

University of South Wales

Faculty of Life Sciences and Education

'A STUDY EXPLORING 'BELONGING' AMONGST YOUNG, MALE,
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN NEWPORT'

MA Working for children and young people (Youth Work Initial Qualifying)

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Working for children and young people (Youth Work Initial Qualifying) degree

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree

Signed Michael Davy (Candidate)

Date 13/04/2024

STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of MA

Signed Michael Davy (Candidate)

Date 13/04/2024

STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references. A reference list is appended.

Signed Michael Davy (Candidate)

Date 13/04/2024

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Introduction

Key Terms

Refugee - A refugee is defined as “people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country” (UNHCR, 2023).

Asylum Seeker - An asylum seeker is defined as “someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed” (UNHCR, 2023).

Belonging - Whilst belonging is a highly contested subject, explored further in the literature review, the definition broadly used is; a phenomenon achieved by feeling comfortable with one’s social and physical environment (Miller 2003).

My research aims are to:

- Explore the significance, if any, of ‘belonging’ for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.
- To explore the enablers and barriers to ‘belonging’ for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.
- To gather data, providing local youth provisions and policymakers the opportunity to tailor services to create a sense of belonging for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.

Rationale

In order to deliver effective youth work, support must be tailored to the specific needs of the young people. In the last 12 months, the UK has received 74,751 asylum applications with 75% resulting in a grant of asylum or humanitarian protection (Refugee Council, 2023). Of the 74,751 applications, there were a total of 5,152 applications from unaccompanied children currently separated from their parents and family members (Refugee Council, 2023). With a lack of family identified, youth work is pivotal in facilitating; personal, social and educational development, and helping them find their voice, influence and place in society, allowing them to achieve their full potential (Youth Work in Wales Principles and Purposes (YWIWPAP), 2023).

Welsh Government (2019) have declared its aim to become the first 'Nation of Sanctuary' supporting all seeking sanctuary with integration, free from discrimination. With this news, support needs have been predicted in areas such as; accommodation, employment, access to healthcare, safeguarding, participation in sport and physical activity, protection from discrimination and relationship building/ integration with the wider community. In order for these aims to be efficiently met, communication must take place with the community the plan aims to serve. With a focus on 'belonging' this research has the potential to identify a factor for consideration that may not have been realised as Wales plans to become an exemplar of diversity and inclusion (Welsh Government, 2019).

This investigation aims to fill a gap in the research literature, recognised when exploring belonging amongst young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport. With 'belonging' being a highly contested term, its meaning to participants will be identified, before exploring the enablers and barriers that affect a sense of belonging.

The participants will be asked if belonging important, before being offered the opportunity to become partners in changing the landscape for current and future youth provisions in Wales.

The need for refugee and asylum seeker support is prominent in Newport and this investigation aims to identify for improvement in existing support, whilst simultaneously recognising opportunities for further creation and growth. Welsh Government (2019) have declared its aim to become the first 'Nation of Sanctuary' supporting all seeking sanctuary with integration, free from discrimination. With support needs already predicted in areas such as; accommodation, employment, access to healthcare, safeguarding, participation in sport and physical activity, protection from discrimination and relationship building/ integration with the wider community, All aims are to be delivered with Wales being an exemplar of diversity and inclusion (Welsh Government, 2019).

In addition to Wales becoming a 'Nation of Sanctuary', Newport is has also expressed a desire to join several other UK cities in becoming a 'City of Sanctuary' (City of Sanctuary UK, 2024). As the city aims to become more inclusive and welcoming, Newport City Council have recognised the need for refugee support, including refugee and asylum seeker support into their youth provisions. Newport Youth Service has also recognised the need for housing support and has assigned budget to assist accommodation transition and providing household items and food. Signposting and promotion of other supportive organisations has also become a feature on the council website (Newport City Council, 2023). Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS) continues to provide support to school pupils and their families, facilitating positive communication between schools and the families. 'Newport Live' and 'Urban

Circle' continue to run very successful football sessions promoting health and wellbeing, whilst offering a safe space for youth work support. Whilst the need has clearly been identified, and positive changes are being implemented, with very little research into the significance of "belonging" in refugees and asylum seekers living in Newport/ Wales, there is potential for even greater more efficient changes to be made.

The outcomes of the investigation and voices within it will be used to start conversations about what changes if any can be made to provide the most effective and relevant support to the young people, based on the needs they have highlighted. With the conflict between Russia and Ukraine currently taking place and the Taliban again occupying Afghanistan, the last 12 months has seen an increase of 20% in unaccompanied children applying for asylum, with Afghanistan being identified as the top country for applications (Refugee Council, 2023). With the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers increasing the information from this investigation aims to provide youth organisations the opportunity to be 'proactive' rather than 'reactive'.

Literature Review

To proceed with this investigation, a literature review exploring 'belonging' across a variety of sources, including, books, journals, news articles, websites, PhD theses, etc, must first take place. Whilst there are many studies exploring 'belonging', there are far fewer exploring the relationship between belonging and young, male refugees and asylum seekers. Where research has encompassed the above characteristics, the geographical location of the research undertaken has been significantly different and therefore a gap in relevant literature is identified. The literature review highlights that 'belonging' is subjective and its definition is contested depending on the person, environment, and situation. Despite the lack of a clear and precise definition, in addition to the word's ability to be applied in a variety of contexts, it was consistently powerful, with the ability to generate emotion, bringing people closer together or pushing them further away.

What is belonging?

In everyday use, Schein (2009) defines belonging as membership and ownership, such as 'belonging with' and 'belonging to'.

Skrbis (2008) recognises that belonging is ever-changing, based on the situation and context. It is enacted, displayed, paraded and exaggerated in a form of essentialism and authenticity.

The recognition of comfort and community in the definition of belonging is a consistent theme for many theorists, with Fenster (2004) defining belonging as a

sense of comfort created by commitment to a community, experienced after prolonged engagement in a place.

Miller (2003) highlights the significance of belonging in increasing well-being, a phenomenon achieved by feeling comfortable with one's social and physical environment. It is a 'mode or state of being' that represents an 'ideal condition' of dwelling, that could entail displacement from their home and families, in exchange for 'refuge' and 'safety'. Perception of an individual was again associated with belonging, as Hagerty (1992) further explained two dimensions of belonging; 'valued involvement' - the experience of feeling valued, needed and accepted, and also 'fit' - the perception their characteristics articulate with or complement the system or environment. (pp. 173). Crowley (1999) however, challenged the effect of environment, recognising that whilst this is the favoured opinion of political geographers it fails to recognise belonging as a humanistic approach.

Skrbis (2008) recognises "belonging" as a significant factor when discussing societal issues, in particular, immigration and cultural diversity. Belonging is seen as an ever-changing phenomenon, where human relationships can both grant belonging and remove it. Skrbis (2008) further exclaimed that belonging to one group, may not transfer to another and in the case of the 9/11 attack in New York, Muslims were powerfully excluded from one group due to their connections with another. This creates a powerful juxtaposition of "belonging" in one group as an American, whilst simultaneously removing the sense of "Belonging" due to being Muslim.

Is belonging important?

Whilst the definition of belonging varies, there is consistent evidence highlighting its importance. In addition, there is an overarching theme of belonging as a 'feeling' and/ or 'sense' that can be interpreted and experienced uniquely by each person.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) state that "people who lack belongingness should exhibit pathological consequences beyond mere temporary distress." (p. 498)

Ziaian *et al.* (2021) investigated 'belonging' and a feeling of 'being Australian' in refugee children and parents who had sought safety in Australia between 1-15 years ago. Whilst the investigation touches on similar themes, the time spent by refugees in their new country was much higher in the Australian study, therefore potentially increasing the feeling of belonging and Australian identity. Perhaps more significantly, Australia has a far greater percentage of Australians with a parent born overseas at 48.2% (Australian Cultural Diversity Census, 2021) in comparison to the UK's 34.2% (International Migration, England and Wales Census, 2021). This difference in parent migration percentage is significant enough to warrant local research.

Another study of interest investigates visualising belonging with Palestinian refugee children. Marshall (2019) examines how practices of care reproduce a collective sense of belonging. The study recognises the power in solidarity and strength as 'political actors', before concluding that Palestinian refugee children were able to create a sense of belonging in their "home out-of-place", in their current "home outside of their homeland" (Marshall, 2021, p. 809).

O'Connor (2018) used qualitative research consisting of semi-structured interviews and observations, to assess the issues surrounding identity, belonging, memory, and attachment to place and homeland. The study which focussed on youth, Palestinians in Lebanese refugee camps, observed changes in identity perception following the displacement of war that contrasted previous generational studies. The study highlights a rise in heterogeneity with the current generation that contrasts previous research findings, that labelled Palestinian identity as homogenous. Whilst this research investigation involves participants who have already been in the country for 4+ years, it will still provide initial data that can be compared in the future. Similarly to the research aims of this investigation, O'Connor (2018) made several recommendations to assist policymakers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in their efforts to support Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Maslow (1943) proposes a five-tier model of human need, accepted as hierarchical levels of a pyramid, with the third stage being 'Love/ Belonging'. This third stage encompasses friendship, intimacy, giving and receiving affection, and being part of a group/community such as; family, friends, and colleagues. The theory proposes, to progress to the higher needs of the pyramid, the lower needs must also be met.

Maslow (1987) clarifies this is not 'all or nothing' as progress can still occur before 'fully' achieving the previous need. Based on this theory, the significance of the refugee and asylum seeker community developing a sense of belonging is not just about experiencing a positive feeling, but it is a human need. Maslow (1943) labels 'Self-Esteem' and 'Self-Actualization' as the next stages of the pyramid, therefore, youth provision support to develop belonging will be essential to aid progression.

Maslow (1943) also states that deprivation of needs acts as a motivator, with motivation to meet the need increasing the longer one is deprived.

The premise of belonging as a developmental process that occurs over one's lifetime is echoed by Erikson (1959), Kestenberg and Kestenberg (1988) and Bronfenbrenner (1994). All three theorists identified the environment as a considerable factor in development, however, Bronfenbrenner (1994) alone recognised the individual as an active player in their interactions with the environment.

Using interviews and self-report methods, Fisher, *et al.* (2015) explores the relationship between belonging and depression. The results demonstrated a lower sense of belonging was significantly associated with a greater severity of depression and hopelessness, characterising belonging as an important contributor to the development of and recovery from depression. The investigation concludes with a need for cognitive, behavioural, and interpersonal interventions to help improve one's sense of belonging, and in turn reduce the symptoms of depression and hopelessness.

What are the Enablers to Belonging?

The literature review reveals that whilst some factors are specifically an enabler or barrier to belonging, the effects of many others are based on the individual's interpretation and whether they experience it as a positive or negative. Many factors also cross themes, however, they will be grouped with the factor deemed most appropriate.

Oxford Learners Dictionary (2024) defines 'enabler' as a person or thing that makes something possible.

Communication (enabler)

Whilst this section focuses on communication, several theorists link this to local community and culture. As such, there is some crossover between enablers.

Shah (1991) finds a positive relationship between social interactions between Asian Indians and Americans, and their psychological adaptation in the United States.

Zimmermann (1995) concurred with the previous finding, acknowledging that international students talking with American students is the most important factor in psychological adjustment to American life.

Selltiz and Cook (1962) discovers that sojourners (a person residing in a place temporarily) living in the United States who were more involved with Americans, expressed greater satisfaction with their experiences and of their perception of American society and its people. Similar evidence was recorded by Adkins-Hutchison (1996) identifying an increase in perceived success and more positive attitudes in black graduate students who partake in mixed social contacts.

Kim (2001) explores the need for immigrants to spend time with the local populus (or ethnic friends who have successfully adapted) to learn the subtleties of communication, including what to do and how it is done. This is ethically questionable with Kim (2001) acknowledging it is the natives who again exert social control, by not only controlling the language that must be used, but also the cultural and social values.

Moos and Mitchell (1982) explores communication in both verbal and non-verbal forms, identifying the interactions between the natives and 'strangers' as the facilitator for learning the hosts cultural practices.

Welsh Government (2020) exploring the results of the National Survey for Wales, identified Welsh people who spoke Welsh (their home language) in everyday life, experienced a greater sense of belonging to their local community than those who did not. Given the variance of Welsh language speakers in different parts of the country, the additional factors affecting the answers may have been more complex than purely communicating in one's home language.

Community

Blow and Timm (2002) claim that people do not live in a social vacuum, but rather a complex social network, known as a community. They differentiate from other theorists, stating a community is not based on living in the same geographical area or being part of a group of casual acquaintances, but is instead based on significant relationships characterised by understanding, connection, mutual meaning, belonging and commitment. This view is supported by Gusfield (1975) who distinguished the term community, explaining one is 'territorial' and 'geographical' (town, city, region), whereas the other is 'relational', focusing on the quality of character of human relationship, irrespective of location.

McMillan (1976) defines 'sense of community' as a feeling of belonging, that members matter to each other and share faith their needs will be met through this togetherness. McMillan and Chavis (1986) encompass this belief in their four-element 'Sense of Community Model' - the first element being 'membership' which is a feeling of 'belonging' or shared sense of personal relatedness.

Peck (1998) addressed the importance of community, stating "There can be no vulnerability without risk; and there can be no community without vulnerability; and there can be no peace-ultimately no life-without community." (p.233)

Following the transition of refugees from adolescence to young adulthood, Brar-Josan (2015) finds that belonging is tied to a greater cause or wider community, where meaning and purpose can be realised when helping others.

In 2019 Wales declared they would become the first 'Nation of Sanctuary', promoting a person-centred approach and ensuring those seeking sanctuary are supported with integration, regardless of their background or situation. The Welsh Government have outlined their proposed actions that include support with; accommodation, employment, access to healthcare, safeguarding, participation in sport and physical activity, protection from discrimination and relationship building/ integration with the wider community. All aims are to be delivered with Wales being an exemplar of diversity and inclusion (Welsh Government, 2019).

In addition to Wales as a 'Nation of Sanctuary', Newport is in the process of becoming a 'City of Sanctuary', with aims of encouraging; inclusivity, solidarity and compassion, whilst building a more welcoming UK for people forced to flee their homes (City of Sanctuary UK, 2024).

Football

Stone (2013) explored the role of football in creating belonging in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers. The report highlighted football's great potential to transcend both physical and psychological barriers, offering some stability in an otherwise chaotic world.

Stone (2013) summarised the findings into 5 areas;

Routine – providing consistency and regularity that enables the building of relationships.

Catharsis – previous memories of watching or playing football allow for an almost instinctive response that disregards the pressure of understanding a new culture.

Sociality – football provides an alternative form of communication, with personal differences replaced with a collective team/ community goal, creating connections despite cultural differences.

Empowerment – providing an opportunity to exert some power in a world where people feel powerless... to be a winner!

Plurality – providing an environment where differences can be negotiated, frustrations released, and sameness recognised.

‘Football Welcomes’, celebrates the contribution players with a refugee background make to football and the positive role the sport can play in bringing people together, creating a sense of togetherness and developing a sense of belonging. It recognises the hugely important role football plays in helping newcomers settle in their new country, build relationships and learn the language (Amnesty International, 2023).

Football's identity as a game for everyone has previously come under scrutiny, with racism and discrimination threatening to damage its great potential for developing belonging and community. Due to such issues; several charities have been established with the shared goal of supporting under-represented and minority

communities to thrive. Both, 'Kick it Out' and 'Show Racism the Red Card' have unfortunately become well-known charities within the football world, and their need to confront issues, raise awareness and educate are as prominent as ever (Kick it Out, 2022 and Show Racism the Red Card, 2024).

The impact of the Black Live Matter (BLM) movement is also recognised in the football community with many players 'taking the knee' to show solidarity in the fight against racial inequality. In a review of the gesture, Dixon, Cashmore and Cleland (2023) highlighted 65.2% of football fans surveyed now opposed its continuance, citing the gesture has replaced the actual fight against racism.

Family and Friends

Ziersch, Walsh and Due (2023) discover, that friendship and connection through bonding are key factors in the way refugees and asylum seekers access emotional support, sense of belonging and hope, and safety and security. The study highlights how emotional support and belonging can be achieved not only by co-ethnic bonding but also through bridging networks within the host community. These bridging networks are often linked to religious organisations or NGOs and staffed by individuals from the host country. After analysing the interview answers, Ziersch, Walsh and Due (2023) revealed that volunteering within these bridging networks offers the opportunity to improve English skills and further strengthen relationships.

Keles and Oppedal (2022) explore the importance of support from friends, amongst young refugees. The findings reveal a positive correlation between one's perception

of oneself to others (based on culturally shared assumptions) and stronger support from friends.

Wells and Seage (2022) carried out a local investigation in Cardiff, Wales, exploring the importance of social support and poverty alleviation amongst refugees and asylum seekers. The report which also used semi-structured interviews highlights a significant requirement for both formal (government, charities) and informal (family, friends) sources of social support to reduce the effects of poverty on the health and well-being of the community. It's acknowledged that this support provides opportunities for education, language development and a facilitator for a sense of belonging.

Bergnehr *et al.* (2020) exploration into friendship formation among refugee girls, revealed family are defined as being 'best friends' whom they can trust and confide in. The findings of Chase and Sapkota (2017) also highlight the importance of family and friends in the refugee community, particularly when supporting an individual through a period of distress. The role of the family was described by one participant as "the most important" (p. 407) and that family should watch over each other. The answers suggest, the need for support should be identified through everyday attention of their loved one, not following a verbal request. The role of a friend was equally important, offering support when relationships with the community or family were strained and consisting of mutual responsibility, evidenced by the comment "in our community, a friend is a psychologist" (p. 412).

Brar-Josan (2015) determined developing relationships with others is integral to achieving a sense of belonging, as it shows acceptance of one's uniqueness.

What are the Barriers to Belonging?

Barrier - “a problem, rule, or situation that prevents someone from doing something, or that makes something impossible” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, 2024).

“Something immaterial that impedes or separates” (Merriam-Webster, 2024).

In the context of this investigation, when referring to barriers, the above definitions accurately represent a barrier as something systematic and unseen. Despite the accuracy of the above definitions, given the subject matter, an alternative definition “an object like a fence that prevents people from moving forward from one place to another” (Oxford Dictionary, 2024) is poignant due to the physical barriers such as fences and barbed wire that have been used to prevent the participant's physical progress to the UK.

Communication (Barrier)

Again, communication as a barrier contains links to ‘community’. Communication barriers and their significance to the refugee and immigrant communities have been explored by several theorists. Tsoh *et al.* (2016) reveal a positive correlation between immigrants with limited spoken English proficiency, along with low health literacy and their poor self-rated health. Kamran (2022) exploration into the barriers affecting the refugee and immigrant communities' ability to access primary healthcare, concurred with the inability to speak the countries' first language as a dominant theme.

Jenkins (2020) reveals language proficiency and communication challenges pose a significant barrier to the academic success experienced by post-secondary education, International Students in the US. Amongst several barriers, Jenkins (2020) identifies comprehension of the English language to be the most significant barrier to educational success.

Kim (2001) states that 'strangers' cannot fully develop host communication competence - therefore allowing cross-cultural adaptation, without first participating in the social processes of the host's social environment. This social participation is however linked to the stranger's ability to communicate per the norms and practices of the local people.

Autochthony

A more controversial interpretation of the essence of belonging is seen in the concept of autochthony. This concept has the potential to increase belonging in one community, whilst systematically reducing it in another.

'Autochthony', meaning "nativeness by virtue of originating or occurring naturally" and "belonging to or being connected with a certain place or region by virtue of birth or origin" ([Vocabulary.com, 2024](https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/autochthony))

Bøås and Dunn(2021) recognises autochthony as "emerging from the soil" or "son of the soil", is a prominent term in Africa and implies localist forms of belonging, due to an undisputable link to a geographical area. This form of belonging through being 'native-born' factors heavily when exploring, citizenship, politics, and conflict.

Geschiere (2011) explore the notion of autochthony as a 'trump card' for deciding one's level of belonging. This primordial claim rhetorically asks how one can belong

more than if they were born from the soil itself. Lentz and Carola (2013) highlighted many West African countries believe, that to be a legitimate citizen of a nation-state, one must first be recognized as a “son” or “daughter” of a local community. It is only from belonging to one’s ‘home’ community, can one enjoy full rights over landed property and participation in local political affairs.

Lentz and Carola (2013) note the significance of belonging being based on ‘autochthony’ has intensified in the African political forum, with debates taking place regarding the right to represent local communities in the larger political arena. Whilst the new nation-states convert their population to citizens of equal rights (regardless of ethnicity, or regional origin), free from the labels of ‘first-comers’ and ‘late-comers, many others have specified legal definitions of citizenship (p. 1326). These definitions include the principles of ‘jus soli’ (belonging based on residence) and ‘jus sanguinis’ (belonging based on descent) (Manby, 2012. p. 33).

Geschiere (2011) identifies autochthony as a dangerous rival to national citizenship that undermines ideals of national unity and equality of all national citizens.

Regardless of one's interpretation, Geschiere (2011) highlights autochthony slogans demand purification of citizenship and exclusion of “strangers”.

Whilst autochthony may not be mentioned in word by the participants, as African born refugees and asylum seekers, there may be some subconscious or even conscious recognition.

Cultural Barrier:

Also strongly linked with communication language and styles, cultural differences play a significant role in acting as a barrier to belonging.

“Anthropology is the study of the origin and development of human societies and cultures. Culture is the learned behaviour of people, including their languages, belief systems, social structures, institutions, and material goods” (National Geographic, 2024).

Kamran (2022) notes the barriers affecting immigrants' and refugees' ability to access healthcare also highlight differences in 'culture' of practice and values as a dominant theme. Owusu (1996) study of Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto, highlighted living near other Ghanaians, results in a lack of common interests and weakness in relationships with non-Ghanaians. Whilst familiarity within communities has the potential to enable, it sacrifices the opportunity for cultural development.

Jenkins (2020) states, that many international students find it difficult to create friendships with native-born classmates unless it is through organised/curriculum-required groups. Even after spending time within these mixed groups, the international students highlighted a greater sense of comfort when back with other international students, whom they shared more in common. This lack of friendship and sense of community is linked to the feeling of belonging.

Peck (1988) observed that whilst most people are starved for community, the majority of communities are 'pseudo-communities' that lack inclusiveness and authenticity. He continued that most communities require homogeneity (exclusion of those of different race, class, religion or ideology), but will tolerate these individual differences, providing there is conformity and the differences do not cause destruction of the community.

What can youth provisions do to create a greater sense of Belonging?

The purpose of Youth Work and Youth Workers is to “enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and education development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential.” Community Learning and Development Standards Council (CLDSC, 2019)

Youth Work is a universal entitlement and is open to all young people aged 11-25. It is provided in both Welsh and English through both the voluntary and local authority sectors. Delivery settings include, but are not limited to; centre-based, street-based, outreach and targeted provisions, with methods including, but not limited to; one-to-one work, group work, sport, cooking, youth forums, and Duke of Edinburgh (WYIWPAP, 2023).

Youth Work is value-based and is grounded in respect for young people, through inclusion and equal opportunities. It offers learning opportunities in the form of ‘The Five Pillars’ which are; ‘Educative’, ‘Expressive’, ‘Participative’, ‘Inclusive’ and ‘Empowering’ (WYIWPAP, 2023). As per National Occupational Standards (NOS) guidelines, Youth Work must be anti-oppressive at all stages, challenging and educating both the young people and the youth organisation where oppressive or discriminatory behaviour is identified (CLDSC, 2019).

Throughout the literature review, both barriers and enablers have been explored and their effects considered. As per “The Five Pillars”, youth provisions should encourage and support young people to become partners in their opportunities, working in collaboration to deliver young person-focused support. Where factors

have been identified as enablers, provision should consider the implementations they can make to facilitate such factors. With barriers, the same consideration should take place, but to remove or reduce their effect (WYIWPAP, 2023).

Uitermark & Duyvendak (2006) highlighted the potential for inclusive citizenship at a local level to be accessible to both immigrants and 'native-born' citizens. Through the sharing of experiences, meaning and emotion, citizens were able to create a sense of inclusive local citizenship, both by themselves and in partnership with others. Following such discoveries, urban citizenship in Amsterdam and Rotterdam were promoted in campaigns such as 'I Amsterdam' and 'People make the city' ('Mensen Maken de Stad') (I Amsterdam, 2024). With this research investigation focussing on support at local level, inclusive citizenship is a realistic and desirable outcome.

Continuing with the potential for creating local citizenship amongst refugees, asylum seekers and the native community, Tonkens and Hurenkamp (2011) revealed a neo-republicanism approach to creating belonging through local citizenship. It is claimed that when brought together, people from a community at a local level will celebrate their community, rather than discuss their differences. Tonkens and Hurenkamp (2011) further expressed that citizens are often equipped to tolerate each other but avoid the opportunity for meaningful dialogue about their differences. Whilst the approach is not without issue, the principles of the approach have the potential to provide a foundation for local citizenship that that be developed, allowing for future negotiation and conversation regarding wider issues/ differences. Whilst enablers such as football may not offer the opportunity for more meaningful conversation, youth provisions can use these enablers as the mode of engagement, before assigning time before or after for dialogue.

Whilst youth provisions may be well-intentioned, the timing of support needs must be considered as Brar-Josan (2015) states only after a sense of safety has been established, remain status granted and day-to-day routines realised, were the refugees interviewed able to consider belonging.

Methodology

Originating during the South African disability rights movement of the 1990's, the expression "Nothing About Us Without Us" emphasized the importance of involving people with disabilities in decisions and policies that affect them. It ensured their needs and perspectives were considered, leading to more inclusive outcomes (National Democratic Institution, 2023).

Whilst standard youth provisions can still offer an inclusive service to young people, providing young people a mode to express their needs, provides youth provisions the opportunity to tailor services to the youth they serve. Support should start at the developmental point of the young person, not at the point the organization deems appropriate (National Youth Agency, 2022). To best meet the needs of young people, conversation must take place. It is through consultation with the Refugees and Asylum Seekers that we can support them to become partners and develop a sense of ownership of a service that aims to meet their needs and positively influence their future opportunities (YWIWPAP, 2022).

As a Youth Worker with a genuine desire to enable young people to find their voice, influence and place in society, as well as achieve their full potential (Youth Work National Occupational Standards, 2019) I have the foundations to be a motivated, yet empathetic and genuine researcher. Hennink (2020) states that accurate data is the result of a qualitative researcher who is open-minded, curious, empathic, flexible and able to listen to people share their stories. These are all attributes of an effective and caring youth worker (YWIWPAP, 2023).

To ensure the voices of the participants were best represented, the investigation was completed by carrying out an empirical research study.

Creswell (2022) defines empirical research as, research driven by the participant's perspectives, that can generate detailed answers, providing a wealth of information and themes to be later explored during analysis. Gaskell (2000) discusses how empirical research aims to answer a question with knowledge extracted from observation and experience, rather than being restricted to existing theory.

As discussed in the Literature Review, whilst there are many studies involving belonging with refugees and asylum seekers, Ziaian *et al.* (2021), Marshall (2019), O'Connor (2018) and Brar-Josan (2015), the research aims, geographical location of the research and the characteristics of the participant pool were considerably different, thus justifying the need for fresh, empirical research. In addition to the gaps in the literature, the decision to complete new, empirical research was also due to my own personal and professional values. Having worked so closely with the youth refugee and asylum seeker community, I feel a responsibility to facilitate a voice for this vulnerable and marginalised group, who now form an important part of our local community.

Whilst the lack of literature greatly determined the decision to carry out empirical research, consideration during the investigation proposal stage was still given to the use of secondary data (also termed desk/desk-based research). Secondary research can be defined as “research using information that has already been compiled and formatted” (Oxford Reference 2024). Moore (2008) describes desk research as working with data already collected and processed by others, with a focus on re-analysis of other people's research or secondary analysis of previously collated data.

Had secondary research been used, the intention would have been to assess if the data from previous investigations already possessed key findings, that could be implemented or avoided in youth provisions in Newport. Despite this hypothetical potential, unless the previous research had analysed participants from Newport, I would have still made the same choice. Sulaiman-Hill and Thompson (2011) state the need for additional time when accessing refugee communities, therefore having already invested time to overcome barriers, build trust and develop professional relationships, I had created a unique opportunity to gather views from a section of the community to be considered in future local decisions, for local community members. As young people should be empowered partners in the processes and opportunities provided by youth organisations, to not make the most of such an opportunity would be in contrast to the principles of youth work in Wales (YWIWPAP 2023).

Research Strategy

Following the decision to undertake fresh empirical research, thought was given to the research strategy that could produce the most beneficial and appropriate data collection and analysis. With the research focussing on the participants as individuals and with a story to share, a qualitative approach with an interpretivist philosophy was identified as the most appropriate approach.

Hennink, *et al.* (2020) defines qualitative research as an enabler of an in-depth examination of one's experiences, utilizing various methods including interviews, group discussions, visual methods, and biographies. They continued, that it allows identification of key issues from the perspective of the participants and facilitates understanding of the meanings and interpretations that they give to behaviours,

events, and objects. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) support this definition, stating qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world, with the researcher aiming to understand and interpret information based on the 'meanings' allocated by the study participants. Stake (1995) clarifies that qualitative research is not about rushing to unwind the complexities of the phenomena or participants but rather taking the time to recognise, celebrate and appreciate their uniqueness.

Collins (2019) states that interpretivism rejects the objectivist view that meaning exists in the world independent of consciousness. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) discuss the importance of the researcher, as a social actor, being able to appreciate the differences between people. They state, that qualitative research focuses on meaning and employs various methods to highlight different aspects of the same issue. Weber (1936) further compliments the views that 'empathetic understanding' (originating from the German word "Verstehen") is required to understand human actions and social change. It implores the researcher to put themselves in the participant's shoes as an insider in the research, not just an observer looking in.

As with the type of study, alternative research strategies and approaches were also considered. As the driving motivation for my choice of research topic was my desire to provide young refugees and asylum seekers the opportunity to not only be heard but listened to, the potential to instead complete quantitative research was dismissed. Williams (2021) recognises the focus of quantitative research to be quantities, where the data collected and coded is expressible by numbers. When comparing quantitative to qualitative, O'Dwyer (2014) used the simple definition "numbers vs words".

I wanted to provide an opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers to be viewed as a person - a human, not a number or statistic. Given this ideology, a qualitative approach enabled a more personal and holistic research style, providing an opportunity for exploration and understanding of the meaning the participants ascribe to social/ human problems. Pathak (2013) refers to qualitative research as focusing on a humanistic approach, further defined by McLeod (2023) as a study of the whole person and their uniqueness – exactly what I have aimed to achieve. “A single leaf, even a single toothpick, has unique complexities” Stake (1995, p.11) a sentiment that reflects my intentions in this study

Whilst Dudovskiy (2024) concludes that an interpretivist approach is more suited to empirical research, consideration of ‘positivism’ still occurred. Ward (1898) describes positivity as producing exactness or positivity, allowing phenomena to be exactly determined. They continue, that this exactness can be subjected to mathematical demonstration, the general gauge accepted in the sciences. The exactness, coupled with a favour for numbers and statistics, over the emotional connection and understanding, was the predominant reason for positivity being judged non-viable. Thompson (2015) highlights positivism’s lack of consideration for the participant's lived reality, with priority allotted to uncovering the laws of human actions, as a scientist would explore physics.

Pizam and Mansfield (2009) outline the main differences between ‘interpretivism’ and ‘positivism’, with the former being much more aligned with the ‘five pillars of youth work’. When assessing the differences in subject/ researcher relationships, positivism enforces rigid separation, whereas interpretivism is deemed more personal and relationship-based, as it’s interactive, cooperative, and ‘participative’ (YWIWPAP,

2023). The goals of the research were also contrasting, with positivism favouring strong prediction over interpretivism's preference for broader predictions that accept the uniqueness and unpredictability of each participant and the data they provide, "conversation without guarantee" (Conroy, 2022). Finally, interpretivism recognises that knowledge generated was that of meanings and was relative to the participant (time, culture and value bound), whereas positivism deals with absolutes. Ultimately, whilst quantitative and positivism can produce data that can be easily shared and interpreted, it is void of human feelings and treats the participants as a number, rather than a person. This again reinforced my decision as "youth work is an art, not a science, hence it is not a BSc" (Haywood, 2022).

In conclusion, whilst a qualitative approach, with an interpretivist philosophy will produce smaller sample results and generalisation of data will be complicated due to the need for interpretation, the potential outcomes from richer information and in-depth personal perspectives, coupled with empowering and facilitating the participant's voice to be 'heard' enforced this decision (Creswell, 2022)

Sampling

Selection Process

Participants were selected from a larger group that had attended youth provisions organised by 'Urban Circle'. The selection of participants was targeted and considered both the frequency of attendance in sessions and the observed perception of engagement and enthusiasm. With youth work and also participation in this research

being voluntary, the selection process was created to reduce the risk of non-attendance/ participation, whilst maximising potential data collection.

Sample Group

The research sample group consisted of 3 males, all aged 20 who are currently a refugee. Prior to the selection of participants, the research aims, and literature have referred to both refugees and asylum seekers. Whilst the sample pool does not contain asylum seekers, and I recognise there are differences between the two communities, I have chosen to continue including asylum seekers throughout this research, as it is my professional opinion that this label does not detract from the similarities in their story, journey and support needs. The 3 participants live in Newport, Wales and have accessed youth provisions in the last 12 months. The participants are Muslims/ followers of the Islamic faith, from East Africa. The sample group contained both English and Arabic speakers (language skills developed in UK secondary school), with the intention being the latter would be supported by an interpreter. Whilst the inclusion of a non-English speaker would increase the difficulty of data collection, the decision was consciously made to align with 'the five pillars of youth work' promoting opportunities that are 'expressive, participative, inclusive and empowering' (YWIWPAP, 2022). In addition to the above value-based considerations, the inclusion of a non-English speaker aimed to facilitate greater representation of the refugee and asylum seeker community, both presently living in Wales and those who will arrive in the future. The inclusion also allowed for further consideration of communication's importance in developing a sense of belonging. Whilst the intention was to use an interpreter, during the time between my last professional involvement with the participants, English communication skills had risen considerably and following

conversations prior to data collection, the decision was made that an interpreter was no longer required.

Sampling

Data Collection Method

The investigation methods aim to directly engage with refugees and asylum seekers to understand the importance, if any, they attach to the feeling of belonging. It is acknowledged that the definition of 'belonging' can vary from person to person, but it's the assigned understanding and interpretation of the participants themselves that matters the most. To collect the thoughts of the participants, a one-on-one, semi-structured interview will take place, allowing the interviewer to remain focused, whilst retaining autonomy to explore pertinent ideas that could be revealed throughout the interview (Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik, 2021). The interviews were recorded on a recording device, allowing for transcription and analysis to take place. When the participant's interpretation of belonging was established, further questions explored the enablers and inhibitors of belonging, before suggesting action for youth organisations.

The interviews were supported by photo-elicitation (Collier, 1957), incorporating photographs into the research interviews. Harper (2002) highlights the method's ability to trigger participants into producing rich data, due to the reflexivity between image and verbalization. Thomas (2009) recognises the method's function for enabling expression, with Samuels (2004) further highlighting the ability for expression on a subject where the participant may lack knowledge. Bender *et al.* (2001) acknowledge

its ability to support participants' articulation, which can be challenging if the method used is purely verbal. This additional means of expression further provides a voice to an isolated group (Löbel, Kröger, Tibubos, 2022), that is often considered hard to reach... "hard to reach or arguably easy to ignore" (Haywood, 2023a).

As the participants had access to smartphones with internet access, they were encouraged to collect images (either stock or from their personal collection) that represented belonging 'to them'. The images were not collected from the participants, as their purpose was specifically to provide an additional method of expression and further facilitate/ prompt conversation "a tin opener for talk" (Pescott, 2023).

Due to its 'participative' and 'expressive' format, Auto photography was also considered, however, due to its need for the participants to photograph live images (Glaw, *et al.*, 2017) it felt like an unnecessary ethical risk, when the participants may find it upsetting or difficult to photograph images in a world that could potentially lack their family, home and belongings. In addition, taking photographs in a public setting may have led to questions or hostility from others, which was deemed an unacceptable risk to take. The ability to use the internet for images was not only more ethical but allowed for images to be presented that may not be available in the immediate environment.

A questionnaire/survey was briefly contemplated as a means of expanding the sample size, however, in my professional view the rich information gained from an informal interview would better represent their larger group of peers. In addition, with communication identified as a potential barrier in data collection, the suspected need for reading and writing support amongst participants would likely result in some thoughts not being expressed. The method was also deemed to be very much

researcher-led and another example of the "professional" voice taking precedence over that of the participants. The free-flowing nature of a semi-structured interview, coupled with the lack of strict answer parameters, facilitated a more seamless and natural conversation, where participants could ask questions and gain clarification, ensuring their understanding of the questions being asked at the point of interview.

Depending on the environment where the questionnaires were completed, there was a potential for reduced data integrity due to questions being misunderstood, or if certain participants had access to additional information or support. These variances would not only lead to potential bias but also potentially discredit the data. To fully empower young people, it is essential to offer them the opportunity to express themselves freely, beyond the confines of a questionnaire. Adopting an 'Expressive' approach, in the form of a semi-structured interview, with a focus on facilitating informal conversation, provided participants with a platform to share their knowledge, ideas, and emotions in a more profound and impactful manner (YWIWPP, 2023).

Analysis of data

As the questions were designed to encourage in-depth answers, interview transcriptions were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The analysis process consists of six steps:

- 1) Familiarising yourself with your data – transcribe data, read, note initial ideas.
- 2) Generating initial codes – coding interesting features across the entire data set and collating relevant data to each code.
- 3) Searching for themes – collating all codes into potential themes.

- 4) Reviewing themes – considering if the themes work in relation to steps 1 and 2, before generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
- 5) Defining and naming themes – ongoing analysis to refine each theme to tell the story of the analysis. Create clear definitions and names for each theme.
- 6) Producing the report – final analysis with data extracts being related back to the research question and literature. Complete report of the analysis

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.87)

Triangulation

Methodological triangulation has been used to increase the credibility and validity of this research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Data has been obtained from both semi-structured interviews - consisting of set questions and ad-hoc relevant, probing questions, and photo elicitation, to offer an additional mode of expression and further data collection from the ensuing conversation.

Ethical Considerations:

As the research topic focuses on belonging, and therefore likely family, friends and home, there was potential for participants to explore/ revisit difficult and potentially upsetting memories. With empathetic consideration, questions and the conversations that followed remained sensitive to the potential loss participants may have experienced. Whilst inhibitors were discussed, the conversations primarily focused on the positives of belonging, emphasised by the research aims of empowering and enabling those concerned with positively impacting future provisions.

With the potential risk considered and my previous experience supporting the participants in a professional youth worker role, it was my professional view that the process was worthwhile, as only by encouraging and enabling the refugees and asylum seekers the opportunity to express themselves can organisations aim to deliver the best possible service to the young people it supports (YWIWPAP, 2022). If we ignore or shy away from the tough questions, we miss out on the impactful thoughts and feelings of this significant, but often marginalised group (Haywood, 2023b).

Interviews were recorded at the University of South Wales, Newport Campus, a building familiar to the participants, and geographically situated in the city centre, allowing easy access by foot and public transport. 'Urban Circle' agreed to be the Gatekeeper organisation, as due to previous engagement with these individuals there was an implied trust between participant and organisation.

Following the completion of the interviews, all data was stored securely and protected with a password. Identifying information was anonymised with names replaced with a participant number (USW, 2019).

Due to all participants being adults (18+) and able to speak and understand English (no requirement for an interpreter), the participants were able to provide consent independently. If there had been an identified language barrier, consent would have been sought from a parent/ guardian or allocated social worker.

The University of South Wales (USW) Research Ethics Policy (2019) has been considered and adhered to at all phases of this research. A USW 'Model Information Sheet' and 'Consent Form' was read to each participant ensuring they understood the research aims and purpose, as well as its intended use - copies were provided. During and after reading the documents, participants were encouraged to ask questions or

seek clarification on points. Participants were also made aware that they have the right to dictate their level of participation, stop the interview and or withdraw from the research up to the point the data has been anonymised.

I have considered carefully with my supervisor, whether Newport should have been anonymised. On reflection however, given that Newport is a Home Office Dispersal area with many asylum seekers and refugees, cited as the eighth highest proportional number in the UK, the generalised nature of the description of home countries (East Africa) and the lack of identifying features within the data, means that it is legitimate to name Newport. 'Urban Circle' and other support services working with these participants to understand and support belonging are Newport-based organisations and it is hoped that the findings from this research will make a tangible difference to their work and the provision of support to participants and other asylum seekers and refugees. In this sense, this is a very 'local' study with findings applicable to Newport initially with potential application elsewhere.

Whilst my previous professional involvement with the participants provided me a valuable opportunity to represent the community, I was conscious of the power dynamic that may be at play. I recognised that the participants may feel they owed me their participation, either due to them still viewing me as an authority figure or as a means of repayment for previous youth work support. To reduce any feelings of pressure or obligation, the 'Information Sheet' included a statement confirming participation refusal would not affect our relationship or future youth work support. Although I acknowledge that this is a potentially limited mitigation, it was an important reminder to participants.

The status of participants as refugees was also considered as their situation is inherently unpowerful, whilst mine was inherently powerful. The power dynamic has the potential to affect participation, with participants possibly concerned with saying/doing something that affects their status in the country, or on the contrary, participating due to deference. When exploring this dynamic I was also aware of the possible perception of me being a white, male, professional, with assumed authority. This was strongly considered when first interacting with the participants in my previous professional role as their youth worker, however due to the developed relationship of trust and respect, my perceived image was no longer deemed a hinderance.

All participants were informed of my researcher safeguarding/ confidentiality responsibilities and my obligation to report any suspected safeguarding concerns in line with Appendix 1 of the USW Safeguarding Policy (USW, 2019).

In the event a participant expressed a need for support or became upset, I stopped the research and reverted from a researcher to a youth worker, providing appropriate support. Support was based on the needs of the participant, but could involve, listening, providing advice and guidance and/or signposting.

The investigation including; research and interview questions, participants and location have been risk-assessed and approved, with the support of my Dissertation Supervisor Kate Haywood.

Report and Discussion

This chapter reports and discusses the key findings from the primary data collection. The sample consisted of 3 male refugees, aged 20 years old and living in Newport. The participants agreed to participate in this investigation, free from coercion and with the knowledge of its planned use. Whilst there were some minor issues regarding efficient communication, the 3 participants were competent in the English language and were able to participate in the research without the need for an interpreter. The investigation carried out an empirical research study, with a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews, supported by photo-elicitation were conducted, with data being analysed with an interpretivist philosophy. Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis was used, allowing data to be coded into significant factors, before being sorted into relevant themes that link to the research aims/questions.

My research aims are:

- Explore the significance, if any, of 'belonging' for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.
- To explore the enablers and barriers to 'belonging' for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.
- To gather data, providing local youth provisions and policymakers the opportunity to tailor services to create a sense of belonging for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.

Research Aim 1 – Explore the significance, if any, of ‘belonging’ for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.

What is belonging

Given the investigation was centred around ‘belonging’ it was imperative participants were questioned about their interpretation and understanding of the word. Initial contact with the participants (prior to the interview) provided an early opportunity to assess their understanding. In preparation for the conversation, I spoke with a fellow student who is fluent in Arabic, as well as searching online for the Arabic translation of ‘belonging’. Both sources produced the same translation of ‘muntamin’ which allowed greater confirmation during the brief. When initially discussing the theme of belonging, I observed facial expressions that I interpreted as confusion. Based on this assumption I read out the Arabic translation of ‘muntamin’ which immediately resulted in a change of facial expression and one participant responding ‘ahhhhh, muntamin, belonging, I know this”. With clarification of ‘belonging’ achieved, the first language barrier was overcome, establishing a base understanding, and preparing the participants for their future interviews.

As learnt in the literature review, ‘belonging’ has many definitions and can be interpreted differently based on the situation and environment. These considerations created interest in the definition each participant would ascribe. When exploring the answers from participants they will now be referred to by their participant number, (P1, P2 or P3) as per the anonymisation outlined in the methodology.

When asked the interview question ‘What do you understand belonging to be?’ all 3 participants described belonging as a ‘feeling’. This view is shared by Miller (2003)

when discussing feeling comfortable in a social and physical environment and Fenster (2004) when discussing comfort that derives from a commitment to a community. P1 described belonging as 'somewhere or some people that you belong with', supporting the views of Millery (2003), before directly stating 'It's a feeling for me'. These comments highlight belonging as something you can feel through both social and environmental influences, a theme that will be later explored when discussing enablers and barriers. P3 explained belonging as 'somewhere you can feel you belong' before listing several enablers 'culture, friends, language and the area you live'. These enablers again highlight both social and environmental factors as contributors to the feeling of belonging, a view shared by Miller (2003).

Whilst interviewing P2 their initial interpretation of belonging seemed more routed in belonging as items or things that belong via ownership. They explained their feeling of belonging as 'I have it, I own it' and 'my things. So, when you have your car, you can't let other people drive it'. Whilst these aligns with part of the definition provided by Schein (2009) in that belonging is ownership and 'belonging to', I felt this interpretation leant more towards belonging as possessions, a different interpretation to the one I had envisaged. As such, I was a little concerned that P2 had misunderstood belonging when we had discussed it as a potential feeling during the reading of the 'Research Information Sheet'. Despite this, I realised that again, interpretation is everything and ownership of a feeling, can be much like ownership of an item, and therefore entirely possible. Very quickly I learnt the importance of approaching this research with an open mind and free from expectations and prejudices. It was vitally important to the integrity and overarching aim of this research that I did not allow my thoughts and feelings to hinder the enabling intention

of providing a voice to the young, male, refugee community the participants represent.

As the interview progressed, P2 agreed with my interpretation of their comments, that, belonging meant being part of something. They replied, stating 'Yes, it's a part of myself as well', a comment that feels in contrast to Skrbis (2008) who recognises belonging as an ever-changing phenomenon. P2 comment is interesting as not only does it challenge the ideas of Skrbis (2008), therefore potentially producing new literature, but it also begins to answer the first research aim, showing that feeling a sense of belonging is important. In life, people often reference emotions when describing how they feel. It is however my understanding that these emotions/feelings are often temporary and only applicable at certain times, or during specific social and environmental situations. People may describe a sense of feeling tired, but it would be unusual for someone to refer to tiredness (a feeling) as part of themselves, as it is often temporary and can likely be resolved by rest/sleep. Whilst of course there are examples when this feeling could be more permanent, it is usually temporary and dependent on the environment or situation the person has been experiencing (hard work, lack of sleep, etc). Regardless of the feeling, there is an understanding that feelings are likely temporary and at some point, a contrasting feeling will be experienced. This acceptance that feelings are often temporary is significant as it is in great contrast to P2 who assigned the feeling of belonging as being part of who they are as a person. This answer suggests its importance stretches much further than a 'feeling'.

Is belonging important?

All concluded that belonging was important. P1 states 'I think it is very important for everyone', P2 'obviously yeah, it's really important for me, everyone'. P3 views echo McMillan (1976) who explores the feeling of belonging as needing to matter to each other. P3 states 'I think belonging is important for everyone, to feel you are acknowledged for someone, that you're important because lots of people don't feel that'. McMillan (1976) believes it is during times of need that the 'sense of community' creates a sense of belonging that leads to faith their needs will be met with togetherness. On reflection, this comment and the supporting literature from McMillan (1976) highlighted a missed opportunity in my data collection method. Due to my professional experience working with both the participants and the wider refugee and asylum seeker community, many discussions about their journey from their home country to Wales have taken place. These conversations not only provided me an opportunity to learn but also helped establish a relationship based on trust and genuine care. Whilst I already possess the knowledge of the participant's journey, by not asking for this information again in a recorded semi-structured interview, I missed an opportunity to document their answer, allowing further analysis and discussion. Despite this oversight, I am conscious that asking such questions would potentially cause distress to some participants, and as such would have likely resulted in difficulty obtaining ethical approval.

Despite not having documented answers in this research, I can confidently state the journeys experienced by some of the participants and the community they represent contained loss, fear and uncertainty. Given these significant risks and barriers/experiences, I would assume for many people (myself included) the priority would be their immediate family and loved ones. With this in mind whilst professional

experience has shown strong support networks amongst the community members and what P2 described as being treated as a 'brother', it would be interesting to explore if this would extend during times of greater vulnerability, risk and sacrifice. As P3 states "belonging is important for everyone, to feel you are acknowledged... that you're important" and McMillan (1976) states community and as a result belonging increases during times of need, it would be interesting to explore whether a lone refugee would really matter to an unrelated person who is trying to protect their own loved ones?

P1 was very positive in their assessment of belongings' importance, stating 'I would like to have it all the time... I don't know how to explain it, but it's just a beautiful feeling that just makes you happy'. For P1, there was a clear association between the sense of belonging and the effect it had on their mood and feelings. P1 belief is supported by Fisher, *et al.* (2015) who found a correlation between lacking a sense of belonging and a greater sense of depression and hopefulness. According to the above statements, the importance of belonging reaches much further than just a nice feeling. During my professional experience working for the Local Authority Youth Service, I was based 2-3 days at local high schools. During this time as a school-based youth worker, one of the most common reasons for youth work support referrals was due to anxiety and depression. According to the YWIWPAP (2023) high-quality youth work should be implemented 'ensuring the health, well-being and safety of young people'. With the sense of belonging in emotions being identified by both Fisher, *et al.* (2025) and P1 as a potential barrier to positive mental health and well-being, it is an important need, that must be considered by youth provisions.

Research Aim 2 – Explore the enablers and barriers to ‘belonging’ for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.

Communication

Communication was acknowledged by all participants as one of the biggest contributors to a sense of belonging, having the ability to be both an enabler and a barrier.

P3 discusses the barrier communication plays on healthcare, stating it's 'very hard for people who don't know English... some people can't write Arabic so they can't even go on Google to translate... If there is something wrong at home they can't talk to their social worker, because they can't communicate. If they needed help to go to hospital they can't because they can't communicate to say they are hurt". Both Tsoh *et al.* (2016) and Kamran (2022) identified positive correlations between limited English proficiency and poor self-rated health and access to healthcare. Whilst I recognise the need for communication when seeking healthcare, It is my belief that in 2024, with the technology we have available, it should not be causing significant issues. P3 mentioned the inability to write in Arabic as a barrier to interpretive functions, however, many phones now offer translation via both typed and verbal inputs. Due to a potentially simple solution, I was a little shocked when communication barriers to healthcare and therefore well-being and belonging were mentioned. This is however another example of me as an English speaking person, in an English speaking city, speaking without experience of language difficulties. Whilst a phone provides a suitable solution to the communication barrier in health, I recognise that there would still be a requirement for a smartphone, internet access

as well as competency in the phone functions. These are requirements that many refugees and asylum seekers may not have access to or may not prioritise over more essential items.

I am also conscious that the communication barrier extends beyond a translation service, such as Google Translate or an interpreter service such as 'Language Line'. When we are not clearly understood it can be damaging to confidence, and potential solutions can cause anxiety. When discussing communication with native English-speaking peers and being asked to go out and socialise, P3 displayed a lack of confidence, that was derived from the communication barrier. P3 states 'I would feel like I'm quite boring because I can't talk... They will say 'weirdo' and stuff and like I didn't want to go out". This is more significant as P3 states 'I knew English and understood very well and could speak it, but the words wouldn't come out sometimes'. They finished their answer by disclosing 'I didn't feel like I was one of them'. Despite being able to speak English very well, it was the subtleties of communication and perhaps cultural communication differences that caused a barrier. P3 explains how topics would change quickly and seemingly without reason, so even when spending time thinking about a conversation topic, it could be changed instantly and they would be unable to adapt 'they would be talking about what they had yesterday for food, then suddenly switch to what the teacher did and that's conversation skills that I didn't have, so I couldn't talk to them'. These less obvious factors of broader communication caused difficulty and removed the sense of belonging. This information supports the views of Jenkins (2020) who identifies language proficiency and communication as a barrier to academic success. Kim (2001) also recognises the need for communication competence, with a focus on communication norms and practices of the local people, as a way of cross-cultural

adaptation. Ironically, to learn communication norms and practices, one must first participate in the social processes of the local social environment... a task made more difficult if one does not have understanding of the norms and practices.

With the Welsh Government (2019) stating their intention for Wales to become the first 'Nation of Sanctuary' it was pleasing to see they have already considered the need for support to access healthcare and this has been documented in their proposed actions. Whilst I am often suspicious of how well thought out and genuine such actions can be, the fact the country has stepped up to such a meaningful challenge, has created confidence these actions are being addressed with the best intentions. Welsh Government have reinforced their stance, stating the aims of the project will be delivered with Wales being an exemplar of diversity and inclusion... an important and hopefully not optimistic claim.

I believe that with the possible solutions discussed, communication in the English language is only a small factor in the barrier to healthcare. I believe it has more to do with a lack of self-efficacy (confidence in one's ability to perform a task) and the perceived cultural perception (prejudice, discrimination, lack of patience, etc).

When discussing the ability to communicate with others, P2 explained 'I thought I don't belong to this country... I want to go back home, I don't like this country'. They continued, 'I didn't speak their language...It was hard for me, a hard moment for me'. The effect communication has as a barrier to belonging, in particular belonging to a country shares similarities to those of autochthony. Geschiere (2011) described autochthony as a 'trump card', meaning regardless of both enablers and barriers, belonging is dependent on being from a geographical place. Whilst autochthony was expectedly not mentioned by any participant, if any had experience of the notion, it is

possible their thoughts surrounding communication barriers would naturally be negative and culminate in a feeling of not belonging.

Whilst P2 initially labelled communication as a barrier, it is interesting that the results of this negative interpretation actually produced a positive outcome. Much like Mcmillan (1976) who explains, that times of need create a sense of belonging, P2 recognises the barriers as temporary, that could be overcome. P2 states 'I learnt the language...I went to school, I went to college, I found a job and now I found everything easy for me'. The ability to recognise the barrier seems to have created a motivation to overcome and recognise their potential. The motivation from deprivation is discussed by Maslow (1943) in the Hierarchy of Needs. My thoughts of motivation through deprivation are similar to the need for resilience and resilience building. Yes, there are potential positives such as developing a need, desire and toughness that cannot be coached, but it also means someone has to first suffer. As per the YWIWPAP (2023) youth workers should deliver learning opportunities in an 'expressive' manner that offers expression through creative and challenging opportunities. The method for such work, in particular with the participants and the refugee and asylum seeker community is sport, in particular football. Whilst our support is rooted in values and good intentions, the motivation developed through deprivation and struggle can make someone a great asset to a team if channelled correctly. Whilst it is not my view, there could be an argument against removing all barriers to belonging, as you inadvertently remove the driving factors in motivation. When asked in interviews, Cristiano Ronaldo has explained despite his Son having great potential he will not achieve the same level of greatness as he does not want it or need it as much as he did. Cristiano Ronaldo had a Mother who sacrificed everything for him to pursue his dream. It was the barriers he faced that created a

motivation and need to succeed. Despite his footballing ability, Cristiano's Son will never experience such deprivation and as such will never inherit such motivation. Whilst we do not aim to create barriers, there is something to be said about not 'wrapping your children up in cotton wool' or not letting them 'figure it out for themselves'.

When discussing enablers to belonging, P3 again referenced communication, stating 'When I'm with people that speak the same language as me...I feel like I can speak my 'home language'...when I speak Arabic, I feel like I can be me!'. The strong feelings created by speaking ones language is echoed by Welsh Government (2020) who recognised speaking their home language created a greater sense of belonging in their local community. Whilst speaking Arabic in Wales at a national level may not create such feelings of belonging, speaking the language within a smaller, local community of Arabic speakers would likely have the same effect. There is a clear feeling that being able to communicate in one's 'Mother tongue' allows the speaker to be their true selves and transcend borders, in a world where they are currently unable to do so.

Culture

Another factor that was highlighted as both an enabler and barrier was culture/ cultural differences. Heavily linked with communication, in particular its subtleties, its reach is felt as an underlying theme in many factors. Culture and understanding of cultural differences allows for an easier transition into the local community, and less chance of isolation, and lack of belonging due to misunderstandings.

P1 spoke passionately about their experiences joining a Newport football team, however despite the sport being one of the biggest factors in enabling a sense of belonging (to follow), it was the cultural differences, linked with communication that resulted in a great enabler, producing such a negative experience. P1 explains that after joining a local football team he noticed 'people are a little bit different and I didn't feel belonging... the place I come from there's no swearing, but it was normal for them... for a new person I think they should change their attitude'. Whilst P1 spoke negatively about their experiences with the native players, they also recognised their limitations that may have contributed to feeling a lower sense of belonging. P1 explains 'I didn't find any racism, but I felt a little bit different from the others'. Following on from football and into school, they state 'I couldn't find that belonging... I was a little bit different to them... my understanding and communication with them was a little bit different. They might find some of the things they told or do... insulting or something'. P1 concluded admitting 'I wasn't that good at understanding other people'. These feelings were supported by Shah (1991), Selltiz and Cook (1962), Kim (2001) and Moos and Mitchell (1982) who all expressed the importance of spending time with the local/ native population to become educated in the subtleties of communication, learn cultural practices and experience more positively perceived attitudes.

In the example of swearing within the football team there is an ethical dilemma raised by Kim (2001) as the social control possessed by the native population requires new comers to adopt such norms to be accepted, even if against their values. The feeling of 'selling out' or being a hypocrite in order to 'fit in' could be potentially damaging to one's character, however with the importance of belonging highlighted in earlier sections, it may be deemed necessary. Whilst conforming may

offer not only a solution but also an educational opportunity to learn from the locals, it requires submission from a group that is already considered vulnerable and with little power. Rather than conforming to fit in, the ability to create higher expectations and educate others to be the best possible version of themselves is one that youth workers should be promoting, empowering its young people to challenge and share their thoughts and opinions (YWIWPAP, 2023)

Offering a third solution P1 acknowledged that barriers can become enablers if you 'give yourself time..you get used to it. You learn people and their language, you know how they feel, you know how they react", they continued 'respect that difference, and you just get on with it'. P3 also recognised the importance of time, explaining as their social communication skills improved by spending time with local peers in school 'life became better and better'. These views were supported by Kim (2001) who expresses that 'strangers' cannot fully develop host communication competence without first participating in the social processes of the host's social environment.

In addition to the cultural differences causing feelings of unease, P1 also discussed behaviour that was both isolating and exclusionary 'I talk to one of the boys and they don't reply to me, but then someone else talks to them and they are like 'yeah, whats up mate?'. I was shocked by the assessment made by P1 regarding the treatment experienced as when they were sharing their story I began to experience a variety of emotions. Through previously working with P1 in a professional environment I have developed a positive relationship where I have learnt about their family, worries, aspirations and the journey from their homeland to Newport, Wales. With such a strong relationship and recognition of their vulnerabilities and struggles, I feel when the need arises, I should protect them. As the story continued I felt angry,

disappointed and upset as P1 spoke with a softness that reflected sadness and rejection. As I listened to the oppressive and exclusionary behaviour my immediate thought was that P1 had been a victim of racism. It was only after they finished answering and their demeanor showed their previous comfort and happiness, did I recognise the need to bottle these thoughts, allowing for reflection at a later time. It made me realise that those of us active on social media and with an interest in the news, are surrounded by words such as racism, homophobia and transphobia. I acknowledged that choosing not to speak to someone because they are different or because there is a language barrier is not necessarily due to racist or xenophobic reasons. The native players are entitled to their own thoughts and feelings, including how and with who they choose to communicate with. If they cannot be bothered, don't have the patience or are just having a bad day, they are not obliged to make an effort. Whilst this behaviour could be seen to cause negative feelings, one might argue that you cannot 'make' someone feel a certain way, how they choose to process a situation is up to them.

Further reflection, several days later, highlighted a potential support need for the local players. Whilst the behaviour could be deemed malicious and uncaring, there is a very real possibility that the players themselves lack the confidence or perceived communication skills needed to interact positively with a refugee or asylum seeker. These support needs can be supported by youth provisions, as they promote inclusion (YWIWPAP, 2023) and anti-oppressive approaches (CLDSC, 2019). This again raises even further considerations given the current theme of companies and organisations enrolling staff on awareness training sessions to learn awareness and how to work to certain expectations. My interpretation and perceived support need is

another example of a white, male determining a need for an issue that the affected participant didn't recognise or request.

In the preparation for this research I explored multiple sources such as 'Stop the Boats', leaving the EU and the rise of the far right, however I was shocked when racism as a whole was not mentioned by all participants. P3 did mention racism had been suggested by other refugees and asylum seekers when discussing varying support from different social workers 'why is he getting better treatment, we are the same... are they racist?... These guys are racist' although the perception of the term was again questionable. In my professional opinion I was say the term racism was being incorrectly used as the other person being compared to is so similar. This again shows perception is down to the individual and it is not up to me as a white, male to educate a person of colour how they should interpret racism. These reflections have allowed me to reflect on my own prejudices and thoughts that I naturally assume are correct and reinforce the need to work in partnership and with the consultation of the young people.

Community – Football

Throughout the 3 interviews there was one theme that dominated. When football was mentioned, each participant seemed to grow in both stature and confidence. When discussing football as an enabler, I observed the participants become immediately enthusiastic and passionate, leaning forward in their chair, opening up their body and establishing unbroken eye contact. It felt as if I as the researcher had unlocked something inside them they really wanted to share. Due to the changes, I witnessed

in both verbal and non-verbal communication, it is no surprise that football was acknowledged to be one of the most significant enablers to belonging.

P2 discussed their experiences of football and the impact it had on developing belonging through the community 'I started going to the park and playing football with everyone. There is a lot of nationalities, even UK people/ English people...I used to speak with them and they didn't find me as a refugee or something, they find me like as a brother, as a friend...they have a nice relationship with me, they are friendly'.

The observations of P2 recognise themselves as a refugee but point out how football and the shared sense of community and working towards a collective goal removed their negatively viewed label. Peck (1998) addressed the importance of vulnerability, in this case being a refugee, explaining it is the journey of vulnerability, risk and community that ultimately provides peace.

P3 stated 'everyone in the world knows football... people from different backgrounds and different ethnicities, different race, different languages, different colour, different everything, they can play together doesn't matter, doesn't matter the colour, it doesn't matter'.

The views expressed by the participants align with those of Hagerty (1992) who explored the two dimensions of belonging; 'valued involvement' - the experience of feeling valued, needed and accepted, and also 'fit' - the perception their characteristics articulate with or complement the system or environment. Stone (2023), explores football's ability to provide an alternative form of communication that can create connections regardless of cultural differences. Kick It Out (2022) and Show Racism the Red Card (2024) both recognise the potential football has for

developing belonging and communication, regardless of one's defining characteristics.

Newport is becoming renowned for its community sports provisions, with both government and NGOs trying to meet the needs of the young people in the community. My professional experience has witnessed first-hand the importance for youth provisions to deliver sport in the community, not only to ensure the engagement of young people but to create a sense of belonging within a community. Whilst it is brilliant that youth provisions have been offering refugee and asylum seeker football, it has to consider the potential barriers they may themselves be creating as they segregate an already excluded community away from the natives.

Community – Family, Friends, Organisations

P3 discussed the importance of the GAP Centre/ The Sanctuary Newport, a charity that aims to reduce social exclusion and promote well-being within the refugee and asylum seeker community. They discussed how 'communities such as the 'GAP Centre help people a lot... people that come here are depressed and have nothing to do, so communities are very good to help people relax and talk to people'. The recognition given to the mental health support needs highlight the community group's ability to help. Fisher, *et al.* (2015) discussed the need for interpersonal interventions to help improve one's sense of belonging, that in turn will reduce the symptoms of depression.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) state that people who lack belongingness will exhibit greater consequences than mere temporary distress. The ability of organisations and community members to create a sense of belongingness that in turn helps improve

mental health is imperative. Specialist organisations focussing on refugees and asylum seekers are in contrast to the observations made by Peck (1988) who defines most communities as 'pseudo-communities' that lack inclusiveness. With the GAP Centre, inclusiveness is very much at the forefront of their values, and despite offering specialist support to refugees and asylum seekers, they do not discriminate against the local population.

Another significant point raised about community is from P3 who discussed the ability to be with someone with shared experiences ' You can find people from your own country... You have a sense of feeling you are in the same shoes. Like me and him are the same'. This feeling of unity created by shared experiences is supported by Marshall (2019) who explored Palestinian childrens' ability to create a 'home-out-of-place' through a collective sense of belonging and strength in solidarity as 'political actors'.

Family and friends were mentioned consistently through the interviews and each time there was a clear emotional impact on the participant. P1 shared 'Family left me for a month, but then they came back I felt so happy, and so belonging', they continued talking about their friend 'I seen a friend of mine I hadn't seen for a long time... you don't feel that loneliness... when he came back, I felt very happy, and it brought back lots of memories... a friend is a person that makes you happy'.

Continuing they explained 'these are the people that respect you and understand you... when you are feeling sad or in a time of need they always rush to help you out'.

P2 states ' family... it's a part of everything of me, like when I see this photo I just say 'Oh god thank you' because they create me in this family... I love them, I love

them'. On the topic of Mum 'My Mum is all my life, I can't explain to you, my Mum is everything, everything in this life, everything. As much as I can to make her happy, I'm still doing less'. Discussing friends they explain 'you make friends ... you're going to find it easy, simple as that... you build those relationships, you are going to find everything easier'.

Love/ Belonging which encompasses friends and family, form the third stage of Maslow (1943) Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid. Whilst progression to the higher stages of the pyramid are no longer dependent on fully achieving the one below, their significance cannot be dismissed. With the next stages of the pyramid including 'self-esteem' and 'self-actualization', the significance of friends and family assigned by the participants is in alignment with those of Maslow (1943)

Regardless of one's birthplace, the need for friends and family feels natural to us all as humans. We are social beings and we need to be around others. Family in particular is everything to me and the idea of losing them would break me. I can only try my best to try and empathise with the comments made by the participants, and I am aware that even my attempts likely fall short in comparison.

Research Aim 3 – To gather data, providing local youth provisions and policymakers the opportunity to tailor services to create a sense of belonging for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.

How do you think youth work could help create a sense of belonging?

The Refugee Council (2023) revealed in the 12 months prior there had been a total of 5,152 applications from unaccompanied children, currently separated from their parents. With family acknowledged as such a powerful and important factor in not only belonging but also, happiness, well-being and as P2 stated 'everything in this life' focus from local youth provisions must place focus on the importance of these support networks. Whilst family alternatives are not possible, the importance of friends may go some way in bridging the gap between Wales and home. To support the family links, youth provisions can signpost to relevant refugee and asylum seeker support organisations, providing a voice where needed.

Both P1 and P2 discussed the interpersonal skills of the Youth Worker as an enabler for helping develop a sense of belonging. P1 states 'When I first come to youth club, one of the members of the youth club welcomed me very warmly.' They continued 'when you are not feeling belonging with the other people, the youth workers come straight away to help you out... they give you the confidence to communicate with the others and become part of the family'. This solution is very simple, but requires the correct staff who possess genuine care and passion for young people. As youth workers, support should be delivered in line with the '5 pillars of youth work' (YWIWPAP, 2023) and NOS Guidelines (CLDSC, 2019), as such delivery should already follow an inclusive and non-oppressive style, however, this needs to be continually assessed and if lacking, challenged.

P2 states 'Just be friendly...have a nice conversation.' They elaborated on the conversation, mentioning again the vulnerability and desire to not be seen as a label, but as a person, a human being 'Don't tell them 'you are a refugee', don't tell them these things, just treat them as a person as a brother'. With many refugees coming from a world of chaos, where they have experienced loss of; possessions, family,

friends and belonging, it appears this simple acknowledgement provides; equality, stability and respect, which is missing when identified as a label, a number.

P3 emphasised the need to provide youth provisions that not only provided support through various delivery methods 'activities such as hiking, football, cooking lessons', but also educative opportunities to share and learn from others 'cooking classes with dishes from different cultures'. It was important P3 was able to recognise the need to incorporate people from other cultures as Shah (1991), Selltitz and Cook (1962), Kim (2001) and Moos and Mitchell (1982) all identified the need for interactions with the local/ native population to develop the skills needed to then experience a greater sense of belonging.

P3 also highlights the need for 'English lessons and maths lessons and any lessons that bring people together to be able to learn about this country.. lessons about law, whats good and whats not good.' further explaining their reasoning 'you can do one big mistakes and that's it, youre not going to get another chance'. The need for integration and support to integrate has also been highlighted by Welsh Government (2019) 'Nation of Sanctuary' plan. The Local Authority Youth Service are actively engaging with Gwent police who have been running awareness and rights sessions with the refugee and asylum seeker community. The sessions not only provide valuable information, but also educate the young people on their rights should they have a need or interaction with the police. The sessions are in line with the 'empowering' learning opportunity (YWIWPAP, 2013).

In addition to join cooking classes, football was again mentioned as a requirement in youth provisions creating a sense of belonging 'almost everyone who comes from Africa has a football background or played football. Everyone knows football, so

everyone enjoys football, and that's why if we can get stuff for people from similar backgrounds such as football it's good.' the suggestion was developed highlighting the need for facilitation of training and transition into local teams 'football training, teams, clubs, trying to help them, because some people have got potential, but they give up because they say "I'm in a new country, I can't do it anymore'. These suggestions are supported by Stone (2013) who highlighted football's ability to provide consistency and regularity that enables the building of relationships, provide an alternative form of communication, with personal differences replaced with a collective team/ community goal, creating connections despite cultural differences and also providing an environment where differences can be negotiated, frustrations released, and sameness recognised. It was clarified that these provisions should not be exclusive to refugees and asylum seekers from the same areas but from other cultures as well.

Youth provisions often have workers with links to local football teams, therefore they should be providing a recruitment/ progress route for those who want to continue their love of the sport into a more organised activity. Where these relationships are not yet established, every effort should be made to build them, supporting the refugee and asylum seekers' integration into the wider community. People have suggested refugee and asylum seeker teams, but whilst that may be with the intention of removing communication, culture and confidence barriers, it again highlights the community as outsiders, and does little for integration.

Conclusion

With the recognition that Wales is on the verge of becoming the first 'Nation of Sanctuary' (Welsh Government, 2019) this investigation has highlighted significant needs surrounding the feeling of 'belonging'. The importance of belonging has been shown to extend beyond just a feeling but to integration within one's new community, reduction in depression and hopefulness, positive assessment of experiences and personal well-being.

Whilst I recognise due to the size of the investigation sample pool, the findings were going to be limited, it has set out to achieve its intentions. This was a small research investigation with the intention of capturing the voices of refugees and asylum seekers in Newport. Whilst there are undoubtedly findings that could be applied in other communities across the country, my focus was on those living in Newport, Wales. I have known this group for several years and am proud to have been able to provide them an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings... to give them a voice.

My research aims were to:

- Explore the significance, if any, of 'belonging' for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport. – belonging was quickly identified as an important feeling, producing positive reactions that empowered the young person, helping break down the barriers caused by displacement.
- To explore the enablers and barriers to 'belonging' for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.

- To gather data, providing local youth provisions and policymakers the opportunity to tailor services to create a sense of belonging for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.

I will provide the recommendations of the research investigation to local youth provisions including; Urban Circle, The GAP Centre/ The Sanctuary, Newport Live and Newport Youth Service, with the intention that its use can provide a useful insight into the importance of considering belonging when creating provisions. I will offer to share my findings as a guest lecturer at the University of South Wales, Newport.

Hearing the participants speak about their family and now reading back their words with the ability of time and reflection, they are not only extremely powerful but also humbling. As a youth worker, I do everything in my power to try and relate to the young people I support, listening, showing empathy and where appropriate working in partnership to help improve their situation. With the participants and the communities they represent there is a recognition that the support I can try and offer will only scrape the surface, however, I am proud to be more informed as a result of this research investigation.

Recommendations

Following the discoveries unearthed in this research investigation, it is clear there is a great significance attached to the feeling of 'belonging' for young, male, refugees

and asylum seekers in Newport. The importance extends beyond just that of a feeling but has been identified as a key contributor to community relationships that in terbelonging holds great significance in the happiness, well-being and feeling of acceptance in the refugee and asylum seeker community. Recommendations are as follows:

- Creation/ increase in youth provisions that allow for greater integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the local community
- Increase opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to play football, both with their own and the local community.
- Progress/ development routes established with local football teams allowing young people to achieve their full potential and continue the process of integration with their new community.
- provisions will have the opportunity to discuss and support integration, cultural awareness and the importance of meaningful conversation.
- Continue to deliver young-person-centred care with a focus on treating the young person as a human, not a refugee or asylum seeker... an identity/ label forced on them.
- Explore methods for communication competence to be delivered in the community, with a focus on communication norms and practices of the local people, as a way of cross-cultural adaptation.

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APPENDICES

Information for applicants

This form should be completed for all research studies utilising human participants that are considered **LOW RISK** within the Faculty of Life Sciences and Education.

If **none** of the points from the LOW RISK ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA apply, then the research can be considered Low Risk and this Low Risk Ethical Application form should be completed and submitted for consideration to the Faculty Ethics Administrator and Chair of the relevant low risk committee.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are not sure, it is your responsibility to seek guidance from your Research Supervisor, the Faculty Ethics Champion, or USW Research Governance Officer.

Research recruitment and data collection must not commence until approval from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee has been granted - where approval is required. For the avoidance of doubt, data collection cannot begin until you have received written confirmation of approval from the faculty ethics sub group.

This form should be completed in line with the relevant guidelines appropriate to your area of study. For example (but not limited to) the Research Councils UK, British Education Research Association, the National Health Service, and the British Psychological Society.

Please consult the following USW documents:

- USW GDPR and Research Guidance
- USW Informed Consent Guidance
- USW Research Ethics Policy

| Overview of Proposed Study | |
|--|---|
| Name of Chief Investigator: | Michael Davy |
| Staff or student project: | Student |
| Faculty: | Faculty of Life Sciences and Education |
| Programme of Study: (if applicable) | MA Working for Children and Youth People (Youth Work Initial Qualifying) |
| Name of Study Lead / Supervisor: (if applicable) | Kate Haywood |
| Proposed Project Title: | A study exploring 'Belonging' amongst young men who are refugees/ asylum seekers accessing Youth Provisions in Wales |
| Start date: | 04/09/2023 |
| Proposed end date: | 15/10/2023 |
| Co-investigators: | |
| Code(s) of conduct to be followed or the guidelines appropriate to your area of study or discipline: | Work will be completed in line with the USW Research Ethics Policy. |
| <p>Brief outline of your Research Study (500-750 words) to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rationale, research aims and/or questions 2. Research setting (e.g. is a lone worker policy needed?) 3. Your professional role (if appropriate) 4. Your relationship to participants (if any) 5. Details of sample and sampling strategy 6. Methods of data collection¹ 7. Data analysis | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the last 12 months there have been a total of 5,152 applications from unaccompanied children currently separated from their parents and family members (Refugee Council, 2023). With the conflict between Russia and | |

¹ Data collection methods could include interviews, group interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, observation, visual data, assessment or measurement, documentary analysis. Please specify how the data will be recorded (if appropriate) i.e. note taking, audio recording, visual recording.

Ukraine currently taking place and the Taliban again occupying Afghanistan, the last 12 months has seen an increase of 20% in unaccompanied children applying for asylum. With no family support the need for youth work is vital and the responsibility to facilitate; personal, social and educational development, in addition to helping them find their voice, influence and place in society is key to supporting them to reach their full potential (YWIWPAP, 2022).

This investigation will open dialogue directly with refugees and asylum seekers to identify the significance the young people themselves attach to the feeling of belonging. It is only by encouraging and enabling the refugees and asylum seekers the opportunity to express themselves that organisations can tailor support to develop to deliver the best possible service to the young people it supports (YWIWPAP, 2022).

2. Interviews will take place in The Sanctuary (The GAP), Newport, a charity that supports refugees and asylum seekers and welcomes them in the community. The Gap will act as the Gatekeeper organisation for the participants. The participants are all regular attendees of 'The Gap' and as such it's an environment they feel safe and secure and is geographically easy to attend. Interviews at The GAP will take place during building open hours to ensure employees are present and therefore removing the risk of lone working.
3. I am a Masters Student and Senior Adventure Youth Worker based in Cardiff. I do not provide any support to the participants.
4. The participant group consists of refugees and asylum seekers that I have previously supported whilst working as a Youth Worker with Newport City Council. Previous support was primarily delivered via Duke of Edinburgh and sport sessions. I have a positive, professional relationship with the participants, built on trust and respect. Whilst I have changed employment, there is a previous relationship that will allow for honest engagement.
5. The group will consist of 3 Males aged 18+ who are currently refugees or asylum seekers. I aim to have 1 participant who requires the aid of an interpreter, with this role being completed by a peer who will be briefed on the importance of representing the expressed views accurately and maintaining confidentiality. Consideration has been given regarding someone feeling uncomfortable answering questions with a friend as the interpreter, however due to the strong relationship between the participants this is deemed as low risk.
6. The method for gathering information will be via semi-structured interviews with the aid of photo-elicitation. An interview will allow for a free-flowing conversation where questions can be elaborated on in real time and questions/ further information can be requested by the participant. The decision to include photo-elicitation will offer the participants a further opportunity and additional mode to express themselves and generate verbal discussion. The mode is also inclusive of those who may find it difficult to express their thoughts and feelings verbally.
7. Following both methods of data collection, a Thematic Analysis will take place. Transcripts of interviews will be analysed with codes (key words) being highlighted before being sorted into their relevant themes. This same approach will be used with the images identified in photo-elicitation. Similarities and differences will then be examined and related back to the research question.

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| Responsibilities to Participants | |
| 1. Voluntary Informed Consent | |
| How will you gain access to the participants? | |
| The Gap Centre, Newport will act as the Gatekeeper and will be used to contact potential participants. Contact will take place via a phone call/ txt message, or in person if attending the centre. | |
| How will you provide participants with the information they need about the study? Please attach a copy of the information that will be provided to the participants where appropriate | |
| Study information will be provided both verbally and in the participants information sheet they will be given. | |
| How will you ensure that you have informed consent from the participants? Please attach a copy of the consent form(s) that will be provided to the participants where appropriate | |
| Written Consent will be recorded using the USW Consent Form Template. In the event of a non-English speaking participant, the interpreter will relay the information. | |
| How will you inform participants of their right to withdraw from the study? | |
| The right to withdraw will be explained both verbally and in the participants information sheet they will be given. | |
| How will you inform participants of the complaints procedure? | |
| The complaints procedure will be explained both verbally and in the participants information sheet they will be given. | |
| Checklist for managing Voluntary Informed Consent - Tick all that apply | |
| Please confirm that all respondents will be given an appropriate level of information about and be given adequate time to think about the information before being asked to agree to participate | ✓ |
| Please confirm that all participants taking part in an interview, focus group, observation (or other activity which is not questionnaire based) will be informed that anything they say which either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggests harm to a person might be caused • Indicates potential or actual professional misconduct • Outlines criminal activity Then, the information will need to be report to the appropriate authorities. | ✓ |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Please confirm that all participants completing a questionnaire will be informed on the Information Sheet that returning the completed questionnaire implies consent to participate. On-line: this message will be presented at the start (with a reminder at the end) of the questionnaire as part of an implied consent statement.</p> |  |
| <p>Please confirm that all participants being asked to provide personal data (sensitive and standard) will be told which legal basis is being cited for collecting and processing their personal information – this should be conveyed on the consent form and information sheet. In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.</p> |  |
| <p>Please confirm that all respondents will be told that they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • withdraw at any time, • ask for their data to be removed from the project until it is no longer practical to do so (e.g. following anonymization or, when a report has been written and submitted). |  |
| <p>Please confirm that personal data will only be retained for the purpose of this research and will be disposed of as soon as possible (e.g., immediately following anonymization).</p> |  |
| <p>Duty of Care to the Participants</p> | |
| <p>How will you ensure the participants' well-being during the research?</p> | |
| <p>With empathetic consideration, questions and conversation will remain sensitive to the potential loss participants may have experienced. The conversations will aim to focus on the positives of belonging and the participants will be reminded that the purpose of the investigation is to educate and help shape services to provide the best possible support for both themselves and future refugees and asylum seekers. In the event I become concerned with the well-being of a participant I believe our previously established relationship built on trust and respect, will allow for open and honest communication and I will be able to use my experience and knowledge as a Youth Worker to provide support.</p> | |
| <p>What information will you provide to the participants at the end of their involvement in the study (if appropriate)? Is it necessary to hold personal contact information for this purpose?</p> | |
| <p>Copies of the completed study will be given to staff at the GAP Centre to disseminate amongst participants.</p> | |

| |
|--|
| Does the Chief Investigator or any other investigator/collaborator have any direct personal involvement (e.g. financial, share-holding, personal relationship etc.) in the organisations funding the research that may give rise to a possible conflict of interest? If so, please describe these below and any arrangements in place to mitigate the conflicts. |
| No |
| Researcher Safety |
| Are there any issues around researcher safety and if so how will you address those? Are there any risks? What are the arrangements in place to mitigate risk? |
| No. Research will take place in a public building, with other people in the building. |

| | |
|--|---|
| 2. Managing Data | |
| How will you ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants? | |
| Data will be stored securely and protected with a password. Identifying information will be anonymised with names replaced with a participant letter/number as per USW Policies. | |
| Checklist for managing issues of confidentiality and anonymity Tick all that apply | |
| Questionnaires will be returned anonymously and indirectly | |
| Questionnaires and/or interview transcripts will only be identifiable by a unique identifier (e.g. code/pseudonym). | ✓ |
| Any lists of identity numbers or pseudonyms linked to names and/or addresses will be stored securely and separately from the research data. | ✓ |
| All names of people, places or organisations, which could lead to the identification of individuals or organisations, will be changed. | ✓ |
| I confirm that my research records will be held securely at USW according to the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2018, as well as | ✓ |

| | |
|---|--------------|
| the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 in accordance with USW guidelines | |
| I confirm that I will not use the research data for any other purpose WITHOUT contacting the Faculty Ethics Champion or USW Research Governance Officer in advance. This includes the sharing of research data with people outside of the research team. | ✓ |
| Data will be stored on a personal computer and, as well as the computer being password protected/encrypted, so will any document files. | ✓ |
| Data custodian: please indicate the supervisor/co-applicant member of USW staff responsible for archiving/destroying the data referred to in this application. The data custodian cannot be a student. | Kate Haywood |
| How will research findings be fed back to the research participants? | |
| Copies of the completed study will be given to staff at the GAP Centre to disseminate amongst participants. | |
| How will the research be disseminated to the wider community? | |
| Copies of the completed study will be given to staff at the GAP Centre to disseminate amongst relevant organisations. Copies can be provided to other relevant organisations that are currently supporting young refugees and asylum seekers ((Newport City Council, Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS), Newport Live, Urban Circle, etc) | |
| Attachments | |
| Tick all that are included | |
| Data collection tools | |
| Adverts and standard letters | |

| Security Sensitive Material | |
|---|---|
| Will your project involve any of these? NA to all X | <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Defence-commissioned work on military equipment or policy |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> EU security research including policy development |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> All work related to extremist groups (e.g. related to animal rights campaigners) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> IT encryption design for public bodies or businesses |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> All work related to terrorism |
| If you respond YES to any of the above please ensure your complete and attach the USW PREVENT for RESEARCH registration forms to this application | |
| Information Sheet(s) | |
| Consent Form(s) | |
| Researcher Safety Protocol (e.g. the lone worker policy) | |
| Other approvals, for example approval of external organisations allowing you access to their participants; or internal approvals and USW risk assessment. | |

| Applicant's Declaration | |
|---|---|
| <p>If your project is approved you must follow the process and documents you have submitted. If your application is not approved you will need to refer to this version of your application when preparing your re-submission. Please note if you intend on deviating from the approved protocol or documentation you will need to request approval for any changes.</p> <p>Please indicate the following:</p> | |
| <p>I have read and agree to abide by the latest versions of the relevant Research Governance documents which can be found at: https://universityofsouthwales.sharepoint.com/sites/ARBE/SitePages/en-GB/research-governance.aspx</p> |  |
| <p>Research Governance University of South Wales</p> | |

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| The University is committed to the following principles of good research practice. These are laid out in our USW Research Good Practice Code of Conduct which stipulates: That our research is underpinned with common values of rigour and integrity. | | |
| I have read and agree to abide by the Code(s) of Conduct identified at the start of this form | | ✓ |
| I understand that failure to follow my approved protocol constitutes research misconduct and the policy for such offences will be followed in such an instance | | ✓ |
| I confirm that the USW is responsible for this study | | ✓ |
| I confirm that all procedures that will occur within the research will adhere to USW Policy on Health and Safety and that where applicable, a thorough risk assessment will be completed <i>prior to</i> the research taking place | | ✓ |
| Print name: Michael Davy | Please sign: Michael Davy | |
| Date: 23/08/2023 | | |
| Supervisor's Declaration (for students). If missing, application should be rejected. | | |
| If the student's project is approved they must follow the process and documents they have submitted. If their application is not approved they will need to refer to this version of their application when preparing their re-submission. Please note if you intend on deviating from the approved protocol or documentation you will need to request approval for any changes. | | |
| I have read and agree to abide by the Code(s) of Conduct identified at the start of this form | | |
| I have read the guidelines accompanying this application form and understand that failure to follow these and the approved protocol constitutes research misconduct and the policy for such offences will be followed in such an instance | | |
| Print name: | Please sign | |

Date:

| Decision | |
|--|--|
| Approval | |
| Further Information needed and Resubmission required | |
| Rejected | |
| Notes | |



Model Information Sheet

Dear Participant,

As part of my MA Working for children and young people (Youth Work Initial Qualifying) at the University of South Wales, I am required to undertake a research project. The title of my research is: **A study exploring 'belonging' amongst young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.**

My research aims are to:

- Explore the significance, if any, of 'belonging' for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.
- To explore the enablers and barriers to 'belonging' for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.
- To gather data, providing local youth provisions and policymakers the opportunity to tailor services to create a sense of belonging for young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.

I intend to undertake this research using semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation, to find out your views on this subject. These methods will involve a conversation where you can talk about your experiences, as well as presenting your own images that you feel best represent 'belonging' to you. These will take place at USW, Newport Campus and will take approximately 1 hour. At the end of the semi-structured interview, we will be able to discuss your thoughts on the process through a debrief.

The dissertation will be used as part of my degree, and with the intention of positively affecting the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers accessing youth provisions in Newport, Wales. It may also be used in teaching, at conferences and in academic papers in the future. You do not have to take part and the decision to participate is entirely up to you. If you choose not to, it will not affect our relationship or any future youth support. If you change your mind during the study, you are free to withdraw or contact me directly without having to give a reason. You can also tell Chris Porter of Urban Circle, who can also pass on your decision.

The University of South Wales has given ethical consent for the study. All information collated via the semi-structured interviews will be stored on a password-protected computer in my office. You will not

be able to be identified from the information and all of the information will be destroyed once the piece of work has been completed and passed through the University exam boards.

The study will adhere to confidentiality and anonymity. This means that any identifying information will be anonymised with names replaced with a unique identifier, in this case, a participant letter/number as per USW Policies. I confirm that I will not use the research data for any other purpose without first contacting the Faculty Ethics Champion or USW Research Governance Officer in advance. This includes the sharing of research data with people outside of the research team.

Should you require further information or to make a complaint, the contact details of the Research Supervisor are below.

I again thank you for your participation in this research and you should feel proud knowing your contributions have the potential to positively affect the experiences of future youth refugees and asylum seekers.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Researcher: *Michael Davy* – [REDACTED]@students.southwales.ac.uk

Supervisor: *Catherine Haywood* – [REDACTED]@southwales.ac.uk



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project title: A study exploring ‘belonging’ amongst young, male, refugees and asylum seekers in Newport.

Researcher’s name: Michael Davy

Supervisor’s name: Catherine Haywood

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential (Participants to receive an alias).
- I understand that I will be audio-recorded during the interview.
- I understand that data will be stored in both hard and electronic format, with access being restricted to the researcher and relevant USW staff for marking. Both formats of data will be stored securely, with electronic data protected by additional levels of password protection.

- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research or if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed (research participant)

Print name **Date**

Contact details

Researcher: *Michael Davy* – [REDACTED]@students.southwales.ac.uk

Supervisor: *Catherine Haywood* – [REDACTED]@southwales.ac.uk

Interview Participant 1

R) First off thank you so much for taking the time to do the interview. We've gone through the information sheet and the consent form which you have read and signed. I really appreciate the time you are taking to do this.

1) The first question is, what do you understand belonging to be? So, a definition, how do you define it?

P1) Belonging is somewhere or some people that you belong with, for example, family, a place like a country, it could be certain people from the same country, that's what belonging is.

2) R) What does belonging feel like to you? Is there a sense that you get when you think of belonging?

P1) Basically, it's a feeling for me. let's say if you are with close family, I feel like I belong to it and I get that feeling. I feel like I belong to that family, it's just a feeling.

R) Is it a nice feeling?

P1) Yes, it's a very nice feeling. I would like to have it all the time, but it doesn't come all the time.

**3) R) Are there factors that help you develop a sense of belonging?
These are called enablers.**

P1) What does that mean?

R) You mentioned you develop a sense of belonging when you are with your family, so that would be one of the things. Being around family enables you to feel a sense

of belonging. I know you mentioned a few earlier on, so would there be any others? Don't worry if you repeat yourself. Places maybe where you feel that sense of belonging.

P1) Oh, that sense of belonging. I feel if say I'm in my country. I feel very belonging, because I see the people I grow up with, other families I would see all the time and seen when I was young. I feel belonging over there. I had friends over there and used to play football with them. We used to do lots of things. The houses are a little bit different. You know, like when I go over there I feel I very belong there?

R) What is it about the houses?

P1) They are different from the other places I went, for example, I came to the UK and the houses are very beautiful too, but they are very different to the ones I grew up with. Every country is a little bit different, but where I feel belonging is the place I was born. The houses are a little bit different and when I see them it gives me a sense of belonging.

R) It's a feeling, right? It's hard to explain. You are using your hands a lot, and I get that (P1 points to their chest/stomach), it's that feeling in your stomach, but I know it can be really tough to explain.

P1) Yes, you know the weather too, the weather is a little bit different. The houses over there, from the roof they are flat, because there is not that much rain, it is only sun. The houses in the UK are a little bit different, but if you see someone that's born in the UK and they go to my country and they see the houses are flat, they don't feel that belonging. But it's about where you are born. It's about being a human being, a place you are born, the place that you feel you belong to.

R) So, for you it's that place of birth, that gives the real feeling of belonging?

P1) Yes and it's about the weather too, also. Because most of my years I lived, I lived in an Arabic country called Yemen. Most of the time it was sunny and I was hot. That's the place that I felt like I belonged to. So, let's say when the sun hits me in the day, I get that feeling every time. I get that feeling because I had the memory of it. But let's say I come to the UK and live here for 6 years, I only see the cloud and rain, but when it comes to the summer and that sun comes out, you know, you get that feeling.

R) I know exactly what you mean, that's brilliant.

4) Can you think of a time when you felt a sense of belonging?

P1) Yes, there's a time I feel a sense of belonging when my family left me for a month, but then they came back and I felt so happy, and so belonging, because I hadn't seen them for a whole month, and I felt very happy. Also, there's a time when I seen a friend of mine I hadn't seen for a long time too, because you don't feel that loneliness, because you didn't see your friend for a long time. When he came back, I felt very happy, and it brought back lots of memories of me and him doing lots of things. Your friends are not just about being your friend, but its about doing lots of things with that friend. For example, let's say, you have the same thinking. I'm a person that likes to go out and my friends know this, so they are asking me "let's go out or something" and I will be very happy because I don't like sitting at home all the time. So me and him would go out, do lots of fun things, sometimes he sleeps with me and I sleep with him, like a sleepover.

R) So would you say it's that feeling of having someone who knows you, that stops you from feeling lonely and that then creates a sense of belonging?

P1) Yes, a friend is a person that makes you happy and if you have no friends, you might feel depressed. People are different, but for me, if I had no friends or anything like this, there is no sense of belonging with anyone else and you may feel unhappy or a little bit depressed. That's what I think.

5) R) The next question. **Are there any factors that get in the way of developing a sense of belonging?** We call these barriers or inhibitors. Are there any factors that get in the way of developing a sense of belonging?

P1) Yes, actually there are lots of things in mind. Let's say you make the wrong friends. For myself in the past I joined a team called Newport City (football team), so basically for them over there, people are a little bit different and I didn't feel belonging. Even though I was playing football, I didn't have the confidence to play the way I wanted. Most people were a little bit different, because the place I come from there's no swearing, but it was normal for them. There's lots of respect, and then when you come here and see those people, I know they've been friends for a long time with each other and it became normal for them to speak like this, but for a new person, I think they should change their attitude.

R) So actually, the way they speak and some of the words they use, because that's different to how it would be spoken at home, it stopped that feeling of belonging a little bit and made belonging more difficult?

P1) Yes, that one, but also sometimes they would ignore you. That's the only place I found ignoring was a little bit bad.

R) Why do you think they ignored you?

P1) Because of my language.

R) At the time were you able to speak fluent English?

P1) No, I wasn't fluent, just a little bit, a tiny bit.

R) So communication was a barrier.

P1) Yes, sometimes I would ask some questions, but I don't want to make it obvious, because they might laugh at the words coming from my mouth. Let's say I say it wrong or something like this, so I just make it quiet. I talk to one of the boys and they don't reply to me, but then someone else talks to them and they are like "yeah, what's up mate?", these kinds of things.

R) That's such a good answer, it was really important.

P1) That's one of the things, also having to move countries, that's one of the hardest things, because it's all about family to be honest. Because when your family moves to that country, there the ones responsible for you, especially at a young age. Some people might get along with a country they come to young, but some people they get no feeling there. For me, when I came to the UK, luckily, I came Newport, which is Wales, which was a little bit better than the places that they told me about. Let's say England, Scotland or other places - other people told me you don't feel that belonging because they are a little bit different and a little bit harder. That's what I heard from them.

R) So, other refugees and asylum seekers who have lived in parts of England and parts of Scotland have said it's harder to feel that sense of belonging?

P1) Yes, so when I first come here. It's a little bit different for everyone, but when I first come here I didn't find any racism, but I felt a little bit different from the others. In school, I couldn't find that belonging. Even though the teachers were helping me get

along with others, I couldn't feel that belonging with the classmates I was with. Firstly, because my language wasn't that good. Second, I was a little bit different to them, because my understanding, and communication with them was a little bit different. They might find some of the things they told me or do, I might find insulting or something like this.

R) Would you say these are culture things?

P1) Yes, basically I was just a little bit different from the others. But you just have to give yourself time and everything, then you get used to it. You learn people and their language, you know how they feel, you know how they react. But not everything is bad, there are countries that I went to, that teach you more things. Let's say you go to a country and people are a little bit different to you, but at the same time you respect that difference, and you just get on with it. By the time you move, you get wiser and more intelligent with others and understanding. I would say that is one of the good things that helps you and helps others to communicate and become more confident. I think this is one of the things the youth workers do well, they learn about people's cultures, and they get along, which gives you confidence.

6) R) Can you think of a time when you didn't feel a sense of belonging?

P1) I think I already answered that on the previous question, which is about Newport City (football). The Newport city is the only one.

R) So this was in football, in regards to the communication?

P1) Yeah, about the communication, the different culture, the different people. I wasn't that good at understanding other people, but now I do. That was the only time.

7) R) Thank you so much, so almost the last one. I've probably got an idea based on your last few answers, but **is belonging important to you?**

P1) I would say yes, and I think it is very important for everyone to be honest. Because I think it's part of your body, and the feelings that you get from actions you take or from other people from other places. I would say the feelings are in us and you can get them anywhere at any time. I don't know how to explain it, but it's just a beautiful feeling that makes you happy, makes you smile, I would say these kinds of things.

8) R) So the final question, thank you so much for making it this far. **How do you think youth work could help create a sense of belonging?**

P1) To be honest, I would say youth workers do most of the things correctly and perfectly. When I first come to youth club, one of the members of the youth club welcomed me very warmly. There's nothing to explain these feelings, but I felt very happy and was smiling all the time. I would say the most important thing they do is when you are not feeling belonging with the other people, the youth workers come straight away to help you out, and to be honest they give you the confidence to communicate with the others and become part of the family.

R) So from what you are saying, if they can help you integrate into a group it can help create a sense of belonging.

P1) Yes, that's the one.

R) Are there things that could be changed or added to create that sense of belonging?

P1) I would say no, they are doing a great job and they do all those things. I would say keep doing what you are doing, and I don't think you need to change anything. Future things, I don't know. But the things they are doing right now are very helpful and they are helping other people. I would say these things that they do might help another generation in the future.

R) So to finish off, I know you have brought with you a couple of photos based on the task I gave you. Your first photo, can you explain what the photo is and what that photo means to you?

P1) The photo is a family walking on the beach and it's sunny and hot. That gives me that feeling of belonging, as you have your family with you, walking in a very nice, sunny place, beautiful place, beautiful weather. It reminds you that when you go home after this, you will go home, you will say "Mum and Dad, thank you for bringing me there, I feel very happy". It is one of the things that is belonging, family.

R) The second photo, it looks like a city, with a lot of buildings, what is this?

P1) This is the one I speak previously on. This is the country I grew up in. There's the houses and buildings. In this country to be honest, this country I grew up in, there's no computers or anything like this. There is no television, except for sometimes, but mostly I just go out with my friends and play outside.

R) It looks really busy like a lot of people would live there.

P1) That's what you would think, but to be honest inside there are not much cars, it's all city. There are more details than in the photo, but you can't see it here. Inside the city there are lots of people, there's the neighbours you can find, little children you can play with. That's where I grew up and there's lots of communities to play with. I

felt very belonging over there, but to be honest, when I come to the UK I couldn't find those things.

R) Is it the community and how everyone knows each other?

P1) Yes, it's very close. The neighbours know most of the people that live there. We felt like a family to each other.

R) Then you have your third photo, what is this one?

P1) The third photo is about being with the right friends, the correct friends, that you feel you belong to. These are the people that respect you and understand you. Also, when you are feeling sad or in a time of need they always rush to help you out, regardless of what they have, or what they have experienced in life. Even if they have a sick family, they rush to make you feel happy. That is the definition of a friend, of friendship.

R) That's amazing! Thank you so much for your interview. It's been absolutely brilliant and I loved hearing everything you had to say. I really appreciate you, thank you so much.

Interview Participant 2

R) Thank you so much for agreeing to do this interview with me. We've read through the information sheet and you've signed your consent form. All your questions have been answered, so thank you for taking the time.

1) First question, what do you understand belonging to be?

P2) Belonging is like, you have to belong to all your relatives, and your jobs and they belong to you. There's a lot of things you can do like, visit friends that belong to you.

R) So for you it's the communities, friendship community, family community, work community. So, you belong to groups?

P2) That's it, that's it.

2) R) Amazing, when you feel belonging, what does belonging feel like to you?

P2) Belonging to me, I feel something of my things like I have it, I own it. So, when I have these things, nobody can touch my things. So, when you have your car, you can't let other people drive it, that's for example. For family, they belong to me and I don't like anybody hurt them, that's the feeling I have.

R) Like it's a part of you, part of something?

P2) Yes, it's a part of myself.

3) R) That's quite powerful, I really like that. Are there any factors that help you develop a sense of belonging?

P2) When I come to this country in 2019, I don't have anything to be honest with you. I was with my family, but I was boring, I can't handle this country, I don't have any

friends, I don't have anything. So, I thought I don't belong to this country and these things, so the first 6 months I just say "I want to go back home, I don't like this country" and these things, but a couple of years later I find a job and learn English, so I learnt the language, which I never expected, I never expected to learn it. I went to school, I went to college, I found a job and now I found everything easy for me. To be honest with you, in the UK you can find everything, there is a lot of nationalities, different food, different types of drink, different types of religion. You can even find mosques, there are a lot of mosques, there are a lot of church, you can pray wherever you want here.

R) That's right.

P2) I find it easier now, I get my license (driving) I get everything, I feel like I belong to this country now. I belong to things and want to return this favour to this country, because they give us a big favour and I don't know how to pay it back.

R) That's brilliant, what you said there about the license, that is something I assume as an asylum seeker you would have found difficult to get, because when people are trying to get the right to remain they can't get paperwork and different ID's, but being able to get your driving license kind of shows you are part of this country.

P2) Yes, part of the country, that's right.

4) R) Can you think of a time when you felt a sense of belonging?

P2) Yes, straight away after the lockdown, when the lockdown finished I started going to the park and playing football with everyone. There is a lot of nationalities, even UK people/ English people and I used to speak with them and they didn't find me as a refugee or something, they find me like as a brother, as a friend, you know, they have a nice relationship with me, they are friendly. You just have to try to speak

to everyone, they will be friendly with you, there is no anything, there was no racism no bullying for me.

5) R) Thank you so much, are there any factors that get in the way of developing a sense of belonging? They inhibit, they prevent you from feeling belonging.

P2) Yes, obviously, when I first come to this country I find everything don't belong to me, like everyone negative with me, everyone don't like me. After a couple of years, I find everything easy, but at first everyone when they move to a new country they find the country hard. Even if you go on holiday you gonna find it hard as well to get locations, to get everything, to get your food, to get things, so you can find it hard as well. It's the same thing. I moved to this country to live and remain in this country, so I found it hard, but a couple of years later it was easy for me. Even with a job, if you go to a new job the first couple of days you're going to find it hard, after you make friends and things inside you're going to find it easy, simple as that.

R) Something you mentioned to me before, it's the relationships and building those relationships.

P2) Yes, when you build those relationships, you are going to find everything easier and another thing, friends can help you. If you struggle with something they are gonna help you with it. Everyone can do it with you. But if you don't have a nice relationship with people, they obviously aren't going to help you.

6) R) Can you think of a time when you didn't feel a sense of belonging?

P2) So, at first obviously I didn't find any feelings with the other people, I didn't speak their language. I am from out of this country so I can't see or find anything, so it was hard for me, a hard moment for me.

R) So that initial moving to Wales, moving to Newport is where you found it difficult to get that sense of belonging?

P2) When I came to this country I came straight away to Newport and it was like, a busy city and busy everything.

7) R) Is belonging important to you?

P2) Obviously yeah, it's really important for me. Everyone, if you have any things to belong to you, so obviously they are really important to you, they are a part of your things a part of your feelings.

8) R) So, the final question before we look at the photos you've brought. How do you think youth work could help create a sense of belonging? Are there things we could do with young male refugees and asylum seekers to help create that sense of belonging?

P2) Just be friendly with them. Have a nice conversation with them. Don't tell them "you are a refugee", don't tell them these things, just treat them as a person as a brother. That's all I'm gonna say.

R) Brilliant, that is the interview concluded. I did ask as part of the photo-elicitation to bring in a couple of photos that mean belonging to you, so if we could go over them and you talk me through that would be brilliant.

So, you are showing me the first photo, what is this?

P2) This is a family photo. To be honest with you, it's a part of everything of me, like when I see this photo I just say "Oh god thank you" because they create me in this family. This family, I cannot pay them back what they pay me. So that's all I'm going to say. That's all my family, I love them, I love them.

R) The 2nd photo you've got me here, it's a school, is this your school?

P2) Yes, to be honest with you I had never been in a school all my life, but I been just 1 year in the UK in a Newport school, I studied year 11 and that was like 2019 and it was like very nice and friendly and there's a lot of memories in there, a lot of memories.

R) Do you have that feeling of belonging there with the people you went to school with?

P2) Yes, obviously, every 3 or 4 months I go over there and check on my teachers and just say "hello" to them, I love them man, I have a lot of memories of there.

R) So the 3rd photo your showing me, what have we got here?

P2) These are the friends and the relationships with the friends, so all of them are lovely friends. What they done to me I cannot return it back to them. They did big favours for me. They help me a lot. They always push me to do things, "come on you can do it".

R) So, again it's that community thing you mentioned, about how belonging to you is being part of something.

P2) Yes, it's a part of myself as well.

R) So we've got a photo of a beautiful house, what is this?

P2) So, where I live now, there's a lot of memories as well, so I cannot leave this house. If I have to leave, I will buy this house, if they don't like us anymore I will buy this house, because there are a lot of memories inside and I cannot forget these memories.

R) Do you feel a sense of security in that house?

P2) Yes, like where my mum used to sleep, I love these things.

R) You mentioned your Mum and the safety of your mum and mum being home. I'm assuming Mum's quite a big factor in your feeling of belonging?

P2) To be honest with you, my mum is all my life. I can't explain to you, my mum is everything, everything in this life, everything. As much as I can to make her happy, I'm still doing less.

R) I know what you are saying.

P2) I have to do a lot to make her happy, but I'm still doing less. Every year I do something for her. Lots of things for her just to make her happy, because she did a lot of things for me, she grow me up, she worked hard for me, she worked hard in her life so I have to return these things to her.

R) It's that feeling right?

P2) Yes, it's that feeling, the feeling and I can't return it back to her.

R) That's lovely. It's been absolutely brilliant talking to you today. Thank you so much for taking the time to do the interview and bringing with you the photos, it has been really appreciated. Thank you so much.

Interview: Participant 3

Thank you so much for agreeing to do the interview with me today. We have read over the information sheet which you are happy with and we have also read and signed the consent form, so let's crack on with questions.

1) R) What do you understand belonging to be?

P3) Belonging is like somewhere you can feel you belong there, for example, a culture, friends, language the area you live in.

R) So, it's the factors that make you feel like you belong

P3) Like, you feel like you are back in your own country.

R) So, you feel like you are a part of something.

2) R) What does belonging feel like to you?

P3) I feel like I'm happy that I'm here right now. I'm grateful that I came here to meet different kinds of people, from different kinds of backgrounds - from the same country or from a different country, it doesn't matter. To hear their stories as well sometimes to feel, say 'thank god I'm here', God gave me a better place to come.

R) What about a feeling in your body?

P3) It's like a feeling that makes you smile, makes you happier, makes you more excited, it makes you want to wake up older and enjoy your life.

3) R) Are there any factors that help you develop a sense of belonging?

That enable you to feel like you belong or that you have that feeling of belonging.

P3) When I'm with people that speak the same language as me, because I speak Arabic. Anyone that can speak Arabic, I feel like I can speak my home language to them

R) So your home language, your Mother tongue?

P3) It doesn't matter if they are from a different country, to be able to speak Arabic. All my life I have spoken Arabic, so when I speak Arabic, I feel like I can be me!

R) I really like that, because I suppose being able to communicate is key and even though we are communicating now and your English is really good and you have done school here, it is still not your first language. I'm sure that if this conversation was taking place in Arabic or with an Arabic interviewer it may be even easier for you to feel belonging.

So, you've got language as one of those things and being able to communicate, what other factors help you feel belonging?

P3) When I do activities with different kinds of people it doesn't matter their country, for example, football, when I play football with my friends against different people, it makes me feel like I'm enjoying myself now and everyone is enjoying it. It doesn't matter about race or nothing, it feels like everyone playing football is just playing the game.

There are different communities such as the 'GAP Centre' help people a lot, like people who come here. Lots of people that come here are depressed and have

nothing to do, so communities are very good to help people relax and talk to people. *You can find people from your own country, where you were born or from different countries.* Even speaking your language or another language you can learn from them. You have a sense of feeling you are in the same shoes. Like me and him are the same. I come from a different country as well and at first it was hard, but it become better because over time there is always something and good times are going to come after that.

R) I really like the feeling of community and that community is like being part of a group. You mentioned that you can be a part of a group that plays football, or you can be part of a group that are asylum seekers and refugees, or a group that speaks the same language.

P3) I come here with my family, so my Mum she cooked for me. Lots of people who come here miss their Mum's food, they miss their countries food, they miss everything, but for me I'm from Sudan but I came from, I lived in a different country where the food there is easy to get in this country, but some people who come from Sudan, it is very hard to get their food in this country as there are different names, if you don't know how to cook at all. Lots of my friends don't know how to cook, they don't know what to eat, they are depressed, they can't eat, they come here in good health, but they come here and they become skinnier. I had a friend who came here, he was healthy, but after coming here he became depressed, couldn't eat that much and when he sent a photo to his mum she started crying saying he's not eating

R) He needs Mum's home-cooked food! Do you find that living where we do in Newport, where there are lots of people from different demographics and different

countries, is it easier to get food in Newport as we have a lot more foreign stores and world stores?

If you ask me that same question 4 or 5 years ago I would have said it was very hard to get food from the community you want, but now 3 or 4 years ago there were lots of halal shops for people who are Muslim and shops selling international food and ingredients, everything. There is a place called Pill, where there is loads of foreigner's food, like Arabic food and African food, lots of different stuff you can buy, so it is easier for people to learn how to cook.

4) R) Can you think of a time when you really felt that sense of belonging?

P3) There are a couple of times, but the first time was when I came here and I didn't know anyone, so I was just chilling at home for a couple of months until I found the GAP Centre. When I found the Gap Centre they had loads of activities, but especially the football, because when I first come here I loved football but didn't know where to play it. I found the football where there are loads of Sudanese people, Arabic people, people from Africa even English people, British people loads of different kinds, and we used to play football and everyone used to enjoy it. Even if we were fighting in football, when the football finished we would shake hands, we laugh together and do stuff together.

R) So you really found that sense of belonging when you found the GAP Centre.

P3) The second time was when I found the Sudanese community, because when I lived in Lebanon there is a Sudanese community, but when I came here the first couple of years I didn't find any Sudanese community, but after 2/3 years loads of Sudanese people came here, that were my age. I chilled with them, lived with them,

eat with them, see how was life, because I never been to Sudan so I experienced life in Sudan without being in Sudan, because of them.

R) Even though you are from Sudan, your time growing up was spent in another country, so you were still able to get that experience?

P3) Yes, I was able to learn stories, new words, because every Arabic dialect is different, so I learnt new words, new stuff, new cooking.

R) You mentioned the importance of the Sudanese community and being surrounded by people from your home country/ where you came from, to you, that was really important?

P3) Yes, because I learnt lots from them.

5) R) Are there any factors that get in the way of developing a sense of belonging? We call them inhibitors, they prevent you from feeling belonging.

P3) When I first come here the Muslim people they don't know English, but when I first come here I already know English fluently - I understand everything, so it wasn't that difficult to adapt. There were a couple of things, probably the weather, it was raining a lot. I didn't mind it that much but for other people like my friends when they first come here it was raining a lot and it was very hard for them, because me when I first came I was used to wearing shorts when it was raining but they couldn't do that because they lived in Africa, and in Africa its always sunny and hot

R) It would have been really cold for them?

P3) It was really cold, so if its colder you need to get coats and coats are money and some people don't have money to buy coats. When they came here they were

provided with stuff but not lots of stuff, they don't provide you with expensive coats, they provide you with coats, but not the ones that make you really warm.

R) So, its not that it isn't a good make, that's not the problem. The problem is that it's just not warm enough and it doesn't do its job?

P3) Yes, especially in Wales, we live in Wales where it is raining a lot and is colder.

R) You mentioned in the start that you were lucky because you already spoke English when you came here, but you mentioned that for some people who didn't speak English it was quite difficult?

P3) Yeah it was very hard for people who don't know English, because some people are depressed for the first year because they can't speak English, they don't want to learn it. They feel like life is getting harder and harder and they can't do anything. Some people, a couple of them, went to school, but they couldn't communicate with people and some schools don't have Arabic speakers, so some people find it really, really, really hard to stay in school and some people causes them to leave the school and some people leave the school and go to college. For me school is the best place you can go. If you can come here and go to school its one of the best places you can go because you can learn a lot, you can learn English, people, you can learn teenager life, you can live life as a teenager, because one of the most important things is your childhood - if you can live it good, with good memories, you will enjoy the rest of your life. Even some people can't write Arabic so they can't even go on google to translate the language if they want something. Imagine If there is something wrong at home they can't talk to their social worker, because they can't communicate. If they needed help to go to hospital they can't because they can't communicate to say they are hurt.

R) I understand that's massive.

P3) I heard loads of stories from friends that when they first come here they couldn't do this, they couldn't do that, when I met them I help them a lot, even till now I do some volunteering.

R) Some Volunteer work?

P3) Yeah, I do some volunteer work in football, in everything, if they ask me anything about like banks, paperwork, they want to apply for something, I will try to help them. If I can't, I will go to somewhere they can help them. I can go and tell them the situation to make it easier for them. Some people will help them and they can be very happy because they've had some help.

R) Yes, that communication is massive.

6) Can you think of a time when you didn't feel a sense of belonging?

P3) Yes, probably the first month of school. Before I come here I went to school in Lebanon but I stopped in year 6 and then came straight away into year 10. I knew English and understood very well and could speak it, but the words wouldn't come out sometimes. Everyone used to speak English and they would try to speak to me, but I couldn't reply to them, so I didn't feel like I was one of them. After 2,3,4 months everyone used to say "yes Marko, safe, my guy" and stuff and slowly, slowly, become more friends then after 4,5,6 months I started laughing with them, playing with them, joking with them and stuff, and life became better and better.

R) That comment you made then that you didn't feel like one of them, can you talk a little more about this and what it means?

P3) For example, they would be talking about what they had yesterday for food, then suddenly switch to what the teacher did and that's conversation skills that I didn't have, so I couldn't talk to them.

R) So the way the conversations flowed?

P3) Yes, so for me to talk to them, I used to have to think, I couldn't just talk. For them, talking was very easy, as it was natural and they do it every day, but for me it was very, very difficult, so for me to be able to talk I had to think the whole day about something, about a topic to talk about, but for them it was 2 seconds.

R) I totally understand what you're saying, and that being "one of us/ one of them" as in the group, part of that community"

P3) Yes group, class, even outside they would always invite me to come out, but I would say no because I would feel like im quite boring because I cant talk and they would say why is he talking and they will say "weirdo" and stuff and like I didn't want to go out.

R) So, then your confidence was really low and its not that you don't want to talk, but it's difficult.

P3) Yes

R) Thank you so much for sharing that.

7) So it's almost the end. Is belonging important to you?

P3) I would say yes, 100%. I think belonging is important for everyone, to feel you are acknowledged from someone, that you're important because lots of people don't feel that. For example, to do activities together like youth work, cooking activities.

Lots of people would come and we would all have a laugh, and even learn skills, and

there are lots of trips to hiking, which older people, my age and younger people went and you can feel life in Wales is very nice. The houses are strong and very nice and you can breathe fresh air and you can go there and think about how life isn't that bad to come live here and it's going to get better.

R) Did you feel like you belonged when you were doing these activities

P3) Yes because everyone was hiking and was laughing together.

8) R) The final question before we look at the photos you've brought in. **How do you think youth workers could create a sense of belonging?**

P3) I have a couple... to stay active because lots of people when they come here, they get depressed because they're not active, so if there are lots of different activities such as hiking, football, cooking lessons for people that live at home who can't cook, they can do cooking classes with dishes from different cultures, to learn cooking. Lessons with people from similar backgrounds.

R) To understand where each other have come from?

P3) Yes, doing English lessons and maths lessons and any lessons that bring people together to be able to learn about this country. What they can do, what is fun, what is allowed and not allowed, even if there are lessons about law, what's good and what's not good. It will be very important for some people, they come here and think it's the UK, you can do whatever you want, but sometimes you can do 1 big mistake and that's it, you're not going to get another chance, so for people to know when somethings wrong, it's better.

If you can do trips, because we went on trips with the youth workers. We went to Arsenal and saw the stadium. Lots of people went and enjoyed it, even though it was like a 7-hour trip, 4 hours to go.

R) Sure, driving into London.

P3) Yes, we went to London then when I came back it was really nice. Even on the bus we had music, we were joking and having fun. We went there checked around and afterwards we had a football session there as there was a small pitch which we played on. They told us about Arsenal and the players, the history, and everyone enjoyed it. Even some people didn't know much English, but they knew football so they somewhat understood what had happened, so they had the knowledge to know what had been done.

R) I think you've mentioned it a few times but that being part of something together, as a group and as a community, not just being on your own. These activities let you do things together?

P3) Yes, so with football almost everyone who comes from Africa has a football background or played football. Some people have lots of knowledge and some people don't have lots of knowledge, but everyone knows football, so everyone enjoys football, and that's why if we can get stuff for people from similar backgrounds such as football it's good.

Another thing is equal treatment. Lots of people who come here have different social workers, different place, different house and almost everyone got different treatment. Some people they get better treatment from the other people, even if you are from the same country. There's different houses, some houses got playstations, some houses don't, some houses look better and got better heater, people, kitchen, better

social worker and some people think they are lucky and get more money. I don't know how it works, but some social workers get more money to buy from JD and if I tell my friend I get given £100 to buy whatever I want from JD, the other guy goes and tells their social worker "where is my £100 why is he getting £100". Probably the social worker says it's because he's with a different social worker. Then the guy is going to think "why is he getting better treatment we are the same, we are from the same country, are they racist, and they start thinking loads of other thoughts. Lots of people they come to me and say "these guys are racist", because they come here for 2/3 months and they want everything and the other guys is here for 2 years and he waited and waited and got lots of stuff from the social worker and probably saved up money. Some people they just come for 2 months and say "this guy has this and that and these guys are racist because he's got an iphone". I told them "they've lived here for 2 years, they've saved up money, sometimes the social worker buy you gift cards as presents, or they save up, you cant just come here and expect everything to be here for you.

R) So you think that everyone should be treated the same, once you've been here this amount of time you get this, rather than 2 people who have been here the same amount of time but if one has a better social worker than the other they get more opportunities and more things?

P3) Yes

R) That makes sense

The next part will be on the photo-elicitation we talked about. I've asked you to bring in a couple of photos or images that help convey belonging for you, so we are just going to go through some of those now. Ok, so the first photo you are showing looks

like a couple of people playing football. So, if you can describe what I'm looking at and how that means belonging to you?

P3) Like I said, everyone in the world knows football, everyone like tries football, every kid loves football and stuff and even some people who didn't have the chance to play football back in their country, they come here they can try. Those people from different backgrounds and different ethnicities, different race, different languages, different colour, different everything, they can play together doesn't matter, doesn't matter the colour, it doesn't matter.

R) So they can belong, regardless of all those things, it doesn't matter?

P3) Yes, you can play any position, we can enjoy, we can laugh, they can do whatever they want and it's very easy to play, especially in the UK because you can play football everywhere. There's loads of parks, for example, the place I used to live or Sudan there's not a lot of local parks you can play, not loads of football, not loads of teams you can play for free, so this country to be able to play football for free and even if you are so good you can even try to play for a team and get paid.

R) Do you think this is something that youth workers and youth work provisions should be trying to offer more for people?

P3) Yes, football training, teams, clubs, trying to help them, because some people have got potential, but they give up because they say "I'm in a new country, I can't do it anymore".

R) So this can create a sense of, belonging to a team or club. So onto the 2nd photo, what am I looking at here?

P3) You are looking at somewhere you can play games such as Playstation, pool, table tennis, anywhere you can find a community there and like involve lots of people, you can enjoy a laugh, have fun, and waste time, because lots of people who come here for the first couple of months they just stay home, so if there's somewhere they can stay active and social it can help them with their mental, because lots of people have mental problems.

R) So again, that being part of something, being a part of a community or around friends, even if just wasting time, it will still help them with feeling they belong and their mental health.

Thank you so much for taking part in this interview, I've definitely learnt a lot and there were some absolutely brilliant answers you've given. So, thank you again, it has been really appreciated.