



What are the challenges that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face and how can youth workers in Northern Ireland support them?

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ABSTRACT

Around the world 68.5 million people have been displaced from their homes, amongst them are young people who have been separated from their immediate families. This small group of young people is referred to as 'separated or unaccompanied' In 2017 the United Kingdom saw 2,399 applications for asylum from unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people: Northern Ireland averaged around 13 referrals each year.

This study aims to detail the processes that surround unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people entering Northern Ireland, identify the challenges they face, make recommendations for youth workers and explore the theological understanding for welcoming them.

The research uses interviews and questionnaires to identify these challenges and suggests recommendations for youth workers who may engage with unaccompanied asylum seekers in the future.

The study outlines and reviews existing literature focusing on three areas: the initial processes for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face, everyday challenges and leaving care over 18.

The findings indicated that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face challenges around the lengthy asylum process, which is not child-friendly also issues with language and subsequent integration into local society. Additionally, unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people can suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of trauma in their country of origin, on their journey to Northern Ireland or possibly in the hands of traffickers. The study identified the vital role Christians play in supporting individuals taken from verses relating to welcoming the stranger and showing hospitality to those in need. The study also briefly touches on future challenges and how Brexit could potentially affect unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people.

Recommendations suggested that youth workers should increase their awareness of the young people's culture and of the asylum process along with accompanying them in everyday tasks. The research also identified the importance of knowing the community and how to access important resources such as translators.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... 2

ABSTRACT 3

 TABLE OF CONTENTS.....4

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 5

 1:1 UK CONTEXT.....6

 1:2 NI CONTEXT6

 1:3 REASON FOR RESEARCH.....7

 1.4 THEOLOGY8

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 9

 2.1 INITIAL PROCESS WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ENTER NORTHERN IRELAND9

 2.1.1 *Guardianship*.....9

 2.1.2 *Age Assessments*.....10

 2.2 EVERYDAY CHALLENGES OF ASYLUM-SEEKING YOUNG PEOPLE11

 2.2.1 *Trauma*.....11

 2.2.2 *Education/ language*12

 2.2.3 *Status*.....13

 2.3 LEAVING CARE OVER 18S.....14

 2.3.1 *Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)*.....16

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY 17

 3.1 CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH17

 3.2 JUSTIFY THE METHODS USED19

 3.3 LIMITATIONS19

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS..... 21

 4.1 *Challenges identified in questionnaires*21

 4.2 *Challenges identified by interviews*.....21

 4.3 *Christians’ response*25

 4.4 *Future outlook*26

CHAPTER 5 RECOMMENDATIONS 28

 5.1 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS28

 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERVIEWS29

 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHURCHES/CHRISTIAN YOUTH WORKERS30

CONCLUSION 32

APPENDICES..... 34

 APPENDIX 134

 APPENDIX 235

APPENDIX 3	36
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	37
ETHICAL CLEARANCE.....	39

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Around 68.5 million people around the world have been displaced from their homes and around 25.4 million are refugees with over half of that number being under 18. Statistics show that 57 percent of refugees come from areas involved in conflict: South Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria. It is also estimated that around 10 million people are stateless meaning they have been declined nationality and as a result they are unable to access basic rights such as education, health care, employment and freedom of movement. (UNHCR, 2018) Along with refugees and asylum seekers, there are small numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people or separated children. An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) is a person under the age of 18 who is applying for asylum in their own right, separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who in law or by custom has a responsibility to do so. (Home Office, Department of Education, 2017) Bokhari and Kelly (2012) identify that “in mainland Europe the term ‘separated children’ is used to describe this diverse group of children” and they suggest that the United Kingdom (UK) should adopt this description, as the term “separated” more accurately defines the issue that these children and young people face. However, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) identifies some differences between “unaccompanied” and “separated” which sees separated as being “separated from both primary care-givers but not necessarily from other relatives.”

The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” (Refugees, 1951)

However, the Northern Ireland based charity Refugee Action Group (RAG) recognises “In the UK this process is managed by the Home Office. In these terms, an asylum seeker is a person who has applied for refugee status and awaits a decision, whereas a refugee is a person who has had a positive decision on an application for asylum and is granted full refugee status.”

1:1 UK CONTEXT

There are significantly more applications for asylum from unaccompanied children in the United Kingdom than there are in Northern Ireland. Information from the Refugee Council shows that in 2017 there were 2,399 applications for asylum from unaccompanied children made, out of these applications 56 percent were granted refugee status.

- For decisions on unaccompanied children who have reached the age of 18 there was a refusal rate of 57 percent in 2016 but the refusal rate dropped in 2017 to 45 percent.
- Unaccompanied children who have reached the age of 18 have generally been more likely to have their asylum claim refused.
- Although there are fewer outright refusals for children under the age of 18 this is because a child who cannot be returned to their country of origin is granted a specific form of leave called UASC leave. Prior to 2013 discretionary leave was granted in these cases.

1:2 NI CONTEXT

In the last five years, in Northern Ireland there has been an average of 13 referrals each year, peaking at 17 in the 2014/15 financial year. Unaccompanied children presenting in Northern Ireland have mainly been in the older adolescent age group and in terms of gender, males are particularly prevalent.

In 2014 a dedicated residential unit for unaccompanied, separated, trafficked and asylum-seeking young people and children which has provision for a maximum of 8 children aged 13+ was set up through the Health and Social Care trust. In addition, relevant documents providing information on how professionals can support unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people have been developed through the Health and Social Care trusts and an Independent Guardian service has been created by Barnardo's with a further document outlining the need for this Guardian service to include separated and trafficked children in Northern Ireland. These documents will be referred to within the research.

Northern Ireland is participating in the UK government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) which has the overall aim of helping 20,000 Syrian refugees over 5 years to resettle. As a result of rising pressures, the Northern Ireland Assembly has agreed to resettle 2,000 Syrians over a 5-year period. This scheme is for people in greatest need, for example people who require urgent medical treatment, survivors of violence and torture and women and children at risk. (Home Office, Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) Guidance for Local Authorities and Partners, 2017) Although the young people are not unaccompanied, the challenges they face in some ways may be similar to the challenges faced by unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. There have also been some cases where young people who came to Northern Ireland through this scheme have been brought into care by the state or it has become apparent that sometimes the people they come with are not actually related to the young person meaning that they are separated young people. This explains the reasoning for including the scheme within this research.

1:3 REASON FOR RESEARCH

This piece of research explores the challenges that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face and has the aims of:

- Detailing the process surrounding an unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person entering Northern Ireland.
- Identifying the challenges that unaccompanied asylum seekers face.
- Exploring and making recommendations for the ways that youth workers in Northern Ireland support them.
- Exploring a theological perspective around welcoming asylum seekers, refugees and unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people.

The reasoning for choosing the topic of the challenges of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people as a research topic is that this is an area that is becoming more prevalent and the demographic is likely to continue to grow in the future in Northern Ireland. As a result of this it is

important for youth workers to be fully equipped and have the knowledge of the challenges and ways they can effectively provide welcoming spaces and support. This is a crucial aspect in the role of a youth worker as the core values focus on enabling equity, diversity and interdependence following on the principles that should underpin all youth work resolve around preparing young people for participation, testing values and beliefs and promoting acceptance and understanding of others. (Model for Effective Practise, 2003) In practice to do this a youth worker should get alongside the young person and assist them in any way, for example ensuring they are getting access to their basic rights, they are actively involved in decisions about their lives and have the opportunity to meet with people their own age.

This research will consist of a literature review which will explore findings from recent articles, journals, government publications and books relevant to the challenges that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face. It will also explore the methodology, identifying and analysing the findings from the research and ending with suggestions for how youth workers can support unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people drawing from the responses of the participants.

1.4 THEOLOGY

Whilst this piece of research has the aim of exploring what the challenges that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face and identifying recommendations for youth workers in Northern Ireland, it will also explore a theological understanding around the topic of welcoming asylum seekers/refugees. Many verses through out both the Old and New Testament relate to good relationships for example Mark 12v30-31

And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength. The second is equally important love your neighbour as yourself no other commandment is greater than these. (NLT)

Throughout the Bible there are examples of refugees being welcomed both physically and through Jesus' teaching which will be referred to later on in the research. Firstly, in Ruth 2 the Old Testament shows how refugees were welcomed. Ruth was a foreigner from Moab who had left her

home to join her mother in law after the death of her husband and two sons. She was showed hospitality by Boaz who offered her work, food and protection. Additionally, in the New Testament Paul in his letters to the Galatians notes how the early church was persecuted and directs that everybody should be treated equally and with respect: “there is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3v 28) Likewise it should be the same within today’s society.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Having identified the aims of the research, defined the terminology and established the global context, the UK context, specially the context in Northern Ireland, The next stage of this research was to conduct a literature review to bring together relevant books, journals and articles around the challenges that unaccompanied asylum seekers face.

2.1 INITIAL PROCESS WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ENTER NORTHERN IRELAND

2.1.1 GUARDIANSHIP

Research completed by Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) highlights some of the issues that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people or separated children initially face. One challenge identified was having to encounter various processes and people which could be very overwhelming for the young people, “For the majority of children, these will all be somewhat of an enigma to them and a source of bewilderment, if not fear.” (By their side and on their side, 2014) When young people and children first present themselves as unaccompanied or separated, they become ‘looked after’ and are brought to the local Health and Social Care Gateway Team where they are provided with a social worker who has a duty to appoint an independent guardian for the young person. Lynda Wilson (2018) notes that “the aim of the Independent Guardian Service is to provide specialist knowledge to safeguard and promote the welfare of child victims of human trafficking and always act in the best interest of the child.” (Barnardos.org.uk) NICCY also identified an independent Guardian as “a trusted adult at the side

of a child who oversees and co-ordinates the complex services and processes (including immigration and welfare) in which they are involved.” (2014) The Health and Social Care Board Commissioning Lead, Deirdre Coyle said:

the regional Independent Guardian Service is intended to strengthen the safeguarding arrangements to such children and specifically to assist, represent and support such children by listening to their views and making representation to, and liaising closely with, all other agencies that fulfil key functions in the arrangements for their immediate and future care and protection.”

NICCY furthers this definition, “A guardian ensures the child’s participation in decisions affecting them and that their best interests are of paramount consideration. A guardian has legal responsibilities, making them an authoritative figure among other stakeholders.”

2.1.2 AGE ASSESSMENTS

Guidance provided by the Health and Social Care Board (2017) found that, “some unaccompanied children/young people may not be in possession of official documentation confirming their date of birth or may have been told to lie about their age to evade attention from the authorities.” In the event of young people not having the documentation or if they appear to be older or younger than they claim an age assessment may need to be carried out.” This is “the process used to determine the age of a child/young person whose age is indeterminate or in dispute.” (2017) However, Mitchell and Kholi (2007) have pointed out that “

an unaccompanied child’s age no longer tells us when they were born and when to celebrate their birthday but whether they can stay in the United Kingdom, what and how much they should get of the state’s resources and whether they might get sent back to where they come from.”(p2)

The same guidelines recommend that, “where the age of the child /young person is uncertain, they are to be treated as such in order to receive immediate access to assistance, support and protection in accordance with Article 10 of the European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.”(2017) This means that if a young person claims to be over 18 they should still be treated as though they are underage until their age is confirmed. It is also pointed out that,

examinations must never be forced or culturally inappropriate. The least invasive option must always be followed, and the individual's dignity must be respected at all times. Particular care must be taken to ensure assessments are gender appropriate and that an independent guardian has oversight of the procedure and should be present if requested to attend by the individual concerned. (2017)

This ensures the welfare of the young people is considered. The guidelines make some recommendations for what should happen if the young people are found to be over 18 which identifies that support should be provided to help them transition into the appropriate services.

2.2 EVERYDAY CHALLENGES OF ASYLUM-SEEKING YOUNG PEOPLE

2.2.1 TRAUMA

A significant challenge that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face is trauma due to coming from countries in conflict where the young people have experienced traumatic incidents. Bokhari and Kelly (2012) identify that, “they are typically older adolescents exposed to considerable adversity prior to migration coming either from socio-economically deprived backgrounds and/or chaotic family circumstances.”(p106) Additionally Kidane (2001) recognises that, “there are major challenges in providing appropriate services for children and young people with special needs arising from the trauma, major disruption and loss of their former lives.” (p3) The Health and Social Care Board also recognises this impact and recommends that “Looked After Child (LAC) Therapeutic services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or other relevant counselling and support services should be provided in a timely manner promote the child's emotional well-being.” Developing on from this, Bokhari and Kelly (2012) note that, “separated migrant children face the added difficulty of recovering from their experiences without the care or guidance of a parent or any substitute carer.” (p101) Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people could also be carrying memories of disintegration as a result of war and trauma and so may be haunted by ghosts from the past. (Kohli and Mather, 2003) Bokhari and Kelly (2012) go on to identify some of the mental health challenges that separated and unaccompanied young people struggle with such as anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression. The

World Health Organisation (2007) note that, “PTSD can follow an extremely frightening or distressing event” it is when the “young person develops intrusive memories, flashbacks or nightmares relating to the event.” (Bokhari and Kerry, 2012)

Along with dealing with trauma and PTSD, unaccompanied young people may also be struggling with additional mental health issues such as anxiety or depression. Murphy et al points out that, “asylum seekers and refugees are vulnerable to suffering from mental health problems.” They note, “prompt mental health care is vital for successful integration and community cohesion, as it builds resilient individuals and subsequently resilient communities.” (2017,p27) This presents a challenge for youth workers as they aim to create welcoming and safe environment, it would be beneficial to understand the possible triggers and they ways they can support young people who are struggling with mental health issues in a non-intrusive way.

2.2.2 EDUCATION/ LANGUAGE

The United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child determines that every child should be given the opportunity to have an education:

All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this right. Discipline in schools should respect children’s dignity. For children to benefit from education, schools must be run in an orderly way – without the use of violence. Any form of school discipline should take into account the child’s human dignity. Therefore, governments must ensure that school administrators review their discipline policies and eliminate any discipline practices involving physical or mental violence, abuse or neglect. The Convention places a high value on education. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable.

(Article 28 UNCRC)

This is something that the Health and Social Care Trusts have recognised and have a responsibility, along with other statutory authorities, to ensure that unaccompanied and separated

children/young people are able to avail of appropriate education or training opportunities. They set out the following guidelines:

- The unaccompanied or separated child should be registered with an appropriate school, college or training provider as soon as possible and get assistance in maximising learning opportunities
- All adolescents should be allowed to enrol in vocational/professional training or education, and early learning programmes should be made available to young children.
- If the unaccompanied child/young person is under school leaving age, the Trust must consider and make provision for the child's educational needs. The social worker should explain the necessity for educational provision to the child/young person and make contact with the Educational Welfare Service. In the first instance this should be via the Chief Education Welfare Officer (EWO) or the Deputy Chief EWO for the area. Where there is a local Education Welfare Team for Looked After Children, any agreed actions or liaison arrangements should be made with the relevant staff from this team.
- The social worker and Educational Welfare Service should involve the independent guardian in discussions and arrangements in respect of the child's educational arrangements and the child's Personal Education Plan.
- If the unaccompanied/separated child/young person is over the statutory age for school attendance the Trust should ensure that the young person is afforded opportunities to attend further education or training as appropriate.

(Health-ni.gov.uk, 2018)

2.2.3 STATUS

The uncertainty of their asylum status can provide great challenges for asylum seeking young people and this is recognised by the government: “an unaccompanied child/young person who has left his/her country of origin and is unable to go back to his /her country because of fear of persecution can apply for asylum.” (Health-ni.gov.uk, 2018) It is the role of the Independent Guardian to ensure that the application for asylum is dealt with as quickly as possible, despite this, “in 2012, only 24.1 percent of child applicants were granted status in comparison to 30 percent in

the adult asylum population. (Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2013) Instead, 40 percent were granted 'discretionary leave' either for three years or until they turn 17 ½ years of age." (Kohli and Connolly, 2008; Bhabha and Finch, 2006; UNHCR, 2009) NICCY defines discretionary leave as "a concessionary status granted on grounds that adequate assessment arrangements are not available for them in their country of origin." (Kohli, Connolly and Beckett, 2014) As a result it is in effect a limbo status which forces children to live their lives anticipating a return to danger and harm back in their country of origin. (Kohli and Connolly, 2008) According to JCHR, "A further 36.1 percent of separated children's claims for asylum were refused outright (JCHR, 2013) with the overhanging threat of removal to their country of origin or a third country. In recent years, outright refusals have been increasing as discretionary leave has been decreasing. (JCHR, 2013) Kidane (2001) identifies that, "unaccompanied refugee children who have left behind any form of stability and who face uncertainty while their immigration status is settled are faced with an unfamiliar present and an uncertain future." (p5)

Unaccompanied children/young people should not, as a general rule, be detained, as this cannot be justified solely on the basis of the child being unaccompanied, separated, their migratory or residency status or lack thereof. Similarly, detention cannot be justified on the basis of a 'blanket' intention to safeguard and/or protect the child/young person.

2.3 LEAVING CARE OVER 18S

A care leaver is someone who has had an experience of care and is over the age of 18 who has often been supported in their transition into adulthood and independence through a pathway plan and support from a personal advisor. The experience of leaving the care system for an unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person once they turn 18 is very different. Stanley (2001) cited by Mitchell and Kohli (2007) notes,

There is considerable confusion, anxiety and a lack of information about what happens to a young person when they reach 18 years. A number of professionals pointed to the potentially disastrous effects of the transition to adult systems at 18 especially dispersal which entails the loss of friends, support and even homelessness. (p24)

Once an unaccompanied asylum seeker turns 18, the Home Office determines that they can be treated as adults and as a result they are no longer exempt or protected from Schedule 3, detention or enforced removal. Schedule 3 identifies certain groups of migrants who are excluded from social service support unless to withdraw support would be a breach of human rights. (Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, 2002) This could affect a young person if by their eighteenth birthday they have not gained the right to stay in the UK, as Mitchell and Kohli (2007) note, “broadly speaking a young person’s immigration status at age 18 will determine the likely impact of Schedule 3.” (p29) Kidane (2001) suggests that the Home Office aims to resolve all asylum applications within 6 months which allows two months for the initial application and four months for any appeals.

The Health and Social Care Board recognises the importance of ongoing support due to the fact that unaccompanied children and young people remain vulnerable and note that “support should begin with the end in mind and all unaccompanied children/young people should be made aware that the support being offered is limited,” working towards an exit strategy and leaving care plan should begin as early as possible to ensure appropriate support will be provided. The guidelines recommend that planning for leaving care and engagement should enable the young person to:

- Explore and understand all the exit options available, including repatriation if the young person has expressed a clear desire to return home based on an informed decision;
- Make safe and appropriate travel arrangements if returning to his/her country of origin;
- Move on from the service, find suitable accommodation, training or employment and financial support, and making appropriate travel arrangements;
- Contribute as fully as possible to a final assessment to identify areas where he/she has made progress and/or needs that have not been fully met yet.

As well as support with planning to leave care, the guidelines for working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people also recommend additional areas of ongoing support for young people once they leave care:

- On-going safety (including risk from traffickers or exploiters)
- Legal issues and immigration status;

- Social and spiritual networks (contacts with family, friends, and community agencies);
- Options in relation to future return to their country of origin.

(Health-ni.gov.uk, 2018)

2.3.1 TRAFFICKING AND CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people at any age are at a higher risk of being trafficked or exploited. Barnardo's (2011) identifies child trafficking as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child, whether by force or not, by a third person or group, for the purpose of different types of exploitation." The policy goes on to present the numbers of children who are separated and may or may not have been victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation.

According to the Home Office, eight children have been referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) by first responders in Northern Ireland since 1 April 2009. One child has now been conclusively identified as a victim of trafficking for the purposes of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, four children have been found not to be victims of trafficking, in one case the child has gone missing, in another case the decision is pending, and the remaining case was withdrawn. (2011)

It can be a challenge to discover if a child has been a victim of trafficking as they may be uncomfortable talking about their background or there is a fear of getting into trouble. Barnardo's notes that the number of trafficked children is relatively small in Northern Ireland, but it can often be hidden. Guidance issued by Health and Social Services and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) recognise that when working with children who may have been trafficked, "it should be borne in mind that some trafficked children may not show obvious signs of distress or disturbance."

Summary

This chapter consisted of a literature review which explored literature on unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. It mainly focused on the challenges that they face under three main headings with some sub-headings:

- Initial processes when young enter NI:
 - Guardianship
 - Age assessments
- Everyday challenges faced:
 - Trauma
 - Education/language
 - Status
- Leaving care over 18s
 - Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation

The following section reviews the methodology that was used to conduct the research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This section explores the methods that were used to conduct the research whilst detailing the number of individuals who participated in the research and the organisations they represent. This section also explores the justification for the methods used along with any limitations or issues that arose as the research was carried out.

3.1 CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

Having identified and explored relevant current literature the next step was to conduct the practical part of the research. The study began in January 2019 and continued until April 2019. It was based in Belfast however, the focus was on Northern Ireland whilst also exploring the policy and procedures around unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, asylum seekers and refugees set out by the rest of the United Kingdom and Ireland. As this is an empirical study, an action research approach was used following Denscombe (2010) who describes action research as involving, “practical issues, problems concerns and needs that arise from routine activity in the real world”. (p125) Since the research involved the use of questionnaires and conducting interviews, it was necessary to obtain ethical approval before the study began. To gain this approval an ethical

clearance form (p40) was submitted which demonstrated the understanding of pertinent considerations and the steps that would be taken to ensure this piece research was ethically compliant. Throughout the study guidance was provided to ensure the research remained ethical.

The research involved 9 professionals who have either had experience or currently work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, asylum seekers and/or refugees. The participants have been involved in various youth organisations around Northern Ireland such as Barnardo's, Voice of Young People in Care, Community Intercultural Programme, South Belfast Roundtable, Embrace NI and the participants were contacted through email to inform them of the research, to ask them to read the participant information sheet, (Appendix 1) and if they were willing to participate to sign the consent form (Appendix 2) along with filling in the questionnaire. They were selected through recommendations from my line manager, supervisor and other respondents. The research consisted of an initial questionnaire (Appendix 3) which was sent to youth organisations that have worked with or currently work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, asylum seekers and/or refugees. The questionnaire provided an initial insight into the work and experience the participants have been involved with in their organisations and a brief overview of their thoughts on what the challenges and or barriers that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face. The questionnaires sought answers based on fact and opinion. For this study a mix of types of questions were used. The factual questions focused of the organisations and the experiences of the respondents in working with unaccompanied asylum seekers, asylum seekers and refugees.

The second part of the research involved a set of unstructured interviews with some of the individuals who were recommended by relevant stakeholders. This enabled the participants to expand their answers and provide me with more qualitative data which enables me to ask focused open-ended questions. Bell (2000) cites Moser and Kalton in describing that an interview is, "a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent." An unstructured interview provides some freedom for the participant to

talk about the topic but also provides some pointers via the questions asked whilst allowing the questions to be relevant to the role.

3.2 JUSTIFY THE METHODS USED

The reason for using questionnaires in this piece of research was because they can be a good source of qualitative data as an initial insight into the topic, due to the fact they can be distributed to a wide number of respondents very easily. Equally they can be easily responded to as they do not require any travel time and can be filled in quickly especially if they are on a topic that the respondents are knowledgeable in.

To ensure the research was valid and reliable two different methods were used to collect data and allow for high levels of qualitative information to be given. Using two or three methods within research is called triangulation. Alternatively focus groups could have been another method used to collect qualitative data however the challenges around getting the potential participants together and create a safe space would have proved to be difficult due to different work schedules and the individuals would possibly have been meeting for the first time within that setting. As a result the research did not include the use of focus groups.

3.3 LIMITATIONS

The methodology that was used for this study has some limitations that have been considered and every effort was made to reduce the effect of any potential problems. One such limitation in using questionnaires is they do not have a good response rate. In this study this could have caused difficulty as the process for contacting participants was through email and there was no personal contact which Bell (2003) notes as having “distinct advantages” as it allows the researcher to “explain the purpose of the study” and provides a chance for “better cooperation.” (p128-129) Using questionnaires can result in a no response which can pose a challenge in producing accurate and valid results. This is something that Moser and Kalton (1971) as cited by Bell (2003)

recognised “no response is a problem repeatedly confirmed in practice- that people who do not return questionnaires differ from those who do!”(p130) In an attempt to combat this problem a reminder email was sent out to the respondents 8 days after the initial email this helps to give anyone who would like to respond has the opportunity to do so.

Additionally, a limitation to using questionnaires is that the amount and quantity of data can be limited depending on the type of questions used. When designing the questionnaire, it is best to be aware of the language used. It is best to avoid questions that would lead to a particular answer or prevent a participant to be honest.

Alongside questionnaires using interviews can also be problematic. They are time consuming both for the interviewer and the interviewee. It can initially be difficult to arrange a time that is suitable for both parties due to busy workloads. Using interviews requires a particular skill set including good communication skills, Bell notes the importance of a researcher having this skill set “the interviewer needs to have the skill to ask questions and if necessary, to probe at the right time.” (p138) In an analogy of fishing Cohen (1976) suggests “interviewing as an activity requiring careful preparation, much patience and considerable practice if the eventual reward is to be a worthwhile catch.” (Bell, 2003, p136)

Language can be a barrier but can be overcome as the interviewer has the opportunity to clarify if the need arises. The language still must be understood by the participants and questions still should not lead to any particular answer. The language and wording used in a research study should try to reduce the risk of bias. Gavron (1966) cited by Bell (2003) identifies, “it is difficult to see how this [ie bias] can be avoided completely but awareness of the problem plus constant self-control can help”.

Summary

Chapter 3 explored the methodology that was used to conduct this piece of research. It explored the methods used through identifying the strengths and the limitations or challenges that arose during the research. It was split into 3 sections:

- Conducting the research
- Justify the methods
- Limitations

The following chapter identifies and analyses the results of this research.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

As a result of this research various themes around working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people continually appeared both in the questionnaires and the interviews. The themes have been assigned to the following categories: challenges unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face, exploring the vulnerable Syrian resettlement scheme, the residential unit in Northern Ireland, and the Christians' response to helping unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people.

4.1 CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires that were returned highlighted some of the challenges or barriers that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people may face which included issues around language and finding interpreters. Problems with communication could link with the other issues as not knowing the language and not having access to a translator could make it difficult for young people to integrate into society, for example, it could make it difficult to make friends and understand their culture. The questionnaire identified issues around the asylum process for unaccompanied and separated young people who highlighted it as not being child friendly especially due to age assessments being carried out particularly if the young person seems to be older or younger than they claimed. The young people may also feel confused about who to trust as a result of possibly their journey here and the amount of people who are now involved in their day to day lives. Adding to the confusion they may also be dealing with trauma as a result of the reason behind leaving their country and or the journey over to Northern Ireland.

4.2 CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY INTERVIEWS

The interviews provided more of an insight into the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) along with the challenges that comes with that. The UK agreed to welcome 20,000 people from the camps in Jordan who were suffering a chronic ailment or required medical treatment. The Northern Ireland Assembly agreed to take 2,000 people over a period of 5 years and so “The Department for Communities appointed a consortium of local voluntary sector organisations which have relevant experience in working with refugees and new entrants to Northern Ireland.” (Syrian vulnerable persons relocation scheme briefing, 2019)

A participant in one of the interviews pointed out that “what happens in Northern Ireland is probably a superior service to the UK mainland” and they went on to detail what happens when Syrian people arrive. They are welcomed at the airport and brought to orientation which is a talk that explains the history and culture of Northern Ireland and assisted in getting their health care, accommodation and finances organised. They have a key worker who works with the family over a period of 12 weeks to provide intense support in arranging the important issues such as doctor appointments.

As part of 3 interviews, various challenges for the young people involved in the VPRS were identified. Young people who arrive here often do not have a lot of choice in the decisions of their lives as they can find themselves waiting in the camps for possibly 2 years and then they get the chance to come to Northern Ireland, so they take it without knowing much about the country or the culture. Another challenge related to the scheme is related to the amount/intensity of support provided at the start is that it can cause an expectation and a level of dependency on other people. As one participant explained, “people are lifted and brought to the shop and supported with housing and furniture and all that it sounds lovely and compassionately it sounds very nice but there sometimes can be an expectation that that is the lifestyle they are going to lead.” The participants also noted that once the 12 weeks is up the support provided is suddenly stopped. An area the participant noticed as a challenge with the young people is that there are many complex layers involved in not only being a young person but with also being a Syrian refugee:

“young people have their challenges of today your mental health, social media, body image whatever’s going on so you add the extra layer of being a migrant from a foreign background where you don’t have the language, and you can’t access the support and you maybe don’t have a family network stuff here and that’s like a huge extra layer on top of all the normal just being a young person. And then with the Syrian community you have maybe the added pressure of the stigma attached to who you are so racism, being from a Muslim background it’s just another layer of suspicion that people have and then obviously as well the trauma.”

The participant went on to identify that “some (young people) have seen horrific stuff, some of them haven’t seen it but have seen the aftermath of it so they kind of know couple of wee lads that told their story they have vivid memories of their hometown where they grew up and whilst they didn’t see any of the actual massacres or anything that took place they have memories of seeing their town destroyed and their home blown up.”

The participants recognised some of the challenges around separated young people and what happens when young people enter the care system and turn 18. They identified two occasions where young people entered the UK with their parents however because of state intervention they became looked after. Once they became 18, they were still students but had no means of income and no parents to support them so the organisation had to fight really hard to prevent the state from refusing them right to remain. The participants went on to talk about separated children or young people and identified that there can be a culture where young people arrive here with a family member who may not necessarily be a parent and the challenge this brings is that it brings questions as to what level of parental responsibility do they have and how it will affect their status when they become 18.

An additional area that can act as a barrier to unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people is how well they integrate in society. Participant D stated that “boys integrate far more easily than girls.” Expanding on this she recognises that boys “can play football, non-verbal stuff its relatively easy the girls find it more difficult, they make close-knit groups that’s really hard to break into and if you’re a young Chinese or Muslim girl who looks visible different it’s much harder.” The

participant draws on the uncertainty of their status or placement as a layer that adds difficulty to integrating successfully because “if you’re in one of the units and go to school, if you go to school you don’t know if that’s going to be your permanent school ‘cause you don’t know where you’re going to end up.”

The participant stated that the young people are likely to have experienced some sort of traumatic experience, “they’ve been traumatised in the country they’ve left, they’ve been traumatised on their journeys here” this could be through smugglers or traffickers. The participant added, “I would say I would imagine they’ve been put in the hands of a smuggler who’s brought them pretending to be a part of the family and just abandoned them at the airport.” Adding to the young people’s problems is trying to figure out who they should and can trust again.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people may not know where the rest of their family is in the world. The Red Cross can try to trace them however sometimes they can’t find them sometimes may have really bad news. This then can create another layer in the complex range of emotions, thoughts and feelings and the challenge for youth workers is how can we support these young people through the grieving process or to express their emotions in a way that doesn’t cause them or anyone else harm.

A component of the research was to interview an individual who has a role in advocacy for the unaccompanied asylum -seeking young people who are in the specialised residential unit. Their role focuses more on their care experience and to ensure that the young people feel happy and their needs are attended to, for example, that they are getting the right food and opportunities to explore their religion. In the interview they identified the challenges they face as language being a barrier to youth workers but also the asylum process and recognises that with the asylum process being so long “you could have a young person who is here for maybe 3 or 4 years and then be told no you can’t have. (right to remain)” The participant at a later point in the interview identified that the capacity of the residential unit poses some challenges “It has 8 beds and well since I have taken

over I've seen a rise because that's not enough capacity so the young people are going into other homes in the area.”

4.3 CHRISTIANS' RESPONSE

Christians in society have a duty to look after those in need. The theological principles for helping refugees was discussed in an interview with a faith based organisation. The vision of the organisation is “to promote a positive response to minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland. We seek to equip the church to fulfil its call to welcome the stranger, by providing information, training, resource materials and channels for practical help.” (Who We Are | EMBRACE, 2019) The organisation draws on the words of Matthew 25v35 (NLT) as the basis of their work. In the early days the organisation had an important role in encouraging churches to think about becoming more welcoming, for example, through English classes and through various resources that they have produced.

The theological and Biblical mandate can be traced back to the Old Testament in the way that Israel was judged because of the way they treated the poor and whether they welcomed the stranger or not. The participant identified that this theme carries on through to the New Testament within Jesus' teaching, for example, the good Samaritan and the following verses, to the verse mentioned previously.(Matthew 25v35) The participant then went on to explain that, “theologically it is just what we were meant to do no matter about people's faith or background or where they come from, we are meant to reach out with love.”

Having explained the theological and Biblical mandate for the work they are part of the participant explored how this looks in practice. This is done through having an emergency fund which is used to fund various things such as putting oil and electricity in the houses of the Syrians arriving through the Syrian resettlement scheme and it also pays for a number of things for migrants. The organisation find that the people who come as migrant workers if they lose a job or they can't find a job they are stuck here so the fund can pay for flights home or to get people back to a country

where they have an entitlement. The participant went on to explain how through the fund they can offer hostel accommodation for a couple of nights, provide food, sometimes give money towards funeral costs if someone from overseas dies here and pay for bus fares for young people to get to schools and colleges. The emergency fund meets a lot of the needs of and works when the government fund is not operational. The participant used an example to explain how the fund works, “I get a phone call from Home Plus now and they say there’s somebody homeless tonight and they haven’t got any money. I’ll say yes I’ll get it, if they phoned Red Cross it could take a couple of days to get the money through I just go to my account take the money out and give it to them.”

In terms of what the Christian response is to welcoming asylum seekers and refugees the participant urges that we are to “be open” and suggests that “it’s not an option” when it comes to welcoming asylum seekers/refugees. The participant recognised that it looks different for different people and explored the roles that individuals undertake saying “some people that would be going out and getting engaged in a role like a youth worker for others its speaking positively in society for other people its smiling at somebody you see who is visibly different.” It was suggested that one of the misunderstandings of being Christian and welcoming asylum seekers and refugees is that Christians think they have to offer charity however the participant points out, “it’s not about charity, it’s about treating people as equals you know loving somebody as you love yourself.” (Mark 12:31) They also recognise the response for welcoming refugees and asylum seeker from what Jesus said about separating the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25v31-46) identifying how it’s not about how holy you are, it’s about whether somebody’s in need you’ve given the shoes and put the coat on the back kind of thing.

4.4 FUTURE OUTLOOK

A common theme that arose within my research is that of the uncertainty of the future and the impact that this could have on both the asylum seekers and for the numbers of unaccompanied

asylum-seeking young people with in the UK and Ireland, especially with the recent vote for the UK to leave the European Union. One of the participants recognised that most of the work they would do would be with European citizens and identifies that currently, “stuff around documentation is not an issue ...but that may change with Brexit and it may look slightly different.” As a result, Brexit is bringing up questions as to how it’s going to impact the work with asylum seekers, refugees, unaccompanied children and separated children for example:

- What ways will that work for the young people who are already in the country will they become unaccompanied minors?
- If as part of the Syrian VPRS we brought unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people over how would we accommodate young people and their faiths within families?
- How do you do this right?

One participant suggests that, “as part of the EU we are struggling” and identified that at the minute “we have a specific home I think we’re going to have to have specific plural homes.” They continued on to predict that “we will feel a strain and I think we feel a strain now to meet the young people’s needs ...I mean those other needs (social and developmental needs.)” The participant stated that that this is where youth work can really come in to its own in meeting those social, developmental needs and recognises it’s now we need to step up to the social needs and I think that’s where as a youth worker you can definitely see where we can really have an input in.” Murphy et al also recognized the challenges of the future “Newcomer children and young people feel they face an uncertain future in light of Brexit. (2017)

Summary

Chapter 4 identified the results of the research carried out the individuals identified various challenges that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face. These have been categorised into the following headings/sub-headings:

- Challenges identified by questionnaires
- Challenges identified by interviews
- Christians’ response
- Future outlook

Continuing on from the findings the following chapter goes on to explore the recommendations for youth workers in Northern Ireland.

CHAPTER 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the research the participants were asked if they could identify any recommendations for youth workers who are or may work with unaccompanied or separated children, asylum seekers and or refugees in the future. Below are those recommendations.

5.1 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The questionnaires provided an idea for the recommendations for youth workers supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, One of the most important recommendation taken from the answers to the questionnaires was for youth workers to become more aware of the processes the young people are involved in which will enable leaders to understand the particular needs and experience of the young people and be well prepared to answer questions that the young people may have. It was identified that this can be done through reading guidelines provided by the government and research completed by relevant stakeholders, being involved in training and listening to the young people they are working with without judgement. It is also recommended not to ask the young person to explain their background or journey unless it is absolutely necessary for the work being done. This is because the young people will have had to explain this many times to different people this could cause a phenomenon called secondary victimisation where people's trauma is made worse by constant questioning. It has been found that "Institutionalised secondary victimisation can involve inappropriate or insensitive behaviour from officials and/or processes of investigation and prosecution, which fail to take account of the victim's experience and perspective."(Victim support response, 2005) Another suggestion was to create a welcoming space which would be safe, comfortable and accessible using décor, for example, incorporating different religions and languages on signage.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERVIEWS

Whilst the questionnaires provided a brief overview of how youth workers can support asylum seekers, refugees and separated children, the interviews provided an insight from professionals who either work directly with young people who have undergone similar experiences to the type of young people referred to in this study or who are aware of the challenges through their line of work.

Participant D contributed some recommendations for working with unaccompanied asylum seeking young people she identified that “all asylum seekers, all migrants really benefit from having accompaniment.” She describes this as “when people from the local community whether that be youth worker young person or another young person take them to show them how to get bank accounts set up, to go to the doctor with them, wait with them and bring them home.” The participant continued on to identify that “those kinds of roles are really important” but it poses a question of “how do you do that safely? because with adults it can be volunteering however with young people, safeguarding issues make it more complex.”

Participant E throughout the interview recommended that youth workers should, “be realistic and have an understanding” and they recognised the importance of getting to know the young people by being really interested in their culture taking an interest in all the things that make them who they are. The participant realised the importance in this as it can prevent you from making mistakes or misunderstanding. They also suggested taking your time because it can be difficult understanding initially and realising where their coming from whilst recognising that the young people have obviously been through a lot more to get here. The participant also recommends to “remember they are young people and talk to them about football and who their favourite player and get to know them as a person and look past where they come from and look past their status.” In addition, the participant recognises the importance of knowing the community and where you can get relevant resources for the young person. They explain, “so it’s all about building your knowledge bank up of where we can access these services and building your knowledge bank up as

a youth worker” building on from that they identified it as a crucial part of the role of a youth worker “part of what we want to do is bring new young people into the community so finding out where those communities are and just making sure your aware of where the communities are but also going out and immersing yourself in them and finding out more about it.” The participant identified an important part of youth work as being able to have meaningful conversations with the young person and by “getting to know them and through doing that you get to support and help them in all these different mediums, but to be able to do that you have to have an understanding even if it is learning about the football offside rules, just having something that you can build the relationship with.” They go on to identify that, “it’s a bit more difficult with young people who are unaccompanied because they may have the language barrier and you don’t know what they are bringing to you.”

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHURCHES/CHRISTIAN YOUTH WORKERS

Throughout one interview with a representative from a faith based organisation they were able to identify some personal and practical recommendations for Christian youth workers working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, refugees, asylum seekers and separated children. The personal recommendations look at “examining ourselves and checking on our biases and prejudices” which comes from a theological perspective in that we are to ensure that our faith is genuine through testing ourselves. (2nd Corinthians 13v 5) The participant went on to suggest that our motivations have to be right as well referring to 1st Corinthians 13 v 1, “I suppose at the end of the day it’s that whole thing you can have your good things and do all your good deeds but unless you’ve got love you’re a clanging cymbal, so unless you genuinely care about people and are getting involved for the right motives step back, don’t do it.” The participant reinforced the importance of one of the recommendations mentioned in the questionnaire results which was to increase awareness because “very often I think Christians can live in little silos and keep themselves safe, its easy just to have a nice quiet life and not look at all the horrible nasty things there are.” However, we are called to stand up for the oppressed:

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves ensure justice for those being crushed.

Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless and see that they get justice.

Proverbs 31v 8-9

In terms of the practical recommendations the participant identified the importance of cultural competency and how you achieve this? They asked the questions “how do you get cultural competency?” and “how do you understand that you have to treat people equally but differently depending on their background and where they come from and the cultural sensitivities?” The participant suggested that the majority of unaccompanied minors are likely to be from a Muslim background so a recommendation they provided was to create “a safe space where they’re not feeling under any pressure in terms of faith and religion and building a relationship purely of unconditional stuff.” Another area was the challenge of how you support a young person but do not allow them to become dependent on you because the sector is so poorly financed that youth workers and social workers turnover is so high. This then affects the young people and children as they need security and stability and recommendations were made for how to provide this. They also believe that youth workers have to make sure that they and other young people are receptive and open whilst not making them anymore vulnerable.

The final recommendation this participant provided was to recognise how sensitive the role of working with unaccompanied minors can be and explaining “it’s not for everybody, I think it’s the kind of thing people should specialise in, that you have the cultural competency and understanding and you build up experience over time that you can then share with other people and resource them.”

Summary

Chapter 5 provides recommendations for youth workers in Northern Ireland who may be working with or will work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. They have been taken from interviews with professionals from a wide range of organisations. The recommendations have been split in to the following headings:

- Recommendations from questionnaires
- Recommendations from interviews
- Recommendations for churches/Christian youth workers

The following section brings the research to a close reviewing the key aspects of the study and the wider considerations that impact research.

CONCLUSION

One aim of this study was to identify the challenges that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face. This study has used the definition of an unaccompanied asylum seeker as an individual who is under 18 seeking asylum in their own right without the support of a parent or guardian. The research begins by identifying the global, UK and Northern Ireland contexts. The literature review provided an insight into some of the challenges that unaccompanied asylum seekers are faced with split into categories of challenges when they arrive in the country through being appointed an independent guardian and the age assessment process if the young people seem to be older or younger than they first claimed.

The literature review also explores the day to day challenges they face such as a language barrier and education, trauma experienced prior to leaving home or on the journey to the UK/NI and challenges relating to their asylum status. The final category relates to the challenges related to leaving care once they reach the age of 18. The following section in the research focused on the methodology identifying the benefits and the limitations to using questionnaires and interviews as a research method. The findings identified the challenges from some professionals' points of view which mirrored some of the ones mentioned previously but also explored issues around the asylum process and more information on the VPRP along with recognising the implications of young people being "looked after" but also seeking asylum approaching their eighteenth birthday.

The second aim of this study was to identify recommendations for youth workers in Northern Ireland who may encounter this small group of young people. To identify these recommendations professionals who currently work with these young people and/or asylum seekers and refugees both directly or indirectly were asked for their thoughts. The main points identified that unaccompanied asylum seekers would benefit from accompaniment, someone to assist with everyday tasks for example booking doctors' appointments. Another area that was recommended

widely was for youth workers to become aware, not only of the asylum process but also of the culture and background of the young people. This means that youth workers would have a foundation to build the relationship and limit the chance of mistakes around dietary requirements etc. Alongside this the findings enabled an insight into the theology surrounding a Christians' response to helping asylum seekers which identified that it is a calling drawing on verses from Matthew Ch12 exploring its relevance to different people and ultimately, it's not always about charity.

The reasoning why unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people became the topic of this research is due to me becoming recently aware of this small group of these young people through a placement with Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) and a growing interest in how these young people come to arrive in Northern Ireland and what happens once they arrive here. The topic is important due to the current conflicts and the current situation with Brexit. As mentioned within the findings there are predictions that there could be an increase of the number of young people seeking asylum who are unaccompanied or separated. I hope is that this research could help youth worker become more aware of the challenges that unaccompanied asylum seekers face and also to provide a basis for how they can help to support them in the future.

Having explored the challenges that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face and how youth workers can support them in Northern Ireland the implications for further research, practice and policy relate to the how there are currently very limited policies or guidelines produced specifically for Northern Ireland. This is becoming even more important due to the challenge brought by the uncertainty of Brexit bringing up questions such as whether the UK will leave the European Union when that will happen and how that is going to affect either the young people already residing in the country or future young people.

Word count: 9974

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1



Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people

Participation information sheet

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

at Cheltenham and Gloucester

Who am I?

My name is Cathryn Nesbitt, I am 23 years old and I am in my final year of studying youth and community work with practical theology through University of Gloucestershire. I have chosen the topic of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people for a research topic. I would appreciate it if you could take the time to read the information on this sheet and seriously consider if you would like to be a part of the study.

What is an unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person?

An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child is defined as an individual who is:

- under 18 years of age when the claim is submitted;
- applying for asylum in their own right;
- separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who in law or by custom has responsibility to do so.

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/656425/UASC_Safeguarding_Strategy_2017.pdf)

What will the study involve?

This is a study of has the aim of discovering what the challenges Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face and identify how youth workers can support this group of young people.

If you decide to take part in the study you will be asked to complete a questionnaire based on your experience working with asylum seekers, refugees and unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. The questionnaire should only take 5-10 minutes.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you work, volunteer or have experience with asylum seekers and/ or unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is your choice if you want to take part and if at any point during the study that you change your mind and no longer want to be involved just let me know on the contact details below.

What will you do with the information I share?

The information that you provide will be incredibly helpful for the study of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. Everything you share will be confidential and I will not be identifying any individuals within my research. The information you share will be kept safe and secure on a password protected device. It will not be shared unless there is any cause for child protection concerns. The information collected will be used make comparisons between the challenges young people face and the resources provided by youth workers.

If you have any questions about the study you can contact me on my mobile number:07540888697 or my email: cathrynclaire95@hotmail.com or if you have any questions about the course you can contact Sharon Rain by phoning Youthlink NI on 02890323217 or email her at sharon@youthlink.org.uk



Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking young people

Consent Form

I _____ (participant) agree to participate in the study and confirm that I have read and understood the Participant information sheet. I confirm I have a clear understanding of the aims and purpose of the research on the topic of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people.

I understand that:

- My participation in this research is voluntary and I can withdraw at any point by contacting Cathryn.
- The questionnaire will last 5-10 minutes.
- The questionnaire is about finding out about the challenge's asylum-Seekers and Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face.
- The information received will be kept safe and secure.
- I have the right to withdraw at all times.

Signed _____ (participant) Signed _____ (researcher)

Date _____ Date _____

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Dissertation

September 2019

Research Methods and PPE

Ethical Clearance

This form is for those students completing the Pilot Study assessment for Research Methods and Evidence based Practice.

SECTION A

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name: Cathryn Nesbitt
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Tel. No.: 07540888697
Email: cathrynclaire95@hotmail.com
Regional Centre: Ireland
Title of dissertation/PPE: What are the challenges of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people in Northern Ireland and how can youth organisations further support them?

SECTION B

INITIAL DECLARATION

This investigation will include formal study of children, young people or vulnerable adults **Yes/No**

This investigation will include formal study of adults **Yes/No**

All students must complete Sections C, D and E. They will also need to include a copy of their Consent Form and Information sheet for human subjects.

SECTION C

Please answer the following questions, and give details if answering Yes (or if necessary, to explain No):

<p>1 Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent?</p> <p>This study will only involve adults who have been or are involved in working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people for example: social workers from the Health and Social Care Trust and youth rights workers from Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) and workers from Barnardo's.</p>	<p>Yes / No</p>
<p>2 Will the study require access to groups or individuals because of their membership of a particular group, organisation, place of study or dwelling place? (e.g. particular youth group, school, community group)</p> <p>The participants for this study will be selected because of their experience in working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people and they are employed in organisations which previously and/or currently work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people through groupwork, mentoring, advocacy and introducing new policies/guidelines.</p>	<p>Yes / No</p>
<p>3 Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent at the time?</p> <p>Participants will not begin being a part of the study until they have been fully informed and written consent has been given.</p>	<p>Yes / No</p>
<p>4 Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics not usually addressed in your placement work?</p> <p>Some of the topics that could be addressed in this area of study may be personal or sensitive however, the issues can be frequently discussed within my placement work and within the organisations the participants will be involved in. I will ensure that there is sufficient support in place should any issues arise.</p>	<p>yes / No</p>
<p>5 Could the study induce psychological stress, anxiety, or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encounter in normal life?</p> <p>I have carefully considered this possibility and I believe it is unlikely that any stress or anxiety will be caused as a result of this study. All participants will be advised to seek assistance from myself or from a pastoral support worker if any issues arise.</p>	<p>Yes / No</p>
<p>6 Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses) be offered to participants?</p> <p>Participants will be taking part on an entirely voluntary basis with the aim of increasing awareness of the challenges unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face and identifying areas where youth workers can support this group of young people.</p>	<p>Yes / No</p>

SECTION D

The investigation that you are about to begin is potentially harmful to participants. You are being judged on four issues:

Is your study valuable enough to ask other people to give up their time?

Have you considered that some people might not want to take part in your study, and how they will say no (the issue of informed consent)?

How can individuals leave the study if they wish to?

How are you going to store and use the information you have gained?

1. What do you hope to achieve through this study?
Through this study I wish to find out more about the challenges that unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people face. At the conclusion of this work I intend to make positive suggestions to assist youth workers offer support to unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people which better meets their specific needs.
2. How will the study be carried out? (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, observation)
This study will be carried out through initial questionnaires sent out to social workers, and youth workers. I will also be conducting interviews with individuals. I will also be conducting a literature review of relevant journals, articles and books reinforced by official statistics.
3. How will you collect and store the data (e.g. recording, written notes)
The data will be collected through recording interviews on voice notes on a phone and backed up on a computer. This data will be saved on password protected devices. The results from the initial questionnaire will be collected through an online survey which will also be password protected. The information of participants will not be shared with any third parties and I will comply with EU GDPR. The information will be kept until the research is finished, any personal information will be deleted or shredded. Transcripts of interviews will be included in the research as an appendix however, any personal or identifying details will be redacted.
4. How many participants will be recruited, and by what criteria will they be selected?
Through this research I will aim to interview eight individuals, two of whom work in VOYPIC and had influential roles in introducing rights for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people in Northern Ireland, three who work with Barnardo's and three social workers. The participants will be selected because of their experience in this area of youth work.
5. Outline your plan for gaining informed consent
(a) initial approach: My initial approach will be to email or telephone individuals briefly introducing my study topic and asking if they would be interested in taking part in the research, I will then send them information packs which would include a participant information sheet and a consent form.
(b) individual consent: The way I shall gain individual consent from the participants is through sending out consent forms which will confirm that they understand what the research will entail and what the data will be used for.
(c) ability to withdraw: Within the participant information sheet, I will inform the potential subjects of the process if they wish to withdraw. They will be able to do this simply by informing me via telephone or email at any point in the research.
(d) parental consent: as I am not working with young people lacking the capacity to give informed consent (i.e. vulnerable young people or those with learning difficulties) or children under 18 it will not be necessary for me to gain parental consent for this piece of research.
6. Do you foresee any potential adverse effects of the study?
While I do not see any potential adverse effects of the study, I will ensure that pastoral support is provided and the option to withdraw from the study is available throughout the research.
7. Will confidentiality be maintained and if so how?


(a) Confidentiality of the individual? Confidentiality of the individual will be maintained through ensuring that I change the names of the participants or only refer by code names or randomised identification letters which do not reveal their identities in the transcribing process. I will also ensure that I don't include any defining information through the research. Confidentiality will also be maintained through not passing on any information to anyone else unless it is revealed that an individual is at risk of harm either to themselves or others. All participants will be made aware of this before the research begins.

(b) Confidentiality of the placement? Whilst I have gained permission from my placement in VOYPIC to study the topic of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, I will maintain the confidentiality of my placement by obscuring the names of other organisations that may wish to withhold consent

SECTION E

SUPERVISOR

THE PRACTICE AGENCY SUPERVISOR OR EQUIVALENT HAS A PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THE WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE STUDY.

Practice Agency Supervisor
Name: JENNIFER WARDEN
Address: 9-11 Botanic Avenue, Belfast,
Tel: 90244888
Email: jennifer.warden@voypic.org
Signature: 

SECTION F

I agree to conduct this study in line with the ethical guidelines laid down in the National Youth Agency document 'Ethical Conduct in Youth Work' (for JNC students), and the ethical expectations placed on me by the Practice Agency or Research Location supervisor.

Signature of student *Crossitt*

Date: .11/12/18.....

Student name: Cathryn Nesbitt

DISSERTATION ETHICAL CLEARANCE HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

COMMENTS:

Be specific about sample size for each research method (section D point 4)

Due to the sensitive nature of your research, you must get prior approval from your supervisor for the questions you will use.

Continue to liaise with your supervisor to ensure any ethical issues are addressed and managed.

Regional Centre Ethics Officer

Name: Sharon Raine

Signed:

Date: 18/12/2018