Afghan refugees evacuated after withdrawal of coalition troops from Afghanistan in August 2021 (MoD, 2021). Certain narratives refer to some of these events and therefore this places them within this timeframe. It was, therefore, important to consider the temporality of experience and the impact that this would have on different narratives; the context of the discussions and the uncertainty of the content which could be open to interpretation (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Atkinson and Delamont, 2006; Downey, Schaefer and Clandinin, 2014). This approach is contained

within the postmodernist epistemology underpinning this research which accepts that perceptions are open to change (Punch, 2014). Nevertheless, the trustworthiness of the narrative was the crucial validity for the research; this was based on plausibility of the content within context; confirmation of the content with the participant; and coherence within the aims of the research (Reissman, 1993).

4.6.4 The small story approach

In choosing an approach to collate narratives, it was important to acknowledge that participants would have different experiences, and this could mean that they would adjust their narrative to compensate for this (Bruner, 1986); for example, when there was a gap between the ideal and reality, or between personal viewpoints and those of society (Reissman, 1993). We can see this reflected in Daisy's second narrative ([5.10.2](#)) when she states what she thinks should happen and then becomes uncertain when she considers what might happen in practice. This approach required an acceptance that each narrative was a product of social context (Atkinson and Delamont, 2006) and that there was also a 'situational context' within the storytelling (Kraus, 2006:107). Tentative questioning allowed the participant to revisit the scenario from a range of perspectives and thoughtfully question their own perceptions and beliefs in a supportive environment; for example, in Mike second narrative ([5.8.2](#)), the following question was asked:

Are there opportunities to challenge any of that - to make the outcomes better – or is that route set in stone?

Mike reflects during this narrative, but then in the following meeting, we see a change in emphasis in the narrative content, ultimately leading to a positive ending. Additionally, it was critical to reflect on what was included, or excluded, and how silences within the

discourse were reflected and acknowledged (Reissman, 1993; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Georgakopoulou, 2006; Slembrouk, 2015). Ultimately, this was included as part of the narrative analysis and combined with the policy analysis ([Chapter 6](#)).

Narratives are often associated with storytelling of major life events (Watson, 2007). Small stories have often been deemed as insignificant in comparison, dealing with reflections on the ordinary, or fragmented episodes (Georgakopoulou, 2006). Nevertheless, they have become increasingly relevant to research by allowing individuals to explore multiple versions of themselves, enabling them to consider issues of identity within personal and professional situations (Georgakopoulou, 2006; Bamberg, 2011; Norton and Early, 2011). Small story research was chosen as the preferred method for this thesis, rather than more formal *big story* research with its focus on a life-changing event or experience (Georgakopoulou, 2015). Small stories allow the telling of on-going events as well as future, or hypothetical events (Georgakopoulou, 2006; Hyvärinen, 2015). The aim was to enable discussion of possible responses to incidents which may not have occurred within the life experiences of the participant but were part of their wider consciousness (Georgakopoulou, 2015) as well as creating opportunities for them to consider alternative possibilities or viewpoints within the security of storytelling, reflecting any changes in policy which occurred whilst they were undertaking the narrative process ([2.1](#)).

The recognised characteristics of small stories allowed discussion of non-chronological events which may happen every day or be ordinary, as well as being outside specific environments; thus, allowing co-construction between the narrator and the researcher (Watson, 2007; Georgakopoulou, 2015). However, this raised complications in relation to ownership of the story and how individuals were able to establish a sense of self beyond

the researcher; this needed to be addressed in considering the co-creation of the story (Bamberg, 2006). It was considered as part of the narrative analysis although, in general, the participant told their story without interruption from beginning to end. Occasionally, a question was asked to illicit further detail, but this question was then added to the narrative and became part of the story. Sometimes a question enabled the storyteller to take a different route within the narrative, in which case the story sequence reflected the extension to the narrative (Reissman, 1993); for example, in Jessica's third narrative the following alteration to the story arc was postulated and a question posed:

Unfortunately, the asylum wasn't granted for these children, and they are told to return to their country of origin. Is it possible to challenge this?

This made Jessica change the outcome to her story and consider challenges to practice that she might not have contemplated before.

The structure of the small story facilitated the possibility of each individual drawing on their experiences as members of social groups, as well as on their beliefs, hopes, fears and habits which enabled them to consider complex identities and affiliations across their personal and professional lives (Watson, 2007; Bamberg, 2011; Van de Mieroop, 2015); for example, in Mike's second story, he considers his relationship with his Headteacher and how this would inform any challenge ([5.8.2](#)). Kraus (2006) considered struggles that individuals face in establishing a clear identity in modern society. He stated that they may be encouraged to reject old links, which previously gave them security, whilst also regulating their actions to gain more freedom within social structures which, in turn, could create the risk of skewed responses and inaccuracies. There was, therefore, the potential for participants to be faced with multiple choices within the narratives which needed to

be managed by questioning to ensure clarity (Watson, 2007). Nevertheless, it was important that they could reflect their collective identity should they wish (Bruner, 1991) whilst also enabling them to defy predetermined expectations (Van de Mieroop, 2015; Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019). This personal negotiation enabled them to position themselves within the research parameters and consider their place within the story structure (Kraus, 2006; Watson, 2007). Through the discussions, narrators were given the opportunity to reposition their 'relationship to dominant ideologies' and 'reconfigure dominant ideologies' (Shuman, 2015:47) This can be seen in several narratives when the narrator began to question the scope and effectiveness of inclusive practices previously accepted without question.

Juzwik and Ives (2010) reflected on the premise that teachers have often been perceived as creating identities in relation to their working lives, rather than reforming ideals through discursive processes, a factor underpinning this thesis ([1.1](#)). Previously, Kraus (2006:105) suggested that 'societies no longer provide models of coherence for our fragmented experiences'. It was interesting to note that some participants articulated this issue within their narratives and commented that the discussion allowed them to consider previously unexplored issues (Denscombe, 2014). Facilitating the opportunity to reflect on ideological perspectives and responses was an important part of the co-construction: this enabled participants to create their narratives on personal reflections but also to develop a sense of self through the narrative activity (Bamberg, 2006; Kraus, 2006; Watson, 2007). They were able, therefore, to consider their position in relation to wider world issues whilst also weighing up the social world in the present, drawing the two worlds together and judging their place within these two constructs (Bamberg, 2006).

4.6.5 Narrative analysis

There were potentially three ways to carry out the analysis of the story completion narratives:

- Horizontal patterning in a broad way across the data set.
- Structured horizontal patterning with reference to analytic research questions.
- Vertical patterning called 'story mapping' (Clarke et al., 2019:12).

For this study, it was decided to use story mapping, looking for key elements in each story. This matched the story approach being used which would be unique to each storyteller and narrative and, therefore, there would be no comparison with other narratives. The key elements can be summarised as open coding of positive, negative and ambiguous language as well as references to inclusion/refugee policy and challenge ([fig.4](#)) ([4.1.1](#)). This required identification of the beginning, middle and end of each story (following Western cultural conventions of storytelling as these were more familiar to the narrators) and identifying responses at each stage under broad categories of negative (N), ambiguous (A), or positive (P) in relation to the research parameters (Clarke et al., 2019). The words or phrases used in each part of the story enabled coding to take place under these categories; for example, participants often used negative language at the start of their stories when describing the lives of refugees travelling to the UK, whereas their language often became positive in the middle of their stories when reflecting on experiences in UK schools. However, this is a simplified account of the story content which was influenced by practitioners considering external influences, such as deportation orders which instigated ambiguous or negative phrases or words. Fig. 7 gives an overview of aspects considered in carrying out the vertical story mapping.

Vertical Story Mapping		
Factor	Evidence	Question
Language or word use - indicating a positive, negative, or ambiguous response	Words such as trauma, fear, relief, anxiety, happy, smiling	Q 2.2.5
References to inclusion or inclusive practice	Policy responses or ethos (specific or implied), and how these impacted on the story structure	Q 2.2.1 Q 2.2.2 Q 2.2.3 Q 2.2.4
References to immigration/refugee policy	At national, regional, local, or setting, and impact at different points in the story	Q 2.2.1 Q 2.2.2 Q 2.2.3 Q 2.2.4
Challenges/potential challenges, to school/education policy in responding to need	Specific, implied, or raised through individuals questioning their own practice. <i>Silences</i> within the narrative	Q 2.2.1 Q 2.2.4 Q 2.2.5 Q 2.2.6
Challenges to wider immigration/refugee policy	At national, regional, local, or setting - specific, implied, or raised through individuals questioning their own practice. <i>Silences</i> within the narrative	Q 2.2.1 Q 2.2.4 Q 2.2.5 Q 2.2.6
Impact of media coverage	Potential influence on narrative content. Identification of personal and social issues arising from this	Q 2.2.1 Q 2.2.2 Q 2.2.3 Q 2.2.5 Q 2.2.6

Figure 7: Vertical Story Mapping

Once vertical mapping was completed for all five participants, it was then possible to look at responses in different stories and begin to answer the study questions ([Chapter 6](#)). Furthermore, in adopting this approach, it was hoped that this would make the stories accessible to other members of the teaching profession, informing CPD outside the parameters of this study. This would be enabled through discussion of issues raised in the narratives in [Chapter 5](#) (Van den Hoonaard, 2013) with subsequent consideration of

whether the positive, ambiguous, and negative responses hold significance for other teachers. The narratives are therefore an integral part of the main study but also a standalone element that could be used to inform and advance professional dialogue, enhancing provision and outcomes for teaching staff and children. Participants were aware of this aim prior to creating the narratives as details were provided in the overview of the study and consent form as well as in initial discussions around the research. Consequently, and without prompting, they endeavoured to structure their stories around these parameters, often identifying from the outset whether they intended to have a positive, negative, or ambiguous outcome but allowing the language within the story to follow the journey of the child and therefore be spontaneous as events emerged within the narrative. Interestingly, on occasions, this was amended as the story was created and participants altered the story structure whilst voicing the narrative (Perrino, 2015). Sometimes, when clarification was requested on a specific point, this led to the participant altering the content as they redefined statements and reflected on potential outcomes. This created an unintended consequence of storytelling in providing a learning opportunity for the teller, possibly a contributory factor of carrying out the interviews online (Downes, 2021).

4.6.6 Validity and reliability

As discussed in the ethical principles of this thesis ([4.7.1](#)), all data and participant consent forms were stored on a password protected secure cloud location whilst all contributions were anonymised using pseudonyms. The narratives were co-constructed ([4.6.4](#)) between each participant and the researcher (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Downey, Schaefer and Clandinin, 2014; Cresswell and Poth, 2016), and were organised and shaped into a story

with a beginning, middle and end (Cresswell and Poth, 2016) with the emphasis on whether the participants saw themselves reflected in the narrative, rather than the narrative being an exact reflection of the discussion (Reissman, 1993; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). In considering the aims of the research, as well as the interactions between each participant and the researcher, the aim was to consider the narrative arc and where the narrator positioned themselves (Bamberg, 2006; Kraus, 2006).

As the narrative was co-constructed, it was important to consider my personal beliefs and reflect on how these influenced the creation of the narrative (Punch, 2014; Reissman, 2015; Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019). Norton and Early (2011) commented that the researcher is often hidden behind the text, but this can hide their values, ideologies and experiences which will inevitably shape the research and findings (Denscombe, 2014). In turn, the content of the narratives can also impact on the researcher's sense of the world and personal values. This, therefore, needed to be considered and addressed within the research parameters (ibid). This was done by allowing the narrator to tell their own story as much as possible and only intervening when suggesting policy initiatives which might influence outcomes. Occasionally, participants were asked to expand their story content with reference to personal experiences. In managing my personal impact, it was possible to explore challenging themes in professional negotiations outside the narrative process (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) with colleagues and thesis supervisors. However, this was rarely needed due to the storyteller having ownership of their story and checking the content of the final narrative before it was included in the thesis.

4.6.7 The relationship between narrator and researcher

Ownership of the story needed to be identified throughout the process and consideration needed to be given to status, power, moral and ethical stances during the interactions (Denscombe, 2014; Shuman, 2015). It was important to consider whether the power relationship during the narrative process ever became unintentionally coercive, or overly collaborative. The recruitment process supported a cooperative approach built on mutual respect. This ensured that intimidating relationships were avoided and supported validity and reliability in the co-construction of the narrative; any coercive relationships would also have been unethical. The collaborative and enabling discussions facilitated the narrative creation (Norton and Early, 2011) and were an essential part of the process as articulated by Kate (5.4) during and after the process. The aim, throughout, was to ensure that, 'the subjectivity of the researcher [did] not stand in the way, nor... at the centre' but was just one aspect in the process which needed to be specifically addressed (Reissman, 2015:234). The essence of the relationship was that I aimed to be a 'good listener rather than questioner' and the participant was a 'narrator rather than a respondent' (Slembrouck, 2015:250). This was achieved by limiting the number of questions and allowing the storyteller to follow their own narrative arc. This can be evidenced by the limited number of questions in the stories which reveal the main interventions by the researcher (Chapter 5). Recognition and effective response to the potential of power and privilege was key to establishing a valuable narrative (Lainson, Braun and Clarke, 2019). My aim, as the audience and co-creator was merely to resolve ambiguity as well as condense and unite the different narratives to provide clarity (Bamberg, 2011).

Georgakopoulou (2013) contemplated the *positioning* of the narrator and how they identify their moral landscape within the narration. Addressing this within the study required consideration of the following:

- Where each participant placed themselves in relation to other characters within the story, and how events were sequenced in relation to social or professional categories; for example, some narrators began the process seeing themselves as providers of education, but by the end of the process had taken up a role of protector or protagonist in challenging policy decisions.
- Where the narrator placed themselves when telling the story and how they saw themselves within the narrative. Again, there are a range of examples, with some placing themselves firmly within the narrative, whilst others seeing themselves as a spectator or witness to events.
- Enabling participants to make sense of the roles of narrator and character. It was important to reflect on whether the narrator was constructing *the world* in a particular way, or whether *the world* was constructed in such a way as to make the narrator appear to be subjected to it and, therefore, not having independent action and thought (Bamberg, 2011). This can be seen repeatedly within the narratives as narrators constantly adjust their position, particularly when dealing with changes to the narrative arc which were introduced to challenge their perceptions of the status quo.

This enabled reflection on who the participant *actually was* at the time of the meeting, rather than how their identity was expressed within the story itself. The teller was placing themselves within a fictional *and* a real world and thus, reflecting on how the two

correlated. This positioning was an important part of the analysis (Reissman, 1993; Georgakopoulou, 2013).

4.7 Ethical principles

Data was sourced from two lines of enquiry: policy analysis and narrative creation with individual teachers ([fig.3](#)). Although the work considers policies relating to refugees, no refugees were approached to take part in the research and therefore, there was no negative impact on their wellbeing (Punch, 2014). All policy documents were intended for public use and were found on unrestricted public forums; the names of schools and UAs were redacted from all sources. This underpinned the overall rationale with the aim of considering conflict between different public policy requirements and the impact on individual teachers (Denscombe, 2014). The aim of the research was to inform and close knowledge gaps; not harm any group or profession (Punch, 2014). Integrity was maintained when considering the documents by ensuring transparency in relation to the choices made within the study (Mintrom, 2010). Additionally, discussions with colleagues and supervision of my work by my PhD. supervisors ensured that my personal opinions had minimal influence on the quality of the work. Challenges to my perceptions and written work enabled me to see a range of viewpoints and therefore helped mask personal bias during the narrative discussions and analysis. Discussion and reflection also ensured that others could follow the analytical procedures during the process as they were clarified through revisiting any areas of ambiguity (*ibid*).

4.7.1 Ethical approval relating to participant recruitment

Ethical approval was sought and obtained based on specific recruitment benchmarks (Keele University, 2020) ([Appendix 3](#)). Participation in the study was voluntary and based on informed consent; all participants were given written details of the research as well as a consent form which had been agreed as part of the approval. Additionally, they were able to ask for further information at the first meeting as well as throughout the narrative process (Bell, 2010; Denscombe, 2014; Punch, 2014).

The recruitment criteria ensured that participants did not have links to the chosen UAs and schools, and this minimised impact on their professional roles. Each participant adopted a pseudonym which was used to identify and group their contributions; these were kept securely throughout, again minimising impact on their professional roles whilst meeting data protection legislation (GOV UK, n.d.). As participants were approached through personal connections, they were not identified through any databases, including social media. They were contacted, having expressed an initial interest in taking part in the study, and then information was sent to them by email. Following this email contact, online meetings were arranged at mutually convenient times. The pseudonym for each contributor allowed data to be stored anonymously in a secure cloud location which was password protected (Denscombe, 2014).

Although participants were aware of opportunities to be signposted to support networks if they felt any distress during discussions, this was not necessary, and they commented that the procedure was a positive and supportive process. Again, although participants were aware of the possibility of outside agencies being contacted if safeguarding issues arose, this was not necessary as no such issues were raised (Punch, 2014).

Social justice was a fundamental aim of this study but potentially could create challenges for participants as it could raise emotive issues. Nevertheless, social justice is seen as a positive force in research, aiming to achieve more than merely avoiding harm to participants (Kara, 2020), instead demonstrating a positive ethical stance within the wider ethical approval framework (ibid). Participants were told, in advance, that they would be asked to talk about photographs showing refugees and were given the opportunity to withdraw up until the point when narratives were finally agreed. The selected photographs were used to evoke narratives around policy impact, rather than strong emotional reactions linked to some harrowing events that have happened to child refugees. Therefore, fewer ethical issues relating to emotional stress were expected to emerge, although potential issues were considered and addressed as part of the ethics application (Keele University, 2020).

The narratives provide an accessible overview of the teachers' thoughts, challenges, and conflicts whilst also providing an indication of potential silences. They were reviewed and amended by the participants prior to analysis and inclusion in the final research. The purpose of this negotiation was to do justice to the emotional impact on the individual participants, and feedback from them was used creatively to gain a deeper understanding of their responses and beliefs (Kara, 2020) in relation to their interpretation of problem representations and discourse whilst also producing their own discourse which is open to future analysis (1.6). The collation of policy and practitioner narratives enable the research questions to be answered (Chapter 6), facilitating a deeper understanding of the impact of policy on teachers (Denscombe, 2014).

4.7.2 Use of media photographs within the ethical framework

Narrative frameworks have become increasingly popular in allowing storytellers to compose narratives of similar length, form and content and avoid lengthy narratives that can be problematic to analyse (Greenier and Moodie, 2021). In constructing the methodology for this research, the intention was to consider issues such as these in developing the storytelling approach whilst focusing participants on the policy areas under consideration without being overly prescriptive. Therefore, consideration was given to the use of photographs as a data collection tool. This has become popular over the last thirty years in supporting a range of co-produced research projects (James, 2023). Photographs have been used to illicit narrative accounts in a range of research arenas but often these relate to images provided by the respondent - taken or chosen specifically for the research. However, instead of adopting the increasingly popular method of 'photovoice' in this study, a decision was taken to provide photographs from media sources to enable a wider group of participants to contribute to the storytelling, including those who might have limited experience with refugee groups and therefore would not be able to source their own photographs easily. In addition, this method removed any ethical dilemmas relating to participants taking their own photographs, including gaining approval from people in the images (Greenier and Moodie, 2021; James, 2023) whilst allowing participants to consider scenarios beyond their personal experience. There were, however, some similarities relating to the use of media images and the merits of using 'photovoice' as a research tool. The media photographs were used to scaffold and streamline the process, add coherence and consistency to the research design, and tap into narrative knowledge, stories and identities through a structured approach to support

analysis (Greenier and Moodie, 2021). Photographs can enable participants to provide richer accounts by connecting with the image (ibid). They can also empower the storyteller especially when *they* choose the images to explore which was an option for the participants in this research - they adopted this to some degree in meetings two and three ([4.6.1](#)). Thus, the use of photographs enabled participants to be directed towards policy areas of interest whilst the storytelling element assisted them in considering their perceptions and experiences, exploring wider concepts of *knowledge* and *truth* (Bacchi, 2009).

The use of photographs from the media aimed to provide a gateway into teachers' understanding of policy as the media has been seen to influence *knowledge* and *truths* around specific phenomena (Foucault, 1972; Bacchi, 2009; Anderson and Blinder, 2019). This aspect was articulated by Kate:

A photographer arrives and takes this picture which is sold to newspapers all over the world. The newspapers in the UK all tell different stories about this image, and other images, depending on the reaction they want to get from people. These images are emotive. They all show situations that look traumatic. They would choose different images if they wanted to be positive (Kate:[5.4.4](#)).

It was therefore important to select images which reflected messaging at the time when the stories were being collated. All the photographs chosen by the researcher exemplified images in the media during the period between 2016-2020, echoing the composition of ethnic groups seeking refuge at that time ([2.5.1.3](#); [5.1.4.1](#)). These photographs also portrayed wider political discourse in the UK which was often reflected in media coverage. As explained previously, images of Ukrainian refugees were not prominent in the media

when the storytelling took place ([4.3.4](#)) and although there were images of the evacuation of Afghanistan, many of these showed distressing scenes as Afghan citizens tried to access flights out of the country. Following the ethical guidelines (Keele University, 2020), such distressing images were avoided to protect the wellbeing of participants. However, time was taken in choosing photographs to avoid selecting pictures showing one viewpoint. Therefore, there were images of individuals, small groups and larger gatherings, with some being clearly set in geographical contexts whilst others were more ambiguous in relation to the setting. In addition, there were a selection of photographs depicting scenes from peri-migration and post-migration contexts to allow the stories to start from different points in the migration.

In essence, the photographs reflect the policy research methodology in the study in providing an entrance point (Bacchi, 2009) to the narratives and wider discussion rather than each photograph being analysed in depth by the narrator. In nearly all cases, the storyteller quickly moved away from the photographic content and began to tell a story based on their own understanding as exemplified by:

Alison - I see more than just a picture here ([5.2.1](#))

Kate - This photograph raises questions for me ([5.4.3](#)), and

Mike - This reminds me of the current situation with the RNLI lifeboats being criticised for picking up refugees in the Channel and all the current policy issues surrounding that ([5.8.3](#)).

The images, therefore, are fixed within their own time and space but also in the time and space of the narrator. This corresponds to the wider theoretical stance of *knowledge* and

truth associated with power discourse (Taha, 2019) and whether the photographs were situated within the time and space, including the social space, in which the practitioners 'moved' at the time of the narration (Perrino, 2015).

In choosing the photographs, it was important to consider the credibility of the sources following the same criteria used to test the validity and reliability of all internet documents:

- *Authoritativeness* – linked to the media publication
- *Trustworthiness* – the statement of purpose and legitimacy of the publication, including its 'currency'
- *Popularity* – whether it was typical of content at the time (Denscombe, 2014).

Initially, before discussion with my supervisors, the photographs were not included in the thesis as they were merely starting points for the discussions and the practitioners' moved away from the images as they recalled memories, or their own internal dialogue as exemplified by Daisy:

I've seen recently, stories in the news where people are being displaced for a variety of reasons, even maybe... the weather conditions... From the majority of things I've read... when they're coming over from camps overseas, it's mostly like... they're not going to come over. That's what I see. That's my perception anyway...

(Daisy:[5.10.3](#))

As previously stated, these images are fixed in time and place and therefore they would have little relevance to future elicitation of storytelling. Their inclusion in the thesis document reflects the potential adoption of any research methodology by future

researchers when they consider ‘to what extent *could* [media photographs of this type] be transferred to other instances’ [inflection in the original text] (Denscombe, 2014:299). Therefore, it is anticipated that *these specific photographs would not be used* in future CPD opportunities whereas sections of the *narratives could be used* to provide foundations for discussions and storytelling. Hence, the inclusion of the photographs in this thesis merely acknowledges the photographers and sources of the images, as well as providing clarity for future researchers in supporting potential *replication of the method* through articulation of ‘procedures and decisions that other researchers can “see” and evaluate’ so that the techniques are seen to be based on ‘reputable procedures and reasonable decisions’ (Denscombe, 2014:298) which can inform future research and CPD opportunities.

Chapter 5

Full narratives

Chapter 5 presents national, UA and school *problem representations* with practitioners' narratives, allowing teachers to provide an alternative voice to organisational strategy, reflecting policy in practice. These are written in the present tense with policy narratives drawing on a range of sources ([Appendix 4](#)) to identify problem representations, adopting the *What is the problem represented to be?* (WPR) approach to policy analysis (Bacchi, 2009) ([2.1](#); [4.3.2](#)). Practitioners' narratives include emotions and potential challenge, providing evidence for thesis questions [2.2.7](#) and [2.2.8](#).

Chapter 5 has been constructed in this way to enable content to be extracted and used for CPD, whilst the content remains a core element of the whole thesis ([Chapter 1](#)). The aim is to promote dialogue and discussion to inform professionals and develop future practice.

5.1 National policy narrative

5.1.1 Timeline

Item number	Evidence	Source/Date	Category
1	Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 c.41	2002	<i>Statute</i>
2	Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill Vol 806	Hansard HL, Deb. 30 th September 2020 ^a	Parliamentary Debate
3	Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill Vol 806	Hansard HL, Deb. 21 st October 2020 ^b	Parliamentary Debate
4	Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill Vol 807	Hansard HL, Deb. 9 th November 2020 ^c	Parliamentary Debate
5	Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 c.20	2020	Statute
<i>An Act to make provision to end rights to free movement of persons under retained EU law and to repeal other retained EU law relating to immigration; to confer power to modify retained direct EU legislation relating to social security co-ordination; and for connected purposes', 11th November 2020: online.</i>			
6	News Story: Immigration Act Receives Royal Assent: Free Movement to End on 31 December 2020 11 th November 2020	HO, 2020 ^b	Government Briefing
7	Overview of Family Reunion Options in the Immigration Rules, 31 st December 2020	HO, 2020 ^c	Policy Overview
8	Statement in Relation to Legal Routes from the EU for Protection Claimants Including Family Reunion of Unaccompanied Children, February 2021	HO, 2021	Policy Statement
9	New Plan for Immigration: Legal Migration and Border Control Strategy Statement, 24 th May 2021	HO, 2021 ^h	Policy Statement
10	Policy Paper: Nationality and Borders Bill: Factsheet, 6 th July 2021	HO, 2021 ⁱ	Policy White Paper
11	Welcome Pack for Arrivals on the Afghanistan Locally Employed Staff Scheme, 6 th July 2021	HO, 2021 ^m	Policy Information for Refugees)
12	New Plan for Immigration Consultation on the New Plan for Immigration: Government Response, July 2021	HO, 2021 ^c	Government Review

13	Oral Statement to Parliament: The Prime Minister's Opening Statement on Afghanistan, 18th August 2021	Prime Minister's Office, 2021	Policy Statement
14	Correspondence: Afghanistan Update: Letter to Members of Parliament (MP), Published 27 August 2021	HO, 2021 ^e	Policy Statement
15	UK Refugee Resettlement: Policy Guidance, August 2021	HO, 2021 ^l	Policy Guidance
16	Afghanistan Resettlement and Immigration Policy Statement, 13 th September 2021	HO, 2021 ^b	Policy Statement
17	English Channel Small Boats Incident Vol 704	Hansard HC, Deb. 25 th November 2021	Parliamentary Debate
18	Policy Paper: Nationality and Borders Bill: Factsheet Safe and Legal Routes, 3 rd December 2021	HO, 2021 ^j	Policy
19	Guidance: Afghanistan Resettlement Education Grant, 3 rd December 2021	DfE, 2021 ^b	Policy Guidance
20	Research Briefing: Brexit: The End of the Dublin III Regulation in the UK, January 2021	UK Parliament House of Commons Library, 2020	Policy Briefing
21	Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme Vol 706	Hansard HC, Deb. 6 th January 2022 ^a	Parliamentary Debate
22	Guidance: Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, 6 th January 2022	HO, 2022 ^d	Policy Guidance
23	Policy Paper: Nationality and Borders Bill: Overseas Asylum Processing, 25 th February 2022	HO, 2022 ^l	Policy White Paper
24	Policy Paper: Nationality and Borders Bill: Safeguarding through Age Assessment, 25 th February 2022	HO, 2022 ^m	Policy White Paper
25	Policy Paper: Nationality and Borders Bill: Children Factsheet, 25 th February 2022	HO, 2022 ⁿ	Policy White Paper
26	Policy Paper: Nationality and Borders Bill: A Differentiated Approach Factsheet, 2 nd March 2022	HO, 2022 ^j	Policy White Paper
27	Guidance: Afghanistan Resettlement Grant: 2021 to 2022 Local Authority Allocations, Updated 11 th March 2022	DfE, 2022 ^a	Policy Guidance
28	Local Government Association (LGA) Responds to Government Homes for Ukraine Scheme, 13 th March 2022	LGA, 2022 ^b	Response to Policy
29	Press Release: 'Homes for Ukraine' Scheme Launches, 14 th March 2022	DLUHC, 2022 ^d	Policy Statement
30	Guidance: Support for British and Non-British Nationals in Afghanistan, Updated 17 th March 2022	HO, 2022 ^f	Policy Guidance

31	Consultation Outcome: Report in Relation to Legal Routes from the EU for Protection Claimants, Including Family Reunion of Unaccompanied Children, July 2021: Updated 29 th March 2022	HO, 2022 ^c	Government Review
32	Consultation Outcome: New Plan for Immigration: Policy Statement, Updated 29 th March 2022	HO, 2022 ^b	Government Review
33	Guidance: School Applications for Foreign National Children and Children Resident Outside England, Updated 12 th April 2022	DfE, 2022 ^b	Policy Guidance
34	Home Secretary's Speech on UK and Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership, 14 th April 2022	HO, 2022 ⁿ	Policy Statement
35	Guidance: Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy: Further Information on Eligibility Criteria, Offer Details and How to Apply, Updated 27 th April 2022	MoD, 2022	Policy Guidance
36	Guidance: Apply for a Ukraine Family Scheme Visa, Updated 28 th April 2022	HO, 2022 ^f	Policy Guidance
37	Guidance: Week One Guidance for Ukrainians Arriving in the UK, Updated 29 th April 2022	DLUHC, 2022 ^a	Policy Guidance
38	Guidance: Welcome: A Guide for Ukrainians Arriving in the UK, Updated 29 th April 2022	DLUHC, 2022 ^b	Policy Guidance
39	Nationality and Borders Act 2022	2022	Statute
<i>'Make provision about nationality, asylum and immigration; to make provision about victims of slavery or human trafficking; to provide a power for Tribunals to charge participants where their behaviour has wasted the Tribunal's resources; and for connected purposes', 26th April 2022: online.</i>			

Figure 8: National Timeline

5.1.2 The beginning

This story begins with the introduction of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 which, in part, aims to end rights to free movement previously held within European law. These rights are no longer part of the legal obligations of the UK Government following withdrawal from the European Union, commonly known as 'Brexit'. The story will end on the day that the Nationality and Borders Bill completes its passage through Parliament on 28th April 2022.

The Home Affairs Committee (HAC) (HAC HC, 2022) publishes data in July 2022 stating that in 2021, there were 48,450 asylum applications and a total asylum caseload of more than 125,000. On average, in 2020, asylum seekers wait 449 days for a decision, with UAMs waiting 550 days. In September 2021, 64,000 people are in asylum accommodation with 13,000 in hotels. These include UAMs, 17 of whom are reported missing, with nine unaccounted for during the period between July 2021 and December 2021. The committee reports that some of these issues are attributed to a high turnover of staff, out of date IT software and not enough staff to manage the workload. Therefore, the focus of this story will be a period of 18-months when the Government grapples with the refugee *problem*.

Stem: Lord Alton of Liverpool speaking in 2020, quoting aspects of Eleanor Rathbone's (MP) speech in 1940:

Discussions about asylum seekers and refugees "always begin with an acknowledgement of the terrible nature of the problem and expressions of sympathy with the victims. Then comes a tribute to the work of the voluntary organisations. Then some account of the small leisurely steps taken by the

Government. Next, a recital of the obstacles—fear of antisemitism, or the jealousy of the unemployed, or of encouraging other nations to offload their Jews on to us”
...In 2020, nothing much has changed, and it is hard not to see the parallels
(Hansard HL, 9th November 2020^c 807 column 827).

5.1.2.1 What is the problem of refugees represented to be?

Initially, this story considers the political representations of the Conservative Government which adopts a right-wing narrative in relation to refugees (Duncan and Van Hecke, 2008) and openly advocates hostile responses towards those deemed to be illegal migrants (De Genova, 2002; Casciani, 2013; De Genova, 2013; Webber, 2021). Later, the story will move to deeper issues which lie under the surface, creating the tangled web of problems which are identified by the HAC in July 2022 (HAC HC, 2022).

Government policy documents and press releases relating to the treatment of refugees start with similar sentiments, suggesting positive and encouraging attitudes towards refugees arriving in the UK. These are reflected across all sources and are exemplified by statements referring to *pride* and *generosity*. These optimistic statements about the national role in provision for refugees are generally accompanied by reference to prior experiences of refugees, using terms such as *heart breaking*, *devastating*, *trauma*, *dangerous and unsafe*.

Attention needs to be focused on any supporting evidence used to substantiate claims of generosity and historical pride. When drawing together evidence for the national approach, it is asserted that the UK meets its obligations under the UNHCR (1951) and

other international agreements. This is underpinned by data from carefully chosen sources which, on occasions, seem inconsistent.

The Government reinforces the discourse by reference to settled refugees with a focus on the period from 2015 onwards, implying that data demonstrate more than generosity but *over-generosity*, with the UK taking far more claimants than other countries in the EU. The focus is on claims for asylum with emphasis on over-reliance on the UK to solve this problem by other countries. However, declarations of generosity and acceptance conflict with concerns around high numbers of refugees landing in the UK. These become the focus for policymakers who move to describing a broken system with ‘illegal refugees’ being a threat to society, thus necessitating additional control and security. They stress the need for other countries to provide adequate support for refugees and remove responsibility from the UK.

The Government places focus on a system that is flawed but this is attributed to high numbers of illegal migrants, confusing different migrant groups with refugees (De Genova, 2013). Additionally, they refer to high numbers of migrants in certain areas of the country and associate this with an inability to remove undeserving cases (ibid).

5.1.2.2 What are the suppositions that underpin the representations?

Statements from government suggest an assumption of consistent and positive responses to refugees throughout history. Examples to support this viewpoint are often drawn from the Kindertransport in World War II in deference to Lord Dubs who was part of this policy in the 1940s and who subsequently campaigned for the Dublin III agreement (commonly known as the Dubs Scheme) which allowed for the admission of UAMs to join family members until January 2021. Additionally, references are made to provision for Syrian

refugees in 2015 (McGuinness, 2017) or to historical personal experiences linked to family members of policymakers who previously migrated to the UK.

Refugees are generally seen as a homogeneous group which endures negative experiences prior to seeking refuge. This discourse is reflected in all practitioner narratives in this study which is not unexpected as policymakers across the political spectrum consistently advocate a deficit model in reflecting refugees' experiences prior to entry, without considering elements which may have been positive, such as life experiences in their country of origin before circumstances arose which contributed to their migration.

These claims assume that the data previously shared by government departments and ministers are accurate and that the system is being overrun by excessive claims. However, inaccuracies in data indicate the possibility that the Government is using data which supports its political stance (Amnesty International UK, 2022). This political stance begins to underpin discourse which suggests that the UK is taking more than its fair share of claims and that this needs to be addressed. The system is seen to be at fault by allowing criminals or illegal migrants to abuse it (De Genova, 2013). There is focus on control, security and keeping migrants out of the country to protect the population (UK Parliament House of Lords Library, 2022). Additionally, there is a desire to expediate removal of those who are deemed to have entered illegally (De Genova, 2002).

There is another theme specifically linked to Channel boat crossings which focuses on exploitation of migrants by people smugglers who facilitate unsafe crossings for payment. These migrants can be described as victims of smugglers or, alternatively, queue-jumpers depending on the agenda of the discourse. Refugees are seen to be choosing the UK over other countries where they could settle under international law. There is an opinion that

many are abusing the system in a variety of ways and that punitive responses will deter these behaviours. These priorities and restrictions are identified as reflecting views of voters, with the Government justifying austere responses by linking them to populist attitudes as explicitly stated in the Consultation Outcome New Plan for Immigration: Policy Statement (HO, 2022^b).

5.1.2.3 What are the origins of the problem representations?

These *problems* originate from historical discourse surrounding wider migration and the impact on social, economic, and cultural factors (Ball, 2013; Hadjisoteriou and Angelides, 2016; Refugee Council, 2021; Lee, 2021) ([2.2](#)). Additional concerns around security and control are heightened following terrorist attacks in the early 2000s (Pigozzi, 2006; Holohan, 2014; Barber, 2021). Subsequently, political agendas linked to Brexit become confused with refugee policy (Stewart and Mason, 2016; HAC HC, 2022). The origins of these statements are found within the chronosystem of historical responses which circulate around given *truths* seen from one political viewpoint, generally associated with a White British ruling class and colonialism, and thus perpetuating certain belief systems (Vertovec, 2007).

As the UK is surrounded by a water border, it enables government representatives to suggest that other countries have a duty to resolve these issues (Welander, 2020) as often refugees arrive in other European countries first and then travel to the UK. Advocates who wish to reduce refugee numbers cite international agreements which require claims to be made in the first safe country of migration. However, international agreements do not necessarily require a claim to be made in the first safe country if other criteria are met

(UNHCR UK, 2021; HAC HC, 2022) although this viewpoint is rejected by policymakers as a misinterpretation of international agreements (MoD, 2022).

The consensus across the political spectrum and stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) is that the system is flawed and poorly organised (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a; UNHCR, 2021). This discourse is adopted by the Government and becomes focused on refusing entry to those who are unworthy, rather than restructuring the system to enable a more equitable and supportive approach, solving issues at source (Amnesty International UK, 2022; Oxfam, 2022). Many government discourses reflect and confirm the convictions of certain voters. Often these are related to perceptions and belief systems perpetuated in discourse surrounding immigration in the past, as discussed in Mike's third narrative ([5.8.3](#)). These have been adopted by certain groups to enable them to gain power and have underpinned policy responses across wider government agendas (Foucault 1972; 1980).

5.1.3 The middle

5.1.3.1 What effects are produced by the representations?

These representations ([5.1.2.1](#)), or similar ones, are repeated regularly, and consistently form the foundation of policy documents; they become *truths*, with opening statements often using identical phrasing which is rarely questioned, as focus turns to the central debate of control (Foucault, 1972; Fitzgerald and Kay, 2016). Therefore, these statements gain legitimacy, allowing subsequent representations to claim merit and authenticity based on tacit acceptance of these initial assertions of *generosity*. This discourse, which is repeated consistently, allows policymakers to move towards the focus of policy 'change' by presenting a discourse that suggests that current policies are substantial and liberal

and therefore can be confined to worthy causes. To validate these representations, data is selected carefully to make links to the New Labour administration, with Lord Horam stating a desire to ‘return to the migration rates before Blair who opened the "flood gates"' (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a 806 Column 192). These representations feed populist discourse relating to migrant populations which is reflected in Mike’s second (5.8.2) and third (5.8.3) narratives. Some voters assimilate messages from discourse blurring the difference between refugees and other migrants which creates the impression that many refugees are underserving or criminals, with a focus on method of entry rather than eligibility (City of Sanctuary, 2022). Meanwhile, as legitimate routes are restricted, more refugees are forced into taking extreme measures to gain entry, thus perpetuating the model (UNHCR, 2021; City of Sanctuary UK, 2022; Amnesty International UK, 2022; HAC HC, 2022).

When analysing the impact of policies on those who have arrived in the UK, the Red Cross and Refugee Council issue reports to the media stating that there are increased numbers of refugees who are self-harming (Syal and Siddique, 2022). Additionally, they identify individuals who are trying to avoid contact with authorities, with some choosing to ‘disappear’, thus making them prone to criminal groups that policy aims to eradicate (ibid): the overall impact of the procedures being the weakening of any secure and safe environment. Those who defend refugees are seen as challenging a benevolent state which aims to protect its citizens from those who desire to misuse the system. Alternative views are openly rejected with the focus being on the preferred policy model which appeals to certain sectors of the population (HO, 2021^h; 2022^c).

Policies focus on denying entry rather than solving issues at source or providing more organised methods of legal entry. The policy responses are viewed negatively by organisations supporting refugees and are seen as aggressive by other governments, raising the possibility of legal challenges which are time consuming and costly (UK Parliament House of Lords Library, 2022). Certain refugees, and groups that exploit them, are finding alternative ways to deal with policy implications which create a subclass within society (Alison:[5.2.3](#)), often exacerbating negative responses (Mike:[5.8.3](#)). This perpetuates belief systems surrounding refugees and negative responses to them.

5.1.3.2 How can these representations be considered in a different way, and can the silences be identified?

Members of the House of Lords question representations of a welcoming agenda in HL debates in 2020, with a specific focus on UAMs and the Government's reluctance to continue Dublin III Regulations (HO, 2020^a). Peers who support the Government's aims for tighter restrictions try to distance themselves from support given in World War II, by asserting that children coming from Europe are already in a place of safety. These recorded statements are made prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine but during a period when Russia is already occupying territory outside its recognised borders and when concern has been raised in relation to the election of populist parties throughout Europe: the assertion that there is stability in Europe is therefore misleading.

Acknowledgement that success stories are partially attributable to pressure applied during the parliamentary process is noted in the commentary; for example, members of the Government rely on data linked to children reunited through the Dubs Scheme to justify the number of refugees accepted. Dublin III (HO, 2020^a) was extended through

pressure from Lord Dubs, supporting parliamentarians and outside agencies, and will be no longer in place following the enactment of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill. Thus, the Government are evidencing success by reference to schemes that will no longer be in place. Additionally, the assertion that we are more generous than other countries, or alternatively less generous, to create notable news headlines, needs to be considered with reference to accurate data with the aim of improving effective international responses and solving issues at source or collaboratively (HAC HC, 2022).

The HO has long been criticised for being a hostile department to immigration, enforcing an intimidating agenda (Webber, 2021) which causes some refugees to disengage from processes that they feel might impact on their eligibility to remain. As well as campaigns such as the 'go-home vans' (Casciani, 2013), perpetuating issues such as those surrounding the Windrush Scandal remain unresolved (BBC News, 2022^d) and give a perception of an aggressive rather than a welcoming environment. The HAC report in July 2022 notes that the HO has made no attempt to discover why refugees are travelling to the UK to seek asylum and it recommends that this is introduced as part of the HO analysis (HAC HC, 2022).

It is possible to see dichotomy in messaging from the Government when reflecting on rhetoric directed towards those refugees who make Channel crossings. This is often linked to *greed* and *queue-jumping* by young men. It is recognised that families often send younger men to make the initial claim as they are more likely to survive the migration journey; they then send for their extended family once settled (UNHCR UK, 2021). This does not mean that they are not entitled to claim refuge, although discourse tends to see

them as illegitimate claimants (Grierson, 2021). However, families are also making the crossings, and this raises issues for the Government in creating punitive policies as when applied to children, they can appear particularly aggressive and may raise wider challenges (UNHCR UK, 2021; Amnesty International UK, 2022; HAC HC, 2022).

Disputes over international responsibilities create negative headlines; for example, when tragedies occur attributed to French and UK border forces passing responsibility back and forth (Welander, 2020; Bunkall, 2022). These hostile responses are in stark contrast to a helpful and welcoming situation, especially when tactics such as *pushing-back* small boats and processing claims in the Ascension Islands are being mooted within government departments (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a). Although the Government withdraws the *push-back* policy in April 2022, following concerns being raised by various stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) (JCHR, 2022), it agrees to transport refugees to Rwanda for processing and settlement in the same month (HO, 2022ⁿ) despite contentions that this will break international law (Faulkner and Lee, 2022). However, reports indicate that civil servants in the HO are expressing concern about the morality and legality of the Rwanda policy which necessitates the rare use of a ministerial direction by the Home Secretary (BBC News, 2022^b).

The language of policy documents indicates a desire to restrict access rather than provide safety; for example, UAMs need to demonstrate why they should *not* be excluded from the UK with reference to ‘serious and compelling’ circumstances which seems to undermine the ‘importance of the family unit’ (Hansard HL, 9th November 2020^c 807: online). Additionally, legal and safe routes are failing applicants. Lack of coordination and inability to process requests from Ukraine is acknowledged by the HO, with a denial that

the HO is deliberately delaying children's visas to reduce the number of successful applicants (Gentleman, 2022), nevertheless instigating an apology from the Home Secretary in relation to delays in processing visas (Syal and Gentleman, 2022). Some children have been sent back to Ukraine because they were not travelling with parents, but other family members raise concerns about safeguarding protocols (Forrest, 2022; ITV News, 2022^b). Applicants from Afghanistan have been informed that there are no sites available for them to present their biometric information which prohibits entry to the UK (HO, 2022^b). Similar issues are also reported in areas close to Ukraine, eventually leading to policy change for Ukraine citizens, requiring biometrics to be shown on entry to the UK, rather than at application stage (Walker, 2022).

The confusion around terminology reflects other forms of migration as well as the continuing Brexit agenda which focuses on the eligibility of migrants to work in the UK (Stewart and Mason, 2016); this enables certain groups to promote a neo-liberalist agenda (Gillborn, 2014; Arar, Órúicú and Waite, 2020). Policy representations can be seen as a populist response to maintain power by the ruling political party which is facing political challenges in this period (Mason, Stewart and Allegretti, 2022). These views on migration appeal to certain elements of the population and are linked to views held in parliamentary constituencies which provide the Government with a considerable majority in Parliament (Amos, 2022). By retaining popularity with these voters, the Conservative Party can maintain its control and thus allow individuals within the Party to influence wider policy agendas. In a more tolerant society, more extreme voices would not influence the policy agenda, but they are enabled through populist support. There is an argument to suggest that politicians should moderate more extreme views to enable democracy; however, adhering to populist and nationalist discourses empowers leaders

to promote more extreme policies. This raises issues for alternative political parties which aim to regain influence but cannot do this without also adhering to the current discourse, thus raising challenges in opposing certain agendas (Stone, 2022).

Failures in the system are blamed on refugees and their actions as well as those who facilitate them, rather than policies or procedures. However, more rigorous responses seem to have little impact; for example, Channel crossings increase rather than decrease despite threats of instigating the Rwanda Policy (BBC News, 2022^b). Pressure on housing and dispersing refugees also cause challenges for certain LAs, with provision often being inadequate for *genuine* refugees (Fazackerely, 2022) as well as those deemed to have entered illegally (De Genova, 2002; Boyden, 2019). Furthermore, councils are often not informed about details of schemes such as the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Bulman, 2022).

When discussing delays in the system, there is a focus on removal from the country, rather than dealing with delays in admitting refugees and processing genuine claims, with some suggesting that certain politicians merely give tokenistic support to safe and legal routes whilst having little enthusiasm in ensuring that they work effectively (Amnesty International UK, 2022). Additional procedures added by new policy protocols, often aiming to prohibit entry, merely add to the workload of officials rather than allowing them to become more efficient in enabling genuine claims (ibid). Additionally, challenges to the proposed policy agenda such as the Rwanda Policy (HO, 2022ⁿ) add to pressures on the HO, which is already identified as hostile, ineffective, and lacking in humanity (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a).

Opposition to the Government increases within the 18-month period, with challenges focusing on maladministration, financial costs, adherence to international law, and misrepresentations through rhetoric which often become part of policy. The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration states that the HO response to migrants crossing the Channel has been largely ineffective and inefficient (Easton, 2022^b). A report, commissioned by the HO states that HO policy has made the system worse not better (Easton, 2022^a). Although welcoming the findings of the report, the Home Secretary is criticised by some groups for delaying its release, with claims that it has been postponed so that it cannot be scrutinised in Parliament (Easton, 2022^b). Comments are also made relating to the lack of access that the Independent Advisor has been given to the Home Secretary (Ford-Rojas, 2022). Challenges are raised by various organisations including the UNHCR, Amnesty International UK, City of Sanctuary UK, ECPAT UK, Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, with members of the House of Lords and Commons across all political parties commenting on lack of compromise from government (Elgot, 2022; Kelly, 2022). Groups begin to mobilise although the impact of this mobilisation following the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 is still in its infancy, and it is ambiguous as to whether it will provide a credible challenge to the national policy agenda.

5.1.4 The end

5.1.4.1 What discourses underpin the representations, how are they disseminated or endorsed, and are there any different or conflicting discourses?

It could be argued that the portrayal of a generous benefactor (Holohan, 2014) (in the form of the UK) dates to the British Empire, when the state portrayed itself as an educator and patron of countries contained within the Empire (British Nationality Act, 1948). This

has been transferred to discourse associated with those seeking refuge from other states. It is so entrenched in national discourse and belief systems that few challenge the concepts, with critics often being identified as 'woke' and their comments being rejected as socially liberal (Smith, 2021). National and neo-liberal discourse favours a dialogue around a benevolent state which needs to restrict its acts of generosity to redistribute accountability to nations which shirk their duty towards refugee populations (Johnson, 2021).

Although there are some voices within government trying to promote continuation of the Dubs Scheme, the Government promotes use of existing legislation to allow entry, despite concerns that this is not adequate and will not meet the needs of these children (Hansard HL, Deb. 21st October 2020^b). Concerns are raised as to the relevance of the legislation for UAMs, leading Government Ministers to assert that it will be considered on a case-to-case basis by officials interpreting regulations. This causes additional concerns as to the interpretation and how this will be monitored. The Government endeavours to pacify challengers by stating that regulations will be clear so that they can be interpreted easily; again, raising issues around personal bias as well as regulations being used as a blunt instrument. In a desire to pass legislation promptly, the Government agrees to a published review of the system which, on publication, seems to lack rigour, openly rejecting the opinions of those not promoting the Government agenda (HO 2021^c; 2022^c), and appearing to be a procedural exercise in quietening dissenting voices. Similar directions, asking claimants and agencies to use existing legislation, are given in relation to Ukraine refugees early in the conflict as Ministers look for ways to allow entry into the UK, with one Conservative MP suggesting that they use the fruit picking scheme to facilitate admission (BBC News, 2022^c). During a meeting with the HAC, the Chief Inspector of

Borders confirms that he has no access to the Home Secretary to discuss policy, despite attempts to arrange meetings over 18-months, although adding that he does get information from subordinate staff (Ford-Rojas, 2022).

Some argue that the British public's response to Ukrainian refugees is more generous than that of the Government, with some suggesting that this is because the refugees are White Europeans with similar attributes to the English, countering some arguments around the deficit model (Hayes and Shain, 2023): they are people who drive the same cars, have similar lifestyles, and may have relatives in the UK (Bayoumi, 2022). However, the Financial Times (2022) reports that even this welcome will diminish as soon as any Ukrainian citizen is blamed for a criminal act, at which point hostility will turn towards the Government for allowing entry to the country. Some suggest that leaders and policymakers are aware of this eventuality and, therefore, they are reluctant to show generosity in case it impacts on their own popularity and electability (ibid).

This representation of a benign state overtaken by claims, fails to recognise international struggles such as war, famine or persecution which contribute to populations leaving countries of origin. It does not address the UK's 'interventions' in other countries or links that migrants might have to the UK which would encourage them to seek refuge; for example, 45% of claimants in the UK are from five countries: four have severe refugee disbursements and the fifth has high levels of economic migration with strong links to modern slavery (UNHCR UK, 2021). The data continue to be problematic. The UNHCR (2021) cite a contrasting view, showing the UK accepting fewer refugees each year with a drop of 18% year on year and an overall drop since 2010. Moreover, the UK has far fewer asylum applications (29,456) than France (95,600), Germany (122,170), Spain (88,530)

and Greece (40,560) (ibid). The HO often refers to the Hong Kong Scheme as evidence of a successful asylum policy, whereas the conditions of the scheme mean that it is not classed as a route for refugees by monitoring agencies (Amnesty International UK, 2022). As safe routes to the UK are reduced, more refugees are trying to enter the UK by using small boats across the Channel (Welander, 2020). However, it should be noted that although the Government focus on this increase, there are about 21 million refugees globally, with over 86% living in lower/middle income countries and 73% remaining in countries near to their country of origin (UNHCR, 2021) demonstrating that the UK's contribution is 0.14% of the whole, a small percentage of total numbers.

A focus on criminality blurs definitions which means that sometimes refugees are identified as criminals or illegal migrants (De Genova, 2002; 2013) seeking to appropriate jobs and housing from local communities. This perpetuates negative discourse, feeding prejudice in some communities as can be seen in Mike's third narrative (5.8.3). Additionally, a focus on biometrics and medical examinations to establish legitimate claims, often in relation to children, perpetuates a belief suggesting that a large majority aim to deceive the system (HO, 2022^{i, k}); this extends to recognised schemes such as the Afghanistan and Ukraine policies in 2022. Although these approaches raise some challenges from other political parties and focus groups, there is reluctance to suggest an alternative approach in case it is seen as reducing the security of the borders (Stone, 2022). Consideration of how these viewpoints and discourses are disseminated as well as alternative voices within the ecological system will be evaluated in the regional and local policy analyses, as well as practitioners' narratives.

The scene is set for the introduction of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 which is widely challenged. The Government and specifically the HO acknowledge that much of the policy will be open to legal challenge in the courts. These legal challenges commence almost as soon as the legislation is enacted, leaving an ambiguous ending to this story.

5.2 Alison's stories

My name is Alison. I have been part of the teaching profession for 22 years: I live and work in the East Midlands. I have been a senior leader for the majority of that time. The senior roles that I have held are linked to Looked After Children and safeguarding, but my main role has been that of a SENDCo and Key Stage Leader.

I have also been a school leader for science, design and technology, and other subject areas. I am now a consultant and write children's stories linked to sustainability but more recently I've been commissioned to support SENDCos and teachers through mentoring and coaching programmes. I have some experience in working with refugee/asylum seekers.

5.2.1 Alison's first narrative

Alison is shown photograph 1 and given the following information:

The individuals in the photograph have extended family who live in the East Midlands. Tell me their story.

5.2.1.1 The beginning

I see more than just a picture here. I see families that have left everything behind, who are standing in only what they have: this is what they own now. They've had a frightening and terrible journey and they are bereft; perhaps because they've left other family members behind or because they have experienced trauma and loss. They have young children and they're looking for a better life. They've come to us for help and support to create that better life. I don't know where they're from; they could have experienced

dangers that we have no idea about so... the first thing I see is trauma... and fear... and maybe relief that they have arrived here. I see their emotion first... and then I see my empathy for them and a desire to help.

5.2.1.2 The middle

These families... these children... these parents... sisters... brothers... they are placed in camps/houses often in one room - that they have to go to - before they can get to where they would like to be... to join other family members and carry on with their lives. They have reached a place where they have come for sanctuary but, actually, they can't carry on with their lives. They have to go through a process. I personally don't know what that process is... I know they cannot work or claim benefits. I can only assume that it must be really frustrating to not be able to support yourself. It must be really upsetting to not have any possessions... to not own anything... to come and not to know where you're going to end up or be successful in seeking asylum; to be in a huge group and not to be seen as individuals... it must be quite, quite difficult. I share their frustration... I put myself in their shoes and what I want for my children and for my future.

And so, they are going through the process that can take a long time... quite a few months... and in some cases years before they can go where they want to go. You hear of that... where people have been in camps seeking asylum for years which is terrible... and children aren't being educated. I'd like to think that when asylum seekers/refugees arrive in England, that process would be as short as it can possibly be. I'd like to think they can get where they need/want to go. They need to be able to develop language skills, understand cultural differences, break the barriers that exist and overcome racism and prejudice.

This father could be a skilled practitioner... who could contribute to society professionally. I feel that the opportunities for this family are restricted tremendously by our procedures – not being able to work. I understand we need to have them... but when it comes to children... to young families, these procedures need to be as short as possible to allow these families to get on and for these children ‘to be’... for their lives to be affected as little as possible from the journey they have made.

5.2.1.3 The end – ambiguous

I would like to think this family get to the East Midlands, but their frustration is going to be high. Once they’re with their family, they need housing, funding, money, jobs. There’s a whole raft of issues for this family: this father and mother. Perhaps they move in with family... but there are all these worries, and concerns and we need systems to support them. I’d like to think these systems are in place and that this family get where they need to be. I would like them to get support and find employment... although I understand that it could take a long time and that they could end up doing more menial jobs when they are trained and skilled. It would be difficult for these parents – their expectations of themselves... and professionally what they are capable of. I am a teacher; how would I feel if I couldn’t do that? It would be really frustrating! But... it’s the children at the heart of this; it’s supporting them – culturally, understanding the language, being involved with society, having resources, joining in with everyday activities – all of these things – the roadmap of where they live. I’d like to think that these children are able to join our education system and our health system very quickly and that they are looked after and that they become part of our society as every child has the right to education in this

country. It's being part of something bigger because their world has become small and completely alien to them.

This seems positive but this isn't the end of the story. I'm not sure what the ending is... whether the journey actually ends. I don't know whether I know the end to their story. This is just an episode, and I can see positives but, going forward, it's ambiguous. How can I know? I am sitting here, not having experienced what they have experienced, and it's impossible for me to end their story. I can empathise as a parent; how they would feel – what I would want for my children. I'd like to think that we as a nation, as a country, as a society allow these people to get where they need to be to continue their lives in a safe, happy way but I don't know how this would play out for them. Their journey is huge, and I can't end it. If they get refugee status this is the beginning of their story, and I can't end it: it's too big and too long – it's too hard.

This has made me think... do we really think of the stories behind these children when they come to us? Do we think of their personal journeys? We try to fit them into our system and do what's best for them... but do we think about their past? Do we ask?

5.2.2 Alison's second narrative

Alison is shown photographs 2 and 3. She is given the following information:

The child in photograph 2 is a lone child arriving on UK soil.

Photograph 3 shows a group of children who might be siblings. One is holding a photograph of a blown-out window. These children have not been granted asylum and need to return to their country of origin. Tell me their story.

After some consideration (which is included as part of the narrative), she chooses to tell a story about photograph 3.

5.2.2.1 *The beginning*

This is a really difficult choice because the four children have not been granted asylum and I don't know a lot about what happens next for those children. I'm sorry, I am hesitant because of my lack of knowledge about what happens to a family, or group of children, that haven't been granted asylum. It's difficult for me to talk about their story but I know what I would like to say. What would you like to say? I want to choose these children because I feel I will have more impact in what I say, although I don't fully understand what happens to them and what the appeal process is which is making me hesitant. I feel I have more to say about these children because there are four of them, and I look at their ages, and I know a bit more about their story while they are here.

The children have attended several schools because of relocation but then were placed in a school and have spent the last six months attending a school where they made some relationships with teachers and bonded with friends. They have established some normality and become part of the setting. Firstly, I'd like to talk about that aspect of the

children's wellbeing and the impact of moving those children at this point when they've already established these links. I don't know a huge amount but if those children were in my setting, I feel that I would do everything within my power, alert everybody and anyone, to try to ensure that these children remain in this setting... and this community where they have established links and friendships... and have begun to settle into some form of life. We know that when families have been granted asylum, they stay for good, and these families remain with us for second and third generations. When that happens, it's very unusual for families to return to their country. With those facts in mind, it seems ridiculous to send these four children, and this family, back to where they came from. Now, as I understand it, the very definition of asylum seekers is that they were under threat, in danger, and they were seeking asylum because they need protection for their safety and because of all the things they've experienced. So, again, on that note, it is important that we look at where these children would be going. Where would they go? I don't know the answer to that. For me to tell that side of the story, it's really difficult so I'm going to place myself in this story with these children.

5.2.2.2 The middle

I would be trying to alert as many people as possible; I would petition; I would create some reports and files... I'm assuming this has already been done... but I would be part of the appeal so I'd like to think that there would be an appeals' process. I'd like to think that within that appeals' process, we are able to put forward further evidence and say why it would be detrimental for this family to be moved from the UK once they have established links. It would be horrendous... terrible... for this family not to be granted asylum; having become established... having made that journey... that traumatic journey... still continuing

on that journey of breaking down barriers, settling in, building attachments, overcoming the psychological effects of the move... developing connections. All the things they have experienced – and then being told to leave, or told they are not granted asylum, would be devastating and would throw them right back to the beginning of their journey... where they started.

For this family to have to face this, is wrong. It is a terrible, terrible thing to happen and so I would get as many people involved, petitioning. That's what we'd do... we'd petition... we'd get support for that whether it be through crowdfunding, or whatever. We'd tell the stories of these children: we'd tell it from their point of view. We'd talk about their journeys, the trauma they have experienced, alongside the journey that they've made at school... beginning to integrate and be part of the community of the school. I would involve outside agencies, educational psychologists – ensuring we have as much outside agency support in understanding and knowing these children and the detrimental effect it would have. I'd make sure my case files were completely up-to-date and accurate. I would engage local politicians in the claims process. I would like to think they would want to be involved and, in my story, I would like to think they were. They feel the same as me – that this is unjust, and this family, having been integrated within the community, deserve the protection of this community. Engaging the community and politicians so they know more about these stories... in the hope that we would be able to keep this family with us.

5.2.2.3 The end: ambiguous

This joint enterprise could be a positive ending? I do know that only a very small percentage actually achieve asylum... about 1%... so I know the chances are slim. When I

say these things, I think this is what I would do... and knowing that the chances were slim would not stop me seeking support... community support... and challenging the decision. I couldn't go against everything I believe regarding this family. If I put myself in these children's shoes... if anybody puts themselves in these children's shoes – they have had multiple relocations, multiple school placements and then they finally settle and become part of a community who know their history... coming from war situations... and they come to us and we are about to displace them again when, potentially, they could be happy and safe... continue their journey albeit a difficult one. It's probably the safest they have felt in their entire lives, particularly the younger children and we can't disregard that, so people like me... in positions like me... need to shout loud and engage the community to challenge that decision. And so, my ending is an ambiguous one as I don't know the outcomes. We've got the full range there – the positive nature of a response... the ambiguity of what might happen... with the negativity of knowing that the chances are slim. Although we have these laws in our country... just because we have these laws... does not mean we agree with them. If you don't agree with them, as a citizen you have to stand up and make it clear that you don't agree – without a shadow of a doubt – for the sake of these children, you have to challenge it.

5.2.3 Alison's third narrative

Alison chooses photograph 5.

There are a group of people in photograph 5 who are standing around a fire. Tell me their story.

5.2.3.1 *The beginning*

I've chosen this photograph because I felt it was similar in some ways to the previous photographs and because I feel that, as part of the work that I am doing with you, I am also going through a process and a learning curve, and I wanted to tell a similar story but with more knowledge behind it... having done some research and some more thinking around it.

This is a group of refugees and they're fleeing from Afghanistan. They've arrived in Dover after being picked up in a dinghy off the shores of Dover by a search and rescue team. They've paid a 'people smuggler' with a small number of belongings and money that they had left. I've concentrated on the family in the photograph. They've lost family members in war zones through persecution, as well as on their journey. They're in fear of being sent back to live in the war zone that they're fleeing from. They have spent the last few years trying to manage with no proper sanitation, very little food... they were living in one room at the back of the house as the rest of the house had been destroyed. They were struggling for supplies, and it was increasingly hard to feed the family and they felt it was... either sort of stay there... or die of starvation in the war zone.

The child you can see with the blue coat on is the youngest; a child born during this conflict who has never yet experienced life without conflict. The girl in front is an orphan. I've read

about so many orphans... a high percentage of orphans... and she's lost her entire family through bombing - they lived in the next house along. This family have taken her in and have been taking care of her ever since then.

Prior to arriving here, they fled to a camp where they were discriminated against and treated badly. They didn't feel safe, and they fled to Turkey and were placed in a camp with no proper facilities and further hardship. They continued their journey which eventually led them to Calais. After several months of living in a tent with no running water and living on emergency food supplies, they finally travelled in a dinghy... we've read about this... we've seen images... a thing that's meant for 20 passengers and holding 70. They knew what the risks were... but knowing those risks, they were willing to take them. They've got nothing: they own nothing. They felt they had nothing to lose. They didn't want to be forced to return and saw no future in remaining where they were in the camp. They were cold; they were hungry; they were scared and afraid what would happen next... and they so wanted refuge.

They were taken to a hostel on arrival in Dover, and this hostel consisted of one room between two adults, and three children: two of their own children and the orphaned child who they had fostered as their own. They had a microwave and a kettle and access to a shared bathroom, and this is where they remained for eight months with the help of a charity, until their case for asylum was finally heard. As soon as they arrived at the hostel, they were hoping to receive refugee status so they could stay and build a life together without persecution or fear. They're relying on translators and key workers, but they find it hard to communicate effectively to ensure that their case is truly understood, and that their history is truly understood. It's really difficult for them because they've got some

difficult memories and they feel traumatised by their experiences. Imparting that to people is quite tricky and getting their point of view across is incredibly hard.

They want their children to go to school for the first time: their children have never been to school. They want their children to roam freely, free of discrimination, hunger, fear, and free to build a new life based on equal opportunities – the same as everyone else. This family is seeking refugee status due to the threat on civilian life from armed conflict.

The orphan at the front, I've called Rhema, remains with the family. They receive free health care, and the children go to school which the family are so happy about... this is all they wanted; safe, healthy children, being educated for their future away from persecution and conflict. They're waiting for resettlement and have been trying to seek money to afford clothing and better food. Dad is unable to work due to the rules but he's a qualified electrician and Mum is a qualified teacher. I've chosen that because I'm trying to relate it to how I would feel. Both are not legally allowed to work until they have refugee status.

5.2.3.2 The middle

Eight months have passed very slowly for the parents and children. They've settled into their new life at school, but they feel trapped. They are unable to settle because they feel in limbo until they know whether they are able to stay. They've been displaced several times now and the fear of displacement again hangs over them very heavily. The parents do their best under the circumstances and are grateful for the peace that they're experiencing. For the past eight months they've been afraid that they were going to be deported and they dare not complain about the accommodation and the food, and the lack of money for fear of discrimination or because they're afraid that they might be

deported again. The food supply and the accommodation are poor, and they've not really got enough to manage. The room they are in in the UK is damp and not appropriate for young children. I was reading about this and felt that this needed to be in my story.

The oldest child suffers from night terrors and he's afraid to leave his parents and go to school in case something happens. Despite a lot of reassurance, he still feels they might be separated. He's made a friend but he's struggling to learn English and feels anxious about being made to speak in class. He gets flashbacks and he's scared of loud noises. I want to tell my story with the angle of me being a teacher as well, and how this child might feel at school due to the language barrier. He hates being sent to a different class to learn. This comes from an experience that I've recently had with a child in a classroom. He is a capable learner and when he gets home, his mother who has always taught them since the fighting destroyed their school, continues his learning at home but struggles to find resources and materials to support the work she'd like to do at home with her children. Although she would really value support with this, there is a language barrier and she is afraid of what the school might think, so she does her very best.

The child who was born during the crisis has never been to school; she loves school and quickly settles into Year 1. She's learning English quickly and she's enjoying playing and learning through play. She's happy and she tells her parents that she likes school, but she hates school dinners. The teachers feel that she's learning to read English, and she loves books. She doesn't seem to notice the confines of the accommodation and she clearly feels safe in her new home. This is a whole new adventure and a whole new experience for her, and she doesn't see the confines, but she sees the freedom. I also imagine... because I've seen this in my career... that she's teaching Dad to read English as she learns

her sounds. Dad is also learning his sounds, and she's really proud of herself. Dad has joined a local charity group which is offering lessons for free. I've got a friend who does this as part of her Church group.

Dad is frustrated and constantly fears the worst; being deported and having to go back to where he will face the same terrorism and fears for his family, but he's determined to be as prepared as possible, ready and eager to find work. I imagine these classes are quite hard for him, but he is determined... should he get his status... that he is ready to join the workforce and is as skilled and equipped as he can be... trying to alleviate the language barrier and make connections within the community. Mum and Dad struggle to make ends meet and often go hungry to ensure the children are fed. I've read about how much money families receive, and it really isn't enough to live on.

Now, I want to focus on the girl who lost her family who's orphaned. I've imagined that her name is Rhema. I want to put the struggle into my story to represent these children. Rhema is given additional support at school, and she's really struggling to communicate and needs support to follow rules and routines in the school. They've sought further support from psychology services and they're following advice, but Rhema misses her parents. She's displaced and suffering from PTSD. She does, however, respond to the school mentor. The school are doing all they can to make her feel safe and confident and I've put myself in this position... I know what I would do for this child... we would know that she needed help to understand, and we would need help to understand how best to help her through these traumas. Seeking specialist support would be really important in helping her through these traumas and the experience of bereavement. There are quite a

few charities. We've got Bridge the Gap in [UA2] which I've used before. I would do everything... and, in my story, this school would do everything to support Rhema.

Each morning, Rhema clings to her 'mother' – her foster mother. She doesn't want to enter school and she's afraid when she leaves. She's concerned she won't be there when she comes back so she's quite afraid to leave that family unit. The family have asked about adopting Rhema, but the authorities have said that family reunification may still be possible and that their primary goal is to reunite Rhema with her family, wherever that may be. I did a bit of research on orphans and the policy on that. The family repeatedly inform them that Rhema's family were killed and that they saw this with their own eyes but due to the lack of documentation, this cannot be confirmed and therefore Rhema remains with the family as it's perceived, following assessments, that it's in Rhema's current best interest. The family care for her and she's become part of their family. They've been caring for her for three years and she's quite settled and happy with them, despite all the difficulties.

5.2.3.3 The end – positive

Now I'm going to track forward. It's now eight months... possibly longer... since arriving and applying for asylum or refugee status and it's the day of the hearing and they've been awarded refugee status. Of course, they would love to return home; they would love to return to the streets of their home but that's an impossibility. Even if they returned, it doesn't exist; that community doesn't exist there. There's nothing for them there. So, when we talk about deportation and returning home, I want to add that it no longer exists and placing myself in that situation, it's just horrendous. It's important for me to tell this story and for this to be in my story... deportation, returning home is just not possible and

the family should not be made to go because there is no such thing as home for these people... it no longer exists. I know only 1% get status and I want to tell the end of this story beyond the hearing. I like to think we have compassion... and I don't agree with the 1%. However, I understand the chances and, despite the fact that I know this, I am going to say that this family *do* get status, and they begin to rebuild their lives and go to the Midlands to join family. I choose this because it's too hard for me to imagine that they don't get status. I can't imagine what I would do if this was me and so, for me, I feel this is where my story ends. But... it's a brand-new story once they have refugee status and they're allowed to rebuild... and so I'm ending my story here.

In recognising quite openly the low chances of success, or the inability to provide the right support for these families, do practitioners feel in a position to do anything when, ultimately, they might not be able to stay? It seems the chosen ending is positive because the negative is too hard to contemplate... although it is acknowledged. The positive indicates an inclusionary response and yet, it seems disempowered? In my career, I've always received families that have gone through the process and, therefore, have become part of our community. I've never had that worry or fear; I've never had to face that within my career as a teacher. This is down to me doing further research because of what you've asked of me. I didn't realise the numbers... the figures... the timescales. If this was happening to me as a teacher, I would feel completely disempowered and not know how to go about supporting this family. I am sure, because of the sort of person that I am, I would go out of my way to find that out, but it would be much better to know this beforehand. The other thing is that when you really look at it and read about the huge numbers, and the trauma, and the displacement that these families are going through, you don't always see that. You just see the family, here and now, you don't see the journey

that these families have made and the displacements, the fears and the risks that have been taken, even though we see it in the newspapers. So, it's just too hard for me to imagine that these families don't get what they're seeking. I honestly feel terrible as I don't think I've ever put myself in their position as much as I am doing through this narrative. I have always been an empathetic person and would always fight for what is right, but actually knowing more is really important. To understand these stories... and know *them*, maybe you're more likely to challenge and make a difference in a much greater way.

5.3 Unitary Authority 1 (UA1): policy narrative

5.3.1 Timeline

Item number	Evidence	Source/Date	Category
1	Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 c.41	2002	Statute
2	Asylum Seeker Support Available in [UA1]: Delivering on our Commitment to Still Human Still Here	[UA1] City Council, 2016 ^a	Policy Document
3	New Arrivals	[UA1] City Council, 2016 ^b	Policy Document
4	New Arrivals, Asylum Seekers and Refugees	[UA1]City Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016	Policy Document
5	ESOL in the East Midlands: Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme, February 2017	East Midlands Councils, n.d. (2017)	Policy Document
6	Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 c.20	2020	Statute
<i>An Act to make provision to end rights to free movement of persons under retained EU law and to repeal other retained EU law relating to immigration; to confer power to modify retained direct EU legislation relating to social security co-ordination; and for connected purposes', 11th November 2020: online</i>			
7	Council Support for Afghan Resettlement	LGA, n.d.	Policy Document
8	Afghanistan, 18 th August	LGA, 2021 ^a	Policy Statement
9	Local Government Association Statement - 'Operation Warm Welcome', 6 th September	LGA, 2021 ^b	Policy Statement
10	[UA1]City of Sanctuary Support Hub 2021: Services Provided to Local Asylum Seekers and Refugees	[UA1] City of Sanctuary, 2021	Policy Document
11	[UA1] City of Sanctuary Strategic Plan 2022-2025	[UA1] City of Sanctuary UK, n.d. ^a	Policy Document
12	[UA1]City of Sanctuary: Model of Change	[UA1] City of Sanctuary UK, n.d. ^b	Policy Document
13	City of Partner Organisations	[UA1] City of Sanctuary UK, n.d. ^c	Statement
14	Services	[UA1] City of Sanctuary, n.d. ^d	Statement
15	Support for Asylum Seekers	[UA1] City Council, n.d. ^f	Statement
16	Support for Refugees and People in Crisis	[UA1] City Council, n.d. ^e	Statement

17	Welcoming Ukrainian Arrivals to [UA1]	[UA1] City Council, n.d. ^h	Policy Document
18	Homes for Ukraine: Information for Sponsors	[UA1] City Council, n.d. ^c	Statement
19	Staying Safe and Avoiding Harm	[UA1] City Council, n.d. ^e	Policy Document
20	Local Government's Role in Supporting Arrivals from Ukraine, 9 th March	LGA, 2022 ^c	Policy Statement
21	Ukraine: Support for New Arrivals, 11 th March	LGA, 2022 ^d	Policy Document
22	Information for Ukrainians	[UA1] City Council, n.d. ^d	Statement
23	Arrivals under the Ukrainian Family Scheme	[UA1] City Council, n.d. ^a	Policy Document
24	3.2.2 Families with No Recourse to Public Funds	[UA1] City Council, 2022 ^a	Policy Document
25	3.2.1 Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Child Victims of Trafficking and Modern Slavery	[UA1] City Council, 2022 ^d	Policy Document
26	Council Support for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Unaccompanied Children	LGA, n.d.	Policy Document
27	[UA1] City Mayor Says City Ready to Welcome Ukrainian Refugees, 28 th February	[UA1] City Council, 2022 ^b	Media Statement
28	Ukraine Refugees, House of Lords, 6 th March	LGA, 2022 ^d	Parliamentary Discussion
29	Partners Band Together to Support Ukrainian Refugees 12 th April	[UA1] City Council, 2022 ^c	Statement
30	Homes for Ukraine: Lessons Learned, 9 th June	LGA, 2022 ^d	Policy Review
31	Homes for Ukraine – Latest Regional Data, 10 th June	East Midlands Councils, 2022	Statement of Data
32	A Fairer Asylum Accommodation System	HO, 2022 ^a	Policy Review
33	Nationality and Borders Act 2022	2022	Statute
<i>'Make provision about nationality, asylum and immigration; to make provision about victims of slavery or human trafficking; to provide a power for Tribunals to charge participants where their behaviour has wasted the Tribunal's resources; and for connected purposes', 26th April 2022: online.</i>			

Figure 9: UA1 Timeline

5.3.2 The beginning

This story reflects UA1's responses as it manages regional systems between the introduction of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 and the enactment of the Nationality and Borders legislation in 2022. It draws on published evidence relating to this UA whilst also considering broader influences impacting on policy decisions. UA1 has 54 councillors from the following political parties: 51 Labour, one Conservative, one Liberal Democrat and one Independent across 21 wards ([UA1] City Council, n.d.^b: online). In February 2018, ONS data (n.d.) recorded 106 refugees settling in UA1 since 2015; this was out of a total number of 446 in the East Midlands. Subsequently, under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, there were 113 visa applications for UA1 with 92 visas issued and 52 arrivals (East Midlands Councils, 2022). The Afghan resettlement grant allocated to UA1 amounted to £53,326.25 in December 2021, with an additional £35,770 in March 2022 (DfE, 2022^a).

Stem:

Whatever their reasons for seeking sanctuary in our city, refugees and asylum seekers are still human and they are still here (Clarke in [UA1], 2016^a:2).

5.3.2.1 What is the problem of refugees represented to be?

During the 18-month period considered in this story, UA1 continues to adhere to policy documents created in response to the Syrian refugee crisis ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a). Council documents predating 2020, identify increasing numbers of residents born outside

the UK who have moved to UA1 for a range of reasons. These numbers are expected to remain high as migrants move to the area to access services and support, or to join family members ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a; Bedford, 2021; Richardson, 2022; LGA, 2022^d).

Although refugee groups are a smaller proportion of the total number of migrants, statistics are dated and do not reflect resettlement of refugees from Afghanistan or Ukraine. Furthermore, refugee numbers do not reflect those outside official systems who are 'illegal' migrants (De Genova, 2002), or those who have moved to the area independently and have therefore lost funding, with as many as 3,000 people estimated to be 'hidden' within UA1 ([UA1] City Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016). This number is potentially higher than estimated figures in 2016, following Brexit and subsequent legislation and policy. UA1 provides links to supporting services and groups, with external messaging being positive and supportive to those arriving as refugees ([UA1] City of Sanctuary, 2021; [UA1] City of Sanctuary, n.d.^{b; c; d}; Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, n.d.; [UA1] City Council, 2022^{a; b; c; d}). This information is regularly updated to account for changing circumstances and is easily found if individuals can access the content, which is generally in English, although translation services are signposted.

5.3.2.2 What are the suppositions that underpin the representations?

There is emphasis on meeting need and ensuring support is in place to improve the life chances of refugees, as well as addressing the impact of previous experiences. Importance is placed on engaging the local community to enable integration with a focus on the person (Alison:[5.2](#)), rather than the legal (or illegal) definition of the claimant. This holds challenge to government policy which is often explicitly hostile to certain groups of refugees (Meer et al., 2021; Webber, 2021) who are not formally recognised in the

system. This challenge is apposite to organisations that collaborate with UA1 as the authority is bound by national legal definitions. Having said that UA1 makes public declarations of refugee rights within the wider legal framework which it states should be followed to support individuals, expressly referencing those relating to UAMs ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a)

The documents draw on evidence which concludes that refugees require substantial support to settle effectively within communities and that refugees will arrive with additional needs which will impact detrimentally unless sufficient resources and support are provided ([UA1] City Council, n.d.^{f; g}). Without additional support, the impact will not only be felt by the individual, but ripples will pass to their family and the wider community ([UA1] Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016; City of Sanctuary, 2022). The expectation is that responsibility lies with UA1 and supporting agencies, with often limited recourse to national funding due to lack of provision from national reserves ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a). There is acknowledgement that central government holds specific definitions relating to migrants which are used to establish eligibility and rights to legal status and funding ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a). Operational policy within UA1 indicates that there is a focus on providing adequate and effective support to *all*, with an awareness that there will be limited assistance from central government ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a; LGA, 2021^c).

5.3.2.3 What are the origins of the problem representations?

UA1 recognises the Government's strategic aims, acknowledging a legal duty to meet these whilst also recognising rights of individuals within the system. Resourcing continues to be problematic, and consideration is given to the Government's aims to reduce costs by a more stringent approach to claims. However, this is seen in conjunction with a duty

of care to meet need in the community and create a cohesive community structure within a region that has a diverse range of migrant groups; this is also seen as important in practitioner narratives. Adopting a strategic response to need, underpinned by adequate funding, is a priority, with recognition of increasing numbers of refugees within regions ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a; City of Sanctuary, 2022), and specifically recognising the Afghanistan and Ukraine crises during this period ([UA1] City Council, n.d.^{a; c; d; h}).

Government dispersal schemes continue to be problematic and focus on certain regions, creating the need to use hotel accommodation due to lack of local housing (LGA, n.d.). Additionally, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic during this period adds to reductions in available accommodation ([UA1] City of Sanctuary, 2021; LGA, n.d.). The redistribution of refugees to the area allows them to access the range of support services but also puts additional strain on local resources ([UA1] City of Sanctuary, n.d.^a).

5.3.3 The middle

5.3.3.1 What effects are produced by the representations?

Information relating to provision for refugees is easily accessible on the council website ([UA1] City Council, n.d.^{a; c; d; e; f; g; h}) with links to translation services, if needed. Additionally, details of wider community support are available. These appear to be updated regularly. Responses to current government schemes are accessible with relevant signposting, allowing claims using these systems. Additionally, legal requirements and conditions for refugees are stipulated. Messaging on websites indicates a welcoming approach with similar discourse in press releases and policy documents. Although UA1 acknowledges challenges in meeting need, it consistently advocates a positive response towards refugees which corresponds to a diverse community in the city.

5.3.3.2 How can these representations be considered in a different way, and can the silences be identified?

UA1, regional associations and community groups consistently raise issues relating to lack of consultation from government departments and lack of funding, with policies being imposed rather than negotiated. This can be seen in relation to central policy created to deal with the Afghanistan and Ukraine crises, with policies lacking clarity especially during the first few weeks of delivery (LGA, 2022^c). Examples can be seen in issues raised relating to the two schemes dealing with refugees from Ukraine. Lack of flexibility in moving across schemes creates increasing numbers of refugees approaching authorities for housing and support after existing arrangements fail (LC, HC, 6th July 2022). Funding and resourcing are also a concern in relation to these schemes, with groups raising issues founded on previous delays in receiving support from central funding (LGA, 2021^c).

Refugee dispersal is also challenged as it is seen to place an excessive burden on certain authorities, creating problems relating to accommodation, health, and education, with school academies able to refuse to take refugee children unless compelled to do so through central government requests. This places additional burdens on the council in having to apply to the DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to request that academies accept refugee children (LGA, 2022^d). Dispersal of refugees is based on centrally compiled statistics rather than local knowledge feeding into government policy ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a; LGA, 2022^c; ^d) and national data are not openly shared with authorities responsible for meeting need at regional level (LGA, 2022^c; ^d). Refugees, and specifically UAMs, can access services through normal routes but often have additional needs ([UA1] City Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016) which cannot be met within existing budgets (LGA, 2021^c; 2022^a; ^d). Documents contain repeated requests for

government to liaise with regional authorities on policy decisions, with clear references to lack of coordination and consultation which impact on provision and place stress on local communities (Bedford, 2021; LGA, 2021^c; ^d). It is a small leap to assume that this contributes to local communities identifying refugee populations as a burden within the community, thus the Government is perpetuating a system that is evident throughout the chronosystem of migration and inclusion (3.2).

The need to provide appropriate resources means that UA1 recognises that refugees can face hardship in their new lives, linked to poverty, housing, lack of support and hostility in the community ([UA1] City Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016; LGA, 2021^c; Bedford, 2021). This clearly confronts other discourses which suggest that challenges occur prior to arrival, rather than within host communities (5.6).

5.3.4 The end

5.3.4.1 What discourses underpin the representations, how are they disseminated or endorsed, and are there any different or conflicting discourses?

There are continuing concerns around allocations, access to data, resources, and accommodation as well as opportunity to use alternative operational systems (LGA, 2022^d). A major factor is lack of information and collaboration from government which impacts provision at all levels (ibid). A tendency to rely on existing structures in UA1, whilst providing no additional funding, places further strain on a system already at breaking point ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a; [UA1] City Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016; Bedford, 2021; Richardson, 2022). There are repeated appeals to government to work collaboratively and learn from previous experiences whilst recognising that national policy can cause additional strain on systems, with hostile or negative policies contributing to

problems with housing, schooling, health services and poor outcomes ([UA1] City Commissioning Group, 2016; [UA1] City Council, 2016^a; [UA1] City of Sanctuary, 2021^a; LGA, 2022^d; LGA, n.d.).

It appears that systems are stagnating from lack of dialogue around a common purpose with government concentrating on national policy agendas (2.5.2) whilst UA1 and supporting agencies focus on policy which provides access to services and community cohesion. These discourses run parallel to each other and, whilst each level of the system acknowledges impact of policy decisions on each other, they fail to establish a consistent dialogue which enables them to be responsive to need. Discourses from community groups, which do not support migrant groups, by-pass regional initiatives by advocating hostile responses linked to central government policy (3.2). Additionally, reactions from other regional authorities provide an alternative response to need within the East Midlands region (5.5).

There is, therefore, an ambiguous ending to the story of UA1, with little reconciliation between central government and regional proposals, and with additional challenges of alternative plans at regional level, as seen in UA2.

5.4 Kate's stories

My name is Kate. I've lived and worked in the East Midlands for the past 45 years. I've also been in education for 45 years. I came straight to the East Midlands from university when I was 21. I worked in an inner-city school in Key Stage 1 and then went on to work in other inner-city schools in different key stages and also in the Foundation Stage. I worked in adult education during that time teaching GCSE English in the evenings. I've had many roles and responsibilities including the curriculum for PE and history. I have been a SENDCo and a Deputy Head. At one point, I had a definite role in developing community links and developing community education, securing finance for two larger inner-city schools, and then setting up a community section to support parents and families within that area. I've been a Headteacher at two schools, one infant school and one nursery school. I have also been a consultant for struggling schools all of which have been in a city. I am currently working with a university supporting teaching school alliances in training trainee teachers.

5.4.1 Kate's first narrative

Kate is shown photograph 1 and given the following information:

The individuals in the photograph have extended family who live in the East Midlands. Tell me their story.

5.4.1.1 The beginning

This story starts many years ago and it starts in Syria. Innocent people are killed daily: men fighting; women and children scared; sons killed. Sometimes it's unbearable: no hope, no

future. The only chance these people have had is to travel to family in the East Midlands where, if they can get there safely, they will have security... or so they think. So, there are lots of negotiations, maybe with their East Midlands family; maybe with other people in Syria and certainly with other people in countries going away from Syria. They've got to get across the seas but, before that point, they've got to travel long distances. They meet ladies and young men. These young children have travelled a long, long way with very little support. This family, or these families, on the boat have probably got more money than most other families and probably have more knowledge about the outside world – they have connections and so they're the lucky ones.

They took days, possibly weeks, to get through to a port in France or somewhere along the coast where they would pay lots of money to access the transition across the sea in very dangerous conditions. Lots of tiny children, no life jackets, cramped conditions.

A young man helps the children to disembark. Possibly, they have no idea where they are going to and they're not quite sure how they're going to get to the East Midlands. Maybe, on route, there's been some disasters – people falling into the sea or being lost on the very long journey from Syria. They've left loved ones behind, and although they're probably relieved at this point, they've left a lot of tragedy behind them, seen a lot of war. The young man could have been a soldier – a child soldier who's managed to break free and help some families.

5.4.1.2 The middle

How do they get to their family? I imagine that they contact them by mobile phone, and they will get to a point where they have to show who they are and what they are and apply... or appeal... for asylum. They would go to some sort of centre where they show

documents, if they've got them, and say whether they have a connection or home to go to. Maybe they'll be allowed to go there? To their East Midlands family. Maybe not? Even when they get to that position, **if** they do get to that position, then life is not easy. I think the uncertainty for this family is that they think they've made it because they're on a boat and they're going to land in the country where their family is living but they're actually going to face lots of challenges.

5.4.1.3 The end – ambiguous

I've worked with families like this when I was a Headteacher. They're in a very difficult position; very difficult circumstances. Families are living lies to get what they want. They can't be truthful about how old the children are... about all sorts of issues... about other families trying to support them. Families I've worked with did receive funding as they were waiting for the outcome but once they heard they could stay here and when they moved status, the funding stopped and so they were left in poverty. There was no joined-up thinking. We had to provide beds and clothing and we contacted social services to make sure they could actually live. It was alright in the end, but they needed our help.

5.4.2 Kate's second narrative

Kate is shown photograph 2. She is given the following information:

The child in photograph 2 is a lone child arriving on UK soil. Tell me their story.

5.4.2.1 *The beginning*

My story begins with a young boy who is coming off a boat. I have a feeling that it probably won't end well but I'm not quite sure. He's come all alone which isn't uncommon. People send their children across for safety... to aunts and uncles or grandparents... to keep them safe. They've often left their parents in difficult situations, and they will remember that. The little boy will be thinking about his mum. His dad's been killed but his mum is trying to hold things together. Perhaps there's smaller children but he is old enough to be able to support himself... even though it's tragic. He can support himself travelling from one part of his homeland to British soil. So, his mum has made a decision... which must be horrendous... to send him. But really, it isn't a decision because she wants him to be safe. So, the child is now on his way to meet his auntie who lives in [UA1]. She's got other children who are older... and younger... than him – who go to local schools and local colleges. So, he's meeting other children, and his auntie, who he's probably never met before. He's seen photographs of them and, hopefully, the language he speaks is the language spoken in their home. Some children may not be as fluent in their home language as he is. He's come from his homeland, in very tragic circumstances, to these children who are happily going to school – skipping, jumping, happily playing outside. They're watching things on television; he just doesn't comprehend any of it. They're all being very lovely to him; really kind – but he's missing his mum. He's missing his other siblings, and he doesn't understand how they can go outside and play so freely. Nobody

is protecting him from the fright... so although he's safe, he's anxious and, actually, they're not very equipped to support him. His aunt knows what is happening in his homeland but hasn't been there since the troubles have been happening. She can only rely on the news and what other family members are telling her, so she is ill-equipped to support a child who is probably very emotionally distressed and disturbed.

5.4.2.2 The middle

He's now got to settle down again in a very strange environment. In a bed... all by himself... he's never had that before. He's moving from one place to another and going to school – he hasn't been to school for a long time. All of a sudden, the following morning, he's taken to the local primary school... signing in. They want details about his background, but he hasn't got any details at all. It's all just on what his aunt says so there are lots of questions. People are asking for things... other people are coming onto the scene... social workers... all these people. Hopefully, they'll find someone that can speak the same language in the community so they can provide support. This child is probably emotionally disturbed, although very mature about the ways of the world. He joins his classes and tries to make friends... but doesn't relate to anybody. He tries to make friends but stands alone. What an isolated child! In the classroom, people are giving him things to take home – books - bombarding him with tests – asking him to write, asking him to draw – asking him... and all he wants to do is talk about what's happened at home. But at no point, in this part of his education, does anybody do this – not because they don't want to but because there's not enough people around to support with the language; or, they don't have the language, or the qualifications, or the experience to support this little chap's needs. So, he goes... oh, very quietly... very quietly... through the school. He settles down to his studies but

never really settles down to where he is, and who he is, because he is confused about who he REALLY is. He may be having conversations with his mum on the phone; he may not. He may be seeing the news about his homeland, or even the areas where he has come from on the television. He might even see people who he actually knows on the news, and all of this is providing him with absolute trauma.

5.4.2.3 The end – ambiguous

For that young man, as he grows up and goes through school, as he gets support, he will adapt to certain circumstances... but he will never feel that he belongs – even if he is allowed to stay. He is just *expected* to settle.

5.4.3 Kate's third narrative

Kate is shown photograph 3. She is given the following information:

Photograph 3 shows a group of children who might be siblings. One is holding a photograph of a blown-out window. These children have not been granted asylum and need to return to their country of origin. Tell me their story.

5.4.3.1 *The beginning*

I can't tell this story mainly because I don't know what would happen to them – to different children like that. Why would they come together? I can see they could be at a school – I get that – but I don't understand.

This photograph raises questions for me. I wonder how I would feel without my child when I couldn't go with him? How would I feel as a child without my mum? She wouldn't be there when I got home from school. Too many life experiences to cope with - just numb with emotion. I think children just settle down and become quiet and withdrawn. It's even worse because families are integrating and settling around them. It's the silence of thinking... but it must be awful. As kind as everybody is, it's tragic. They become politically aware. They do settle down to studies because it's been instilled in them to get a good education. "Go and make sure you learn – you can save us." They'll be doing that, definitely doing that.

It's so emotional – I don't know how these children are so resilient, but I don't think it ever goes away and it's that bit... I don't know how to do it – where's it all coming from? If we've been through something, like post-traumatic stress syndrome... there are processes that adults are taken through... if you're a soldier you go through that... but I've

never known a child going through that and I've known many who've come from war-torn countries. We treat them like children which is lovely, but surely there must be more? Counselling or therapy that children like that need... and that's not in place.

5.4.3.2 The middle

Is there anything that practitioners can do? Protocols are there. They arrive and sometimes they're sent back somewhere... even if it's not their country of origin. The practitioner's hands are tied. I know this. I'm thinking of a family who escaped their country. A family that had settled quickly – two children with their mum, but the situation was lethal... the family were being sought out... someone was seeking to kill them. We tried everything. We went to the MP. They were deported. There was no close family, and mum was phoning us after she was deported. I was trying to do things, and she was hiding... she was hiding in her homeland... and then it all went quiet.

5.4.3.3 The end - negative

I don't know what happened after that. It's so tragic because the whole family were alright. The boys were successful but, because they didn't 'fit the bill', they went. They took them in the middle of the night, banging on the door, taking them off to a deportation centre. That was their destiny. I don't know what happened to that family. Such bright boys... but such fear... they went back and had to hide. We tried to intervene, and with money and support, it might have been alright, but when it comes to deportation, there's no chance. We signed registers; we said "NO! This family must stay here". Social workers were involved, but we had no power whatsoever.

5.4.4 Kate's fourth narrative

Kate chooses photograph 7.

There are three children in photograph 7 who are looking through a barbed wire fence.

Tell me their story.

5.4.4.1 The beginning

Three boys are looking out from a camp. They came from a town because some soldiers came to get them. They saw their father taken away and they saw other children taken away with their mother. They travelled very far but not overseas. They travelled across different countries, and they managed to get to a camp for safety. These three boys saw everything: they were traumatised. Their mum isn't there. Perhaps she's been put in another part of the camp or maybe she came to serious harm... I don't know. The biggest boy is looking after the other two. He's now become the father: he's taken over that role. He knows he's got to keep his little siblings... his little brothers... safe. This is their home, this camp. They're supposed to be safe but there are lots of other children who they don't know who are in similar circumstances. This is a dump... I suppose - sheds with lots of children, lots of beds, no comforts. When it's cold, it's cold and when it's hot, it's hot. The food is awful, the children are becoming ill. The children are traumatised, crying and emotional. There are very few adults in the whole camp. Some adults are very kind; some adults are not so kind. The eldest boy feels it's his responsibility to keep his two brothers safe and away from harm. They sleep with the other children and the bit they enjoy is looking at the soldiers, or the police, outside the gates. They feel like they've done something wrong. They see things happening outside the camp, but nothing is happening for them inside the camp. There's absolutely nothing there, no toys to play with, nothing

to draw with. They start to kick balls around... pretend balls... bits of cans. There are no facilities whatsoever and the youngest boy has a cough. The older boy is always asking for medicine and sometimes they get it but sometimes, they don't. The oldest boy doesn't sleep at night because he doesn't want any harm to come to his brothers, so he's got one eye open as he stays awake... so he's tired. They had no clue what was going to happen to them! They've just got the clothes they came in and no-one is giving them anything else... and they basically roam around, go to the food store, come away from the food store and then look round the camp and watch the soldiers. The oldest boy knows that they have to sign some papers – he doesn't know what's going to happen after that. He's hoping that they've just come to this place for a short time but when he talks to other children who can speak his language, they tell him that they have been there for a long, long time. Nothing seems to change... no papers... nothing to change this... nothing to say how old he is or where he came from. So, he's telling whoever is asking, if they do ask, that he has nothing. They just keep saying that he has to sort his papers before they can move them back home or somewhere else. He doesn't want to go back home. He remembers the soldiers coming in and taking his dad from the apartment. He saw everything and he doesn't want to go back to that part of the country, or to that town but he doesn't know where he wants to go. He doesn't know what to do next – he's literally in no-man's-land.

5.4.4.2 The middle

A photographer arrives and takes this picture which is sold to newspapers all over the world. The newspapers in the UK all tell different stories about this image, and other images, depending on the reaction they want to get from people. These images are

emotive. They all show situations that look traumatic. They would choose different images if they wanted to be positive. They want to show the horror and that's the bit I don't know about – how refugee camps work for children all over the world. I know it's horrific, but I don't know what happens to them. They're always waiting for papers, and I never hear what happens, or where they go. You read about children who are on their own and who don't want to go home because they don't want to go back to that terror. So, what happens to those children? It's not like anything I have experienced. The children I have seen have an end result although it's weak and not very suitable... but there is an end result, whether it's good or bad. These children could be in that situation for years. This should be prevented and that's what it provoked in me and why I want to talk about it. I wouldn't have talked about it before but then I thought... what happens next? I'm horrified at that picture.

I once saw a photograph of people landing in Greece from Syria and I think they were trying to say, "Look how many people are coming into the country." There were so many and there were no individuals, just one big mass of people. I think it was political, trying to say that we can't take any more refugees. It didn't look tragic – it just looked like there were lots of them there. I think it was meant to say that they were landing on our shores and what were we going to do about it. The three boys provoked that in me. What's next? I wanted to know more about the story – the personal story. You see, when there's an individual, I can look into their eyes. If there's a lot of people in a small photograph, people think they're going to be overrun – there's a preconceived idea that thousands of people are coming into the country, and we can't cope with them.

5.4.4.3 The end – ambiguous

In a way, the inclusion programme just pays lip service and that's the worst thing. It's not like that, of course, because schools try harder than that, but, in real terms, for real people, it needs to have more power behind it. They say they have rights, and you can do this, or that, and we are going to support you... and then it doesn't happen. No wonder there's so much mistrust in the world. Somewhere along the line, there's a 'flowery' inclusion – that's being disparaging because it's the inclusion programme that's not really linked to what's happening... what support there really is. This is in all my stories – the juxtaposition – the jarring in British schools between what's supposed to happen and policy.

5.5 Unitary Authority 2 (UA2): policy narrative

5.5.1 Timeline

Item number	Evidence	Source/Date	Category
1	Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 c.41	2002	Statute
2	ESOL in the East Midlands: Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme, February 2017	East Midlands Councils, 2017	Policy Document
3	Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 c.20	2020	Statute
<i>'An Act to make provision to end rights to free movement of persons under retained EU law and to repeal other retained EU law relating to immigration; to confer power to modify retained direct EU legislation relating to social security co-ordination; and for connected purposes', 11th November 2020: online.</i>			
4	[UA2] City of Sanctuary Information	[UA2] City of Sanctuary, n.d. ^{a; b}	Statement
5	Council Support for Afghan Resettlement	LGA, n.d.	Policy Document
6	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2021/2024	[UA2] City Council, 2021	Policy Document
7	Afghanistan, 18 th August	LGA, 2021 ^a	Policy Statement
8	Local Government Association Statement - 'Operation Warm Welcome', 6 th September	LGA, 2021 ^b	Policy Statement
9	Ukraine Refugees, House of Lords, 6 th March	LGA, 2022 ^d	Parliamentary Discussion
10	Local Government's Role in Supporting Arrivals from Ukraine, 9 th March	LGA, 2022 ^c	Policy Statement
11	Ukraine: Support for New Arrivals, 11 th March	LGA, 2022 ^e	Policy Document
12	Council Support for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Unaccompanied Children	LGA, n.d.	Policy Statement
13	Schemes and Resources for Ukrainian Refugees	[UA2] City Council, n.d. ^a	Statement
14	Support for Ukraine	[UA2] City Council, n.d. ^b	Policy Statement
15	Homes for Ukraine: Lessons Learned, 9 th June	LGA, 2022 ^a	Policy Review
16	Homes for Ukraine – Latest Regional Data, 10 th June	East Midlands Councils, 2022	Policy Review
17	A Fairer Asylum Accommodation System	HO, 2022 ^a	Policy Review

18	Nationality and Borders Act 2022	2022	Statute
<i>'Make provision about nationality, asylum and immigration; to make provision about victims of slavery or human trafficking; to provide a power for Tribunals to charge participants where their behaviour has wasted the Tribunal's resources; and for connected purposes', 26th April 2022: online.</i>			

Figure 10: UA2 Timeline

5.5.2 The beginning

This story discusses UA2's responses as it manages regional procedures between the introduction of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 and the enactment of the Nationality and Borders legislation in 2022. It draws on published evidence specifically relating to UA2 whilst considering broader influences impacting on policy decisions. Following the 2022 local elections, UA2 has councillors from the following political parties: 18 Conservative, 16 Labour, eight Liberal Democrat, six Reform [UA2] Group, three Independent, giving no one party an overall majority ([UA2] City Council, n.d.: online). Prior to the 2022 elections, the Conservative Party had minority control of UA2.

Stem:

This city continues to offer a warm welcome to refugees from war torn conflict in addition to hosting those seeking asylum by way of Home Office application (City Council Spokesperson, ITV News, 2022^a).

5.5.2.1 What is the problem of refugees represented to be?

In 2016, following the Syrian crisis, UA2 contacts the Immigration Minister asking for a halt to dispersals ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a). In 2017, ONS record the following statistics for UA2: 14% of the city's population was born outside the UK with 90% being English speakers, below the national average of 92%. However, there are no resettled refugees in UA2. Subsequently, under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, there are 127 visa applications with 108 visas issued and 78 arrivals (East Midlands Council, 2022). This is probably linked to the Ukrainian community based here who are keen to offer support to refugees during

the Ukraine crisis (ITV News, 2022^a). Following the Government's announcement that the UK would be accepting refugees from Ukraine, a Labour councillor advocates the possibility of UA2 joining government schemes. This is supported by the local Ukrainian population and other councillors agree to write to the Government as well as take proactive action to participate in the schemes (ITV News, 2022^a). UA2 is also part of the Afghan resettlement scheme although there is little or no reference to this on the council website. The Afghan resettlement grant allocated to UA2 amounts to £80,898.75 in December 2021, with an additional £44,075 in March 2022 (DFE, 2022^a). However, in 2021, newspaper reports raise concerns over UA2's cuts to funding which potentially impact on provision for vulnerable people (BBC News, 2021^b). Although this funding is not specifically allocated to refugees, provision for them tends to rely on general funds with additional funding being difficult to access (LGA, 2022^d). There are also reports of extremely poor housing for refugees in UA2, with refugees being housed in inappropriate accommodation for lengthy periods (Taylor, 2021).

5.5.2.2 What are the suppositions that underpin the representations?

UA2 has a population which includes a significant proportion born outside the UK (East Midlands Council, 2022). However, following the Syrian refugee crisis in 2016, there is reluctance to accept refugees. This seems to stem from inability to manage dispersals due to limited resources ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a). Possibly due to withdrawal from the system, but perhaps also linked to the political alignment of UA2, many policies associated with equality, diversity and inclusion are withdrawn ([UA2] City Council, 2021) with very little evidence of policy initiatives relating to inclusive practice during this period ([UA2] City, n.d.).

The [UA2] City of Sanctuary website is available to support refugees but is underdeveloped compared to similar websites in other East Midlands cities. It aims to work with other organisations in welcoming refugees but does not include ambitions to challenge the status quo ([UA2] City of Sanctuary, n.d.^{a; b}). It identifies community support with links to relevant websites which refugees can access ([UA2] City of Sanctuary, n.d.^{a; b}). Lack of resourcing continues to be an issue (Taylor, 2021) although UA2 is more open to accepting dispersals through government recognised schemes (ITV, 2022^a; East Midlands Councils, 2022). To some extent, this seems to stem from recognition of groups settled in the area who could support dispersals to the city (ITV, 2022^a). There is guidance to government policy on the Ukraine refugee schemes available on UA2's website ([UA2] City Council, n.d.). There is no available guidance relating to other groups of refugees, such as those from Afghanistan even though UA2 is in receipt of funding.

The main messages relating to inclusion of refugees are held within UA2's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021-2024 ([UA2] City Council, 2021) which is created in response to international and national events, specifically Black Lives Matter, as well as several national and local cases which raise issues of safety. Policy statements in this document go beyond the needs of refugees and do not mention them specifically. This is a tentative response to address equality issues following dissolution of the [UA2] Racial Equality Council ([UA2] City Council, 2021). Although UA2 appears to be adopting a more positive attitude to refugee dispersal, this response could link to requests from other councils for fair distribution across regions (LGA, 2021^c; 2022^d; HO, 2022^a).

5.5.2.3 What are the origins of the problem representations?

UA2 has issues with resourcing and funding which impact on overall budgets and their ability to deal with the general population, meaning that they are less inclined to accept additional need. The political alignment of council members means that there has been no clear political party majority, although there have been a larger number of councillors from the Conservative Party, indicating closer alignment to central government policy which tends to be more hostile to refugees (Webber, 2021). This can be heard in soundbites which refer to accepting refugees through approved government routes (ITV News, 2022^a). A stronger response to Ukrainian refugees is linked to the local population and government initiatives. Additionally, the introduction of a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan is specifically linked to national events which initiate responses from many councils following demonstrations, protests, and legal proceedings ([UA2] City Council, 2021).

5.5.3 The middle

5.5.3.1 What effects are produced by the representations?

A reluctance to accept refugees, leading to fewer numbers of refugees in the area, means there is less need for clearer signposting to supporting agencies and possibly this contributes to underdeveloped support elsewhere, such as the [UA2] City of Sanctuary website (n.d.^{a;b}) and inadequate accommodation (Taylor, 2021). Clearer guidance is given to Ukrainian refugees ([UA2] City Council, n.d.) but this relies on government guidance which is organisationally problematic and lacking in clarity (LGA, 2022^c). There is commitment to increase involvement in recognised schemes, but a lack of guidance and support means that refugees remain vulnerable and could lack appropriate support (BBC

News, 2021^b; Taylor, 2021; [UA2] City Council, n.d.). This could place additional burdens on the local population and perpetuate negative beliefs relating to refugees in the community which become part of associated discourse (3.2).

5.5.3.2 How can these representations be considered in a different way, and can the silences be identified?

UA2 now lacks a strong political identity linked to one political party and therefore needs to appeal to the local population. There is a slight move to Labour during the 2022 local elections which some attribute to a national protest against the Government as well as local issues (Baston, 2022). The loss of the Equality and Diversity Committee seems to indicate unwillingness to address inclusion, however, the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy shows a response to wider issues with some consideration of local need. It is interesting to note where UA2 identifies issues, indicating that previously there has been a poor response to certain groups in the city, for example some ethnic groups.

Lack of clear guidance for refugees on the website demonstrates that support is seen to lie elsewhere in the community or may be lacking in general. Those refugees who lack community networks, appropriate housing, facilities, and resources (ITV, 2022^a) would prefer to move elsewhere to access better provision ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a; LGA, 2022^c). Some UA2 councillors make it clear that their offer only relates to selected refugees, leaving others outside the regional offer (ITV, 2022^a). There are indications that they would not challenge government decisions or accommodate those outside accepted systems. More positive responses to Ukrainian refugees link directly to Ukrainian nationals living in UA2 (ITV, 2022^a) and possibly are underpinned by factors influencing

national responses; for example, acceptance of refugees with similar attributes to British communities (Bayoumi, 2022).

5.5.4 The end

5.5.4.1 What discourses underpin the representations, how are they disseminated or endorsed, and are there any different or conflicting discourses?

UA2's website reflects government discourse in welcoming refugees from legitimate schemes but not recognising those who sit outside those schemes. Information is limited, and that which is available is directly linked to national policy. Press releases reflect these viewpoints. Overt statements relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are made through general policy which has limited focus on refugees, although they are recognised as having specific needs (3.2). Similarly, the [UA2] City of Sanctuary website is less developed and focuses on community organisations and groups, rather than refugees themselves ([UA2] City of Sanctuary, n.d.). UA2 holds no challenge to current discourse but provides support by signposting community groups; this attitude is reflected in Jessica's narratives (5.6). National policy responses are being challenged by other councils, with councils and the HO itself wanting a fairer distribution of provision (HO, 2022^a; LGA, 2022^c). It is interesting to note that UA2 appears to be responding to this by accepting higher numbers of refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine. It is not clear whether this will lead to more overt policy responses at regional level which may or may not include challenge to the status quo.

The ending of this story is ambiguous. UA2 appears to be taking a more prominent role in official schemes, but resourcing and support are under-developed. The desire or ability to challenge the status quo is not evident.

5.6 Jessica's stories

My name is Jessica. I have been training to be a primary school teacher for five years. I spent two years at college and then three years on a primary education course at university. I've trained to work with children from the ages of three to eleven. I'm currently working with children between five and six years old. I'm a staff governor at my current school. I have no experience in working with refugee or asylum seeker children.

5.6.1 Jessica's first narrative

Jessica is shown photograph 1 and given the following information:

The individuals in the photograph have extended family who live in the East Midlands. Tell me their story.

5.6.1.1 *The beginning*

The story begins with people in a boat who have travelled to the UK, possibly from Afghanistan or Iran because there was a war going on. Their houses and things have been ruined and destroyed so they're seeking safety and bringing all their family and children to somewhere they think will offer them safety... and a happier life.

They have family in the East Midlands, so they know what to expect in the UK and Midlands. I feel like the journey was risky as there are so many of them in the boat... they all have life jackets on though.

The man holding the children looks concerned. He looks slightly worried about the possibility of not knowing what is ahead... not knowing what the future might bring... not knowing what the future holds for him over here.

5.6.1.2 The middle

...So, what happens next? I think they are met by border control, or the police and they are taken... somewhere. Somewhere like offices... to be questioned... about where they have come from, and why they've ended up in the UK.

They begin by living in social housing, in some sort of community shelter or perhaps with people that offer their homes to asylum seekers. Maybe, if someone has enough space in their house and they can work with different charities, they can offer their home for people to stay in. This can help until they get government housing.

The children will probably be placed in a school near where they are staying. There will probably be no (or few) children who speak their language and so the school will have to offer them a lot of additional support in terms of their education. They will adapt and differentiate learning for them to access the content. The children might find it difficult to socialise with their peers so it might be worth giving them access to a nurture group where they can talk and express emotions in different ways - giving one-to-one support and using different methods. They need to know what is happening to the children and make sure that they get the right access to food and shelter... and things. They need to consider how they can support the parents and help them to learn English as they might not speak English either.

The teachers have a lot of pressure but as a teacher, it's your role to put in place the additional support and to go down whatever avenues you need to in order to have the time, additional Teacher Assistant time, or support from external agencies to make sure every child is supported. It's important to be mindful that there are still other children in

the class and so not to let these children take up all of your time... you just have to manage it. Really, it can depend on the needs of the rest of the class.

5.6.1.3 The end – positive

What happens in the end? Being well-supported in the school, and still very young, the children adapt to their new life. They learn the new language and adapt to life in the UK. I'd like to think that they are well-supported in the school. I'd like to think that the family members that came with them secure jobs so they can financially support the children and that they receive support, from the Government, for counselling or any support they need to deal with the trauma of moving across countries. Hopefully, they find a nice place to live where they are welcomed into the community and go on to have happy and successful lives.

5.6.2 Jessica's second narrative

Jessica is shown photographs 2 and 3. She chooses to tell one story about the two photographs. She is given the following information:

The child in photograph 2 is a lone child arriving on UK soil.

Photograph 3 shows a group of children who might be siblings. One is holding a photograph of a blown-out window. These children have not been granted asylum and need to return to their country of origin. Tell me their story.

5.6.2.1 The beginning

This story begins with a lone child coming over who is possibly placed with some emergency foster carers, or volunteer families that take asylum seekers. Potentially, they would enrol in a school and a teacher, like myself, would... obviously... do everything they could to support. The initial focus is for the child to stay in the country. This would add pressure for the teacher. They're in an educational setting so, even though the social and emotional side is equally (if not more) important, formal education still plays a large part. This child has social and emotional needs that are more important and take up more time, and the teacher needs to take all that into account when planning. The teacher needs to balance the child's emotions – the child may be without parents at home and with other guardians who they might not know or be able to speak to, using the same language.

5.6.2.2 The middle

Then the children find that they haven't been granted asylum and they are going to have to return to another country. This is additional pressure for the teachers. Their focus needs to be completely on supporting the children emotionally and socially, to transition

back to an environment which they are extremely fearful of, and worried about. They could also potentially focus on them reuniting with their family. The blown-out window in their photograph is horrific but it isn't giving a good representation of the devastation and chaos... of what is actually going on in the country in terms of people being killed and buildings being completely knocked down. The children could have misleading information about going back and the things that could happen which could be much worse than they imagine.

5.6.2.3 The end – ambiguous

They may not be united with their loved ones; they may not have anywhere to live; their loved ones may have passed away; they may be put into an institution for orphans. I think it's difficult to say what the children are feeling. They look happy even though they have the photograph... perhaps they think they will see their family... or they're so young they don't understand. As long as they can be with one safe person.

How do you feel as a teacher? I think as a teacher, your instinct is to help and give the best outcome and make sure they're safe... and cared for... and looked after. I think that is being taken out of your control and then they're having to go back into an environment that isn't safe. Obviously, for them to come here in the first place isn't safe and I think it's really concerning. Once they've gone, you've lost that contact with them. You wouldn't know what happens and that would be just heart-breaking... to think there was nothing you could do. You would just have to give them as much support as you could until they left but it would be really hard... for lots of staff... teachers, teaching assistants and other specialists that they come into contact with. As a teacher, your instinct is to look after all of the children and care for them. I care for all of the children that are in my class and

would feel so helpless not knowing what they were going back to or what they were going to experience.

5.6.3 Jessica's third narrative

Jessica chooses photographs 10 and 11. She chooses to tell one story about the two photographs.

Photograph 10

There are five children and one adult/adolescent in photograph 10 who are playing around a bicycle, laughing with each other.

Photograph 11

There are two or three children in photograph 11 who are drawing pictures of foxes. Tell me their story.

5.6.3.1 *The beginning*

This family has travelled over to the UK, seeking asylum and they have been allowed to stay. The children and the mother look happy. They look relieved because, finally, they feel safe. They feel out of danger and away from the awful things that are going on in their country. They are enjoying time outside on a bike, something they've not been able to experience for a long time due to not being safe in their own country. I feel they are happy and are potentially in a community with other families that are in the same situation. They live in the flats behind them, and they look well-clothed. They are obviously receiving enough support from the local authorities. The mother looks so happy, and she is encouraging the child to play and to hold onto the bike. She is looking so relaxed, and she's obviously not scared like she use to be.

5.6.3.2 The middle

Where the children are living, they have access to paper and colouring pens and pencils. They sit, drawing which shows they want to develop skills. They're keen to work; to work hard. It also shows the sort of support the school has put in place. They have sent them these resources to use at home. Although it looks a bit cramped, a bit messy in the background, the children look content, they look like they're enjoying what they are doing. It shows that it's something they can be proud of – the work they are doing could be showcased in school. The teacher, in doing this, really helps the children; being involved and being part of the school community. This could be linked to their art class - drawing - and it's something they can continue at home as they've been given the resources to do so. It looks like they've got shelter over their heads; they're not on the streets; they are well clothed so it looks like they are well cared for – I think the ending for these children would be quite positive. They would continue in education and be socially and emotionally well-cared for in the school and by other professionals involved in their care. Their parents can hopefully find jobs and the children go on to get good jobs in the future too.

5.6.3.3 The end: ambiguous

Unfortunately, the asylum wasn't granted for these children, and they are told to return to their country of origin. Is it possible to challenge this?

A concern needs to be raised, a meeting or consultation with a social worker or a family support worker, or someone who's been involved with the children since they've arrived in the country. It needs to be really enforced how they have positively engaged with the school life – how they are achieving; how they seem really settled, and how they are -

socially and emotionally. The impact that this would have on the children's mental health if they had to move back to somewhere that they last knew as being so unsafe. I would really try, but it ultimately wouldn't be my decision, but I would really try to influence the decision based on what the children really wanted. They seem really happy and content. If they were keen to stay and had made good friends... if their academic achievement was improving... their language barrier was overcome and they were happy to stay, I would really try and put as much input as possible into them staying in the country. I would go to the safeguarding lead because you have to think of the welfare of the child as they move from your care. You pass all that on and if the child is potentially at risk, for whatever reasons, – if they're being neglected, if their family aren't able to get financial support in the country that they're from - then really pass it on... although the SLT would be aware already. It's important that the child stays in a safe environment. It's important to see what routes they can go down in order to push for them to be granted asylum, or to ensure that they have the appropriate support and financial stability when they return to the country they are from.

5.7 School A: policy narrative

5.7.1 Timeline

Item number	Evidence	Source/Date	Category
1	Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 c.41	2002	Statute
2	School of Sanctuary, June 2016	2016	Statement
3	Racial Equality and Anti-Racism Policy, Autumn 2019	2019	Policy Document
4	Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 c.20	2020	Statute
<i>'An Act to make provision to end rights to free movement of persons under retained EU law and to repeal other retained EU law relating to immigration; to confer power to modify retained direct EU legislation relating to social security co-ordination; and for connected purposes', 11th November 2020: online.</i>			
4	PSHE Policy, 2020	2020	Policy Document
5	Single Equalities Scheme, 2021 – 2024	2021	Policy Document
6	Citizenship Policy, Spring 2021	2021	Policy Document
7	Inclusion Policy, Spring 2021	2021	Policy Document
8	Nationality and Borders Act 2022	2022	Statute
<i>'Make provision about nationality, asylum and immigration; to make provision about victims of slavery or human trafficking; to provide a power for Tribunals to charge participants where their behaviour has wasted the Tribunal's resources; and for connected purposes', 26th April 2022: online.</i>			

Figure 11: School A Timeline

5.7.2 The beginning

This story considers School A's responses as it fulfils its role as a School of Sanctuary. It focuses on the period between the introduction of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 and the enactment of the Nationality and Borders legislation in 2022. It draws on published policies from the school's website whilst considering broader influences impacting policy decisions. The school is larger than an average-sized primary school and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average although the number of children with EAL is below average (Ofsted, 2014).

Stem:

We achieved this status for the work we have done to raise awareness of the issues around refugees and asylum seekers... part of this involved collecting toiletries and food for Welcome Packs to help people when they are struggling, and also persuad[ing] other schools to do likewise (School A website: online).

5.7.2.1 What is the problem of refugees represented to be?

The project to help refugees was initiated by one member of staff who responded to the Syrian crisis in 2016. The aim was to reach out to children and families in the school community and support refugees in the locality by collecting items to distribute to the refugee community. Other schools were recruited to provide similar support and thus develop a community response in meeting the needs of refugees and disseminating information. As well as providing practical help, the school carried out various activities

with pupils during June 2016 and was awarded School of Sanctuary status. School A still advertises its status on its website with a slide show of events and activities appearing to originate from events in 2016.

5.7.2.2 What are the suppositions that underpin the representations?

Initial analysis of the website indicates that the school could still be pro-active in supporting refugees within the community. Supplementary links contain details of events and the rationale for them. Although there are no specific policies relating to provision for refugees, published policies indicate commitment to educating children in their roles as citizens, with expectations of respect and reflection on issues facing society, including rights and responsibilities, and helpfulness in the local community and wider world (Citizenship Policy, 2021). Similar values are reflected in the PSHE Policy (2020) which expresses values of respect, responsibility, resilience, integrity, aspiration, and inclusion. Additionally, the Inclusion Policy (2021) explicitly mentions refugees' needs when considering gaps in learning resulting from missed education, whilst the Racial Equality and Anti-Racism Policy (2019) state that identifying and supporting the needs of disadvantaged groups, such as refugees, is a priority.

5.7.2.3 What are the origins of the problem representations?

The origins of *representations* date back to the Syrian refugee crisis which was publicised nationally and regionally. The leader refers to national news bulletins, appeals from UA1 and the City of Sanctuary as catalysts for the venture. The evidence on the school website relates to 2016 when the refugee crisis was at its height in Europe.

5.7.3 The middle

5.7.3.1 What effects are produced by the representations?

The implications are that the school continues to be proactive in supporting refugees in the community. There is some recognition of specific needs of refugees, with express identification of refugees in two school policies. More detail is provided within policies covering general provision which could also be applied to refugees, such as attendance, lack of schooling, SEND, EAL, and health issues. However, these cover the needs of *all* children without specifically identifying refugees as having unique needs (Anti-Racism Policy, 2019; Inclusion Policy, 2021). Additionally, the responsibilities of pupils towards others in the community are seen in general terms and make no specific reference to refugees (PSHE Policy, 2020; Citizenship Policy, 2021). The fact that the school has these policies indicates recognition that diverse needs are in their community, and that acknowledgement is important and should be addressed through policy statements. Nevertheless, a more focused response to the refugee community might have been expected as the school has School of Sanctuary status.

5.7.3.2 How can these representations be considered in a different way, and can the silences be identified?

Publicity surrounding the status of the school as a School of Sanctuary dates to 2016. There is no evidence of similar activities taking place between November 2020 and April 2022, despite national publicity relating to Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, with UA1 and the City of Sanctuary taking a public stance in providing support. Dissemination of information from UA1 in 2016 supported the initial response and yet, council messaging in 2021-2022 either fails to reach the school or does not produce similar reactions. School

newsletters to parents during 2021-2022 make no reference to projects linked to refugee communities. Additionally, there are no press releases from the school aimed at wider audiences, such as local newspaper articles or blogs on regional refugee websites: online searches all date back to 2016. One staff member has a prominent voice in 2016, with blogs and press releases discussing the project. This seems to indicate that initiatives stem from a personal response to the refugee crisis in 2016. It appears that this staff member has left the school which might contribute to a reduction in activity and publicity.

5.7.4 The end

5.7.4.1 What discourses underpin the representations, how are they disseminated or endorsed, and are there any different or conflicting discourses?

Discourses spotlighting refugees stem from a former staff member who was proactive in pushing the agenda forward. Although there are echoes of this initiative in current school policies, the ripples have diminished in strength with provision and response being held in general guidance and policy. It is surprising that discourses do not resurface in response to crises in 2021-2022 but the coronavirus pandemic appears to overshadow school communications at all levels. Perhaps projects such as this rely on individuals with a personal mission and, without these individuals, the discourse becomes weaker and lacking in focus? It is not possible to assess whether it has disappeared altogether, but the initial fire seems to have declined into smouldering embers or has been transferred into projects suggested by pupils which, although valid, may or may not be informed by wider priorities relating to refugees. It is not evident whether inclusive principles have become unclear as priorities have changed (Rustemier, 2004) or restricted because of pedagogical

strategies (Hansen, 2012; Hilt, 2017) ([3.4.6](#)) as described in narratives by Alison ([5.2](#)), Kate ([5.4](#)) and Mike ([5.8](#)).

The ending of this story is ambiguous as although the school retains its School of Sanctuary status, it is not clear if it is still proactive in supporting refugees. Refugee provision is held in general inclusion policies and again, it is not clear how effective these are in meeting need.

5.8 Mike's stories

I'm Mike, I've been teaching for four years. The age range I teach is predominantly 16 - 18 although I also teach Year 7 to Year 11. The roles that I have had are Subject Leader and Core Leader for Social Sciences, and I'm currently Director of Sixth Form and Head of Year 12. My experience with refugees and asylum seekers is none, and I have more of a theoretical understanding at this point. I am based in the East Midlands.

5.8.1 Mike's first narrative

Mike is shown photograph 1 and given the following information:

The individuals in the photograph have extended family who live in the East Midlands. Tell me their story.

5.8.1.1 The beginning

I would like to start with where they're at... so, landing on UK soil. The story will probably start with a feeling of relief, after what I can only imagine would be a horrendous journey to get to where they've got to... coming from an incredibly dangerous environment... travelling, again, through an incredibly dangerous environment so... a feeling of relief to start the story... actually getting onto UK land, safely. Then, I imagine that relief is met with a lot of anxiety, difficulty, stress... trying to get from where they are to their family in the East Midlands... trying to overcome various barriers to get there.

What might those barriers be? So... police, security... when they arrive, having to get through the system; barriers to the language, and not being able to express what they want or what they need - the information they need to get across; barriers in terms of

finance, money; being able to move to different places - so a lot of difficulty, despite the initial relief of getting to where they want to be.

And then moving on from there, obviously trying to actually settle into a new environment for them and their family, with the support of their family who are already in the UK, in the East Midlands. I see they have two young children – wanting to get them into education - and my story now considers their experiences of that.

5.8.1.2 The middle

Looking at the age of the kids – primary age – I imagine it will be completely different to anything they have experienced before, completely abnormal, incredibly scary, despite the fact that primary schools, and primary teachers, and professionals will be as nice and accommodating as they can be. It's going to be really awkward; a very terrifying experience for them and, again, with the best will in the world from staff and students to try and make them feel welcome, I imagine that their experience would still be difficult. Lots of barriers, for example the curriculum, and barriers from coming from a really deprived background... families having accommodation, somewhat settled but a lack of resources... help with education and all the other things you need to succeed but deprived of some of those things so, despite the best will of teachers and students, a really difficult situation to be in. And, in some cases, I imagine, they're seen as hopeless cases going through the education system. From primary school into secondary, they can be seen as students... in terms of academic success and things like that... that can be ignored because there's always an excuse as to why they won't get the grades or why they won't achieve so there's always justification there for staff... for teachers... if their grades aren't where they're supposed to be - if they don't get the value added that they're supposed to get...

all that kind of stuff. When it comes down to the exam group years - crunch time – they'll be experiencing people not focusing on them as a priority; focusing more on students who will potentially get them the grades required for them to meet league tables, things like that... seeing them as hopeless cases who will never get the grades, and then giving them less support... and prioritising things like feeling safe and feeling a sense of the community rather than academic success so there's a fault there... in the education system... not focusing on life chances and not setting them up to leave the education system with any grades, or knowledge, or know-how... to be successful in wider society.

5.8.1.3 The end – negative

My story would be a relatively negative one for the vast majority of people in these situations; where, despite being in a nice environment, and despite being in a safer country... potentially, even feeling more safe and secure... making friends... and having fun at school, and things like that... leaving the education system with a lack of skills and knowledge, grades, qualifications, to be able to go onto the next steps... careers and jobs, and to be able to break the cycle that they are in.

5.8.2 Mike's second narrative

Mike is shown photographs 2 and 3. He is given the following information:

The child in photograph 2 is a lone child arriving on UK soil.

Photograph 3 shows a group of children who might be siblings. One is holding a photograph of a blown-out window. These children have not been granted asylum and need to return to their country of origin. Tell me their story.

After some consideration (which is included as part of the narrative), he chooses to tell a story about photograph 2.

5.8.2.1 The beginning

I'm going to use picture 2 to tell my story – the story of the lone child because it maybe a little more difficult to tell the other story... children going back and not really knowing what that entails - the processes and all that kind of stuff.

So, my story begins with a child who's arrived in the UK, a lone child. The authorities have obviously picked this child up and they then go and put them... obviously... through a lot of processing. Throughout that time, the child is obviously really scared and really anxious and really struggling, missing family and missing relatives... doesn't really know what's going on and they are being taken from one place to the next but, eventually, they get through the process and are put with a carer... so, like a foster carer, for example. From there, they get housed and, obviously, then are entitled to go into the education system – they face a lot of language difficulties with the foster family and face similar difficulties in terms of settling in and belonging and they are not really sure what's going on.

5.8.2.2 The middle

And so, yes, they are placed in a school where, again, there are loads of difficulties. They don't really fit in with the family and there are loads of emotional issues, loads of social issues in terms of not really connecting with anybody, not having friends or friendship groups, missing family, and so having difficulties at home. And so, they're in the education system, in a school setting where they are facing difficulties in adapting and acclimatising into the situation... that environment... and still facing psychological effects. That's the role they have had over previous months, leaving their country, and then going to a new place to live with a new family, going into an education system where everything is brand new.

All of a sudden, because of the trauma and the experiences they've had over the last few months, they have difficulty settling and difficulties with behaviour and they get frustrated quite easily in school. They find it hard to make friends, hard to fit in and hard joining activities, and they don't really understand what is going on and so they are really frustrated and have some behavioural difficulties as a coping mechanism to deal with that difficult, different environment. It is difficult as they are seen as a different 'body' from the other students, and they are also misbehaving and having outbursts... and things like that... and that's why it's hard to make friends. The other students keep their distance and even make fun of them, call them names, and pick on them.

They go from that environment back to a foster care environment and a family that's completely alien to them. It's not even as if refugees are able to go home to a safe environment – it's an alien environment to them. They are finding it really difficult to cope

– all the time there are issues with family, friends... not being able to communicate with family.

As they get older, they live for months and years in the UK – experience racism and discrimination and they still find it difficult to settle – no identity and no sense of belonging in the community, without friends and family. Potentially, there are issues with foster families and carers changing - so even more disruption. Not being able to get to a point where they've got any solid foundations to make any positive next steps. Despite the help of foster carers, support workers and teachers – the processes are just too difficult. It's like having a double barrel... no, it's even more than that... coming to a new country, being with the family and the environment, the new school and having language difficulties, facing discrimination and racism and name-calling and all that kind of stuff. Think how hard it is for kids in care in schools anyway, never mind all the other stuff that is added on top of that.

5.8.2.3 The end – negative

And so, again, a negative outcome. It seems there is a system that is failing in multiple parts – the social care system and policies to do with refugees and asylum seekers in the school system. People trying to do their best but the system failing to address the issues.

Are there opportunities to challenge any of that - to make the outcomes better – or is that route set in stone? From my experience, I wouldn't have the opportunity although I probably have the ability to be able to voice it, but I don't know how far that would go and I wouldn't have anyone to speak to directly. I've got my Headteacher but in terms of the opportunity to impact policy, I wouldn't know the routes to do that and whether it would change as a result, or whether it is just seen as impossible. It's a really difficult

situation and we do our best and that's all we can do. My education gives me the ability to express what the issues might be, but avenues are closed down to me to raise things or push through and even if I say things, it won't go anywhere. There's nothing else I can add to the outcomes for this child.

5.8.3 Mike's third narrative

Mike chooses photograph 9.

The photograph shows many people on a dinghy being pulled to shore by two men in a boat. Tell me their story.

5.8.3.1 *The beginning*

This reminds me of the current situation with the RNLI lifeboats being criticised for picking up refugees in the Channel and all the current policy issues surrounding that. So, the start of the story is them being rescued and being brought to UK shores. Everyone on the boat is going through Customs, or whatever, and the other holding facilities. Many people on the boat aren't granted asylum seeker status and have to return home. However, there are a few... and one family with a young child, in particular... off that boat who do get refugee status... eventually... in the UK and they find themselves being relocated in the East Midlands.

5.8.3.2 *The middle*

Initially, the parents and the family find it incredibly difficult, and they find it really difficult to settle down. Their child finds it really difficult. The parents find it difficult to find work and the benefits, or cash allowances, that they're given barely cover essentials. So, it's a difficult start... after a difficult journey. The positive is that the child gets a place at a local school. They do find it difficult, initially, to settle into a new environment... for all the kinds of reasons that we'd expect. However, the school itself has quite good EAL provision and has experience with refugee children in particular... having had a few cases over the past few years. So, after a few terms, it actually becomes easier and easier for the child to

engage in the school, to settle in, to access the curriculum and start making relationships with other students and teachers. And... they do make some friends and the overall structure that's provided at the school gives them a sense of security that they haven't really had before and they still don't really have at home with their parents, who are finding it so difficult to get jobs... and all the stress that comes with that... and putting food on the table... and all that kind of stuff. But while they're at school... with the sense of security that they've got that they don't really get anywhere else, and they haven't had before... it makes it a relatively positive experience for them.

Through that time in the education system, going up until the end of secondary school, they do experience occasions of bullying and discrimination, teasing and all that kind of stuff and they don't find it easy to access the curriculum and lessons, but they do find it easier and easier. So, there are challenges along the way, however, this child in particular is pretty resilient, and the parents also have quite a strong inclination to push their kid through education and try to get them as good an education as possible. They appreciate it more than other parents who maybe take it for granted in the UK. After such a difficult journey, experiencing what they experienced at home, the journey to get there, they kind of really push the child and give them all the support they can, despite not being in the greatest of situations.

The parents eventually get jobs and, even though it's not great by our standards in the UK, it's a lot better than where they've come from. The child ends up achieving grades at GCSE which allow them to go onto a college course which they can access because it's more practical than vocational. They end up going through that and getting an apprenticeship and then... onto a job.

5.8.3.3 The end – positive

So, for me, this time, it's more of a positive ending with this child. Whilst going through a difficult period at school... and it's not easy by any stretch of the imagination... it's still a better place for them than what they've experienced before, and they make the most of it. Then, they get the grades and the course that allows the apprenticeship... and job... and they're a little more settled in the UK.

The photograph has a lot of background attached to it... from people's opinions which sometimes drive policy responses, but also opinions which sometimes come out of policy responses. If you are a teacher, there will be some challenges, but teachers need to educate and talk about the situation and get more empathy from the students. If you get these refugee students in your class, then obviously there are huge challenges. I mean, we do a lot about past experiences for all students... and why that can lead to negative behaviour in school. We're looking at things here... with these images... that are massively amplifying the issues that we look at. We look at contact when parents split up and stuff like that, but then you look at this... being rescued in the middle of the ocean after leaving the country for whatever reason. All the issues and challenges that we normally have are going to be amplified with these children.

I suppose you're going to have challenges with parents as well and their views on their children being in a class with these refugee children - the media coverage won't help with that. Obviously, if you've got parents that take the Nigel Farage view on things when they see these images in the media, and then, all of a sudden, their child... their 'little prince' or 'little princess' is in a class with a refugee child, that's going to cause issues and challenges for teachers, and the school as well, in terms of parental complaints... dealing

with it seems the teachers' role. It could be a massive problem in changing the narrative, I suppose, for people with those views and also for the kids themselves. That can obviously be really important in providing a sense of security for those refugee children.

The challenge comes at a grassroots level, changing the narrative around these individuals and working with children, parents, and the community rather than taking on the bigger challenge of changing the policy itself: influencing the policy in this way. I personally have not been exposed to changing policy and things like that, and I don't know how I'd go about it, but I feel confident with a group of kids in my class to be able to show them the bigger picture and to change the narrative and change the negative stereotypes that are associated with this kind of situation.

5.9 School B: policy narrative

5.9.1 Timeline

Item number	Evidence	Source/Date	Category
1	Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 c.41	2002	Statute
2	Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 c.20	2020	Statute
<i>'An Act to make provision to end rights to free movement of persons under retained EU law and to repeal other retained EU law relating to immigration; to confer power to modify retained direct EU legislation relating to social security co-ordination; and for connected purposes', 11th November 2020: online.</i>			
3	Equality Information and Objectives, May 2021	2021	Policy Document
4	Nationality and Borders Act 2022	2022	Statute
<i>'Make provision about nationality, asylum and immigration; to make provision about victims of slavery or human trafficking; to provide a power for Tribunals to charge participants where their behaviour has wasted the Tribunal's resources; and for connected purposes', 26th April 2022: online.</i>			

Figure 12: School B Timeline

5.9.2 The beginning

This story outlines School B's responses as it fulfils its vision. Although the policy evaluation focuses on the period between the introduction of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 and the enactment of the Nationality and Borders legislation in 2022, this story also considers preceding events which made newspaper headlines in 2016-2018. It draws on published policies from the school website whilst considering broader influences impacting on policy decisions. This is a non-maintained special school for children and young people aged 3-19 years. Most places are funded by LAs from across the Midlands. The overwhelming majority of pupils have education, health and care plans and many pupils have complex learning difficulties. More than half of the pupils are disadvantaged: this is above the national average (Ofsted, 2019^a).

Stem:

We are eternally thankful and grateful to the people of [UA2] and above all the school. We will never have enough thanks for the school (Parent quoted by BBC News, 2016^c).

5.9.2.1 What is the problem of refugees represented to be?

A family left northern Iraq after reports that authorities were ordering disabled children to be killed by lethal injection. Subsequently, the family spent a year living in a refugee camp in France before leaving to come to the UK (BBC News, 2016^c; ITV News Central, 2017^a). They hid in a lorry to enter the UK and were initially sent to Yorkshire by the HO before being relocated so the child could attend a specialist school. The child had many

challenges on the journey (BBC News, 2016^c). The HO told the family that they needed to return to Germany as they had passed through there on route to the UK and, as it was deemed a safe country, they needed to claim asylum there (ITV News Central, 2017^a). Teachers at the school were impressed by the child's exceptional progress over a 6-month period and were worried about the impact on wellbeing if the child left the school and the UK (ITV News Central, 2017^a). A petition was organised to argue against the Government's plans for deportation (ITV News Central, 2017^b; Lyons, 2018). Despite legal challenges by the HO, the family were granted leave to apply for asylum which was approved in 2018 (Lyons, 2018).

5.9.2.2 What are the suppositions that underpin the representations?

The school and members of the local community assert that the best place for the child is in their locality and that deportation would impact negatively on the child and their family. This belief empowers them to take a stand against government policy. The requirement to claim asylum in the first safe country continues to be challenged by a range of stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) as seen in the national policy analysis (UNHCR UK, 2021; HAC HC, 2022). This challenge is underpinned by the principle that the family have made a conscious choice to travel to the UK to obtain the best provision for their child. Initially, this is overlooked by the HO until a court ruling is taken into consideration. Lack of consultation with refugees continues to be an issue, with the HAC report in July 2022 noting that the HO regularly makes no attempt to discover why refugees are travelling to the UK (HAC HC, 2022). This family chooses to take a dangerous route to the UK because no other routes are available to them; again, this continues to be an issue for refugee families (UNHCR, 2021; City of Sanctuary UK, 2022; Amnesty International UK, 2022; HAC

HC, 2022). Over the two-year period while the case is being considered, the HO response appears hostile towards the family and thus attracts direct challenge from the school, community and supporting organisations. These challenges continue to be reflected at national level as hostile responses towards refugees from the HO continue to be identified by a range of stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) (UNHCR UK, 2021; Amnesty International UK, 2022; HAC HC, 2022).

5.9.2.3 What are the origins of the problem representations?

Although this case predates the 18-month period under analysis, the origins of the challenge can be seen in current published school policy. This specifically identifies that *all* learners are of equal value whatever their national origin or status, setting the tone to empower challenge. Additionally, there is commitment to enable pupils to thrive in a diverse school and be happy and safe. These values, within policy documents, create an ethos which inspires challenge to procedures countering these ideals. It is not clear whether the statements predate the specific case discussed in the media or whether the policy statements were influenced by the court case. However, the Headteacher feels enabled to discuss the case with regional and national media at the time and is supported by local organisations and the community in petitioning the Government. Additionally, the school is explicitly identified as an organisation which ‘saved’ a specific child from deportation.

5.9.3 The middle

5.9.3.1 What effects are produced by the representations?

The school, relevant stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)), wider community, and associated organisations challenge national policy, using the appeal system to reach a successful outcome for the family. This seems to contradict practitioners' narratives in this thesis; their overall feeling is that there is lack of opportunity to challenge with a sense of powerlessness. In this case, there is an acknowledgement by the Home Secretary that the UK is responsible for assessing the asylum claim of the family (Lyons, 2018). The school feels empowered to include references to national status in policy documents and to widen this to recruitment expectations for staff, also ensuring that staff and governors are trained to understand the rights of groups in society. This suggests an inclusive response for all groups including refugees, with language such as 'promote' rather than 'understand' which indicates an active, rather than passive, approach to inclusive principles.

5.9.3.2 How can these representations be considered in a different way, and can the silences be identified?

It is not clear whether the policy pre-dates the challenge to government or if the policy was created in response to the legal dispute. Therefore, it is not possible to know whether the decision to act is based on a personal relationship with the family which informs challenge in practical and emotional ways or whether this is a policy response per se. It is likely that it is a specific response to an individual case as there are no other reports of the school taking pro-active action in relation to other cases. Clear standpoints are included within a policy document so it appears that this initiative might be school-wide,

however, it is not possible to identify whether it is being led by one practitioner, for example the Headteacher, and whether this leadership would be sustained by another Head who might have different priorities or beliefs, possibly feeling it inappropriate to challenge government policy. Additionally, the school website does not hold details of any work done relating to recent refugee crises such as Afghanistan and Ukraine. Consequently, it is not possible to attest how sustainable this is in the long term.

5.9.4 The end

5.9.4.1 What discourses underpin the representations, how are they disseminated or endorsed, and are there any different or conflicting discourses?

The school makes clear links to wider inclusive principles. This is not surprising as the provision is for pupils with SEN who can face prejudice or misunderstanding from the public. It is therefore only a short leap for the school to take a very proactive approach to meet the needs of *all* pupils. Representations are made in school policy as well as in the local and national media . The school has an active media presence using it to promote activities, fundraising events and other news and is comfortable in using this approach to pass messages to the wider community.

The school directly challenges HO policy and uses the media to promote direct responses from the public. School discourse contrasts with that of the Government which consistently justifies hostile policy initiatives by suggesting that they address populist aspirations (Mason et al., 2022), explicitly stating this in the Consultation Outcome New Plan for Immigration: Policy Statement (HO, 2022^b). This document indicates that the Government is only listening to voices it wants to hear in relation to policy content whilst not listening to alternative viewpoints within the community (Ford-Rojas, 2022; Amnesty International UK, 2022; Oxfam, 2022). The school appears to be listening to these voices,

but it is unclear how strong or sustainable the challenge is against prevailing political policy.

The end of this story is ambiguous as although the school's policies acknowledge the rights of people, whatever their status, it is not clear how effective these are in the current climate. Nevertheless, the school has demonstrated direct challenge to national policy when it relates to a known individual.

5.10 Daisy's stories

My name is Daisy and I work in a primary school. I've been a primary school teacher for 5 years. I teach in Key Stage 1 at the moment, and I lead science in the school. I have no experience in working with refugees and asylum seekers. I live and work in the East Midlands.

5.10.1 Daisy's first narrative

Daisy is shown photograph 1 and given the following information:

The individuals in the photograph have extended family who live in the East Midlands. Tell me their story.

5.10.1.1 The beginning

This family were living in a country where there was a war and so they tried to get to a country that was going to be safe. They wanted to go somewhere where the children would be able to access education. They tried to find a way to get there. They saw that people advertised... where they were living... for them to be able to go on a boat to get somewhere that was safer. To go on the boat, they had to pay... loads of money... to do it. And so... they had to save up and sell everything that they owned so they could get on the boat and go there. They didn't know what it was going to be like on the boat. They didn't know if they would be able to get there safely, but... still they went on because it was better than living where they were living.

They had to travel through Europe to get where they wanted to get to... the UK. Then they had to get a boat across the water so they could get to the UK. They were sailing across...

they were *trying* to sail. As they were going over... there were loads of people on their boat... they had to get over the water that belongs to France. I don't know if this is right. I'm just thinking of it all. As soon as they get over that bit, they can get into UK waters and seek asylum because if they say that they're coming from a place where there's war and they're losing their human rights, then they're allowed to seek asylum in the country. Once they do that, then they're allowed to apply for refugee status.

5.10.1.2 The middle

They're trying to get off the boat and people are helping them get onto the land and to try and find somewhere safe. How do they get to the East Midlands? Once they apply and say they're asylum seekers, they get taken to somewhere where the information is processed. While it's being processed, they are given a certain amount of money each week and depending on how many children they have got, they get a certain amount of money for them. I'm not sure if all this information is correct. Once they have applied, they can become refugees, and they are sent to a certain place where they want to go. If not, they have got the chance of appealing, so they don't get sent home to where they've come from originally. Or... they could go to a different country but, most of the time, they try to appeal it and it's very successful.

How do they feel? They probably feel anxious but maybe relieved because they have come from somewhere far worse. If they were going to risk taking their children on something that isn't very safe, then it must be bad where they've come from... for them to do that. So, there might be fear... then they'll be anxious and nervous about if they'll be able to safely get to where they want to get to... but they'll also be feeling relieved as well.

5.10.1.3 The end - positive

I think it's a positive ending. There are lots of people at the moment who are refugees because they're coming from countries where it isn't safe for them to live anymore. I feel that there are lots of countries willing to accept them and it gives them a better chance of living a better life in their country.

5.10.2 Daisy's second narrative

Daisy is shown photographs 2 and 3. She chooses to tell one story about the two photographs. She is given the following information:

The child in photograph 2 is a lone child arriving on UK soil.

Photograph 3 shows a group of children who might be siblings. One is holding a photograph of a blown-out window. These children have not been granted asylum and need to return to their country of origin. Tell me their story.

5.10.2.1 The beginning

The child in the picture was sent by his family because he was the only child in his family, and they paid for him to come over on a boat. He was the only one from his family that went and so he was put in the trust of some people to take him. He got here and, while he was getting processed, he was put into a home with other children, all together; and that's how it links to the children in the other picture. All of those children have come over without their family members, or without adults from their family. None of them are related and they were all put together whilst they were being processed to decide whether they could stay in England, or not.

The officials made contact with the people from their home and found out that they were coming from somewhere that people from England... officials from England... were finding out about. The children couldn't speak English so they couldn't explain what actually happened. They tried to get in contact with their family back home and found that they could go back there because where they came from was safe. They said that they needed

to go back home and that's when it gets to the third picture... when they've got to go home.

5.10.2.2 The middle

Could you challenge this? Yes, I think if one of those children disclosed something. Think of the picture with the broken windows - if they explained and you'd got someone who can speak their language... if they could actually describe it in detail and you'd got evidence, then, yes... yes, definitely. I think at my school, if you found out something like that, it would be heavily investigated.

How does it fit in with the inclusion agenda? From what I'm used to, if it was anything like that, I'd be surprised if they got sent back... if anything got disclosed like that, or it was the slightest bit unsafe. If it could potentially be harmful to them when they went back... I'd be really surprised that they would be allowed to go back. But I'm not really sure... I don't know... I don't know if the school could override a decision made by others. I definitely think we would try to appeal it. I don't really know what the procedure is but I'm assuming that you can. You could try to appeal it... and I'm also assuming that social services or social care get involved at some point. I don't know whether they would have the authority to stop them from going if they found it was dangerous... or could they postpone it until they actually made proper links back to the country to find out if it was dangerous or not?

What happens up until the point that they go? I'm assuming that if the children are in the same process as our current system, they could still go to school and when they're at school they'd get the same input. They don't speak English; they don't know anybody else and the amount of effort, support and resources that you put into those children when

they first arrive is crazy. There would be so much support that would be given by lots of different people. It would be a massive thing for them to be turned back and have to go back where they came from. Say... around language... we would have support with their language and any behavioural needs. We have learning mentors in school so anything where they might need extra nurture or support, they would be put in groups with maybe children that are from the same country as them... or maybe children who need a confidence boost... and they would have one-to-one time with mentors. That would happen as soon as you had a little bit of an idea where they're from, and that would happen when they first arrive.

5.10.2.3 The end – positive

You know... I'd like to think that from what you can see on the third picture... where they're all smiling and holding a picture of something that shows a very negative image of where they've come from... I'd like to think it would be a positive end and that all the agencies involved in looking after those children would be able to keep them somewhere that was safe rather than send them back to where it obviously looks unsafe... in the picture the boy is holding. A positive ending because of the challenge from all the agencies.

5.10.3 Daisy's third narrative

Daisy chooses photographs 4 and 5. She chooses to tell one story about the two photographs.

Photograph 4

This photograph shows a long line of people walking in the rain, many are wearing plastic coverings. The photograph focuses on women with young children. In the centre of the photograph is a young woman carrying a toddler.

Photograph 5

This photograph shows a large group of people outside. They appear to be standing around a fire, eating and drinking. They are wearing coats, hats and waterproof coverings.

Tell me their story.

5.10.3.1 The beginning

These pictures link together because if we start with picture 5, they're all huddled together like they're in some form of camp. They might be waiting for documentation to try and get to their destination because they are trying to get to the East Midlands. Yes, they are in a different country, waiting to try and get their documentation so they can come to the UK. I think that in that picture, where they're all round the fire, it shows the levels they are going to... to try and stay warm and have their basic needs met. They wait there. I've seen recently, stories in the news where people are being displaced for a variety of reasons, even maybe... the weather conditions. They're having to move to a different location or there may be illness going through the camp. So, they have to move from one camp to another. The next picture shows them having to leave to settle in

another place. This is all before they come over to try and get to the UK. Everything is transient; they're doing the best to get what they need.

What impact is this going to have? This is their normal. I've seen that even though the camps are temporary, sometimes people are there for decades. It's actually generations of people who have lived the majority of their lives in a camp. So, for example, you've got that mother carrying her baby. The mother could have been there from when she was a baby, and now she's trying to find somewhere else, so her baby doesn't have the same life she's had. So, coming over to the UK, you've got somebody that may have spent two decades in a camp. They come over to the UK and are put in a flat or housing – it might not be the best compared to some people that live in the UK... we might not think it's the best... but for them... they've lived like that, in those sorts of conditions so I can imagine coming over to the UK will be a complete culture shock and just so completely different. A child would come into school and feel so overwhelmed. I'm trying to think from my personal experience and compare that to the pictures. We've got a lot of children that come from other countries and because they can't speak any English, they then become selective mutes. That's just them coming over from a different country. Their background may not be as a refugee but then thinking about children that come over from that sort of lifestyle, then coming will be really, really hard for them.

5.10.3.2 The middle

How do schools cope? I do think that is coming to the forefront of training and things like that... and then putting it into policy. We've had recent training about identity and understanding that each child has a different identity, and their identity is made up of where they come from, their background and certain things about them. I think we're only

touching the tip of the iceberg in terms of understanding how to support these children. We have no idea of the sorts of lives they've lived before they come. I think it's definitely being addressed at the minute, but I think there's so much more that could be done and needs to be understood.

Is this just being addressed at local level? I don't know about that... I'm not sure about what is happening outside our group of schools. I think it depends on what the demographics of the school are like. If you're coming from somewhere that's obviously got quite a diverse group of children, then there's going to be more in place but, if you come from a school that has a majority of British children, then I think it's going to be extremely difficult. I just don't think they would have the same training opportunities because it's not within the demographics of what they usually deal with. It can be a school where you've got members of staff that speak multiple languages and that's going to help children who come from different backgrounds. That would help. I also think that if you've not experienced it as a teacher, then it feels quite daunting... like... "I'm saying the right thing and I'm going to do the right thing"... but I think... I feel... like you wouldn't, if you haven't experienced it. You can have training and things like that but it's almost like you need to experience it all... first-hand experiences of how to deal with it or what you might come across.

5.10.3.3 The end – negative

From the majority of things I've read... when they're coming over from camps overseas, it's mostly like... they're not going to come over. That's what I see. That's my perception anyway... that they wouldn't come over and that they're just going to have to stay there, or they'd be told to go somewhere else. From everything I've read about refugees... it's

like saying there are no places for them. They will just stay there in the camp. It's a negative end.

What if they got over on a boat? If they got over, I think it would end up being positive. I feel when children are in school, whether people have experience or not... they would always try to help them. Coming over from that... standing round fires, trying to keep warm and walking in the rain to find somewhere to live... life is always going to be better than that. I feel if they got over here... the main problem would be getting them over here and being able to stay... but then it would be positive. As a teacher, can you challenge that? It would be way beyond me if they were not here, but if there were issues when they were in an English school, that would be easier to challenge. I think the stuff prior to them coming over will be too difficult.

5.11 Summary

The *narratives* in Chapter 5 are policy *representations* and *problematizations* at national, regional, and local level, as well as practitioners' stories. These have been presented as full versions to enable each reader to challenge their own perceptions of *representations* and *problematizations* but also to support future CPD opportunities. Chapter 6 combines these narratives to answer the research questions ([2.2](#)).

Chapter 6

Analysis of policy and practitioners' narratives

This chapter merges policy and practitioner narratives as well as evidence from the literature review ([Chapter 3](#)) to answer the research questions. Extracts from practitioner narratives are included to exemplify points being discussed. The thesis questions [2.1.1](#), [2.1.2](#), [2.1.5](#), [2.1.6](#), [2.1.7](#) and [2.1.8](#) are considered explicitly in the following subsections. However, thesis questions [2.1.3](#) and [2.1.4](#) do not have subheadings and are considered throughout as these aspects are held within the other questions: origins, interpretations and effects. Each subsection is organised as follows:

- Evidence is collated to respond to each of the thesis questions ([2.1](#))
- Each question is subdivided using the thesis systems model ([fig.2](#)). Each subsection has the following structure:
 - Outcomes are summarised.
 - Reasons for these conclusions are then considered, drawing on evidence extracted from each policy and narrative analysis.
 - Additional evidence from the literature review ([Chapter 3](#)) is included to support the discussion.

As most schools do not have inclusion policies but use a range of policies to include children into the setting, the term *inclusion* is used in its widest sense relating to any policy (whatever the title) or ethos that explicitly aims to include individuals within the community of education (British Psychological Society, 2002; Booth and Ainscow, 2011); for example, citizenship, equality, personal or social policies.

6.1 What is the problem of refugees represented to be?

6.1.1 The refugee child

6.1.1.1 Summary

It is possible to identify three *problem representations* associated with the refugee child:

- A deficit model of need.
- Negative impact on community structures.
- Antagonism from other groups towards refugees.

6.1.1.2 Evidence

The introductory statements to policy discourses at all levels of the ecosystem (national, regional, and local) focus on welcoming refugees and providing for their needs: this is also reflected in practitioner narratives. Refugees are seen as a disadvantaged and powerless group who have experienced hardship, with practitioners using words such as *frightening*, *trauma*, *loss*, *tragedy*, *horrific* and *dangerous*. This is exemplified at national level by Lord Alton of Liverpool, quoting Eleanor Rathbone MP speaking in 1940:

Discussions about asylum seekers and refugees “always begin with an acknowledgement of the terrible nature of the problem and expressions of sympathy with the victims” (Hansard HL, 9th November 2020^c 807 column 827).

The focus is a deficit model of need (Rose and Shelvin, 2004; Kelcey and Chatila, 2020; Kotluk and Aydin, 2021; Sutton, Kearney and Ashton, 2021) which neglects contributions that these individuals can bring to society. Alison ([5.2.1](#)) mentions that parents can be skilled but unable to find work, having to do ‘more menial jobs when they are trained and

skilled’. This deficit model supports a perception of refugees causing stress to social, cultural, and economic structures (Lee, 2021) which is reflected in [Mike’s narratives](#) when he considers a failing system; this is also acknowledged at national policy level (HO, 2021^{kj}). Viewing refugees as a burden on the community could potentially encourage racist attitudes (Svensson, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury, 2020) which can manifest through the discourse of pupils and parents: identified as potential issues by Mike ([5.8.2](#)) and Alison ([5.2.1](#)).

6.1.2 Refugee policy

6.1.2.1 Summary

There are three main *problem representations* which have been identified:

- Representations at all levels show a flawed system which is struggling to meet need.
- Terminology, based on political ideology, raises multiple *problems* at national level linked to economic, social and security issues. However, the focus of UAs, schools and practitioners is to meet need within the community.
- Although the Government professes to meet need, it has an additional and some might say more dominant discourse of prohibiting entry or expelling *undeserving* cases.

6.1.2.2 Evidence

At national level, there is politicisation of policy linked to discourses around excessive numbers of migrants entering the UK who should be sheltered by other countries (Johnson, 2021) and who are deemed to negatively impact on social, cultural, and economic resources (Hadjisoteriou and Angelides, 2016; Hansard HL, Deb. 30th

September 2020^a). This reflects historical responses to migrant groups which have consistently remained hostile despite attempts to alter perceptions through policy initiatives over the last 50 years (Castles, 2004; Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017; Morphy-Morris, 2020; Veck and Wharton, 2021). The Government consistently claims that it is following the will of the electorate in controlling immigration in all forms (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a 806; HO, 2021^c) but it is not clear whether members of the Government are enabling the discourse or reflecting popular discourse to retain power. The Government focuses on Channel crossings and discourses that marginalise refugees (Rose and Shelvin, 2004; Due and Riggs, 2009; Cefai et al., 2015; Sønsthagen, 2020); these discourses often associate refugees with criminal, threatening or abusive behaviour (HO, 2021^{f, h}). Alternatively, the Government suggests that Channel crossings are made by economic migrants who are abused by gangs offering to bring them to the UK (HO, 2022^j). Interestingly, this is not reflected in practitioners' narratives; refugees are consistently seen as those who are in need and should be cared for by the state. The practitioners acknowledge that the system is failing, with Mike, Alison and Kate addressing this directly: an inadequate process is also identified as an issue by the UAs as well as both schools. At national level, there is recognition that the system is flawed, and policies need to be rewritten (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a; HO, 2021^{i, k}) but those in power place blame with refugees and migrant groups who are deemed to be abusing the system (Castles, 2004; HO, 2021^d).

Children are directly affected as provision for UAMs is revised and restricted (following Brexit) to options held within the existing policy framework for adults (Hansard HL, Deb. 21st October 2020^b; Hansard HL, 9th November 2020^c 807; HO, 2022^{c, n}). Additional

complications arise from constraints in specific schemes, such as the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, leading to some children being sent back to Ukraine because they fall outside policy criteria (Forrester, 2022; ITV News, 2022^b). Terminology, particularly in national policy briefings, confuses definitions relating to different migrant groups (HO, 2021^d; Taylor and Syal, 2021; Refugee Council, 2021^a). It is not clear whether this is intentional in promoting a particular discourse or whether terms have become eclectic over time so meaning is lost. Alison (5.2) identifies this as a personal challenge and spends time researching terminology between meetings so she understands government policy and relevant data.

Two groups are recognised as *legitimate* refugees by all stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)): those from Afghanistan and Ukraine (DLUHC, 2022^c; HO, 2022^f; ^g) although practitioners' narratives focus on refugees arriving on Channel crossings as these were the images in the press at the time of the meetings. Although schemes are created to process Afghan and Ukrainian refugees (HO, 2021^m; DLUHC, 2022^d), procedures and policies are problematic as they operate within a system that is focused on keeping people out, or removing them from the country, rather than providing protection at pace (HO, 2021^k; MoD, 2022; HO 2022^j). The weak procedural system for all migrant groups has a negative impact across the UK as regional authorities struggle to process claims and meet need. It has a fundamental impact on authorities accepting most refugees (LGA, 2022^d; HO, 2022^a) and it is reported that children's needs are not being met, whilst procedural issues delay dispersals and settlement (LGA, 2022^d).

UA1 has large numbers of settled migrants, including refugees. The authority also recognises many *hidden* migrants; these include refugees who have relocated and

therefore no longer receive government funding and support, as well as those who are illegal migrants ([UA1] City Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016; [UA1] City Council, 2016^a). Alison (5.2.3) and Kate (5.4.3) acknowledge these groups and the stress that they place on authorities and practitioners. UA1 confirms that policies and provision are in place for all, whatever their legal status, although the authority is bound by national law ([UA1] City Council, n.d.; 2022^{a; d}). There is an active City of Sanctuary website with clear signposting to supportive organisations (City of Sanctuary, 2021) showing a plan for development until 2025 (City of Sanctuary, n.d.^a). School A is situated in UA1 and has School of Sanctuary status, advertising this on the school website. The overview states that this status was achieved through raising awareness of refugees in the local area and providing practical responses to meet need. However, policy provision is held in general inclusion policies with few references to refugees. This is not an uncommon practice as inclusion policies are seen as a way of addressing a wide range of needs (Hodkinson, 2012; Hilt, 2017). Nevertheless, despite support from settings such as School A, Alison, Kate, Mike, and Daisy recognise the struggles of dispersed refugees when living conditions and provision may not be adequate for need.

Resource challenges are evident in UA2 which is a smaller city with less funding. It agreed to accept refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine (ITV News, 2022^a), having previously requested a pause in dispersals in 2016 ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a). Resourcing, however, remains problematic with several news stories noting poor provision for refugees (BBC News, 2021^b; Taylor, 2021). The city has City of Sanctuary status, but the website is not fully developed which could reflect the size of the population or, alternatively, fewer refugees who have settled in the community. School B is situated within this authority.

The school and local community publicly, and successfully, challenged a deportation notice from the HO and there are specific references to recognising national status in the school's policy documents, although there are no recent examples of this being actioned formally.

6.2 What are the suppositions that underpin the representations?

These *suppositions* have been interpreted from the policy and practitioner narratives and may not reflect general discourse which can change to echo different power dynamics or reinforce political aspirations.

6.2.1 Refugee policy

6.2.1.1 Summary

The following four suppositions have been identified as foundations which underpin fluctuating *representations* in all narratives ([Chapter 5](#)):

- Discourses assume a positive standpoint at the beginning, moving to more negative approaches and outcomes. Policy is challenged at different levels of the ecosystem with varying success.
- Distinctions between legitimate entitlement and 'illegal' claims are not as clear as guidance would suggest.
- The system is flawed at all levels.
- Refugee children are entitled to adequate provision and care, whatever their status. This is not always achieved due to flaws in the system.

6.2.1.2 Evidence

Discourse surrounding refugee policy creation assumes that there are consistent and positive responses - this is reflected in many of the practitioners' narratives. However, this assumption is unstable as voices are questioning provision. At national level, this can be seen through challenge from organisations campaigning for refugees' rights (5.1), but challenge is also exhibited from establishment voices, such as officials in the HO (BBC News 2022^b) or inspectors (Easton, 2022^{a; b}). At regional level, whatever the political allegiance, UAs consistently ask the Government for more information, data, and funding to ensure equity (LGA, 2021^c).

National discourse has themes which focus on *illegal* refugees (De Genova, 2002; 2013); portraying a system that is abused and overrun by claims, whilst other countries fail in their obligations. It cites lack of security and control, with the inability to expel refugees at pace or punish them effectively (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a 806). These viewpoints are not reflected at other levels of the ecosystem, with the focus of the UAs and schools being inadequate resources to meet need (LGA, n.d.). This is reflected in practitioner narratives, although Mike, Daisy and Jessica have concerns in meeting academic expectations, which correlate to neo-liberalist aims (Exley and Ball, 2014; Jones, 2016). Additionally, the Government and specifically the HO, identify a faulty system. This is recognised at all levels of the ecosystem, with practitioners acknowledging that there are unacceptable delays and a lack of joined-up services for refugees. The practitioners do not lay blame with refugees but blame the system. They acknowledge power dynamics at play and recognise the weakness of refugees in influencing policy decisions. This counters government discourse which suggests that refugees hold power by arriving

illegally (De Genova, 2002), using national resources, and delaying extradition by raising numerous and lengthy legal cases (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a 806).

The UAs are mainly concerned with establishing eligibility to government funds and rallying community organisations to support refugees (Meer et al., 2021). Although national policy refers to the importance of these organisations, it is at regional level that these processes are mobilised, and they are essential in meeting need, as recognised in stories told by [Alison](#) and [Kate](#). It is ironic, therefore, that the system relies on pro-active groups, such as teachers in School A, whilst the Government promotes discourse that might lead to disengagement of local communities and activists, overtly rejecting these voices and organisations in recent consultations (HO, 2021^b; 2022^c) whilst conversely recognising the need for more equitable dispersal (HO, 2022^a). Although the Government could claim that negative and hostile discourses relate to *illegal* migrants and not *genuine* refugees, terminology and inadequate systems confuse rights and entitlement (De Genova, 2002; 2013). Nevertheless, generally, practitioners view all individuals as being entitled to adequate education and wider support as summarised by Jessica ([5.6.2](#)): ‘As a teacher, your instinct is to look after all of the children and care for them’, whilst Daisy states, ‘We’re only touching the tip of the iceberg in terms of understanding how to support these children’ (Daisy:[5.10.3](#)).

6.2.2 Inclusion policy

6.2.2.1 Summary

The following four suppositions underpin representations of inclusion policy:

- General inclusion policies are seen as adequate to support refugee children's needs, particularly in primary settings.
- There is conflict between inclusion policies and neo-liberalist agendas which focus on academic achievement.
- Lack of equality or inclusionary policies can indicate problems in provision for refugees.
- General inclusion policies can be used to underpin focused initiatives.

6.2.2.2 Evidence

At school-level, inclusive provision is generally used to meet the needs of *all* children, although both schools in this study have responded to specific needs. The focus on equality or inclusion policies to meet need assumes that these policies are sufficient to address the specific needs of refugees, and that interpretation of them is consistent (Florian and Spratt, 2013; Barber, 2021). The practitioner narratives place emphasis on inclusionary practice to meet refugee children's needs, although Mike implies that this is more applicable to primary rather than secondary education which has a focus on academic achievement:

From primary school into secondary, they can be seen as students... that can be ignored because there's always an excuse as to why they won't get the grades or why they won't achieve (Mike:[5.8.1](#)).

Although, Kate, Alison, Daisy, and Jessica draw on inclusionary practice, Jessica and Daisy both suggest that this may not always meet need or be practical. It is interesting to note that Daisy and Jessica are both in the early stages of their careers and, although aware of inclusive provision, have also been trained within the neo-liberalist approach promoted since 2010, which ties educational policy to state aims, currently focusing on academic achievement (Rogers et al., 2016). Kate and Alison advocate inclusive policies and are aware of more options through their professional experience but also express concern with provision, with Kate saying that it can be ‘lip-service’ and ‘flowery inclusion’ (5.4.3) whilst Alison talks about ‘the inability to provide the right support’ with an ‘inclusionary response’ that ‘seems disempowered’ (5.2.3).

An *unwelcoming* environment seems to underpin reduction of provision for refugees as seen in the removal of equality or inclusion policies (5.5). However, these are in place in both UAs now, indicating that organisations and groups remain open to meeting need, despite recognised hostile agendas at national level (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a; JCHR, 2022; HO, 2022ⁿ). It also appears that general inclusion policies can underpin bespoke arrangements. This is seen in the responses of both schools when catering for specific need, and in practitioners’ narratives even if individuals feel outcomes for refugees may be ambiguous (Chapter 5).

6.3 What discourses underpin the representations: how are they disseminated or endorsed, and are there any different or conflicting discourses?

6.3.1 Refugee policy

6.3.1.1 Summary

The *representations* of refugee policy are disseminated and reinforced in the following ways:

- Legitimate and illegitimate rights are blurred in discourse, contributing to lack of clarity.
- Alternative viewpoints are suppressed at national level.
- Information is withheld or difficult to obtain ([3.2.10](#)) across different ecological levels ([fig.1](#)).

6.3.1.2 Evidence

Nationally, discourses often follow a structure (Hansard HL, 9th November 2020^c 807) and thus, *truths* gain legitimacy through repetition, allowing subsequent *representations* to claim merit and authenticity (Foucault, 1972; Bacchi, 2009). Discourses blur differences between refugees and other migrants (HO, 2021^d; The Refugee Council, 2021^a) with many policies focusing on procedures such as biometrics (HO, 2021^{i; k}) which contribute to the criminalisation or unworthiness of refugee groups, with attention placed on prohibiting entry and restricting legitimate routes (Amnesty International UK, 2022; Oxfam, 2022). This perpetuates methods of illegal entry with other routes unavailable, forcing refugees to turn to alternative methods to gain access to the country (UNHCR, 2021; City of

Sanctuary UK, 2022; Amnesty International UK, 2022; HAC HC, 2022). This is not reflected in practitioner narratives although all appear aware of procedural elements that might take time to complete before refugees are dispersed, with Daisy considering children who might be refused entry to the UK:

From everything I've read about refugees... it's like saying there are no places for them (Daisy:[5.10.3](#)).

As punitive measures take hold, refugees can become wary of authority and hide in the system, creating a subclass and perpetuating a deficit model (Syal and Siddique, 2022). This is reflected in stories told by Mike ([5.8](#)), Alison ([5.2](#)) and Kate ([5.4](#)) who repeatedly identify barriers children face in becoming part of the community.

At national level, alternative opinions are viewed sceptically by politicians and their discourse negates different positions as irrelevant or lacking legitimacy (HO, 2021^c). The political discourse constrains other interpretations to follow chosen policy decisions, acknowledging that this approach will inevitably raise legal challenges (Faulkner and Lee, 2022). Meanwhile, the UAs focus on providing support within the legal framework, with UA1 having a well-developed website with links to the City of Sanctuary and details of community support ([UA1] City Council, n.d.^{f; g}). The website is welcoming and informative, whilst press releases from local government groups indicate some frustration with national government which imposes rather than negotiates policies and fails to provide accurate data (LGA, 2021^c). This is reflected in stories told by Mike ([5.8](#)), Alison ([5.2](#)) and Kate ([5.4](#)) who identify a range of problems faced by schools and LAs, including lack of resources, poor accommodation and insufficient support for children and wider family members. UA2 has less information and no links to the City of Sanctuary website which, in turn, is also underdeveloped. The only accessible information and support

relates to the Ukraine schemes although this is also deficient in detail. Lack of collaboration between national and regional governance means that accommodation, health, and education are problematic even with policy provision; for example, individual academies refusing to accept refugee children unless specifically compelled to do so by the relevant government department (LGA, 2022^d), causing challenges in meeting fundamental rights to education.

6.3.2 Inclusion policy

6.3.2.1 Summary

The *representations* of inclusion policy are disseminated in the following ways:

- Disparity between inclusion policy and academic outcomes.
- General inclusion policies not meeting specific need.
- Pressures on funding and resourcing.

6.3.2.2 Evidence

Mike identifies why schools might refuse admission and focus on academic outcomes. This attention to academic success causes problems in secondary schools especially when staff are not aware of wider requirements (LGA, 2022^d): 'I imagine, they're seen as hopeless cases going through the education system' (Mike:[5.8.1](#)). Problems in gaining access to education indicate that the system is built to present barriers rather than remove them, causing frustration for regional government (Bedford, 2021; LGA, 2021^c; 2022^d). Lack of coordination places a burden on communities and pressure on general funding and resources, perpetuating negative attitudes towards migrant groups which are often used to justify political decisions at national level (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September

2020^a 806). Neither school in this study makes specific reference to refugees in policy discourse, although School A mentions refugees twice as examples of additional need within its general inclusion and equality policies (Equality and Anti-Racism Policy, 2019; Inclusion Policy, 2021) and School B refers to entitlement whatever the national status of the child (Equality Information and Objectives, 2019) which perhaps reflects its participation in legal action stopping the deportation of a pupil (BBC News, 2016^c).

Practitioner narratives raise concerns about using standard inclusion responses for refugee cases, for example:

...the inability to provide the right support for these families (Alison:[5.2.3](#)).

...the inclusion programme [is] not really linked to what's happening... what support there really is (Kate:[5.4.4](#)).

You would just have to give them as much support as you could until they left but it would be really hard (Jessica:[5.6.2](#)).

Daisy raises concerns in meeting need within standard inclusion provision, identifying that effectiveness will depend on the knowledge and understanding of individual settings as much as the individual practitioner:

If you're coming from somewhere that's obviously got quite a diverse group of children, then there's going to be more in place but, if you come from a school that has a majority of British children, then I think it's going to be extremely difficult. I just don't think they would have the same training opportunities because it's not within the demographics of what they usually deal with (Daisy:[5.10.3](#)).

This is particularly pertinent when considering the Ukraine schemes which contribute to wider dispersal based on sponsorship and family reunion. Government discourse places focus on existing provision (Hansard HL, Deb. 21st October 2020^b) diverting planning and

delivery to general inclusion practices at regional level, leading to LAs and supporting agencies raising concerns as to the capability of these policies to meet the specific needs of refugees (LGA, 2022^d; [UA1] City of Sanctuary, n.d.^a).

6.4 How can the representations be considered in a different way, and can the silences be identified?

6.4.1 Refugee policy

6.4.1.1 Summary

Different *representations* and *silences* are summarised as follows:

- National government's rejection of alternative viewpoints which the Government claims are not aligned to populist opinions.
- Limited access to government departments, including the HO, reducing opportunities to influence policy.
- LAs repeated requests for additional support from government to underpin provision.
- Individual challenges related to specific need, with one school participating in challenge at national level.
- Lack of empowerment to challenge or change policy, specifically in relation to individual practitioners.

6.4.1.2 Evidence

Challenges are raised at national level by groups across the political spectrum in parliamentary debates and enquiries, as well as by recognised organisations supporting

the rights of refugees (Elgot, 2022; Kelly, 2022). The Government, however, silences these voices by adopting an unnegotiable policy strategy built on historical evidence and data which is often inconsistent but supports the preferred discourse (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a 806; Hansard HL, Deb. 21st October 2020^b; UK Parliament House of Commons Library, 2020; HO, 2021^c). Justification for silencing these challenges is based on the supposed wishes of the electorate, often linking this to Brexit and wider migration issues (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a 806; HO, 2021^a). The HO continues to promote a hostile and often intimidating agenda towards refugees (Hansard HL, Deb. 21st October 2020^b), occasionally revising strategy in response to criticism (JCHR, 2022) but often instigating alternative aggressive responses (HO, 2022ⁿ) with little effort or enthusiasm to understand the motives of refugees attempting to settle in the UK (Townsend, 2021).

Practitioners show that they are aware of some aspects of these procedures; for example, Kate in her third story ([5.4.3](#)) describes deportation and consequences. All stories show a degree of uncertainty as to how challenges could be raised and all practitioners feel that outcomes would be ambiguous at best, but probably negative, both for refugees and the networks supporting them. It is interesting to note that as the practitioners tell more stories, they become more inclined to talk about possible negative outcomes and potential challenges. Initially, apart from Mike, the practitioners tend to follow a simple and positive trajectory, overlooking the possible impact of government policy on refugee outcomes.

There is dichotomy in the Government's messaging with assertions that there is safety and stability in Europe (HO, 2022^j) at the same time as accepting refugees from Ukraine

and stressing the instability in Europe (DLUHC, 2022^d). Data is selected to underpin the Government's preferred discourse, whilst often referring to schemes that have been withdrawn (Hansard HL, 9th November 2020^c 807). Policies aim to restrict rather than provide safety (Welander, 2020; HO, 2020^e; 2021^h) forcing refugees to follow illegal routes to gain entry or to disappear from official scrutiny (Syal and Siddique, 2022). Safety measures which are introduced to protect borders are poorly organised and prohibit entry to those following government schemes (Gentleman, 2022; Syal and Gentleman, 2022), raising challenges from participating groups, including LAs (LGA, 2022^d). The HO silences these challenges by passing blame to others (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a 806) or suggesting that schemes have not had time to embed (Gentleman, 2022), again reinforcing views that systems are built to prohibit rather than expediate entry.

Alternative voices suggest that interpretation of regulations on a case-by-case basis, advocated by the Government, causes inequality through diverse interpretations (HO, 2022^c). There is lack of coordination across government departments with officials prohibited from meeting the Home Secretary to raise concerns (Ford-Rojas, 2022; Easton, 2022^a). Enquiries are delayed, with some suggesting that this is to avoid scrutiny (Easton, 2022^b). Additionally, certain policies are raising concerns in relation to legality and morality within the HO, instigating a rare use of a ministerial direction (BBC News 2022^b). Practitioners do not raise these as issues with their focus resting on numbers of refugees taking dangerous journeys, reflecting news headlines and dominant discourses. They are aware of reported issues in France and Channel crossings but feel powerless to challenge what is happening.

Protocols and procedures add to the workload of officials at national level, with reports of maladministration, excessive financial costs, inadequate adherence to international law and alleged misrepresentations (HAC HC, 2022). The response to Channel crossings is reported as ineffective and inefficient with additional inadequacies relating to those entering through legal routes (Easton, 2022^{a, b}) ([2.5.1.2](#)). Some claim that politicians give tokenistic support to safe and legal routes whilst having little enthusiasm in ensuring that they work effectively (Amnesty International UK, 2022). Legal challenges provide additional complications but are often *welcomed* by government departments, as in the case of the Rwanda policy (Faulkner and Lee, 2022), so they can officially quieten dissenting voices and gain legitimacy for controversial schemes. Policy reviews in 2022 identify that recent policy has made the system worse, with the Government showing a lack of compromise by prohibiting scrutiny and access to those in power (Easton, 2022^b). The Government claim legitimacy for these responses by adhering to populist and nationalist discourses, raising issues for other political parties in their aim to regain power and influence (HO, 2021^c; 2022^c). Although none of the practitioners indicate that they support the Government stance as a conviction, equally, they do not see it within their power to challenge decisions. National policy is seen as distinct from the practitioners' experiences in the East Midlands, with procedures being held elsewhere and therefore, not open to challenge. Their focus turns to the impact of policy once refugees arrive in East Midlands schools.

LAs continue to challenge government protocols and procedures within the policy structure to enable them to respond to need after dispersal (LGA, 2022^c). There is acknowledgement of some progress relating to funding issues and dispersals, although this lacks urgency (HO, 2022^a). Authorities which associate themselves politically with

government policy ([UA2](#)) are more reluctant to challenge policy protocols (ITV, 2022^a), whilst those promoting an alternative political discourse ([UA1](#)) are more willing to challenge as part of their political ideology ([UA1] City Council, 2016^a). Having said that, national and regional policies seem to run parallel to each other, with the Government focusing on security and control whilst regional authorities focus on meeting need, becoming increasingly frustrated with ineffectiveness of national policy (LGA, 2022^d). This demonstrates a clear move away from previous foci of national government following the Cantle Report (2001) which identified UA1 as a strong example of community cohesion, advocating replication in other LAs. UA1 now explicitly questions national refugee policy, adopting its own version loosely tied to national priorities.

At school level, there is no evidence of the schools challenging recent policy. However, in 2016-2018, School B took a leading role in challenging the deportation of a pupil, using the legal framework (BBC News, 2016^c). It is not clear if this was merely a response relating to one pupil, based on the ideology of certain staff in the school. All practitioners, but particularly Alison ([5.2](#)), Kate ([5.4](#)) and Daisy ([5.10](#)) are willing to reflect on provision available in the local community and school, as this is within their knowledge base. However, they focus on provision through an inclusive model, rather than refugee policy. Daisy identifies the gap between challenging policy at international/national level and at local level:

It would be way beyond me if they were not here but if there were issues when they were in an English school, that would be easier to challenge. I think the stuff prior to them coming over will be too difficult (Daisy:[5.10.3](#)).

Challenge for practitioners, therefore, seems to lie at regional or local level within inclusive provision, with some expansion to address adequate resourcing, housing, or relocations.

6.4.2 Inclusion policy

6.4.2.1 Summary

Different *representations* and *silences* are summarised as follows:

- Limited evidence of current challenge at all levels of the ecosystem.
- Some evidence of individuals who might be prepared to challenge inclusive principles at local level.
- Practitioners show more inclination to *theoretically* consider different representations of inclusive practice relating to refugees at the end of the narrative process, having explored refugee stories and considered potential outcomes.

6.4.2.2 Evidence

Potential challenge to inclusive provision, or consideration of different *representations*, seems to lie at regional or setting level and can depend on attitudes and beliefs of individual practitioners. Nevertheless, the equality policy at School B clearly references national status (Equality Information and Objectives, 2019) indicating that this is available to underpin future challenge in relation to inclusive practice and, potentially, to challenge refugee policy. School A, meanwhile, attaches itself to an organisation that advocates challenge at national and regional level ([UA1] City of Sanctuary, n.d.^a), although this challenge is not evident in current practice at the school. Nevertheless, again, these ties

could underpin challenge if needed in the future. Jessica contemplates challenge ([5.6.3](#)), clearly feeling that this would be led by managers rather than herself. This is also reflected in Mike's second story when he acknowledges that he has the intellectual ability to express challenge but would be restricted within the school processes:

I've got my Headteacher but in terms of the opportunity to impact policy, I wouldn't know the routes to do that and whether it would change as a result, or whether it is just seen as impossible (Mike:[5.8.2](#)).

Daisy takes a positive approach focusing on collaboration across agencies which would counter national policy procedures:

I don't know if the school could override a decision made by others. I definitely think we would try to appeal it. I don't really know what the procedure is but I'm assuming that you can (Daisy:[5.10.2](#)).

She ultimately gives her story a positive ending 'because of the challenge from all the agencies'.

Alison builds on this in her second narrative ([5.2.2](#)), taking a proactive response to support families who are fighting deportation, 'I would get as many people involved, petitioning', volunteering an ambiguous ending because of issues in challenging national policy and procedures within an environment that aims to expel claimants.

Kate reflects on outcomes of a deportation case, showing challenge at setting level but ending negatively:

We tried to intervene, and with money and support, it might have been alright, but when it comes to deportation, there's no chance. We signed registers; we said "NO! This family must stay here". Social workers were involved, but we had no power whatsoever (Kate:[5.4.3](#)).

It is only towards the end of the narrative process that practitioners begin to consider that there might be issues with inclusion provision. Interestingly, it is Alison and Kate, the more experienced practitioners, who begin to see problems with their understanding of inclusive practice ([5.2](#) and [5.4](#)), whereas recently qualified practitioners, Jessica, Mike and Daisy, seem happier to accept the status quo in relation to current inclusive provision ([5.6](#), [5.8](#) and [5.10](#)).

6.5 What emotional responses are generated when considering policy representations of the 'problem' relating to refugee children?

This question considers the practitioners' emotional responses and how these influence their attitudes, agency ([3.7](#)) and potential to challenge. The responses provide evidence which adds to current knowledge as by understanding emotional responses, it is possible to get a deeper understanding of power and agency and, in this study, how this is used to influence *knowledge* and *discourse* relating to refugee policy choices.

6.5.1 Refugee and inclusion policies

6.5.1.1 Summary

Emotional responses to the refugee *problem* are summarised in the following ways:

- Empathy and compassion towards refugee children.
- Compassion can override practical application of policies, especially when considering specific cases.

6.5.1.2 Evidence

Participants' emotions were monitored throughout the process to ensure their wellbeing within the ethical guidelines (4.7). As the story creation process developed, participants made more references to their own emotions, with Kate stating, 'It's so emotional' (Kate:5.4.2), and Alison explaining that some aspects of storytelling were problematic because of the emotions that were created, 'It's difficult for me to talk about their story' (Alison:5.2.2). The stories were their own creation and so they could avoid problematic aspects if they wished and were never forced to confront topics that they did not want to discuss. Therefore, some participants raised fewer emotional responses, whereas others delved deeper into their own feelings within their story context. Nevertheless, all participants showed *moral agency* (Molla and Nolan, 2020) based on past experiences, and engagement with present and future aspirations (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015).

One of the main messages relayed in all narratives is compassion for refugee children and their families, drawing on values and ethical principles (Toom, Pyhältö and O'Connell Rust, 2015; Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021; Nguyen, 2022). Alison expresses these feelings throughout her stories with sentiments such as, 'I see their emotion first... and then I see my empathy for them and a desire to help' (Alison:5.2.1), and 'placing myself in that situation, it's just horrendous' (Alison:5.2.3). As she moves through the narrative process, Alison carries out research to make her stories accurate (Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini, 2015), which appears to contribute to her understanding of policy issues and, in turn, impacts on her emotions:

I honestly feel terrible as I don't think I've ever put myself in their position as much as I am doing through this narrative (Alison:[5.2.3](#)).

In her first narrative, Alison gives insight into how she is creating her stories, articulating her *inner voice* (Tinn and Ümarik, 2022) saying:

I share their frustration... I put myself in their shoes and what I want for my children and for my future, (Alison:[5.2.1](#)); and this provides clarification as to why '[i]t's difficult for [her] to talk about their story (Alison:[5.2.1](#)).

Although some aspects of Jessica's stories lack the depth of understanding shown by more experienced practitioners (Hilal and Akar, 2023), she also makes emotional links with subjects in her stories, saying it's 'just heart-breaking', and continuing, 'I care for all of the children that are in my class and would feel so helpless' (Jessica:[5.6.2](#)), indicating that lack of past experiences can be influenced by relationships with others (Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021).

Daisy explains why she chooses a positive ending to her third story as emotionally, she finds it hard to accept an outcome that could be harmful or destructive and yet, these are often outcomes pursued by refugee policy at national level (Toom, Pyhältö and O' Connell Rust, 2015):

I choose this [ending] because it's too hard for me to imagine that they don't get status, (Daisy:[5.10.3](#)).

Daisy and Mike also consider their emotions in managing their roles as class teachers, within their *professional space* (Toom, Pyhältö and O' Connell Rust, 2015; Nguyen et al.,

2022) and how that might impact on their ability to provide positive outcomes for the children, with Daisy reflecting:

...then it feels quite daunting... like... [am I] saying the right thing and [am I] going to do the right thing (Daisy:[5.10.3](#)),

and Mike addressing his response to negative attitudes towards refugee children:

...but I feel confident with a group of kids in my class to be able to show them the bigger picture (Mike:[5.8.3](#)).

The participants were monitored throughout and consistently reminded that they did not need to discuss anything which gave them distress, nevertheless, they chose to challenge their understanding and perceptions as they became more confident in the narrative story-ending, trying to rationalise policy representations (Wallen and Tormey, 2019) and challenging themselves in the process by considering *counter-narratives* to *master narratives* which can be socially and culturally expected (Juutilainen et al., 2024) which indicates that this method of storytelling can be used as part of CPD opportunities for educators ([1.6](#)), allowing leaders to develop teachers within their organisation (Pyhältö, Pietarinen and Soini, 2015).

6.6 Do teachers believe that they can rationalise the aims of different policy representations and are they able to influence or challenge these representations?

The rationalisation and challenge of different policy agendas has been summarised to cover all processes as they are intertwined. Again, as in section 6.5, this section provides

evidence which adds to current knowledge by considering potential for agency ([3.7](#)) and challenge at grassroots level.

6.6.1 Refugee and inclusion policies

6.6.1.1. Summary

The rationalisation and challenge to different policy agendas are summarised in four ways:

- There are misunderstandings and misinterpretations relating to policies.
- Research and discussion enable deeper understanding of issues, dilemmas, and potential outcomes ([1.6](#)) and thus promote teacher agency.
- Challenge is often linked to individual responses as well as professional experiences. The practitioners often adopt a dominant ‘we’ voice when considering challenge.
- Individuals are more inclined to challenge *representations*, including their own beliefs, when they have a deeper understanding of policies and procedures which has also been identified as improving teacher agency.

6.6.1.2 Evidence: rationalising the refugee process

It became apparent from the beginning that practitioners misinterpreted or misunderstood refugee policy, whatever their level of experience. Participants stated that they were not sure of procedures and were taking their interpretation from media reports, with Alison expressing lack of knowledge despite having experience of working with refugees:

They have to go through a process. I personally don't know what that process is...

I know they cannot work or claim benefits (Alison:[5.2.1](#)); [then adding], I don't fully

understand what happens to them and what the appeal process is which is making me hesitant (Alison:[5.2.2](#)).

Daisy also refers to aspects which she is interpreting rather than fully understanding (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015; Hilal and Akar, 2023); this is based on national discourse, which is often political, for example:

They can get into UK waters and seek asylum because if they say that they're coming from a place where there's war and they're losing their human rights, then they're allowed to seek asylum in the country. Once they do that, then they're allowed to apply for refugee status (Daisy:[5.10.2](#)).

This shows some understanding of UNHCR (2011). She then considers what happens if they fail to take this 'illegal' (HO, 2022¹) route:

From everything I've read about refugees... it's like saying there are no places for them. They will just stay there in the camp. It's a negative end (Daisy:[5.10.3](#)).

Alison confirms this view of refugees living in camps, but then hopes for speedy processing in the UK:

You hear of that... where people have been in camps seeking asylum for years which is terrible... and children aren't being educated. I'd like to think that when asylum seekers/refugees arrive in England, that process would be as short as it can possibly be (Alison:[5.2.1](#)).

This is a misunderstanding of protracted procedures which often occur on arrival in the UK (Hansard HL, Deb. 30th September 2020^a; UNHCR, 2021).

Daisy considers the prospects of deportation and again her hopes, possibly linked to her commitment to social justice (Pantić, 2017), override the political discourse that she has shown an awareness of previously:

If not, they have got the chance of appealing, so they don't get sent home to where they've come from originally. Or... they could go to a different country but, most of the time, they try to appeal it and it's very successful (Daisy:[5.10.1](#)); [and then], [i]f it could potentially be harmful to them when they went back... I'd be really surprised that they would be allowed to go back (Daisy:[5.10.2](#)).

Interestingly, it is mainly Alison and Daisy who address issues with refugee policy directly, whilst other narratives tend to focus on inclusion policies once children enter the UK system, with other participants generally accepting, without question, discrepancies in discourse, showing elements of acceptance which have been 'internalised and normalised' (Hilal and Akar, 2023:9). Alison, however, questions her own understanding throughout the process, and this is reflected in her ongoing dialogue demonstrated through 'self-stories' (Chaabab, Al-Thani and Du, 2021) which consider the impact of policies on the behaviours and actions of the refugee families:

You just see the family, here and now, you don't see the journey that these families have made and the displacements, the fears and the risks that have been taken, even though we see it in the newspapers (Alison:[5.2.3](#)); [and then], [f]or the past eight months they've been afraid that they were

going to be deported and they dare not complain about the accommodation and the food, and the lack of money for fear of discrimination or because they're afraid that they might be deported again (Alison:[5.2.3](#)).

This shows deeper appreciation of conflicting policy decisions at national and regional levels on the lives of refugee children, widening her *internal voice* and thus her potential for agency (Tinn and Ümarik, 2022), ultimately reflecting that these anomalies in policy affect outcomes for families, showing *deliberative agency* (Molla and Nolan, 2020):

I'd like to think that we as a nation, as a country, as a society allow these people to get where they need to be to continue their lives in a safe, happy way but I don't know how this would play out for them (Alison:[5.2.1](#)).

6.6.1.3 Evidence: rationalising inclusion policy

As mentioned previously, practitioner narratives tend to focus on inclusive provision once children reach the East Midlands. However, this also links inclusive provision and refugee policy. When talking about these links and challenging perceptions, practitioners begin to adopt a more dominant 'we' voice (Hilal and Akar, 2023) which has been associated with collective agency (Bandura, 2006). When practitioners use this collective response, it has been noted and emphasised in the sections of practitioners' narratives cited in this section:

We try to fit them into our system and do what's best for them... but do **we** think about their past? Do **we** ask? (Alison:[5.2.1](#)).

On occasions, there is uncertainty as to whether the children are entitled to inclusive provision at all, showing ambiguity relating to the rights of the children within the system which was previously identified as an issue by Miller et al. (2022) when they contemplated stresses between social justice and institutional practice impacting on teachers' agency:

I'm assuming that if the children are in the same process as **our** current system, they could still go to school and when they're at school they'd get the same input (Daisy:[5.10.2](#)).

This potential lack of entitlement to provision offered to others is reflected in several stories:

I'd like to think that the family members that came with them secure jobs so they can financially support the children and that they receive support, from the Government, for counselling or any support they need to deal with the trauma of moving across countries (Jessica:[5.6.1](#)).

Kate considers the predicament of children unable to access provision available to others because of their refugee status:

These children could be in that situation for years. This should be prevented and that's what it provoked in me and why I want to talk about it. I wouldn't have talked about it before but then I thought... what happens next? I'm horrified at that picture (Kate:[5.4.4](#)).

She also reflects on the discourse being promoted by those in power:

[T]here's a preconceived idea that thousands of people are coming into the country, and **we** can't cope with them (Kate:[5.4.4](#)).

This reflects consistent messaging from the HO whilst also indicating that Kate has potential to consider a *counter-narrative* (Juutilainen et al., 2024).

Jessica tends to reflect a neo-liberalist view of inclusion whilst also showing personal beliefs in meeting the needs of every child (Pantić, 2017). She demonstrates a struggle between expectations in meeting academic targets whilst also supporting needs within the class (Molla and Nolan, 2020):

It's important to be mindful that there are still other children in the class and so not to let these children take up all of your time... you just have to manage it (Jessica:[5.6.1](#)).

Mike also consistently adopts a viewpoint focusing heavily on academic achievement over and above other needs, possibly because he works with older children and young adults (Nguyen et al., 2022). Having taken this stance in his first two narratives, he adopts a different standpoint in the third narrative, showing consideration of agency within his *professional space* (Toom, Pyhältö and O'Connell Rust, 2015):

...while they're at school... with the sense of security that they've got that they don't really get anywhere else, and they haven't had before... it makes it a relatively positive experience for them; [adding], it's still a better place for them than what they've experienced before, and they make the most of it (Mike:[5.8.3](#)).

He also reflects on the impact of positive attitudes from the refugee child's wider family which can help to improve outcomes, showing capacity to develop *transformative agency* linked to wider participation (Molla and Nolan, 2020):

After such a difficult journey, experiencing what they experienced at home, the journey to get there, they [parents] kind of really push the child and give them all the support they can despite not being in the greatest of situations (Mike:[5.8.3](#)).

It appears that participants can reconcile different policies if they look beyond inconsistencies and discourse towards families and children at the centre of the debate (ibid) ([fig.2](#)):

...each child has a different identity, and their identity is made up of where they come from, their background and certain things about them. I think **we're** only touching the tip of the iceberg in terms of understanding how to support these children. **We** have no idea of the sorts of lives they've lived before they come... I think there's so much more that could be done and needs to be understood (Daisy:[5.10.3](#)).

Mike adds that the teacher's responsibility goes beyond implementing inclusive resources and procedures but involves addressing contradictions and clashes in the system (Miller et al., 2022; Juutilainen et al., 2024):

...teachers need to educate and talk about the situation and get more empathy from the students (Mike:[5.8.3](#)).

This moves the discussion to challenging the policy agenda.

6.6.1.3 Challenge to refugee policy

Challenging the policy agenda is not easy, even when the policy agenda goes against a personal ethos as can be seen in Jessica's narratives: this is possibly linked to her length

of service (Nguyen et al., 2022). Although she expresses 'heartbreak' in relation to certain policy decisions, she sees challenge as beyond her role (Wallen and Tormey, 2019), mainly lying with others:

It's important to see what routes they can go down in order to push for them to be granted asylum, or to ensure that they have the appropriate support and financial stability when they return to the country they are from (Jessica:[5.6.2](#)).

I think that is being taken out of your control and then they're having to go back into an environment that isn't safe. Obviously, for them to come here in the first place isn't safe and I think it's really concerning. Once they've gone, you've lost that contact with them. You wouldn't know what happens and that would be just heart-breaking (Jessica:[5.6.2](#)).

However, Daisy, who has been in the profession slightly longer, suggests she might explore avenues available to challenge policy decisions, whilst still seeing it as a school decision (Chaaban Al-Thani and Du, 2021):

I don't know if the school could override a decision made by others. I definitely think **we** would try to appeal it (Daisy:[5.10.2](#)).

On the other hand, Alison challenges refugee policy throughout her narratives, based on her understanding of the impact of policy on refugee children through her past experiences which influence her future perspectives (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015):

They have had multiple relocations, multiple school placements and then they finally settle and become part of a community who know their history... coming from war situations... and they come to **us** and **we** are about to displace them again when, potentially, they could be happy and safe... (Alison:[5.2.2](#)).

This leads to her considering how she can challenge policy decisions (Pantić, 2017):

I would be part of the appeal so I'd like to think that there would be an appeals' process. I'd like to think that within that appeals' process, **we** are able to put forward further evidence and say why it would be detrimental for this family to be moved from the UK (Alison:[5.2.2](#)).

Ultimately, she considers how she could engage others in the process (Pantić, 2017; Molla and Nolan, 2020):

For this family to have to face this, is wrong. It is a terrible, terrible thing to happen and so I would get as many people involved, petitioning (Alison:[5.2.2](#)).

I would involve outside agencies, educational psychologists – ensuring **we** have as much outside agency support in understanding and knowing these children (Alison:[5.2.2](#)).

Engaging the community and politicians so they know more about these stories... in the hope that **we** would be able to keep this family with **us** (Alison:[5.2.2](#)).

To some degree, this supports the premise that contesting policy and procedures is often steered by a leading practitioner who empowers others by applying influence (Molla and Nolan, 2020):

Knowing that the chances were slim would not stop me seeking support... community support... and challenging the decision, (Alison:[5.2.2](#)).

These challenges are built from a personal belief system (Chaaban, Al-Thani and Du, 2021): 'I couldn't go against everything I believe regarding this family' (Alison:[5.2.2](#)). This enables Alison to consider challenging decisions made at national level (Juutilainen et al., 2024):

Although **we** have these laws in our country... just because **we** have these laws... does not mean **we** agree with them. If you don't agree with them, as a citizen you have to stand up and make it clear that you don't agree – without a shadow of a doubt – for the sake of these children, you have to challenge it (Alison:[5.2.2](#)).

Finally, she acknowledges that to contest and challenge, it requires an understanding of issues (Pyhältö, Piertarinen and Soini, 2015; Wallen and Tormey, 2019; Hilal and Akar, 2023) and a powerbase to facilitate change (Juutilainen et al., 2024):

...so, people like me... in positions like me... need to shout loud and engage the community to challenge that decision (Alison:[5.2.2](#)).

She also reflects on how the process of storytelling has supported her understanding and ability to confront alternative discourse (Hilal and Akar, 2023):

I didn't realise the numbers... the figures... the timescales. If this was happening to me as a teacher, I would feel completely disempowered and not know how to go about supporting this family. I am sure, because of the sort of person that I am, I would go out of my way to find that out, but it would be much better to know this beforehand (Alison:[5.2.3](#)).

If these teachers feel that challenging refugee policy seems beyond their expertise and scope, it is worth considering if they feel that inclusion policy can be challenged as this is often held at school-level but has a direct impact on outcomes for children.

6.6.1.4 Challenge to inclusion policy

The practitioners were more confident in raising issues about inclusive practice (Toom, Pyhältö, and O'Connell Rust, 2015; Chaaban Al-Thani and Du, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022), possibly having a stronger 'commitment' to social justice (Pantić, 2017), and thus expressing concerns about how this is implemented in schools and how it conflicts with wider policy agendas:

The boys were successful but, because they didn't 'fit the bill', they went. They took them in the middle of the night, banging on the door, taking them off to a deportation centre (Kate:[5.4.3](#)).

In considering a different family, Kate points to issues which required individual practitioners to intervene to support a failing system, raising aspects of a deficit model which could easily transfer to outcomes for these children, aspects previously considered by Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015) in relation to social justice agendas:

There was no joined-up thinking. **We** had to provide beds and clothing and **we** contacted social services to make sure they could actually live. It was alright in the end, but they needed **our** help (Kate:[5.4.1](#)).

Kate builds on this further in her fourth narrative:

They say they have rights, and you can do this, or that, and we are going to support you... and then it doesn't happen. No wonder there's so much mistrust in the world. Somewhere along the line, there's a 'flowery' inclusion – that's being disparaging because it's the inclusion programme that's not really linked to what's happening... what support there really is (Kate:[5.4.4](#)).

Kate explores this further by considering how inclusion provision fails these children, stating that the child in her second story 'will never feel that he belongs – even if he is allowed to stay. He is just *expected* to settle' (Kate:[5.4.2](#)). Mike also addresses this concept in his first narrative:

...despite being in a nice environment, and despite being in a safer country... potentially, even feeling more safe and secure... making friends... and having fun at school, and things like that... leaving the education system with a lack of skills and knowledge, grades, qualifications, to be able to go onto the next steps... careers and jobs, and to be able to break the cycle that they are in (Mike:[5.8.1](#)).

As inclusion is seen as a way of breaking barriers to ensure achievement and successful outcomes, Mike's additional concerns raise warnings for the profession in relation to

professional agency and its effectiveness in countering negative *master narratives* (Juutilainen et al., 2024):

Lots of barriers, for example the curriculum, and barriers from coming from a really deprived background... families having accommodation, somewhat settled but a lack of resources (Mike:[5.8.1](#)).

He considers how refugee children experience these barriers more than other children and, in doing so, identifies many historical issues that have followed refugee communities in the chronosystem of migrants' lives in the UK, identifying contexts and power relationships that influence outcomes (Wallen and Tormey, 2019):

...coming to a new country, being with the family and the environment, the new school and having language difficulties, facing discrimination and racism and name-calling and all that kind of stuff. Think how hard it is for kids in care in schools anyway, never mind all the other stuff that is added on top of that (Mike:[5.8.2](#)).

He adds in his third narrative:

All the issues and challenges that **we** normally have are going to be amplified with these children (Mike:[5.8.3](#)).

Kate enhances these concerns in her stories as she contemplates inadequacies in addressing the needs of refugee children within a general system of inclusion:

We treat them like children which is lovely, but surely there must be more? Counselling or therapy that children like that need... and that's not in place (Kate:[5.4.3](#)).

She summarises her thought process and the system's inadequacies in her final narrative, demonstrating *deliberative agency* in critically reflecting on practice, theories and assumptions (Molla and Nolan, 2020):

This is in all my stories – the juxtaposition – the jarring in British schools between what's supposed to happen and policy (Kate:[5.4.4](#)).

Worryingly, Kate feels that the system disempowers practitioners in meeting the needs of these children: 'The practitioner's hands are tied' (Kate:[5.4.3](#)). Mike also sees the system as failing the children:

...so there's a fault there... in the education system... not focusing on life chances and not setting them up to leave the education system with any grades, or knowledge, or know-how... to be successful in wider society (Mike:[5.8.1](#)).

He sees this failure as a wider issue across a range of agencies and policy initiatives:

It seems there is a system that is failing in multiple parts – the social care system and policies to do with refugees and asylum seekers in the school system. People trying to do their best but the system failing to address the issues (Mike:[5.8.2](#)).

It could, therefore, seem like a desperate situation with few, apart from those who might be seen as *evangelical*, such as Alison, willing to raise challenge to a system which is identified as failing by those working within it. However, the practitioners also discuss opportunity and the ability to engender change and become a 'shaper' within the environment (Wallen and Tormey, 2019:130). Daisy can see opportunity to adjust practice

in the UK, extending her professional arena to wider practice (Molla and Nolan, 2020) Nguyen et al., 2022): ‘...if there were issues when they were in an English school, that would be easier to challenge’ (Daisy:[5.10.3](#)).

By the third narrative, she is also identifying possible areas which might lead to training opportunities (Hilal and Akar, 2023):

I think it’s definitely being addressed at the minute, but I think there’s so much more that could be done and needs to be understood (Daisy:[5.10.3](#)).

Mike builds on this further by discussing how practitioners can alter opinions at grassroots (ibid) and potentially change viewpoints that politicians consistently use to underpin policy choices by creating a *counter-narrative* (Juutilainen et al., 2024):

It could be a massive problem in changing the narrative, I suppose, for people with those views and also for the kids themselves. That can obviously be really important in providing a sense of security for those refugee children... The challenge comes at a grassroot level, changing the narrative around these individuals and working with children, parents, and the community rather than taking on the bigger challenge of changing the policy itself: influencing the policy in this way (Mike:[5.8.3](#)).

He also explains his confidence (Pantić, 2017) in challenging at this level:

I feel confident with a group of kids in my class to be able to show them the bigger picture and to change the narrative and change the negative stereotypes that are associated with this kind of situation (Mike:[5.8.3](#)).

The participants reflected on the narrative story-ending exercise and how it had informed their understanding and knowledge - creating personal challenges and allowing them to consider their belief systems as practitioners (Hilal and Akar, 2023). Through this task, they were also able to begin to articulate ways in which they could challenge policy and established beliefs systems such as inclusion (Pyhältö, Piertarinen and Soini, 2015). By knowing these children through their stories and bringing them into their lives in a story form, they started a process of understanding how they could address the power dynamics of policy creation and enactment in their practice in the East Midlands (Toom, Pyhältö and O'Connell Rust, 2015), and how they could challenge their perceptions and those of others (Juutilainen et al., 2024).

To understand these stories... and know *them*, maybe you're more likely to challenge and make a difference in a much greater way (Alison:[5.2.3](#)).

6.7 Summary

By exploring the narratives contained in [Chapter 5](#), three themes have been identified which can be summarised as:

- A deficit model of need.
- Use of inclusion policies to meet need.
- Potential for challenge and agency.

These are explored and summarised in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

Summary of key findings

In analysing power dynamics in teachers' understanding of policies through storytelling about refugees in the East Midlands region, it has been possible to identify themes which flow through different levels of the ecosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) ([fig.1](#)).

7.1 Theme 1: a deficit model

In this thesis, analysis showed that power tended to be held with certain political factions who influenced policy agendas, and ultimate success of policy initiatives. Refugee children were viewed within a **deficit model** of need, impacting local communities negatively in resourcing and supporting individuals effectively. This deficit model bolstered antagonism towards refugees from certain groups: this was sometimes linked to racism. The deficit model and anti-refugee sentiments were fostered by a flawed system which was struggling to meet need, whilst blurring terminology so specific needs were confused or lost. Practitioners also reflected a deficit model in some of their narratives, echoing similar findings to Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015) in their study of teachers' agency.

National policy, although ostensibly based on a welcoming environment, mainly focused on prohibiting entry or expelling individuals. Regional and local policy, however, was centred on meeting need within the community. These diverging responses caused conflict and confrontations in power dynamics. Creating a consistent, well-structured, data informed, well-resourced and collaborative system is required to support all stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) in providing adequate provision but whilst policy reflects political agendas, this appears unattainable. However, there appears that there may be

potential to contest *master narratives* through *counter-narratives* (Juutilainen et al., 2024) which challenge the framing of *normal* or *typical*, by developing teacher agency which could influence the construction and reconstruction of meaning over time.

7.2 Theme 2: the use of inclusion policies

Inadequacies in the system often meant that children did not receive adequate support even though all stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)) agreed in their discourses (but not always in action) that they were entitled to good provision and care. This caused challenges in managing power dynamics across the ecological system, with different agendas being articulated by a range of stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)). General **inclusion policies** and associated policies ([3.4](#)) were often used to meet need particularly in primary schools, but practitioners' experiences supported wider literature in recognising these were not sufficient and singular use of these could be a sign of inadequacies in the system. However, practitioners felt that inclusion policies could be used as foundations to provide more targeted responses. This supports the view of much of the wider research in the literature review ([3.4](#)).

At secondary school, inclusion policies were less evident with focus moving to academic achievement and examination success. At all levels, conflicts between inclusion and neo-liberalist agendas were evident, with disparity between inclusion policies and academic outcomes. Inclusion within the education system appeared to be a desirable outcome, rather than an explicit expectation and frequently, there was inadequate resourcing, provision, and knowledge to support effective inclusion. National policy overrode inclusion agendas when judging eligibility to receive services, as well as the right to remain in the country, which placed power firmly at national level unless other stakeholders

([Appendix 2](#)) challenged the status quo. This suggests that development of teacher agency could impact outcomes through the reshaping of behaviour patterns (Nguyen et al., 2022) as an on-going process (Toom, Pyhältö and O'Connell Rust, 2015; Miller et al., 2022).

7.3 Theme 3: potential challenge and agency

This theme adds new evidence to existing understanding and knowledge by considering how emotional responses determine challenge to power and discourse through development of teacher agency. These responses appeared to be articulated candidly through the non-judgemental approach of storytelling when narrators could draw on *plausible deniability* ([4.6.1](#)).

Challenge within the system was inconsistent and often blocked by those holding political power. The distinctions between legitimate entitlement and illegal claims were distorted and although challenge was evident at all levels of the ecosystem, there was varying success. Challenge was often thwarted at national level, with additional claims of suppressed data and lack of support from national systems. Poor resourcing and funding created pressures throughout the system with national funding models being inadequate to support need. Blame for inadequacies was often directed towards refugees by a range of political activists who cited illegitimate claims or lack of entitlement.

Practitioners in this research often felt disempowered, although some felt that they could challenge procedures, with the majority feeling that they could initiate change for individual children within their *professional space* (Nguyen et al., 2022). There was limited evidence of effective challenge from education professionals at national level but more willingness to challenge at local and regional levels. The evidence from sources at local

and regional level, as well as practitioner narratives, showed that there was empathy towards refugee children, and this underpinned practical and theoretical challenges to the status quo.

The development of teachers' **agency** seems to be one means to address deficiencies in the status quo by using storytelling to create sense of purpose, competence, autonomy and reflexivity (Pantić, 2017). It is possible to see all these elements within the practitioners' narratives, with some responses depending on teachers' length of service and experience as well as the influence of neo-liberalist agendas on their practice. However, the narratives demonstrate that practitioners can use an *inner voice* to express their beliefs and that they can articulate *counter-narratives* to *major narratives* that inform established norms especially within their *professional space*. They were able to draw on personal allegiance to social justice and moral agency based on past experiences and considered how they could respond in the present and how this might inform future experiences (3.7). The ability to create 'self-stories' provided the opportunity to develop five areas of agency – inquisitive, deliberative, recognitive, responsive and moral (Molla and Nolan, 2020) by 'living in the world' of the refugee child. This gave them opportunity to consider dilemmas, dominant discourses, demands and regulations and to reflect and, in some cases, research in a safe environment. The conscious decision to keep the refugee child at the centre of the research enabled the practitioners to begin to articulate *transformative agency* linked to wider participation and to look beyond inconsistencies and popular discourse towards families and children at the centre of the debate. They also started to use the 'we' voice (Hilal and Akar, 2023) showing that they saw themselves as part of the collective of educators who can engender change. Therefore, this supports and

adds to previous research by promoting CPD for teachers which *develops people* within the profession rather than focusing on *knowledge* acquisition ([3.7](#)).

7.4 Thesis Impact

A deeper understanding of policy through narrative discussion seemed to empower practitioners and potentially support professional agency, enabling them to consider alternative outcomes for refugee children. Following the narrative discussions, feedback from Alison confirmed that, as an adviser, she had altered her practice in school as well as advocating change to senior leaders, and initiatives had begun to improve quality of provision for children in the setting. Meanwhile, Mike adopted the narrative storytelling process to engage Year 12 pupils in theoretical perspectives whilst enabling them to develop empathy towards different social and cultural groups. Additionally, use of narratives outside the scope of this thesis enabled discussions with trainee teachers, demonstrating that dialogue and contemplation helps individuals to review power dynamics and challenge processes, procedures, and outcomes for refugee children, whilst reducing misinterpretations and misunderstandings based on popular discourses.

7.5 Summary of new evidence

One aim of this thesis was to provide additional information relating to the power dynamics that influence teachers' understanding of policies with specific focus on their ability to challenge and develop agency. The practitioner narratives within this thesis, as well as examples from two schools ([5.7](#) and [5.9](#)), demonstrate that teachers can have an emotional response to refugee children that can underpin agency and challenge. This challenge, every so often, manifests itself in relation to individual cases but also influences

overarching school policy (School B:[5.9](#)), practical action (School A:[5.7](#)), as well as Alison's response following her participation in this research ([7.4](#)). However, the longevity of this agency and challenge remains unclear as it appears to be linked to individual practitioners, their emotional reactions to specific cases, and the opportunity for enriched CPD opportunities such as the storytelling in this thesis.

7.6 Conclusions from findings: significance and implications

7.6.1 Strengths and development

This research is fixed within a period of 18-months and therefore the policy and narrative analyses are time limited. However, similar themes are evident in the chronology of refugee policy over several decades and therefore have an enduring truth in relation to policy responses. Power dynamics are shown to guide policy with political ideology influencing stakeholders ([Appendix 2](#)). Challenges at local and individual level have been explored but it would be worthwhile investigating further and identifying characteristics that empower individuals to question policies and procedures and thus develop professional agency. Additionally, it would be valuable to increase the number of narrative accounts to include more participants and therefore obtain more viewpoints, although this could limit the opportunity to explore stories in depth which was an advantage when working with fewer professionals in this study.

The limitations of inclusion policies to meet need were explicitly addressed by participants, and the influence of neo-liberalist attitudes was evident in their discourse. Further investigation into the allegiance of education professionals to inclusive discourse

and provision, and thus the effectiveness of inclusive policies, would add depth to evidence relating to current practice in schools.

7.6.2 Data reliability

During the process of data collection, the decision was made to restrict the timeframe because the situation was changing daily. This means that although some data was collected relating to Afghanistan and Ukraine policy decisions, it was not possible to assess final outcomes. Additionally, the practitioners' narratives were compiled during a period when these schemes were in their initial phases and so they are not reflected in their stories. However, all narratives have depth and breadth and address wider considerations such as political and administrative responses. The epistemology of the research recognises the transient nature of the data within a snapshot of time, but also supports the validity of the outcomes within the scope of the study ([4.3](#)).

Bacchi's (2009) WPR model gave clear structure and created the foundation for policy analysis. Additionally, the traditional story approach provided an effective way to collate narrative data. The combination of the two was valuable in exploring the depth and breadth of power struggles, although it remains an innovative methodology. Use of this in future research would enable a focused approach from the beginning, possibly leading to a stronger analysis, rather than a reactive response following theoretical discussions. Consideration of the effectiveness of online 'interviews' to replace face-to-face meetings would be an interesting aspect to investigate further. This collection method was imposed by lockdown restrictions, but it proved a useful way of collating narratives, and it would be worthwhile researching whether this method is consistently successful.

7.6.3 Future considerations

Politicisation of refugee policy and the influence this has on a deficit model is a persistent issue in meeting refugee children's legal and moral rights. Additionally, impact of neo-liberalist attitudes on inclusion policies is an ongoing concern which continues to create challenges for teachers. However, on a positive note, teachers within this study advocated the rights of children and were open to wider factors if given the opportunity and time to consider these. This suggests that teaching professionals remain open to dialogue and change, despite other pressures in their working lives. Creating opportunities for teachers to debate scenarios in a supportive environment, using appropriate stimuli (such as the practitioner narratives in this thesis) would seem to be an appropriate way to develop their agency and empower them to reconcile the range of factors that impose on their professional identities, enabling them to challenge power and discourse by considering *counter-narratives*. This would, in some way, answer the call for the development of CPD opportunities to enhance the development of *people* within the profession (3.7).

7.6.4 The end

And so, this story comes to an end. I hope it leaves you with more questions than answers about *problematizations*, *representations* and your own discourse. Whilst creating this thesis, it was challenging not to promote *my* preferred discourse and belief system and so, I understand the hesitancy of teachers to challenge prevailing viewpoints. Facilitating narration provides an effective way to inspire *storytellers*, allowing them to develop agency and to bring *truth* to power. The stories in this thesis live beyond the scope of this written document for their narrative seeds add, and will continue to add, to current knowledge and understanding by enabling practitioners to develop and analyse their

practice, potentially challenging the status quo. This study, therefore, leaves a legacy of possible challenge and agency through storytelling, achieved by those with underdeveloped power *living* in the world of those who are often powerless, thus presenting opportunities to uncover hidden *truths* and *silences* which counter prevailing discourses. Thus, the moral of *this* 'story' is that authentic responses ultimately enable deeper understanding of the power dynamics surrounding the refugee child who has always been at the centre of this analysis.

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Appendix 1

The participants chose from photographs 4-11 for their final stories. They created their own stem sentence(s). See ethical considerations in relation to the use of these images ([4.7.2](#))

Photograph 4 (Powell and Hilaire, 2016)

Excluded material: see statement on title page

Photograph 5 (Powell and Hilaire, 2016)

Excluded material: see statement on title page

Photograph 6 (Powell and Hilaire, 2016)

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Photograph 7 (Powell and Hilaire, 2016)

Excluded material: see statement on title page

Photograph 8 (Duley, 2017)

Excluded material: see statement on title page

Photograph 9 (Powell and Hilaire, 2016)

Excluded material: see statement on title page

Photograph 10 (Duley, 2017)

Excluded material: see statement on title page

Photograph 11 (Juarez, 2020)

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Appendix 2

Stakeholders include those impacted by, or associated with, refugee policy such as governing organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGO), charities, pressure groups, legal representatives, health and education representatives, refugee groups or individual refugees. These stakeholders may have different levels of investment at various times or in relation to differing events. They may align or challenge each other depending on the content or potential outcome of different policies.

These organisations and parties include:

Amnesty International

Asylum seekers and their families

Cities of Sanctuary

Department for Education

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Education Policy Institute

Health authorities

H.M. Treasury

Home Office

Housing associations

International governments

Local authorities

Local communities

Local Government Association

Ministry of Defence

National government

OECD

Ofsted

Oxfam

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Political parties

Refugee children/families

Schools (including Trusts, Academies, Faith schools)

Refugee Council

UNESCO

UNHCR

UNICEF

Unitary Authorities

Appendix 3



Keele University HumSS Faculty Research Ethics Committee
humss.ethics@keele.ac.uk

14 April 2021

Dear Shirley Hewitt,

Project Title:	Analysing power dynamics in the understanding and enactment of policies relating to refugee and asylum seeker children in the East Midlands region.
REC Project Reference:	HU-210111
Type of Application	Main application

Keele University's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee reviewed the above project application.

Favourable Ethical opinion

The members of the Committee gave a favourable ethical opinion of the above research on the basis described in the application form, protocol and supporting documentation.

1.	Please make sure that if face to face meetings do take place, that these will be in line with covid regulations at the time of the meetings.
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Reporting requirements

The University's standard operating procedures give detailed guidance on reporting requirements for studies with a favourable opinion including:

- Notifying substantial amendments
- Notifying issues which may have an impact upon ethical opinion of the study
- Progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

Approved documents

The documents reviewed and approved are:

Document	Version	Date
1702370601_200221Participant Email - Shirley Hewitt	1	14/04/2021

1702370601_200221urec-qcd40-humss-frec-application-form-v2.1-11nov2019 - Shirley Hewitt	1	14/04/2021
1702370601_200221urec-qcd79-consent-form-template-v1.0-11nov2019 - Shirley Hewitt	1	14/04/2021
1702370601_200221urec-qcd80-pil-template-v1.0-11nov2019 - Shirley Hewitt	1	14/04/2021

Yours sincerely,

**Professor Helen Parr
Chair**

Appendix 4

Documentary analysis – full references in reference list

National government documents: legislation (L), policy documents (P), news releases (N), guidance (G), committee reports (C), debates (D), statements (S)

Atkins, V. (2022) *Oral statement to parliament Afghan citizens resettlement scheme*. **S**

Department for Education (2017) *Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery: statutory guidance for local authorities*. **G**

Department for Education (2020) *English proficiency: pupils with English as additional language*. **G**

Department for Education (2021^a) *Checklist for school leaders to support full opening: behaviour and attendance*. **G**

Department for Education (2021^b) *Guidance Afghanistan resettlement education grant*. **P**

Department for Education (2022^a) *Guidance Afghanistan resettlement grant: 2021 to 2022 local authority allocations*. **P**

Department for Education (2022^b) *Guidance school applications for foreign national children and children resident outside England*. **P**

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022^a) *Guidance week one guidance for Ukrainians arriving in the UK*. **G**

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022^b) *Guidance welcome: a guide for Ukrainians arriving in the UK*. **G**

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022^c) *News: homes for Ukraine, 14th March.* **N**

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022^d) *Press release 'homes for Ukraine' scheme launches.* **N**

Hansard HC (2021) *English Channel small boats incident Vol 704*, Debated on 25.11.2021. **D**

Hansard HC (2022^a) *Afghan citizens resettlement scheme Vol. 706*, Debated on 06.01.2022. **D**

Hansard HC (2022^b) *Ukraine: urgent refugee applications Vol. 710*, Debated on 08.03.2022. **D**

Hansard HL (2020^a) *Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill Vol 806*, Debated on 30.09.2020. **D**

Hansard HL (2020^b) *Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill Vol 806*, Debated on 21.10.2020. **D**

Hansard HL (2020^c) *Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill Vol 807*, Debated on 9.11.2020. **D**

H. M. Government (2021) *Welcome pack for arrivals on the Afghanistan locally employed staff scheme.* **G**

Home Affairs Committee HC (2022) *Channels crossings, migration and asylum first report of session 2022-23.* **C**

Home Office (2020^a) *Dublin III regulation v.4.* **L**

Home Office (2020^b) *News story Immigration Act receives royal assent: free movement to end on 31 December 2020.* **N**

Home Office (2020^c) *Overview of family reunion options in the immigration rules.* **P**

Home Office (2021^a) *Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.* **P**

Home Office (2021^b) *Afghanistan resettlement and immigration policy statement.* **P**

Home Office (2021^c) *Consultation outcome: consultation on the new plan for immigration: government response.* **S**

Home Office (2021^d) *Consultation outcome new plan for immigration: policy statement.* **S**

Home Office (2021^e) *Correspondence Afghanistan update: letter to MPs published 27 August 2021.* **N**

Home Office (2021^f) *Guidance: funding instruction for local authorities in support of the United Kingdom's resettlement schemes: 2021 to 2022.* **G**

Home Office (2021^g) *Guidance: support for British and Non-British nationals in Afghanistan.* **G**

Home Office (2021^h) *New plan for immigration: legal migration and border control strategy statement.* **S**

Home Office (2021ⁱ) *Policy paper Nationality and Borders Bill: factsheet.* **P**

Home Office (2021^j) *Policy paper Nationality and Borders Bill: factsheet safe and legal routes.* **P**

Home Office (2021^k) *Statement in relation to legal routes from the EU for protection claimants including family reunion of unaccompanied children.* **S**

Home Office (2021^l) *UK refugee resettlement: policy guidance.* **S**

Home Office (2021^m) *Welcome pack for arrivals on the Afghanistan locally employed staff scheme.* **G**

Home Office (2022^a) *A fairer asylum accommodation system.* 14th April. **S**

Home Office (2022^b) *Consultation outcome new plan for immigration: policy statement.* **S**

Home Office (2022^c) *Consultation outcome: report in relation to legal routes from the EU for protection claimants, including family reunion of unaccompanied children.* **S**

Home Office (2022^d) *Guidance Afghan citizens resettlement scheme.* **G**

Home Office (2022^e) *Guidance: Afghans resettlement scheme.* **G**

Home Office (2022^f) *Guidance apply for a Ukraine family scheme visa.* **G**

Home Office (2022^g) *Guidance support for British and Non-British nationals in Afghanistan.* **G**

Home Office (2022^h) *Migration statistics.* **S**

Home Office (2022ⁱ) *News story: Home Office to introduce scientific methods for assessing the age of asylum seekers, 5th January.* **N**

Home Office (2022^j) *Policy paper Nationality and Borders Bill: a differentiated approach factsheet.* **P**

Home Office (2022^k) *Policy paper Nationality and Borders Bill: children factsheet*. **P**

Home Office (2022^l) *Policy paper Nationality and Borders Bill: overseas asylum processing*. **P**

Home Office (2022^m) *Policy paper Nationality and Borders Bill: safeguarding through age assessment*. **P**

Home Office (2022ⁿ) *Speech: Home Secretary's speech on UK and Rwanda migration and economic development partnership*. **S**

Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal Act) 2020 c.20. **L**

Johnson, B. (2021) 'Oral statement to Parliament the Prime Minister's opening statement on Afghanistan', *Prime Minister's Office*, 18 August 2021. **S**

Liaison Committee HC (2022) *Oral evidence transcript*, 7th July. **C**

Ministry of Defence (2021) *Guidance: Afghan relocation and assistance policy*. **G**

Nationality and Borders Act 2022. **L**

Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 c. 41. **L**

UK Immigration (2020) *Education in the UK*. **P**

UK Parliament (2022) 'Minister questioned on support for Ukrainian refugees', *Levelling Up, Communities and Housing Committee*, 29 March. **C**

UK Parliament House of Commons Library (2020) *Research briefing Brexit: The end of the Dublin III regulation in the UK*, Published 21.12.2020. **S**

UK Parliament House of Lords Library (2022) *Refugees and asylum seekers: UK policy*,
Published 01.12.2022. **P**

UK Parliament Joint Committee on Human Rights (2021) *New powers to pushback and
criminalise Channel crossings breach UK's human rights obligations, JCHR finds*, 1st
December. **C**

UK Visas and Immigration (2023) *Guidance: age assessment joint working guidance*. **G**

**Local government documents: policy documents (P), news releases (N), guidance (G),
committee reports (C), debates (D), statements (S)**

East Midlands Councils (2017) *East Midlands strategic migration partnership briefing*,
February. **S**

East Midlands Councils (2020) *Local authority costs and pressures incurred in support of
former UASC care leavers in the East Midlands*. **S**

East Midlands Councils (2022) *Homes for Ukraine - latest regional data*, 10th June. **S**

East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (2019) *East Midlands strategic
partnership briefing*. **S**

Local Government Association (2021^a) *Afghanistan*, 18th August. **S**

Local Government Association (2021^b) *LGA statement - 'operation warm welcome'*, 6th
September. **S**

Local Government Association (2021^c) *The levelling up agenda, House of Commons, 15
June 2021: briefings and responses*. **S**

Local Government Association (2022^a) *Homes for Ukraine: lessons learned*, 9th June. **S**

Local Government Association (2022^b) *LGA responds to government Homes for Ukraine Scheme*. **S**

Local Government Association (2022^c) *Local government's role in supporting arrivals from Ukraine*, 9th March. **S**

Local Government Association (2022^d) *Ukraine refugees, House of Lords*, 6th March. **C**

Local Government Association (2022^e) *Ukraine: support for new arrivals*, 11th March. **G**

Local Government Association (n.d.) *Council support for Afghan resettlement*. **G**

One East Midlands (2018) *East Midlands inclusion framework - inclusion matters: from rhetoric to reality*. **P**[UA1] City Clinical Commissioning Group (2016) *New arrivals, asylum seekers and refugees*. **P**

[UA1] City Council (2016^a) *Asylum seeker support available*. **G**

[UA1] City Council (2016^b) *New arrivals*. **G**

[UA1] City Council (2016^c) *Rapid health needs assessment: the health care needs of asylum seekers in [UA1]*. **S**

[UA1] City Council (2022^a) 3.2.2 *Families with no recourse to public funds*. **P**

[UA1] City Council (2022^b) *title redacted*, 28th February. **N**

[UA1] City Council (2022^c) *Partners band together to support Ukrainian refugees*, 12th April. **N**

[UA1] City Council (2022^d) *3.2.1 Unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of trafficking and modern slavery.* **P**

[UA1] City Council (n.d.^a) *Arrivals under the Ukrainian family scheme.* **G**

[UA1] City Council (n.d.^c) *Homes for Ukraine: information for sponsors.* **G**

[UA1] City Council (n.d.^d) *Information for Ukrainians.* **G**

[UA1] City Council (n.d.^e) *Staying safe and avoiding harm.* **G**

[UA1] City Council (n.d.^f) *Support for asylum seekers.* **G**

[UA1] City Council (n.d.^g) *Support for refugees and people in crisis.* **G**

[UA1] City Council (n.d.^h) *Welcoming Ukrainian arrivals to [UA1].* **G**

[UA2] City Council (2021) *Equality, diversity and inclusion plan 2021/2024.* **P**

[UA2] City Council (n.d.^a) *Schemes and resources for Ukrainian refugees.* **G**

[UA2] City Council (n.d.^b) *Support for Ukraine.* **P**

School documents: policy documents (P), news releases (N), guidance (G), committee reports (C), debates (D), statements (S)

Anon. (2016) *Refugee week.* **N**

[School A] Primary School (2022):

Racial Equality and Anti-Racism Policy, Autumn 2019. **P**

PSHE Policy, 2020. **P**

Single Equalities Scheme, 2021 – 2024. **P**

Citizenship Policy, Spring 2021. **P**

Inclusion Policy, Spring 2021. **P**

[School B] (2022):

Equality Information and Objectives, May 2021. **P**

Non-government organisations (NGO) and charities: policy documents (P), news releases (N), guidance (G), committee reports (C), debates (D), statements (S)

Amnesty International UK (2022) *UK: Priti Patels racist Nationality and Borders Bill ‘drags the UKs reputation through the mud’*. **N**

Amnesty International UK (2023) *Education resources on refugee and asylum issues*. **G**

Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (n.d.). **G/N**

City of Sanctuary UK (n.d.) *About Us*. **G**

City of Sanctuary UK (2017) *City of Sanctuary Charter*. **P**

City of Sanctuary UK (2022) *A shameful day for the UK: the anti-refugee bill has passed, 28th April*. **S**

OECD (2010) *OECD Reviews of migrant education - closing the gap for immigrant students: policies, practice and performance*. **G**

Oxfam (2022) *Oxfam response to the passing of the Government's Nationality and Borders Bill in the House of Lords, 28th April.* **S**

Refugee Council (2021^a) *Briefing: an analysis of Channel crossing and asylum outcomes, November 2021.* **S**

Refugee Council (2021^b) *The truth about asylum.* **S**

Refugee Council (2022^a) *Top facts from the latest statistics on refugees and people seeking asylum.* **S**

Refugee Council (2022^b) *What is the Nationality and Borders Bill, 28th April.* **S**

UNHCR (2011) *Handbook and guidelines on procedures and criteria for determining refugee status under the 1951 convention and the 1967 protocol relating to the status of refugees.* **G**

UNHCR (2019) *Desperate journeys.* **S**

UNHCR UK (2022) *The Nationality and Borders Bill.* **S**

UNICEF (1989). *The United Nations convention on the rights of the child.* **P**

[UA1] City of Sanctuary (2021) [UA1] *City of Sanctuary support hub 2021: services provided to local asylum seekers and refugees.* **P**

[UA1] City of Sanctuary (n.d.^a). **G**

[UA1] City of Sanctuary (n.d.^b) [UA1] *City of Sanctuary: model of change.* **P**

[UA1] City of Sanctuary (n.d.^c) *City of Sanctuary: partner organisations.* **G**

[UA1] City of Sanctuary (n.d.^d) *Services.* **G**

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Bayoumi, M. (2022) 'They are 'civilised' and 'look like us': the racist coverage of Ukraine, *The Guardian*, 2nd March.

BBC News (2016^a) *How do you verify the age of child asylum seekers?*

BBC News (2016^b) *Michael Gove 'shuddered' at UKIP migrants' poster.*

BBC News (2016^c) *title redacted*, 27th September.

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BBC News (2020^b) *Dover immigration protesters and police clash at port.*

BBC News (2021^a) *Birmingham pupils meet refugees as groups oppose Nationality and Borders Bill.*

BBC News (2021^b) *title redacted*, 23rd December.

BBC News (2021^c) *Record number of migrants cross Channel in a day.*

BBC News (2022^a) *Channel migrants: border force intercepts 254 on Sunday*, 2nd May.

BBC News (2022^b) *Patel personally approved Rwanda plan launch after civil servant concerns*, 16th April.

BBC News (2022^c) *Ukraine conflict: UK urgently looking at help for refugees – Truss*, 27th February.

BBC News (2022^d) *Windrush scandal: anger at Home Office over compensation progress.*

Bedford, C. (2021) *title redacted, publication redacted*, 31st August.

Boyden, K. (2019) 'This is what really happens to refugees when they arrive on the East Kent Coast', *Kent News* 26th May.

Bulman, M. (2022) 'Local councils 'left in the dark' as Ukrainian sponsorship scheme opens', *The Independent*, 18th March.

Bunkall, A. (2022) 'UK and French services left rescue of more than 30 drowning migrants in Channel to each other, report claims', *Sky News*, 26th July.

Easton, M. (2022^a) 'Channel migrants: Home Office response ineffective, says second report', *BBC News*, 21st July.

Easton, M. (2022^b) 'Migrant crisis: border force may have made it worse – report', *BBC News*, 20th July.

Easton, M. and May, C. (2021) 'Councils to be forced to take child asylum seekers', *BBC News*, 23rd November.

Elgot, J. (2022) 'Tory peer withdraws name from key amendment to borders bill', *The Guardian*, 26th April.

Faulkner, D. and Lee, J. (2022) 'UK Rwanda asylum plan against international law, says UN refugee agency', *BBC News*, 16th April.

Fazackerely, A. (2022) *Hundreds of Ukrainian refugees removed from UK's 'unsuitable' housing sponsors*, *The Guardian*, 8th May.

Financial Times (2022) *'The UK's shameful Ukrainian refugee policy'*, 8th March.

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Fuller, G. (2020) 'A child with border force officers at Dover. Asylum proposal could leave vulnerable children in the hands of gangs and people smugglers', *The Guardian*, 24th May.

Gentleman, A. (2022) 'UK government admits to processing delays for Ukraine visas', *The Guardian*, 28th April.

Forrest, A. (2022) '13-year-old refugee girl sent back to Ukraine after Home Office refused visa, says Labour MP', *The Independent*, 8th June.

Gillett, F. (2021) 'Channel crossings: migrant boats could be turned back in new UK move', *BBC News*, 9th September.

Grant, H. (2021) 'The need is still there': last young refugees arrive in UK as family reunion route closes', *The Guardian*, 22nd December.

Grierson, J. (2021) 'Backlash after Priti Patel rebukes media over Channel 'migrants' label', *The Guardian*, 25th November.

Howden, D. (2022) 'Europe has rediscovered compassion for refugees – but only if they're white', *The Guardian*, 10th March.

Isaac, A. and Dearden, L. (2022) 'Home Secretary Priti Patel overrode legal advice in asylum cases, adding to record costs', *The Independent*, 15th May.

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ITV News Central (2017^b) *title redacted*, 14th January.

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ITV News (2022^b) *title redacted*, 21st June.

Lyons, B. (2018) title redacted, *source redacted*, 5th April.

O' Dwyer, M. (2021) 'Local authorities in England grapple with audit crisis', *Financial Times*, 30th December.

Richardson, H. (2022) title redacted, *source redacted*, 17th April.

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Stone, J (2022) 'Labour would still require biometric tests for Ukrainian refugees to come to Britain, Ed Milliband says', *The Independent*, 10th March.

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Syal, R. and Gentleman, A. (2022) 'Priti Patel apologises for low number of Ukraine refugees arriving in UK' *The Guardian*, 8th April.

Syal, R. and Henley, J. (2021) 'Channel deaths: Priti Patel disinvited to meetings with France', *The Guardian*, 26th November.

Syal, R. and Siddique, H. (2022) 'Threat of being sent to Rwanda 'harming health of UK asylum seekers'', *The Guardian*, 11th May.

Taylor, D. (2021) title redacted, *The Guardian*, 25th February.

Taylor, D. and Syal, R. (2021) 'Priti Patel urged to justify claim that most boat migrants are not real refugees', *The Guardian*, 2nd November.

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Walker, K. (2022) 'UK to ease entry requirements for Ukrainian refugees, says Priti Patel', *The Guardian*, 10th March.

Welander, M. (2020) 'The politics of exhaustion and the externalization of British border control. An articulation of a strategy designed to deter, control and exclude', *International Migration*, 59(3) pp. 29-46.