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How do Children and Young People, who have lived with Domestic Violence, View, Understand and Experience the Idea of Home?

Kirsten Ellen Hall

Abstract

It was part of the High Sheriff of Tyne and Wear's priorities to improve the situations of children living with domestic violence, and a number of housing providers came together to fund this work.

There has been an increased interest regarding children and domestic violence. Research has sought to highlight the effects on children, and more recently there has been growing recognition that children are not passive witnesses within these situations and are actually victim/survivors in their own right (Sixsmith et al, 2015). This study has sought to contribute to existing knowledge and unearth further insight into children's lives. This has been possible because the study has taken a distinctive approach, by channelling all of the investigation through the lens of home. There has also been additional emphasis on what constitutes resilience and agency in that context, and a concentration on the housing and welfare policy context underpinning the findings.

The research was conducted using qualitative interviews. Sixteen professionals from a range of services related to the subject area participated, as well as thirteen adult survivors who had all lived with domestic violence as children. These discussions illuminated the vast discrepancy between the accepted positive facets of home and how it is conversely experienced by children living with domestic violence. Crucially the research has also highlighted that children directly experience coercive control by perpetrators. This insight has then formed a basis of challenge to what resilience looks like and how agency is interpreted. It suggests that a quiet, studious, mature child is not always 'doing alright' but is potentially being frightened and controlled, and that the agency children display may well be an act of necessity in the absence of adult responsibility or intervention. The overall analysis of the policy context has identified a trend towards increased reliance on charitable support and a reduction in choices regarding necessities such as housing and food.

The research proposes that there needs to greater awareness of children's direct experiences and appreciation of their status as victim/survivors. It concludes by recognising that further research through the lens of the home will provide further insight into how children's lives are impacted by domestic violence both in the immediate and beyond.

**How do Children and Young People, who have lived with
Domestic Violence View, Understand and Experience the
Idea of Home?**

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April 2020

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Declaration

I confirm that no part of the material presented in this thesis has been previously submitted by me or any other person for a degree in this or any other university. In all cases, where it is relevant, material from the work of others has been acknowledged.

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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The person I need to primarily and absolutely thank, and who has consistently given unconditional emotional and practical support, is my Mum. When I started this research I was a single (sole) parent to a two year old son, emotionally raw, and practically and financially struggling. My mother helped me keep all the plates spinning then, and has continued to do so throughout the many subsequent changes that have occurred in my life.

There was a certain amount of serendipity in finding this PhD. My personal circumstances in early 2015 had led me to 'cold call' Professor Nicole Westmarland regarding job opportunities, and through this contact she informed me of the PhD scholarship available. The chances of a successful application was regarded as minimal and so it was truly amazing when I was awarded it. I would like to thank Nicole for this opportunity and the academic support. However, again with some degree of serendipity, there was real understanding about my situation as a truly single parent. We also both went on to have further babies during my PhD engendering enhanced understanding between us. It has been a privilege to be supervised by someone with such wide ranging expertise both in academia and beyond.

I would also like to thank all of the early researchers into children and domestic violence. It is easy to criticise studies and identify gaps, however sometimes it is those early studies, which exist against a less comprehensive backdrop which uncover the most raw and telling insights. There is so much information online and through remote access, that there is a tendency to skim read everything to fit it all in. Sometimes we lose the benefits of spending the time to actually fully ingest, an old school, well written book. *Private Violence Public Shame*, published by Cleveland Refuge and Aid for Women and Children (1984) illustrates this sentiment perfectly.

All of the people that have taken part in the research have to be acknowledged. Thanking people implies some kind of gratitude for their part in my personal achievement. It is more than that. I am also humbled that people wanted to share their experiences in the hope that tangible changes will happen. I intend to try and attain that through the obvious links with funders but also beyond that through alternative mediums and forums.

CRIVA has been there throughout my PhD. Living away from Durham, and being a single parent, it would have been easy to feel completely detached from university life. However, while I did still feel that at times, the CRIVA collective is something that I always felt part of and many of the members have supported me at various times. In particular Stephen Burrell and Kelly Henderson have been at the end of the phone whenever I needed them.

Finally I would like to thank the 'legacy benefits' system. I was lucky enough to start and finish my bursary (3 years of funding) under the 'legacy benefit' regime. A bursary, at that time, was not classed as 'earned income' therefore additional qualifying needs, such as children, were met unconditionally. In other words, I still got Child Tax Credits. In the course of the PhD I had another baby, and when I returned to study following a year out, I was able to still claim child tax credits and I received more because I had two children. This extra help meant that I could afford to put my 1 year old in nursery and still maintain a reasonable standard of living.

Under Universal credit, the bursary would have been fully considered as income and I would have basically been in receipt of the same income as a single student living in student accommodation. Legacy benefits have protected my children from poverty throughout my study. It is likely that there will be less 'women like me' completing further education in the future.

Dedication

This PhD is dedicated to all the invisible children living through lockdown 2020.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background to the Research

This PHD research project came from a desire to learn more about housing issues faced by children who are living with domestic violence. The catalyst for this was the High Sheriff of Tyne & Wear and alumna of Durham University, Ruth Thompson, OBE, who's stated goal for 2015 was 'to help children affected by domestic violence and abuse'. The project has been funded by a consortium of donors from the housing sector, led by the Gentoo Group but also including Poplar Homes, Incommunities, Grainger Trust (Grainger plc), North Star Housing Group, Derwentside Homes and Home Group via Stoneham.

The generosity of the funders means that new insights into this subject are possible and will hopefully result in children living in these circumstances receiving enriched support, suited to their needs and improved accommodation experiences.

Housing Associations often have access to 'hidden' spaces in a way that other service providers don't so enhanced knowledge in this sector may prove to be intensely valuable. Peter Wallis, Chief Executive of Gentoo stated, 'Through this scholarship we hope to help those who need help the most and eradicate the crime and the longer term effects abuse can have on victims.'

This PhD scholarship and scholarship will form part of the Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRIVA) at Durham University.

1.2 Overview

It is widely accepted that human beings need shelter. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation" in Psychological Review. This hierarchy of needs puts physiology as the most basic need which has been interpreted as including food, air, water and shelter. The next most important need is stated as safety, which has been interpreted as security, and in some instances has specifically referred to a home. This theory could be seen as an attempt to articulate the idea that shelter, physical protection from the elements alone, is not enough to create a home and there are various other components and features that humans need to attach to a shelter in order for it to represent something meaningful to them.

1.3 What is Home?

The notion of home is an extremely complex concept for which meanings can differ depending on cultural and historical contexts and individual experiences. For example, home can be a geographical place, family, feeling or community. However, for the purposes of this thesis the notion of home will be the multi-dimensional concepts that surround private shelter. In other words home and housing will be conflated, as is common in western cultures, however it is necessary to clarify the nature of the conflation further. It is not supposed that the two terms or realities are interchangeable, rather that home will be conceptualised, in the main, through the prism of a physical structure, usually a house. In other words 'a house is not necessarily nor automatically a home (Blunt, 2006). However, the premise that the idea and meaning of home is created within a house by a series of interactions both within and without the structure is accepted. The location of the home within a structure is linked to a sense of place. As Douglas (1991) argues, 'home starts by bringing some space under control' (1991: p. 289). Furthermore, it is argued that there is sociological broad acceptance of the rights associated with this space, for example privacy and protection from intrusion (Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017). To extend the net of 'home' beyond these boundaries to include more abstract definitions in any detail is not possible within the realms of this research. Mallet (2004) offers a concise description of home that serves this research:

Home is more than a shelter. It is a repository for complex inter-related, and at times contradictory socio-cultural ideas about people's relationship with one another, especially family, and with places, spaces and things (Mallett, 2004, p. 84)

1.4 A Short History of Housing

It is possible to see the 1970s as the beginning of a new kind of politicisation of the home. In 1974 the Government issued a circular to both social services departments and housing authorities. It became known as the Joint Circular and urged social services to transfer any stock held, to housing authorities in order that homeless duties could be discharged to them. It also identified 'priority groups' that it was recommended should have a claim on Local Authority Housing (Stewart and Stewart, 1993). These priority groups had a strong resemblance to the categories of 'priority need' that were set out in the Housing (Homelessness) Act 1977. This Act put the responsibility for homelessness squarely with Local Authorities and included explicit criteria for establishing local connection, deciphering intentional and unintentional homelessness and as well as identifying circumstances of

priority need, which included fleeing violence. At that time the provision of housing rested on Local Authorities own stock and there was no extra resource available to local authorities to realise these new responsibilities.

This legislation can be seen as a departure from the traditional role of social housing which was largely to house the working classes rather than provide a safety net for the most vulnerable. This departure was the beginning of social housing being inextricably linked with the welfare state and protection of the people in need. Social rented housing in England is now provided by local authorities and housing associations, although they are more widely referred to as registered social landlords (RSL). Social rented housing can be characterised in three ways: rents are below market levels and not solely for profit, it is administratively allocated re need rather than ability to pay, and the quantity and quality is more directly influenced by political considerations than is generally the case in open market housing.

In 1981 there were over 5 million social homes, by 2015 there were less than 2 million (National Audit Office, 2017). However 1980s council housing in particular became to be seen as a problem, representing everything, viewed by central government at the time, as wrong with Local Authorities, such as excessive spending and independent financial management (Malpass 1994; Malpass, 2008; Pawson, 2007; Somerville, 2011; Duffy Jones, 2016). Housing was singled out for cuts and Local Authorities were increasingly subject to new housing policy objectives, termed as a 'disabling of local authorities' (Malpass, 1994). The reduction in funding and independence in this area occurred in parallel with a push to bring Housing Associations to the fore in terms of providing social housing. To some this marked the beginning of a privatisation of the social housing provision and increased scope for policy, relating to social housing, to be controlled by the centre (Pawson and Mullins, 2010). There was deemed to be a general assault on credibility of council housing while at the same time as Local Authorities were given increased responsibility for dealing with situations of crisis under greater financial constraint. In addition by 1988 the private rented sector had been completely deregulated in terms of rents and there was a new regime for housing associations (Malpass, 1994). This set the tone of future housing policy and practice up to the present day.

Significantly the Housing Act 1996 famously removed the automatic link between accepted homelessness and a subsequent right to permanent housing. Under current homelessness legislation, local authorities must ensure that suitable temporary accommodation is available for homeless households who are in priority need and unintentionally homeless until 'settled accommodation' can be found.

It is worth noting that much of the literature that seeks to analyse, describe and comment on housing both currently and from a historic perspective (Pawson, 2006; Malpass, 2008; Forrest, 2014; Bramley, 2016) fail to address the issue of gender within housing trends and current policy.

Finally it is important to note that it was in the 1970s that the refuge movement began, emerging out of the second wave of feminism, discussed earlier. It was a grassroots development based on the idea that women could be in a female only environment and as well as accessing safety could be exposed to an education about domestic violence, and its links to patriarchy. Refuges are an accepted element of accommodation provision for women and children. There are a number of changes and developments in relation to refuges which are cited in Chapter Two.

1.5 Definition of Domestic Violence

The Home Office definition of domestic violence (2013) is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

This broader characterisation has led some academics to use the term Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) when referring to violence that takes place between partners and ex-partners. However for the purposes of this research the term domestic violence will refer to the identified behaviours above, solely in the context of violence or partners and ex-partners, therefore excluding wider familial violence.

There is beginning to be at least, as a result of campaigning by women's groups and academics, increasing acknowledgement by government and the law, that domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour and should be recognised as such. However a paper by Kelly and Westmarland (2016) argues that continuing to include 'any incident or pattern of incident' in the Home Office definition allows space for domestic violence still to be seen as a 'one off' occurrence and mimics how men describe the domestic violence they commit. Therefore although the current definition may reflect women's experiences more accurately there is perhaps still some advancement to be made.

1.6 Domestic Violence and Home

The issue of domestic violence and home has been inextricably linked throughout research and continues to remain a focus of investigation (Kelly et al, 2015; Scottish Women's Aid, 2016; Solace Women's Aid, 2016). All of these recent studies have focussed on the difficulties in securing settled accommodation which implicitly refers to a home, following a process of exiting domestic violence. However, Abrahams (2010) articulates how the concept of home is felt and experienced by women who have fled domestic violence:

Home was a word with deep emotional significance for all the women, it meant far more to them than a roof over their heads or even a safe place to live with their children (Abrahams, 2010, p. 31).

The significance of home in relation to domestic violence has also been studied with an emphasis on how home is experienced by women in this context. Wardhaugh (1999) refers to women feeling 'homeless at home' to demonstrate that the structure of home does not necessarily equate to experiencing a home in the conventional sense. This echoes Stark (2007) who essentially sees coercive control as negating self-direction, which is particularly evident in the home due to the connotations of safety, comfort and self-expression.

1.7 The Position of Children

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of 'significant harm' as the threshold for intervention by services. In 2002 this definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (implemented on 31 January 2005) so that it may include, "for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another" (The Voice of the Child, 2002). This amendment reflects the increased awareness of how children can be affected by domestic violence, which is a departure from the notion that children are not being harmed unless they are being directly abused.

This awareness is also reflected in increased interest from researchers into children and domestic violence which have involved substantial undertakings to understand what the effects on children can be (Abrahams, 1994; McGee, 2000; Mullender, 2002; Hester and Pearson, 2007; Hague, 2012). Further studies into children and domestic violence have focussed more on children as active agents rather being positioned as being 'done to' in situations of domestic violence (Overlien, 2009; Overlien and Hyden, 2013; Katz, 2015; Sixsmith et al, 2015; Callaghan et al, 2016, Callaghan et al; 2018).

1.8 Research Rationale and Aims

A search of the literature revealed very few studies which looked specifically at the combined issues of domestic violence, home and housing, and children.

The literature regarding children and domestic violence regularly refers to the issue of loss, and this is often connected with leaving a house as well as the possessions, family and friends, and school, associated with it. However this issue remains situated within a broader discussion of the impacts of domestic violence on children, and is rarely explored in more detail with specific reference to children's experiences of housing and home.

There has been research into the problems children face when living in temporary housing. Shelter (2004) highlight a number of issues for children such as disruption in education, safety fears, depression, difficulties in making friends and lack of places to play and do homework. While the report successfully brings attention to the plight of children living in these conditions, it relied solely on the views of parents and professionals about how children were affected. Bleak House (2019), the recent research carried out for the Children's Commissioner did involve directly asking children, as well as parents and professionals, about their experiences of temporary accommodation. However, temporary housing is only one potential experience for children living with domestic violence.

Baker (2007) asked children directly about their experiences of refuge, following fleeing domestic violence with their mothers. Similar themes to the Shelter research emerged with children citing problems such as losing friendships, embarrassment, poor support levels at evenings and weekends, lack of space to do homework, and not being able to go out. The children in this study lived in rural areas, with restricted access to alternative accommodation, and therefore they often had to leave their home areas which was identified as problematic. However this is one specified issue that relates to refuge and geographical setting. It is therefore acknowledged that further research is required in this area to further understand children's experiences.

As previously discussed, in order to accurately ascertain children's experiences, views and opinions it is necessary to gain insight from direct experience, either from children themselves or adults who had those experiences in childhood. Where this has occurred in research regarding domestic violence, there has been a lack of focus on housing. Where there has been a concentration on housing and domestic violence, direct research with children has been minimal. In addition both lines of research (domestic violence and

housing, and children and domestic violence) have retained a focus on experiences of refugees/temporary accommodation. Therefore research on how children and young people who have lived with domestic violence, experience, view and understand their idea of home in a range of circumstances, is important.

There is a gap in research which spans these two issues. Namely how children who have lived with domestic violence view their experiences of housing, and their ideas of home. It is known that home, and a sense of place is a fundamental feature of life which can ideally provide a sanctuary from the pressures of the outside world, a place in which to be yourself. However, how children who live with domestic violence relate to these concepts is still largely unrepresented.

This research will demonstrate that conducting enquiries through the lens of the home potentially provides greater insight into how children living with domestic violence experience their day to day lives.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This research project will be placed within a framework of feminist theory that conceptualises domestic violence and women's status in society, and how sex inequality manifests itself. Romito (2008) describes a number of areas where women are discriminated against such as political representation, abortion and rights, and access to education and paid work, as well as highlighting that women continue to take on the majority of unpaid work, domestic work and care. This links to the original 'seven demands' set out in the National Women's Liberation Conference in Birmingham in 1978 which included, equal pay for equal work, legal and financial independence, free childcare and free access to contraception and abortion, and freedom from intimidation by the threat or use of male violence. None of these demands have yet been fully realised.

Some feminists argue that male violence is connected to, and sometimes sustained by these wider gender inequalities within society (Hester, Kelly and Radford, 1996; Kelly, 2006; Stark, 2007; Romito, 2008; Westmarland, 2015; Kelly and Westmarland, 2016).

Although progress has undoubtedly been made, all these forms of gender discrimination continue today, and serve to maintain a society in which male violence against women is implicitly condoned and upheld, and sometimes overtly supported and promoted (Westmarland, 2015, p. xili)

There is recognition that some laws now exist to address gender inequality and protect women from violence, cultural norms such as victim blaming. However, the assumed privacy of family, expectation and continuation of gender specific roles, and related inequality of resources serve to ensure the endurance of discrimination.

In various countries and cultures, many men expect to dominate and control women, accepting no opposition or refusal, and are prepared to use violence, in various forms, including death, if women resist (Romito, 2008 p. 19).

Nixon and Humphreys (2010) argue that the success of the movement against domestic violence is in part down to the frame within which it is understood and represented - essentially that domestic violence is common, dangerous and does not respect social stratifications such as class or race. However they additionally seek to highlight how other aspects of structural inequality intersect with domestic violence to create multiple oppression:

This (multiple oppression) needs to be understood within the broader analysis of interlocking systems of power and domination. In this process, a single monolithic framing of domestic violence is challenged without losing the attention to the broader patterns of discrimination and oppression through which this destructive social problem is perpetuated (Nixon and Humphreys, 2010, p. 151)

This theoretical framework is particularly useful when addressing issues relating to domestic violence and housing as it is often in the area of housing where women experience further difficulties as a result of oppressive practices. This has been demonstrated by Henderson (2018) who found victim blaming and misogynistic practices present in housing professionals dealing with victim/survivors.

1.9.1 Theoretical Perspectives of the Child

It is important to briefly set out perspectives associated with childhood studies in order to explore and place this research within a theoretical framework relating to the study of children and childhood. While it is recognised that children themselves are not spoken to, the testimony from adult survivors is primarily about their experiences as children, and how those experiences have continued to impact.

In the 1980s and 1990s a new perspective emerged regarding research involving childhood and children, resulting from a belief that children had been somewhat marginalised within disciplines such as anthropology and sociology. This new perspective has been referred to as a 'new social study of childhood' which primarily argues that children be studied in their own right and are considered as 'being' rather than becoming, childhood should be viewed as socially constructed, and children should be considered as active agents in their own lives (James and Prout, 1997; James et al., 1998; Prout, 2005).

While this provides an attractive proposition as a principle for ensuring children's views and experiences are captured, there are a number of challenges to this paradigm which provide more nuanced and complex interpretations of where to place childhood within study and beyond. Furthermore, there is a definitive move away from what is viewed as western ideas of dualism whereby the concept of oppositions and divisions are used to describe the world, for example individual versus society, and micro versus macro (Raithelhuber (2016). This is demonstrated by the seemingly contradictory positions of studying children in their own right while simultaneously accepting the notion that childhood is socially constructed which inevitably implies a narrative and reality constructed by adults, and also that childhood study in itself is potentially constructed in order to frame the treatment of children as unfair or unjust (Hammersley, 2017). In other words, the more the idea of constructionism is accepted the less it makes sense to view the child as in some way autonomous and separate. Moreover, when this dualism is applied to agency, viewing it as dynamic and creative, versus the solid unmoving nature of structure, it fails to illuminate our understanding of how and why agency occurs.

Oswell (2013) sets out five myths of childhood studies that all interlink and present with a consistent underlying theme of connection, and rejection of isolated autonomy and difference in children and childhood. Children are identified as social beings over and above dependency which renders them, like adults, and their capacities are a result of their relations with others. There is also a challenge to the idea of child and adult existing in binary silos where the categories of child and adult remain separate and can't overlap in terms of characteristics or abilities. 'We cannot assume a generalised series of equivalences in the manoeuvring of children and adults, nor can we assume a principle which divides between the two and locks the meaning of each as a binary relation between them', (2013, p. 266). These principles are then brought into the concept of space in that 'children's space' even when designed for them is overlooked by adults, and built and designed by adults, and also scale. The myth of scale relates to an assumption that

children's agency occurs on a small, local scale almost beneath bigger and more overpowering structures of for example, family or education. The final myth addressed is that of the child as social agent where it is essentially argued that agency doesn't start or finish with any individual agent and has to be considered within narrative structures and in the context of other characters with agency. It is also recognised that there are multiple possible narratives depending on who the contributor is and the perspective from which their story is told. This is argued to be much more useful than reducing behaviour to simply active or passive. Furthermore, without relational context, in terms of agency, it is difficult to be explicit about how action, freedom and autonomy can be attributed to an individual. It is vital that agency is questioned in terms of the complexity of how it came to be realised in terms of the situation and also the other entities within which it was mediated (Rainthelhuber, 2016; Hammersley, 2017).

These perspectives are highly relevant and valuable for this research, which involves adults recounting their experiences of childhood, for several reasons. As has been discussed childhood does not occur in a vacuum and the transition from childhood to adulthood does not happen overnight with a change from one set of characteristics to something completely different. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that adults can still relate and explain their childhood selves and the situations they were living in. In addition, the concepts of agency are particularly useful. Adults are often able to locate themselves, as children, within a context that they perhaps understand more fully, as a result of the intervention of time and space which perhaps lends itself to greater insight in this context. It is also important to highlight the idea of multiple narratives in that the survivors, as sole contributors to their story, ultimately only have their own stories to tell. Finally, while there is agreement that dualism should be rejected as a framework for research and analysis because of the arrow framework and the inherent contradictions, it is necessary to hold onto the principle that children deserve to be recognised in their own right and not simple as appendages of their parents or wider society. There is an attempt to resolve some of these contentions by describing the study of childhood like a cloth where various disciplines are interwoven in a way that enhances understanding even in the face of apparent contradictions. As Holmberg (2018) states:

In the process (of entwining different disciplines), it will ensure the continued academic rigour and theoretical development of childhood studies, without the need for creating and sustaining false dichotomies, or sacrificing the potential political power that comes from the recognition of childhood as a single social category, which must be distinguished from adulthood. (Holmberg, 2018, p. 497)

This is particularly pertinent for this research as there is still a limited picture with regards to how living with domestic violence is experienced and understood for children and how that impacts of their sense and view of home. Considering these perspectives from childhood studies promotes the need to consistently analyse findings within an acknowledged context of relational complexity.

1.10 Thesis Structure

This thesis is comprised of eight chapters.

Chapter one has provided a background of the research, an overview of the subject area, the aims of the research, and the theoretical framework guiding the research as a whole.

Chapter two provides a theoretical analysis of understandings and concepts of home, and the covers potential differing experiences relating to gender and specifically domestic violence. The limited reference to children and home is reflective of the available literature.

Chapter three examines how children experience domestic violence, with a specific focus on resilience and how it is perceived.

Chapter four addresses methodology which includes the theoretical frameworks relevant for the research model and the qualitative methods employed. There is also an in-depth discussion regarding analysis, ethics and reflexivity.

Chapters five to seven examine, analyse and identify themes from the findings. There are also separate discussions in each chapter to consider and evaluate how the findings link with existing research.

Chapter eight draws together the main findings from the research with reference to the research questions. There is a deliberation of the contribution to knowledge of the research both in terms of academic understanding and professional practice. This chapter ends with recommendations for future practice and highlights scope for future research.

Chapter Two: Home and Housing and Welfare Reform

2.1 Introduction

The number of people in England who are experiencing a lack of the most basic need, shelter, is on the rise. According to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) autumn report of 2015 the number of rough sleepers taken from a snapshot of one night had risen 30% from the same time in 2014 to 3,569 (DCLG, 2015, p.1). Many charities in the field, for example Crisis, highlight that these figures only represent a snapshot, and the figure over a course of year is actually much higher. Crisis also claim that, using the 'one night' system, 4,751 rough sleepers were counted or estimated in the autumn of 2017, which translates as a 169% increase since 2010 (Crisis, 2018).

There has also been a consistent rise in the number of households in temporary accommodation over roughly the same period. It is reported by the Department of Communities and Local Government that the total number of households in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2016 was 71,540, up 11 per cent on a year earlier, and up 49% since 31 December 2010. It is also reported that In Quarter one of 2016, the presence of dependent children in the household was the primary reason for the household being classed as priority need which accounts for 69% of acceptances. Within this category lone parent households were the most common household type accepted with 51% of all acceptances in the same period. This breaks down as 4% male parent and 47% female parent which is significant as it highlights the discrepancy in gender divide in reliance on state assistance for housing when children are involved, a point returned to later in the chapter. There were 5,980 households in bed and breakfast style accommodation as at 31 March 2016. Of these 2,920 (49%) had dependent children or expected children of which 970 had been resident for more than 6 weeks. London accounted for 73% of the households in temporary accommodation highlighting a geographical divide regarding this kind of housing (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2016).

These marked increases in people experiencing housing problems have resulted in the term 'housing crisis' being widely accepted, particularly in relation to the situation in London (Edwards, 2016). In parallel with this analysis and, after many years of neglect, housing is edging to the top of the political agenda. The changing landscape of housing tenure in the years since the financial crisis has disrupted previously unchallenged assumptions about owner occupation. The simultaneous restrictions on mortgages, rise in private sector rents, rise in house prices (particularly in London), increased job insecurity, decline in real wages

and growing discrepancies between supply and demand of social housing have contributed to a debate on housing unseen for decades. Since 2010 a political agenda of austerity has also been pursued, with changes to the benefit system including restrictions on housing benefit and the introduction of Universal Credit, which has been widely criticised for leading to increased issue with housing such as rent arrears and evictions.

This chapter will cover a comprehensive review of literature regarding home and the idea of home. This review will place an emphasis on women's experiences of home and also include an exploration of an ideal home for a child, both the present and also the past. This will prompt further discussion about the impact of lived experiences on imagined homes in the future. Housing policy is addressed including more recent policy change which has implications for housing access and the opportunities available regarding different tenures. A wider discussion regarding welfare reform is also undertaken in this context. The final section will endeavour to return to the idea of home and situate it within the social and economic policy context set out. This will include looking at where we are living now and where we locate our idea of home.

A consistent theme throughout the chapter is a recognition that a significant amount of the literature about housing and homelessness do not make reference to the differing experiences of men and women, and children, particularly in relation to domestic violence. It has been stated that 'the literature notably lacks an analysis of how patriarchal and capitalist social relations are articulated in housing' (Watson, 1986, p. 83). In addition there is similar recognition of the disproportionate reliance on the state of women and children and the broader issue of the feminisation of poverty. Specific reference is made to domestic violence in this context, both regarding legal frameworks of protection, and available resource.

2.2 The Idea and Meaning of Home

As stated in the Introduction, for the purposes of this research the concepts of home and physical structure will be conflated to an extent, as is usual in western culture, whilst recognising that a house does not make a 'home' in and of itself.

Academic writings on the concept of home span many disciplines and there have been a number of attempts to draw together the concepts, philosophies and analysis of home in order to produce a comprehensive review of the literature, and the multi-faceted nature of the home (Chapman, 2001; Mallett, 2004; Heathcote, 2014; Fox, 2016; Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017). Mallett's *Understanding Home* (2004) is particularly relevant in that the paper

takes contributions from many academic fields including sociology, anthropology, psychology, human geography, history, architecture and philosophy, and shares the focus of home in terms of housing, history, culture and the relationships experienced. The paper provides a comprehensive overview of relevant literature that neatly pulls together the general themes of home that can be seen as relevant within the boundaries and confines of the term in this research.

There is also further literature from specific, and varied academic disciplines that seek to analyse and dissect different perspectives, and historical social and cultural contexts. This literature provides insight into the home context and its evolving relationship with society, family, the state and economics, and explores how social norms are responded to, and reproduced (Rybczynski, 1986; Chapman, 1999; Blunt, 2006; Mckie, et al 1999; Heathcote, 2016; Fox, 2016). More recently Atkinson and Jacobs (2017) have produced a comprehensive investigation into all aspects of the home and recognises that study in this area is critical given its 'massive importance to individuals, social groups, governments and supporting industries.....and the formation of deep-running social norms and discourses' (2017, p.16)

2.2.1 What does Home Represent?

Saunders and Williams' seminal paper, *The Constitution of the Home: Towards a Research Agenda* (1988) sought to bring the home into focus and 'reawaken the links between sociology and housing such as community, neighbourhood and social status' (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p. 81). There is a central argument, that with the exception of social anthropology, the concept of home had been somewhat neglected when thinking about the changing entity of the home as a unit of consumption rather than production, and a reflector and driver of social change. The paper cites Giddens' Structuration Theory (Giddens, 1984), and his notion of a 'Locale' to provide a framework in which to explore home and its unique relations with wider society.

Giddens (1984) argues that it is because we take for granted the ways in which we order and use our domestic environments, that they play such an important role in social affairs. The Structuration Theory he refers to is based on a premise that the structure, and also individual agents are equally responsible for societal phenomena, and no one aspect is greater in significance. The idea that social systems are reproduced, and conversely and simultaneously responded to, by, and between the home and wider society relates to this way of conceptualising home in the modern world. The theory is centred on this intersection

between structures and individual agents of which neither is dominant. However while this theoretical approach is useful because it makes space for individual action it perhaps underestimates the influence of wider society, for example pervasiveness of expected gender roles or the structural economic determinism experienced by many people.

Seen in this way, the home, at least in contemporary British Society, is a crucial locale in the sense that it is the setting through which the basic forms of social relations and social institutions are constituted and reproduced (Saunders and Williams 1988, p. 82)

In other words the Locale is the place where an intersection is occurring. Saunders and Williams refer to a notion of household as a mode or unit of social organisation which is distinctive to the home. They view the household as a unit of consumption rather than production and however negate to identify a household as specifically involving family or kinship relationships. There has been criticism, notably from Somerville (1989) that there is little empirical justification for fusing the concepts of home and household too readily. The omission to both analyse familial relations within the home, and take a more critical approach to how consumption serves both capitalism, and the continuation of male privilege gives their propositions less weight. In 2020 it is important to simultaneously acknowledge the continuing significance of gender relation while equally recognising that there is a steady decrease in households containing a nuclear family.

Somerville (1989) also criticises the concept of locale arguing that it is not a concept at all but a common sense description of places without actually adding anything to increased understanding. However this is to miss the point as a locale provides a framework for expectations of function and behaviours, and potentially the relations that occur there (Giddens, 1984) which can be useful. The home is such a locale and contains locales within locales, for example the kitchen and the bedroom which certainly have expectations of this nature attached to them. It is essential to recognise that locales exist in our mind on an almost unconscious level with regards to home and the spaces within it, and this can be vital to remember when behaviours or actions stand contrary to these assumptions. Heathcote (2014) devotes an entire book to

In addition Somerville points out that there are different kinds of homes that do not contain households, for example nursing homes and prisons. However for the purposes of this research the concept of home, as a locale, occupied by a household which may or may not be a family, whose individual agents intersect with wider structures of society, represents a

beneficial framework and context for this research. The caveat being that there is a recognised power dynamic which places wider structures as more influential than any possible individual action.

Home: A Short History of an Idea by Rybczynski (1986) ambitiously sets out a history of the home as we know it today, and similar to the basic foundation of this research assumes links between home, individuals and family. He crucially identifies the key elements of the modern home that, beginning in the seventeenth century, subsequently emerged over time which included privacy, domesticity, intimacy and comfort. Comfort is seen as the last element to take hold and he identifies it as being a recognised part of home by the 1890s. The introduction of the concept of home comforts, familiar and physically pleasing items or objects, as opposed to simply ascetics, is a significant element of home, as would be viewed today. 'Comfort has changed not only qualitatively, but also quantitatively- it has become a mass commodity' (Rybczynski, 1986, p. 220). These key elements also serve as a useful framework to further explore aspects of home within the confines already identified. As

Another strong theme to emerge from the literature, is the idea of home as a haven, as somewhere desirable to return to, almost a need to be immersed and recharged, in that space that is home. Well known sayings and phrases relating to home in this way would appear to be familiar to all and personify that positive connotation. 'Home sweet home', 'there's no place like home', 'home is where the heart is', and 'take me home', are all common in the vernacular. A home is the end goal, the safe place to return, the haven. The feeling of space both physically and metaphorically is cited as the means by which the unique virtues of the home are lived. Kern et al (2000) found that the majority of people in their study, 'Beyond Four Walls', derived feelings of privacy, refuge, safety, freedom and control from their homes. As Heathcote (2014) states:

'Our home is our base, a place that roots us to the earth, to the city or the landscape, it gives us permanence and stability and allows us to build a life around it and within it.....We yearn to return to the familiar rootedness of our sofas and our own beds, places with which we are comfortable and in which we feel we are safe'.

Heathcote, E (2014) p51

The French Philosopher Gaston Bachelard is often referred to regarding home and is quoted from his book the Poetics of Space. He doesn't prescribe any particular structure or requisite features but rather describes at length the importance of a place where a person can be free

to daydream. He describes how outside the home 'the hostilities of man and the universe accumulates' (1994: p. 7) in direct opposition to the house which 'maintains him through the storms of heaven and those of his life ...and always in his daydreams the house is a large cradle' (1994: p. 7) which refers to the idea of metaphorically returning to a home of childhood, and all that stimulates. This description is clearly one dimensional in the sense that a purely positive account of home is being projected, however it does draw attention to the notion of privacy and lays the foundation for one of the primary themes, that of a clear distinction between a private and public existence, that the home affords.

The concept of the private and the public is a primary theme when discussing the home and relates to a notion of inside and outside. The inside is determined as a literal space with definite boundaries that represents, comfort and safety from the outside. The outside is viewed as a place where certain expectations of personal etiquette are present and a sort of unknown quantity exists where danger is a potential. It relates to the concept of haven previously highlighted but means something more in this context. Mallet puts forward a succinct synopsis of the rationale involved in conceptualising the home in this manner:

Related to this view of home, as a refuge is the idea that it is a private, often familial realm clearly differentiated from the public space and removed from public scrutiny and surveillance. The public sphere is associated with work and political engagements and non-kin relationships (Mallett 2004, p. 71).

This clear demarcation of worlds has invited criticism, namely that activity and expectations in the public realm bleed into the private in a number of ways and that a retreat from public view can never be completely attained. Blunt (2006) argues that home is more of a site of intersecting spheres who's nature is dependent on the geographical or historical context in which the home is located. Fox (2016) addresses the need for utilities and services within the home that attach the private home to a network that exists beyond it and without which it would cease to function in a guise that we can recognise. Equally the home is not impervious to outside influences regarding moral or physical expectations and a recognition of the picture as viewed by the outside world. Hepworth (1999) reflects this effectively in his writings on privacy in Victorian England:

The Victorian Home can be seen, in its ideal version, as a controlled private realm within whose walls even more controls had to be established to maintain a desired congruence between appearance and reality (Hepworth 1999, p. 29)

Saunders and Williams (1988) conceptualised the perception of privacy in more detail, introducing three dimensions of privacy in relation to the home. The first dimension, 'privacy' is seen to be occurring in the locale that is home and rather than representing solitude is more a sense that, 'others' role expectations have been lifted' (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p. 88). This concept links strongly with the idea of haven. The second dimension regarding the private realm, 'privatism' is depicted as a movement towards the withdrawal from communal life and a centering of more activities at home. Evidentially they cite the growth of home based leisure activities such as computers, home improvement activities and the increased consumption of alcohol in the home. 'Privatism is thus linked to consumption and the increased commodification of the private sphere' (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p. 89). This commodification they see as mixed in its effects on the inhabitants in that there may be opportunities to work from home and be released from outside pressures, but the strains in terms of relationships and reliance on one sphere may be detrimental. It is also possible to speculate that similar to Hepworth's depiction of how the Victorian home sought to maintain the standards expected outside, further commodification of the home may bring more outside expectations in.

It is also perhaps more difficult to make those distinctions in light of the now ever present internet access and prevalence of social media, which now locates many traditional public activities for example attainment of political knowledge and political action, paid work, shopping, streaming and access to libraries, online and therefore accessible in the private. In fact there is an identified shift of functions of home, which previously were performed in institutions, for example employment, education, care, cinema and hospital ward (Steward, 2000). The implications of these shifts in terms of space/locales have perhaps not been fully explored.

In addition media and technology have created new ways of blurring the lines between private and public. While Saunders and Williams are able to confront the converse consequences regarding privacy with the development of more home based work and leisure they are surely unable to foresee or analyse the phenomena of a voluntary sacrifice of privacy into an online world which in some circumstances involves an almost uploading of the home into a public space. The 'domestication concept' developed by Silverstone and Haddon (1996) is essentially concerned with how technology embed within 'daily routines, social interactions and spatio-temporal structures of the household' (Pell and Roser, 2014, p235). Pell and Roser (2014) conclude that the way space in the home is used in relation to access to media and internet is ever evolving, citing the mobility of media, particularly smartphones as allowing 'household members (to) connect different rooms and places

temporarily to the online world...and thus create new media spheres within the home' (Pell and Roser, p. 243). Running parallel with these trends, legislation including the 'Snooper Charter' are providing government agencies with ever increasing power to view our personal web history that we are, in the main, accessing from home.

The final dimension is 'privatisation' and is perhaps the most illuminating, encapsulating something wider when it is stated that 'privatisation thus entails a shift in the rights of use, benefit, control and disposal from a collectivity, normally the state, to the individual' (Saunders and Williams, 1988: p. 90). This analysis seems to suggest that privacy goes beyond a one dimensional ability to exclude outside people and influences from personal aspects of life (although it has been acknowledged that this is not always possible) or simply enjoy a leisure activity at home, but it is a recognition of a perceived economic freedom to purchase a way out of collective systems like transport or health. The private ownership of housing is the most obvious arena for this privatisation. There is a clear class analysis aligned to this theory of privacy and privatisation where they state that:

an increased 'middle mass' will enjoy home ownership while an increasingly marginalised minority 'remains reliant upon state provision in kind in order to service its consumption needs...and become increasingly stigmatised and dependent on an inadequate and alienating mode of public subsistence (Saunders and Williams, 1988, p. 91)

Somerville, P (1989) in his article Home Sweet Home offers some valid criticisms of their analysis. He claims an assumption that outside surveillance is always carried out by the state, or is somehow undesirable versus an acceptance that privacy is always virtuous and valued, as naïve. He also reviews their link between home ownership and increased control and autonomy by individual households as problematic, and highlights instead that increased control is difficult to measure especially in relation to what he calls marginal home owners who perhaps don't belong to the 'middle mass'. He doubts that an emphasis on home can offer a greater understanding of a political movement that values anti-collectivism and the progress of private capital. However while this may be valid it could make more sense to place the two analysis together. A shift towards neo-liberalism exists beyond any idea or analysis of home, however it is widely recognised that homes as assets, serving as financial security in an uncertain world, is an increasingly prominent feature of home ownership (Malpass, 1998; Heathcote, 2014; Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017; Mckee et al, 2017). In addition Atkinson and Jacobs (2017) point out that the home is increasingly the place where 'capitalism needles' and can now be seen as a retreat from politics, to be

replaced with heightened consumption. Atkinson and Blandy (2017) pull these strands together:

‘.....staying in, protecting the home base, has become part of an elaborate shift of social centrality. Fear of crime, home consumption of alcohol, televisions and home cinemas keep us housebound and entertained than previous generations....the emphatic focus of our lives toward this interior space reflects one of the crucial binds of contemporary social existence: an apparent release from traditional forms of community, obligation an identity has been partially supplanted by more atomized modes of living’.

Atkinson and Blandy, 2017, p. 178

Therefore the analysis of Saunders and Williams, particularly with reference to privatisation, has proven to be a relatively sound basis for understanding how the ideas of home have become encompassed and conflated with political shifts and trends. It has also offered an attempt to conceptualise privacy within a wider context of our current organisation of resources which has seen a shift away from redistribution.

2.2.2 The Subjective Ideal Home

A significant facet of this ideal home, already touched on during discourse regarding privacy, is the issue of tenure, with weight given to the significance of home ownership. A number of commentators make an association between an increased and more intensive positive feelings about home, and home ownership (Saunders, 1990; Ravetz, 1995; Dupuis and Thorne, 1998; Kearn et al, 2000; Blunt, 2006; Bentley et al, 2015; Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017). Dupuis and Thorne (1998), and Saunders (1990) argue that the desire for ontological security is an essential part of what a home is hoped to characterise, and is most likely to be attained through home ownership. Ontological security is seen as having a sense of confidence and trust in the world as it appears to be. It is a security of being. Giddens (1990) defines it as the ‘confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity, and in the constancy of their social and material environment’ (1990: p. 95). Furthermore it refers to predictability and stability with regards to the future (Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017).

Dupuis and Thorne conducted a detailed qualitative study in New Zealand which set out to see whether it could be empirically demonstrated that home ownership engendered ontological security. They found that:

The group of home owners whose understandings we sought, not only pursued the maintenance of ontological security through the economic benefits they perceived home ownership brought them, but also through the routines and practices which they established, and the binding familial relationships they built up over a long period of time, within the specific material environment of the home (Dupuis and Thorne, 1998, p. 43)

It could be argued therefore that the similar to the locale, the wider structure engendered actions and relations and vice versa. A number of limitations are offered that underpin the findings, for example the generation and age of the participants (they grew under the spectre of the Great Depression which might make a desire for security more pronounced) may have affected participants' views. The researchers concede that younger home owners may have different routines and expectations of home. However even taking these caveats into consideration this premise provides a useful overview of how home ownership is seen as vehicle to achieve the desired aspects of home set out in this review.

The ideal home has been, and it could be argued is still, represented by a suburban home with a garden and inhabited by a white, nuclear family headed up by a heterosexual couple with traditional gender roles, and present children (Ravetz, 1995; Chapman and Hockey, 1999; Rowland and Gurney, 2000; Blunt, 2006; Atkinson and Blandy, 2017; McKee et al, 2017). This idealised image of home perfectly encapsulates the best version of the privacy, domesticity, intimacy and comfort laid out as Rybczynski's key elements of home (Rybczynski, 1986). Ravetz (1995) points out variations in design and features, regarding how space is allocated throughout a suburban house building in the twentieth century but also concedes its longevity as a construct. The suburban home remains as a promoted aspiration, serving the 'ideal' demographic, and continues to be visible in 2020 as green belt appears to be built on at will, displaying uniform 'family' homes, for sale in an out of town setting. Chapman (1999) is keen to analyse how much a 'dream home', in other words an ideal home, is now prescriptive in terms of design in terms of space, décor and location, and also strongly adheres to the concept of 'safe' haven and a hazardous 'outside'. He states:

All of the executive show homes that I have studied were detached from neighbours, suggesting that the house will provide high-status accommodation, personal privacy and safety from the 'dangerous' environs in town (Chapman, 1999, p. 55)

This prescription in terms of tenure but also ascetic, design and location has implications for how much choice or variation is included in the tenets of an ideal. It is also interesting to note

how far this ideal is internalised by individuals and to what extent the attainment of such an ideal represents individual determinations. Rowland and Gurney (2000) conducted a study looking at how young people perceived housing tenure. Their findings indicated that not only did young people see home ownership as the most valid tenure, they also regarded it as 'normal', and part of a bigger picture of ideal, or 'social package', that included a good job, successful relationship, a car and children. In other words a group of positional goods that reflected social status as a whole in which a home was a part. These arguments are developed further by McKee et al (2017) who recognises home, not only for its fundamental value but also 'symbolically in terms of the message it transmits about the social position of the owner (2017: p.321).

As previously stated therefore, there would seem to be significant limits in societal terms about what *can be* and *is* considered an 'ideal home'. This has serious implications in terms of social conformity and access, and how those without access are viewed. The conditions out of which shelter-based ontological security is achieved are not equally available to all, and there is also considerable evidence and opinion that questions what marginal home ownership can deliver for individuals within an increasingly neoliberal context (Somerville 1989; Croucher et al, 2018). In other words not all home-owners are equal in terms of the ontological security they enjoy as a result. This will be discussed further in section 2.5.

There is a valid attempt to further investigate the links between home ownership and wellbeing by locating it as both a positional good and a social norm (Foye et al, 2018). This primarily questions the concept as an absolute truth. Firstly there is highlighted what is referred to as a 'strength of the norm amongst relevant others' (Foye et al, 2018. p. 1293). This concept is based on the idea that subjective wellbeing, dependent on tenure, relates to how many others in close proximity share that tenure. In other words if a person is a renter and everyone they know is a homeowner the renter may experience a 'sanction' of feeling 'abnormal. In addition the premise of the positional good states that home ownership represents relative wealth and that actually this representation is subject to diminishing returns as home ownership increases. However, despite some recognition that there might be different material value systems at play which creates desires for different tenures, Foye et al (2018) largely reject this hypothesis and point instead to their findings that suggest that the relative benefits of home ownership in the UK 'are statistically significant and of meaningful magnitude' which relate to higher levels of ontological security (2018: p. 1302). The argument is made that for every relevant benefit gained by the homeowner for example an increase in status, renters experience a lowering in status. 'The negative sanctions associated with 'being abnormal' are particularly acute for social renters' (Foye et al 2018, p.

1303). The paper rejects the idea of a zero sum game however it is suggested that there is significant doubt about the absolute benefits of home ownership, in that it is not an overall

If home ownership forms a significant part of the ideal, there are increasing numbers of the population who are simply not experiencing this. As the next sections seek to further demonstrate, how housing and therefore homes, are experienced and accessed, can greatly deviate depending on factors such as sex, age and class.

2.3 Her Indoors- A Woman's Place

Prior to any discussion of sex in this context it is worth noting that despite a rise in the number of single households the majority of the population still live in families. The Office of National Statistics stated in 2017 that there were 19.0 million families in the UK which was a reported increase of 15% from 16.6 million in 1996, which directly related to a rise in the population. There were 12.9 million married or civil partner couple families in the UK with the second largest family type being the cohabiting couple family at 3.3 million families, followed by 2.8 million lone parent families (Office for National Statistics, 2017).

Therefore discussion and exploration regarding a woman's place in the home and their relationship to home is still pointedly relevant. As Saunders (1996) points out:

Social, cultural and biological reproduction are the central social processes of society and the household has been the basic instrument for achieving such reproduction at least since the thirteenth society (Saunders, 1996, p. 266)

This function of a household, in the shape of the nuclear family, is generally accepted even if the virtue or purpose of this function is disputed. In its most basic form a functionalist perspective will see the household as adapting and fitting into the needs of society as it evolves, and a Marxist perspective views the household as serving the capitalist system by reinforcing hierarchy, producing future workers and providing an institution for wealth transference between the ruling classes. Whichever analysis is favoured, the rise of the nuclear family as a distinct unit living in an exclusive physical structure, following industrialisation has been palpable. As discussed in the previous section this development engendered much discourse regarding the meaning of home. However this growth occurred in parallel with increased explicit roles for men and women, with men engaged in paid work outside the home, and women engaged in domestic unpaid work in the home.

Therefore the subject of gender within the discourse of home needs to be thoroughly investigated to create a specific analysis, essentially a feminist perspective. This draws on the interaction between individuals and societal structures, similar to structuration theory previously discussed, within the context of home. The historical context of the home, in a sense that we understand it generically today had, from its inception a gender dynamic:

Mallet describes a process of instillation of nationalism and nationhood to promote an idea and association with a homeland, which served to simultaneously protect and preserve the interests of the ruling classes but also 'at the same time the idea of home became the focal point for a form of 'domestic morality' aimed at safeguarding familial property including estates, women and children' (Mallett, 2004, p. 65).

This inclusion of women and children as part of the 'home' implies ownership but also an impression of indistinctiveness between human and object. As if the women, children and physical structure are not readily distinguishable. Marriage was traditionally seen as 'marital unity' but not equality: a woman was dependant with the same legal status as a child (Lewis, 2020, p. 14). On a broader level the dawn of industrialisation and the creation of the workplace as a separate entity involving waged work began to contrast against the home which began to take on a separate domestic character, where women's roles were consolidated (Watson, 1986; Pain, 2001; Mallet, 2004).

Since the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, feminist writers have concentrated analysis on the home due to its extreme gendered identity and its reflection and reproduction of the patriarchal society in which it exists (see Oakley, 1974; Crittenden Scott, 1978; Bowlby et al, 1997; Madigan and Munro, 1999). However it is also necessary to acknowledge that more generic commentators on home readily acknowledge the notion that the key positive elements, maybe, and are, experienced conversely by women, and that oppression and harm can also be common features (see Saunders and Williams, 1988, Somerville, 1989, Chapman and Hockey, 1999; Fox, 2016; Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017). In simplistic terms home can be seen as essentially a locale where men control finances and make decisions about resources, and women care, clean and manage budgets within the restrictions provided. This is crucial as it is these divisions that limit women's ability to create an independent home if required. The female experience of the home is therefore seen as a potentially challenging contrast to the more general and mainstream ideas of home previously discussed.

One of the principle arenas of discourse in relation to these converse experiences is that of housework. These conversations broadly started in the 1970s and are associated strongly with a seminal study by Oakley (1974) entitled *The Sociology of Housework*. Oakley argues that 'the equation of femaleness with housewifery is basic to the structure of modern society and the ideology of gender roles which pervade it (Oakley, 2018, p. 24). Oakley characterises the work of a full time housewife as boring and monotonous, undertaken in isolation and in a sense never completed, as new tasks continuously present themselves and also involve long hours. There have been criticisms of her work regarding the small sample involved, and following a return to her thesis, an attempt to nuance women's experiences depending on range of variables including age of children and degree of paid work undertaken outside the home (Bonney and Reinach, 1993). In 2014 the government reported that 67% of women were now in paid employment (Department for Work and Pensions, 2014) which might suggest a move away from the women's housewife role described by Oakley. However evidence suggests that women continue take on the majority of unpaid work, domestic work and care and the economic value of this work is unmeasured. Where domestic work is shared out through paid work or extended family, the providers are in the main, also women (Pain 2001; Blunt, 2006; Romito, 2008).

In relation to the ever increasing presence of media and technology in the home there are two interesting things to note. Firstly that this internet purchase and responsibility for media usage mostly lay with men, regardless of their knowledge or expertise (Pell and Roser, 2014). Furthermore a study looking at the 'domestication concept' in terms of gender found that traditional roles were reproduced even in this context. Women were found to use the internet in order to organise activities or complete work whereas men utilised it to achieve 'solitude (Ahrens, 2013). As Pell and Roser (2014) argue:

On the one hand it (domestication) fosters participation in new media technologies; on the other hand it represents a cultural field where inequalities are being reproduced. This is especially true of gender relations, because gender-related divisions of labour and the reproduction and alteration of gender discourse within society are inscribed in the domestic media practices.

Pell and Roser, 2014, p.243

Therefore one of the principle merits of home has been, and remains potentially skewed for women in that the idea that the home provides a sanctuary from work is a nonsense if the home itself is considered a workplace (Blunt, 2006).

It is also necessary to reassess the concept of privacy and the idea of private/public arenas, from a feminist perspective. Crucially the private element of home in physical terms represents a defined space, 'It need not be a large space but space there must be, for home starts by bringing some space under control' (Douglas, 1991, p. 289). This space could also be termed as the locale. As previously referred to, the locale, has locales/spaces within it that have conscious and unconscious expectations about the behaviours that occur within them, for example sleeping, sex or privacy in a bedroom. It has been observed that these spaces/locales within the home actually have connotations that relate powerfully to gender (Douglas 1991; Chapman and Hockey, 1999, Madigan and Monroe, 1999, Bowlby et al 1997; Pain, 2001; Meth, 2003). These spaces can also provide opposition to gender stereotypes when used in a contrary manner which demonstrates just how entrenched the assumptions about who space is for are:

Challenges to socially accepted versions of gender often involve the transgression of spatial, as well as other boundaries within the home, for example the man in the kitchen of the woman in the tool shed (Bowlby et al 1997, p. 346)

This allocation of sex specific space within the home has important implications for the amount of privacy the home affords women and how that subsequently moulds the meaning of home. There has been a link made between mainstream house design, and gender expectations. 'It is possible to see periods of intense suburban development with a strong ideology of female domesticity' (Pain, 2001, p40). The literature also highlights increased space within the home as families became smaller but it is children that have often been the beneficiaries of this increased space, with more demarcations between adult and child zones (Ravetz, 1995). Furthermore Madigan and Munro (1999) carried out a study specifically looking at the availability of autonomous space for women. They concluded that women were often deprived both of space, and time alone in private, with neither afforded specific allocation. A continued conservatism in house design, which is very much still in evidence was argued to be out of step with changing households, the changing requirements of a home, and detrimental to women's development. Women are still 'placed' as the key to the creation of the domestic sphere, however finding the space unique to women within the home has shown to be difficult. Therefore the freedom for self-realisation and identity associated with the home is problematic. It should be noted however that according to the English Housing Survey (2016) overcrowding has been rising steadily since 2004 in private and public rented housing which obviously has implications for autonomous space for all.

2.3.1 Safe Haven vs Haven for Abuse

A further aspect of the home relating to the concept of private/public is the issue of safety. The safe and warm confines of the home versus the dangerous and unpredictable outside world. There is a recognition that there is a gender element to these notions, which alludes to the idea that it is more beneficial for women to stay within the home rather than risk harm by venturing into the world, beyond four walls. This is categorically and factually incorrect. The prevalence of domestic violence and abuse towards women and children is now recognised as widespread, and it is well established that women are at far greater risk of harm in the home than anywhere else (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Hester and Pearson, 2007; Stark, 2007; Romito, 2008; Westmarland, 2016). This recognition of the home (the private) as a place of danger, is perhaps not as embedded with regards to children, in the same way as it is for women, hence the need to focus on domestic violence in childhood in this context.

There is also a frequent appreciation in writings on home in recent years that the idea of a safe haven is in extreme opposition to many women's experiences (Chapman and Hockey, 1999; Somerville, 1989; Blunt, 2006; Fox, 2016) and that the presence of abuse can severely alter how home is viewed. However because this is often not the main premise, there is still sometimes a tendency to emphasise the haven which sometimes is detrimental to awareness of abuse within the home. 'The more that home is constructed as space vulnerable to incursions from a threatening external world the less evident the interpersonal dangers within domestic space becomes Goldsack, 1999, p. 121).

Perhaps a poignant contemporary example of this sentiment is the murder of Reeva Steenkamp in 2013. The murder was committed by her boyfriend, Oscar Pistorious, and occurred in a home situated within a gated community characterised by heavy security. He claimed he killed her by accident because he believed that she was an intruder, hence exasperating the idea of danger coming from outside the home.

The premise of the home as a private space has sought to act against women and children suffering abuse. Domestic violence against women has also not only occurred in the private domain but often associated with women's expected roles, for example violence could be justified if a meal was not provided on time or sex was refused. Therefore the gendered expectations within the home contributed to the blaming of the victim for their own abuse and became another facet of the patriarchal society. This is further backed up by a prevailing wisdom that any woman who is being abused should leave, and to stay shows a weakness

of character (Romito, 2008). In other words, a woman that remains in the home is stupid, lying or a person of reduced character. As Botein (2016) points out, there is a myriad of financial and practical reasons that prevent women from leaving the home. However, the concept of home 'unmaking' can also be fraught with stigma and embarrassment such is the emphasis on the home representing success and the 'social package' previously referred to, with 'women often tolerating violence so as not to signal a deep failure or collapse of home', (Baxter and Bricknell, 2014). Children obviously often have very little choice about whether or not they remain in the family home when presented with domestic violence in childhood and therefore these questions have added layers of complexity which need to be explored.

Romito (2008) highlights various studies that show health workers and support workers adhering to these viewpoints. Similarly in the Change for Justice Study (2016) there was evidence of housing workers demonstrating little understanding of domestic violence and engaging in blaming behaviours. These beliefs can also be seen to be held by abused women themselves as they also strive to protect the privacy and sanctuary associated with home.

The norms of privacy that surround the marital relationship and constrain women's attempts to get help from family and friends operate even more rigorously outside that network...women not only accepted the idea of keeping themselves to themselves but also felt it was necessary to protect the family from public scrutiny. Many described how they concealed their own and their children's injuries (Homer et al, 1984, p. 36)

This extract is a highly illuminating portrayal of the dilemmas and the contradictory nature of the private and public domains when regarding domestic violence. The way in which children understand these domains in relation to domestic violence is less well known or evidentially established. In addition this depiction only refers the incidence of physical violence. It is acknowledged that domestic violence includes a range of behaviours most notably controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse. Coercive control is explored in detail in Chapter Three but it is important to reference it in this context as its presence supplies another oppositional facet to the notion of privacy provided by the home. It is, of course, possible for coercive control to occur away from the home. However when it is being perpetrated in a cohabiting relationship or marriage, the concept of the home as being a sanctuary from surveillance is seriously negated. Again, knowledge about the experiences of childhood in this context are limited and warrant further investigation.

The term 'homeless at home' (Wardhaugh, 1999) wholly encapsulates the idea that residing in a structure of 'home', does not guarantee any of the expressed beneficial features such as safety, freedom, privacy, space, a refuge or retreat and a place for personal/familial relationships. Wardhaugh specifically uses this term to refer to abused women's experiences of home who are denied a sense of self 'within the supposed safe haven of home' (1999: p. 91). Therefore the value of privacy in association with the home has potentially multifaceted negative implications. The positive aspects of privacy in the home are denied and the knowledge that violence and abuse are occurring within that private sphere means the sense of safety and security is reduced.

The subject of space has already been explored but it is imperative to revisit the topic in the context of domestic violence. Meth (2003) carried out some research in South Africa into where domestic violence occurs. The argument made is that there are assumptions made in relation to domestic violence and home, which state that home is always a formal identity and a space apart from the public view, which is in keeping with the assumed properties of the locale. There is an attempt to challenge this conceptualisation of the public and the private which is so entrenched in feminist analysis of domestic violence in the developing world. Meth found that it was commonplace for women experiencing domestic violence to live in shacks and informal housing and therefore the lines between domestic and civil violence blurred, and the notions of private and public unhelpful in determining how lives are lived. Their (homeless women and women living in informal housing) vulnerability, insecurity, exposure and informality suggested that their experience of domestic violence cannot be examined using the frameworks adopted in western studies (Meth, 2003).

While this study is not perhaps obviously or directly pertinent to this review there is a relevance which provides further insight into the complexity and nuanced nature of the home and the space within it. The first area where there is applicability is women and children who are currently homeless, especially those that are homeless as a result of fleeing. The increased vulnerability of this situation of post-separation means they are likely to be subject to aspects of abuse that are not occurring in a family home.

There is further applicability which relates to the concept of the locale. The locales within homes, the spaces within the home, are allied with certain norms and expectations and there is also a supposition that a certain complement of locales will actually exist in every home. In relation to domestic violence there is a tendency in western cultures to ask such questions as: Did you lock the door? Did you hide somewhere? Did you lock the children away? Did you phone the police? Did you report the case? Did you receive state support?

Did you gain access to shelter? Did they help re-house you? Meth states that 'research agendas and schedules should be scrutinised for problematic assumptions' (Meth 2003, p. 326). This raises questions about how we unconsciously view the spaces or locales within homes and the subsequent expectations about the things that occur within them. It is important to be aware of how the 'use' and 'meaning' of space can be bastardised and trampled on in the context of domestic violence or may not conform to the original norms because of these circumstances. This also relates to the concept of privacy in that the presence of domestic violence, and the impact on space within the house, has repercussions in this context, and where it can be found within the home.

This tangible physical space within the home has potential specific implications for children living with domestic violence in that space, or spaces can be made unsafe or tainted, and space can be controlled as part of a wider pattern of control. This dynamic is developed further by Callaghan et al (2017):

However, the controlling aspects of abusive relationships increasingly limit the victim-survivor's use of the physical spaces of the home, their access to resources, and their ability to connect to others beyond the home. This control maintains the secrecy and silence that contains and enables the violence. It gradually destroys the world of the victim, encouraging the repositioning of their world as entirely constrained and reduced to the abusive relationship (Callaghan, 2017, p. 335).

This assertion validates the importance of focussing on domestic violence in childhood with particular emphasis on their lived experience of the home in that context. As stated in Chapter One the home is idea of space being brought under control. However, the nature of that control is seen to gain freedom within the identified space. The control of space within the home, gained through violence and abuse bleeds into every day lived experience and it is vital that more is understood about how that impacts on children and how they accept or resist it.

2.3.2 Home and Instability

O'Campo (2016) studied forty five women's experiences of housing instability across three periods: while living with abusive partner, immediately after leaving an abusive partner and long after leaving an abusive partner. When living with domestic violence, material stability may be present but violence and financial abuse are present, immediately after leaving there is the experience of a refuge or temporary accommodation that does not feel like 'home',

and the final stage may involve unsuitable or undesirable accommodation due to lack of finance and/or continued fear or possible return to abuser. O'Campo further argues that housing instability and domestic violence should be conceptualised as a continuum of psychological instability rather than one particular stage of housing or homelessness, and that should be considered along with social and health issues when looking at the issue of housing. The psychological instability essentially comes from the unstable nature of constitutes the 'home', at any of these stages. O'Campo (2016) argues that even years after leaving women can continue to experience loneliness and have fears for the future. Therefore the impact of domestic violence on women's experience of home is far reaching and is not time limited or eradicated by any particular set of circumstances.

Botein and Hetling (2016) describe very similar situations and cycles in the US. They cite long waiting lists for refuge beds which starts the difficulties for regarding accommodations when wishing to leave situations of abuse. Crucially they also identified what could be described as a cycle of instability where by once shelter were exited, there was no stable or permanent housing to go to. Women then went onto hostels, temporary arrangements with family or friends or they simply returned back to their abuser. In other words they remained in unstable living conditions.

Furthermore housing stability can also be seen to be entail more than physical security, and this may be particularly true for women who have experienced instability in the way O'Campo (2016) describes, through living with the various facets of domestic violence. This wider scope of stability is successfully described here:

Conversely, if a person's housing situation is chronically unstable, even if it is due to the behaviour of another member of the household, and the person leaves that housing situation, his or her experience of subsequent housing situations will be through a lens of seeking stability not only in the material circumstances of housing, but also in the narratives of the self that can be created to gain ontological security.

Woodhall-Melnik et al (2017) p256

In a more general sense, for women the attainment of ontological security is a problematic concept. This is especially true if it is accepted that this occurs more readily in the context of home ownership as this tenure is generally less accessible to women (discussed later in the chapter). It has been demonstrated that women may simultaneously fail to experience some or all of the positive connotations commonly associated with the home. The view that home

represents oppression and is simply a reproduction of the patriarchy has led some feminist thinkers to conclude that women must pursue lives outside of the home. However women's association with home, and the connection to identity makes the link with home, even in situations of extreme abuse, nuanced and complex. Women are potentially doubly bound by these continued assumptions and expectations. Women's feelings can be seen as a mixture of affection, reciprocated towards the home as a nurturing environment, and simultaneously resentment at the demands of the home (Darke, 1994).

Women seen as conforming to the aspiration of promoting and protecting family life by marrying, procreating and maintaining and running a home, regardless of whether or not they are in paid employment can be positively defined but also constrained by their perceived character. The home, in this context can also be viewed as a safeguard, a marked out space that serves as barrier unto which 'undesirables' and non-conformists may cross (Bowlby et al, 1997) and associated with respectability. Women who fall out of this space, what Wardhaugh (1999) refers to as the 'unaccommodated woman', for example homeless women, sex workers or victims of domestic violence are equally defined and constrained by their perceived character. In other words although the home is viewed as a site of oppression, the connection between femininity and home potentially makes experiences outside of that arena more uncomfortable than it is for men.

The home as a vessel for the reproduction of patriarchy has been somewhat diluted since the 1970s. Women do leave situations of domestic violence, women initiate divorce, more women than ever are in paid work and there are increasingly examples of women who do have their own ideas and create their own meanings of home. There is more recognition that some women stay at home with their children due to personal choice while simultaneously wider social and economic factors, such as poverty, and pressure to conform to expectations and powerlessness still prevail. This results in a challenge to an unapologetic analysis of the home as simply a place of oppression (Bonney and Reinach, 1993; Darke, 1994; Chapman and Hockey, 1999; Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017). However there is much value in exploring the accepted beliefs and virtues about home through a feminist lens as it lays bare the extreme contradictory experiences that are possible and enduring for women. As a woman, to be without a home is to be without a potential crucial element of identity, and intrinsically linked to gender, even if that is socially constructed (Watson, 1988), and that sentiment continues today.

Ultimately even though this research favours a feminist theoretical background and setting, in the words of Hollander (1991), 'it all depends'. Home is ultimately experienced in a

subjective way and it would be folly to make assumptions about how any individual views or understands any aspects, or whole concepts, of home.

2.4 Real and Imagined homes? Ideal home for children

It is interesting to observe the difficulty in locating substantial writing relating to an ideal home for a child. This is somewhat surprising as 'children are presumed to be key inhabitants of 'homely' homes' (Blunt, 2006, p.115), and the family is still the most common and associated type of household with the term home. What Fox refers to as the 'people's' view of home (Fox, 2016 p. 64). Even a quick google search asking 'what is an ideal home for a child' provides a mixture of bedroom design ideas, blogs about the ideal child themselves, how to provide the ideal environment for an autistic child, and home furniture. The ideal home for a child remains elusive. Children appear intermittently in the literature on home which has been covered but often don't warrant any significant emphasis or dedicated attention beyond the implied inclusion when referencing family. When they are at the centre of discourse it is often in regard to the negative experiences they may incur, for example, children's lack of power and representation, to more serious situations of abuse in the home.

It has been widely accepted, as previously discussed, that housing and home are not the same thing and a home has, to some extent, have to be created. In other words it exists and transcends beyond a physical structure four walls. However for a baby or a very small child there is no other home other than the physical environment they are born into and, as is actually true of older children too, they are not able to 'create' their own home.

Children's position in the home has been recognised as one of little agency and even one of tyranny (Saunders and Williams, 1988; Douglas, 1991; Blunt, 2006). Their lived experience has been described as one of constant rules and constraints. 'Even its most altruistic and successful versions (of home) exert a tyrannous control over mind and body' (Douglas, 1991 p. 303). Although this describes an aspect of home for a child, it doesn't add much insight to an ideal home except perhaps to say that an altruistic tyranny is preferable to a more despotic one.

The issue of abuse and domestic violence in the home is frequently articulated, and held up as a situation that potentially changes the dynamic and meaning of home significantly. However this abuse and violence is often described in the context of adults abusing other adults with a warranted emphasis on the gendered nature of this abuse (see previous section). The issue of child abuse specifically is less commonly mentioned or referred to in

any detail throughout discourses on home. Literature which focusses on children and domestic violence tends to concentrate on the issue of loss in relation to home, referring specifically to children who flee abusive situations with their mothers (see Chapter Three). However this issue remains within a broader discussion regarding the impacts of domestic violence on children and is rarely explored in more detail with specific reference to children's experiences of housing and home. This gap in the literature is explored in 'rationale for the research' but is worth revisiting in this section.

The subject of space both inside and outside the home with regards to children is developed in some of the literature regarding home (Rybczynski, 1986; McKie et al 1999; Blunt 2006). The home can be seen to be divided into zones, or locales, which are designed for certain activities or aimed at providing space for particular members of the household, namely adults and children. This process could be identified as beginning in the Victorian era in larger middle class homes but gradually became the norm in smaller more modern suburban homes (Rybczynski 1986). The concept that children have separate places to sleep, and even eat or watch television is a relatively accepted organisation of space within the home and contributes to the creation of children's locales within the home where certain behaviours or actions would occur.

How and when children negotiate space outside the home has seen to have dramatically altered in the last twenty years, with children spending much more playtime within the home. 'The scale of home for many western children is increasingly the value of the house rather than the neighbourhood' (Blunt, 2006, p. 115). A study by Valentine (1999) sought to explore how parents manage children's use of space and it was found that boundaries were established as a result of complex interaction between parents and children which centred round competency rather than mandatory allowances due to age. The study found that assessments of competence of children were highly gendered, with girls being viewed as more sensible. However there was also evidence that parents quantified competence differently depending in whether the space was inside or outside the home, basically they required higher levels of competence for outside due to a belief that they were more vulnerable there. Gender was also relevant in this area with many parents reporting that they were more reluctant to let girls out and often they were older than their male siblings at the time of autonomous socialising (Valentine, 1999).

The increased centring of children's time within the home environment has implications for children who are living in fear and being abused. In addition the continued belief that children, especially girls, are more in danger outside of the home than within it obviously has

massive parallels with the analysis of women's safety and where it is most likely located. This dichotomy and its implications is further explored here:

Thus while stranger-danger education is intended to keep children safe, for some it may have the consequence of putting them in a situations where they are more, not less, at risk of abuse and violence. Indeed because 'private space' is supposed to be safe space it also encourages young people to deny or remain silent about their experience (Valentine, 1999, p. 150).

Space and sensory experiences solely within the home are highlighted in some studies wishing to explore children's experiences and agency, when living in homes where abuse and/or drug and alcohol abuse is taking place (Wilson et al, 2012, Overlien and Hyden, 2009). Wilson et al (2012) argue that there is a strong sensory element to spatial autonomy, or lack of it for children. The auditory experiences of 'safe' spaces are emphasised with children frequently describing hearing violence and arguments:

In this way, loud noises produce by others through shouting, arguments and loud music from which the young person could not escape within often very confined domestic spaces, communicated family relationship and substance use problems, even where visual evidence was unavailable (Wilson et al, 2012, p. 100

The respondents in this study identified a lack of control over domestic space as problematic for them. 'These unwanted sounds sometimes prevented these spaces from being experienced as 'homes' (Wilson et al, 2012, p. 104). It was stated that it was not the intention of the study to explore and place emphasis on these sensory experiences, but it was increasingly noted that it was a way for young people to describe their relationships with their parents and their experiences of home.

In the study by Overlien and Hyden (2009) the aim was to explore children's actions during incidences of family violence. The child's bedroom, a locale associated with privacy, and child centred activities and behaviours, is exposed as being experienced differently in a home where a domestic violence is happening. Similar to Wilson et al (2012) there is testimony depicting attempts to block out the sensory experiences of violence that are bleeding through the walls from other spaces or locales in the house, and also incidences where the physical space is actually invaded. This is an effective example of these lived experiences:

I always turned on music because when dad got angry we all ran to our rooms when we were younger but we knew he would come and suddenly open the door and shout terrible things at us so I always put on music so I couldn't hear him shouting but when he came to my room he turned off the music and threw aside my book and said go to hell and get the hell out of here and I don't want to see you ever again and stuff like that (Survivor cited in Overlien and Hyden, 2009, p. 484)

Overlien's research demonstrates how space within the home can be intruded on, and zones blurred. The expected boundaries and behaviours in the locales are potentially not respected in 'normal' ways when domestic violence is present. Therefore as Meth (2003) argues in the previous section it is vital that assumptions are monitored in order that research is open minded to how space is utilised and acted within.

It has been recognised that children and young people themselves view home as more than a physical structure. In fact Campo et al (2016) found that for children and young people, home was regarded in terms of tangible and intangible dimensions, and characterised just as much by interactions and relationships.

2.4.1 Childhood Memories

A further dimension of the childhood home is that of the memories. A fondness and longing for a childhood home is frequently depicted in songs and films and it would be easy to assume that everyone has that positive blueprint of a home formed in childhood. It is in this arena of memory and nostalgia that the glimpses of accepted ideals of a childhood home are perhaps most readily discovered. The depiction of the idyllic picture of home, dreamed of by a man in prison, in the song Green Grass of Home perhaps exhibits a pinnacle of uncritical nostalgia, which still holds sway as a societal aspiration.

There is an idea that memories of home, particularly childhood homes can be skewed and idealised and based on a kind of false consciousness (Douglas, 1991; Mallett, 2004; Fox, 2016). It is further stated that an ideal home is not attainable and all homes fall somewhat short of the conditions necessary to achieve perfection. 'In other words the real and ideal home are established as oppositional terms' (Mallett, 2004, p. 69). In terms of a childhood home there is, like the song referred to above, a notion that there is an ability to return to that home or that feeling. The country song The House that Built Me by Miranda Lambert explicitly refers to a return to a childhood home in order to restore identity and perspective.

However the Welsh word Hiraeth, which has no English equivalent is used in the context of a person desiring a return to a home which doesn't exist or perhaps never did:

Hiraeth- A homesickness for a home to which you cannot return, a home which maybe never was; the nostalgia, the yearning. The grief for the lost places of the past (Kiraskyy, 2017).

Therefore there is recognition that memories and recollections of childhood homes can create a somewhat glossy version of reality. However it is also important to acknowledge that for many adults those positive memories of a home, that reflect societal norms, are actually extremely limited or non-existent. If the ideal home occurs in the past, the ability to create an 'ideal' home in the future may rely on a positive initial experience. However not all commentators accept this. 'People may have a sense of home even though they have no experience or memory of it' (Somerville, 1992, p. 530). Heathcote (2014) goes further by stating that our childhood homes influence our perception of every future space we live in and form our response to it which encourage us to either replicate or create the opposite depending on the nature of our experience.

2.4.2 Home hasn't happened yet

There has been a number of studies that have sought to explore opinions, feelings and notions of home amongst people who are currently homeless and/or had no or limited positive home experiences as children (Wardhaugh, 1999; Rowland and Gurney, 2000; Parsell, 2012; Kidd and Evans; 2011; Natalier and Johnson, 2015, Bentley et al, 2016). A number of themes emerge from this literature. All of the studies found that desires about a home, and the requirements for creating a home were strongly imagined, and felt even when current or past circumstances failed to provide a prototype.

Crucially shelter was cited by many respondents in these studies as a key element of home, especially among people with no current fixed abode. However running in parallel was a strong sense of home as previously referred to in the beginning of the chapter. Namely that a building in itself did not provide a home, shelter should represent retreat and refuge, a space for emotional wellbeing, a space separated from the outside world.

Control of the environment by the individual residing was also a common theme of home present in this body of research. Natalier and Johnson (2015) stress that children brought up in care have often experienced a loss of control over their lives that goes beyond the

'normal' power dynamics of the home where rules and boundaries are expected to be adhered to. Lack of choice and control was a prominent feature in their research. It contrasted sharply with how the young people saw their ideal home, where they would make their own rules where 'no-one can tell me what to do' (Natalier and Johnson 2015). Similar findings were found by Kidd and Evans:

...for these youths, home was associated with a sense of control within a living environment including behaviours, privacy, persons associated with safety, and a sense of ownership. While several of these meanings are commonly associated with home by most persons they are more sharply defined and strongly sought after by these youths who lack such control in many ways (Kidd and Evans 2011, p. 766).

In both studies there was found to be young people who preferred to live on the streets because the accommodation options open to them represented less control than they could attain as street homeless. Similarly Parsell (2012) studying homeless adults found corresponding sentiments reflecting the same priorities, with many respondents preferring street life to hostels and stating that a home had to involve 'having a control over a place and restricting access to others (2012: p. 197).

Natalier and Johnson (2015) also found that daily practices in the home were seen as important, with the predictability of routines seen as negating chaos and providing a structure currently missing from the lives of many of the respondents. This has also been highlighted by Dupuis and Thorns (1988) as an essential feature of ontological security in the home. Caring relationships were also seen as important. The research describes respondents referencing various birth and foster homes when describing difficulties in relationships, and trying connections that represented positive or negative experiences. In other words an example of caring relationships was sought but there was a desire for a more consistently caring relationship experience in a space that could be called home.

Encapsulating all of the above was a need for stability that would foster all of those desires and was 'part of a broader theme of home as a point of social and emotion stability' (Natalier and Johnson, 2015, p.134). Stability was also interlinked with 'normality' which relates to a stigma and 'otherness' associated with labels like care leavers or homeless. Parsell (2012) found that the concept of home was somewhere 'normal', as opposed to the 'abnormality' that the people in the study were living. 'For care leavers, home serves, as a symbolic and desired repository of positive social relations, as well as a means of self-realisation and belonging' (Natalier and Johnson, 2015, p. 133)

Kidd and Evans (2011) and Natalier and Johnson (2015) both opined strongly in their conclusions that it would be highly beneficial for opinions and feelings on the meaning of home to be sought from individuals, in order for more successful policies and actions to occur. In other words any accommodation which is provided without 'psycho-social' needs being addressed would be subsequently more likely to be 'unsuccessful'. Natalier and Johnson (2015) stringently argue that 'home' represents a critical piece of the imagined futures of young people in difficulty, and effective discourse with them about this will provide the key to a more stable existence. It is possible to speculate that this could also be true for young people and adults who have experienced domestic violence in childhood.

It is interesting to note the degree to which imagined homes fits the picture of the mainstream ideals. It is perhaps useful to give thought to the idealised nature of some of these assumptions especially for people with limited experiences of homes without abuse or unfamiliarity. There are elements that could be seen in a negative light depending in the context. The existence of routine for example, is sometimes interpreted as oppressive and simply a tool for the reproduction of working life thus serving capitalism (Douglas, 1991). Douglas also describes the sometimes difficult nature of family relationships and the processes involved in division of resources. The point of these observations is to raise the possibility that those who have struggled to gain positive experiences of home hold more idealised notions of what a 'good' home should be.

It is important to recognise alternative perceptions of home, which raises questions about the assumptions that all people are striving for what is considered an ideal home. In Kidd and Evans (2011) they found many respondents regarded home as a 'state of mind' and rejected the convention of home.

For these young people, the theme of control involved reconstructing dominant meanings of home-as-place and reconceptualising home as being a state of mind, if being comprised as friends, and as being linked to broad and loosely defined geographical spaces such as city and the world (Kidd and Evans, 2012, p.768)

Similarly Wardaugh (1999) found young women who had no desire for their own place and preferred institutions of hostels. They internalised fears and dangers of home life to the extent that there was no motivation to replicate the physical structure of 'home'. In none of the studies did any participant discuss home ownership. In Parsell's study (2012) 'legitimate ownership' in other words a tenancy was mentioned but home ownership was absent. These studies possibly lend weight to Foye's social norm theory in relation to tenure. It also

potentially highlights a difference what an idealised home looks like depending on lived experience. As Rowland and Gurnery (2000) point out, the stated desirability for homeownership amongst the children and young people they spoke to sometimes demonstrated, a 'lack(ing) of knowledge in the housing system' (2000, p. 128) and perhaps had not yet experienced the need for accommodation in the immediate.

These studies provide extremely useful and interesting insights for this research paper. In conclusion they illuminate the difficulties for adult transition, when a limited blueprint of home has been experienced. They also increase the need to appreciate that imagined and ambitions for home provide essential information for support and intervention, and hold the key for intervention in the achievement of ontological security.

2.5 The Best Tenure and then what is left

The promotion of home ownership has been in existence since before the 1980s (Darke and Darke 1994) however the policy of 'Right to Buy' amplified this both literally and culturally:

The growth of home ownership throughout the 1980s and 1990s can be partly attributed to the introduction of Right to Buy, a policy in the UK which provides secure tenants of councils and some housing associations the legal right to purchase the home they are living in at a large discount. By 1991, more than one million council houses in England had been sold to their tenants as a result (Office of National Statistics, 2015).

There have been a number of implications of this trend. A significant change was that the provision of social housing could be seen as going from a 'mass model', which involved accommodating a wide range of the population to a 'residual' model which limited housing help to people who were not able to partake in the market (Harloe, 1995). It is worth noting that Foye et al (2018) highlight that in the 1950s and 60s council tenants were considered to be affluent and not the economically inactive, benefit recipients that they are now perceived as. Therefore social housing was starting to reflect the values of neo-liberalism in that state help was reserved for only the most vulnerable. A reliance on the state for accommodation was beginning to be interpreted in terms of the idea that people who use social housing are 'flawed customers' (Dufty-Jones, 2016).

Home ownership was promoted as aspirational and the key to freedom and self-expression, it represented a move away from collectivism and embraced individualism. In a speech Margaret Thatcher delivered in 1976 in Finchley she set out the beliefs about home ownership that continued way beyond her premiership. The notion that home ownership gained a man security and freedom and signified ambition and a desire to be independent from the state. In keeping with other politicians including some labour ones she also explicitly stated that the desire to own a home was 'natural'. 'The only way for the majority of people to have any real say in where they live and how they live is by extending home ownership' (Thatcher 1976). This assertion that agency regarding accommodation can *only* be achieved through home ownership was starting to take hold.

Saunders (1990) discovered in his study of three separate British Towns that home owners felt the virtues associated with home, previously discussed in section 2.2, as well the ones articulated above, more deeply than renters. This also applied when the person actually still lived in the same home but had bought it under Right to Buy. However renters cited alternative things as important such as community and social time spent outside the home. Therefore there appears to be a trade-off regarding individual and collective values depending on tenure. This can have wider political implications. The subjective terms of autonomy, privacy, security and freedom were deemed important to home owners, and those values more readily associated with the Tory Party. Studies have shown that, certainly in the early 1980s, renters were far more likely to vote Labour (Williams, 1989). A slightly more cynical view is:

As recent governments of both parties have been aware, the man buying his house will not only enjoy a more settled home life but will also be committed to his work and unwilling to jeopardise his security by industrial action (Darke and Darke, 1979, p. 22)

This analysis again references the shift from a collective to an individualistic existence relating to home. And it must be noted that both this quote, and the words of Thatcher, refer to a 'man' when referencing home-ownership which is significant as it is an assumed feature. This belief that tenures influence voting patterns have continued into the recent past:

This can be seen to be continued as in the 2015 election the Tories once again promised Right to Buy by extending it to tenants of Housing Associations. The statistics for that election read similarly to the figures provided for 1983, with 50% of social renters voting Labour, and 46% and 39% of owned outright and owned with mortgage respectively voting Conservative (Broughton and Keohane, 2015)

Therefore although housing has played an ever decreasing part in the manifestos of the two main parties, with perhaps the exception of the most recent Labour Manifesto (2019), it continues to have a major influence on cultural beliefs, stigma, access to resources, class and social stratification, and subsequently voting patterns.

The political move towards home-ownership, was also important in the forming the idea of asset based welfare. The concept of homes were not just as places to live but financial resource, replacing and making up for some of the reductions in state help, for example a lower or delayed state pension (Malpass, 2007; Lowe, 2011; Heathcote, 2014). Malpass (2007) also links the ability to choose homes with related choices, such as schools and public services which are allocated on the basis of location. This 'wobbly pillar' exists in parallel to the concept of residualisation, in that those with resources buy themselves the best services, while those without continue to be underserved by transport, schools, shops, health services and childcare. This also strongly relates to the idea of 'privatisation' in relation to homes, discussed earlier (Saunders and Williams, 1988).

After continuing the first three years in power adhering to the previous governments spending plans, New Labour used the 2000 Spending Review to increase in spending on health, education and law and order. However, although it was clear that New Labour intended to spend money to achieve their objectives in certain areas, 'The lesson drawn from Tony Blair was the need to accept the political settlement defined by Mrs Thatcher' (Beech, 2008 p. 44). And this belief extended to housing. The superiority of owner occupation was never challenged, right to buy continued, building of new social housing was extremely limited and resources were targeted.

'The vision of public housing being one of choice of high quality housing in the public sector and people choosing their landlords, had become residual social housing that catered for poor families' (Beech, 2008, p. 40).

This continued 'loss' of social housing has sparked conversation and debate about the nature of the housing that is left and who lives there (Pawson, 2007; Malpass, 2007; Somerville, 2011). The term residualisation means a process in which a residue is created, and has been utilised to describe the way that social housing now survives and is beheld. When people move, in some number, from a neighbourhood or community because they believe it is no longer a desirable place to live, then what they leave behind is a social residue of less enabled people (Somerville, 2011). There was also an identified 'othering' of the 'practices of social renting' and traditional housing estates (Mckee, 2013).

This period also saw the mass transference of social housing from the ownership and control of Local Authorities to Housing Associations or what became known as an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO). Direct control of stock and degrees of financial and policy autonomy by Local Authorities remained historical.

The current housing situation however is more complex than a simple divide between homeownership and residual social housing. Financialisation of the housing market, has been underpinned by a steady commitment to neoliberal policies and solutions (Gallent et al, 2016, Edwards, 2016). Neoliberalisation is here seen as a political process driven by a desire to reform institutions with the aim of instilling conditions 'suited to promoting markets, logics of competitiveness, and individual responsibility at the service of commodification' (Blessing, 2016). In addition there is a recognition that the open, deregulated markets, again particularly in London, is rewarding investors in land and property by the fact of ever increasing demand by simply building housing in the most profitable areas. Meanwhile the gap between wealthy homeowners and investors, and essentially everyone else, regardless of tenure has been consistently ignored (Edwards, 2016).

The neoliberal narrative however suggests that failure to create a 'normal' life is down to an inadequacy or deviancy of the individual. This relates to a more general analysis of neoliberal society in which members of society are essentially consumers in all aspects of their life. A freedom to make choices about what and how they consume goods, and but simultaneously a judgement on those not making the 'right' choices open to being conceptualised as 'flawed' or 'deviant' (Bauman, 1998; Hancock and Mooney, 2013; McKee, 2017). McKee (2017) points out how this narrative is highly damaging to young people, 'generation rent' who are pushed out of the housing market but still don't escape being stigmatised or subjected to a 'moral distinction', associated with renting being made. Bauman succinctly defines this shift:

The sudden emergence of public consensus in favour of collective responsibility for individual misfortune and the equally abrupt emergence of the present consensus against that principle.

Bauman, 1998, p. 2

It could also be argued that this emphasis on individual responsibility transcends tenure of housing beyond clear lines of renting or borrowing which will be discussed in more detail in section 2.8.

2.5.1 Women and Tenure

These economic and cultural shifts impact women in specific ways. Although it is possible to argue that housing as well as other services and benefits are now gender neutral in that overt discrimination when applying for a mortgage or tenancy is generally no longer present. However, research shows women continue to face obstacles to accessing and maintaining all types of housing because of structural, cultural and economic disadvantage, and domestic violence (Gilroy, 1994; Watson, 1986; 1994; 2000; Pleace and Quilgars, 2003; Westendorp, 2007, Campo et al, 2015; Kelly 2015). 'The opportunities for women to set up independent households, with or without dependents, are being continually eroded' (Watson, 1999, p.152)

Where the literature on housing has described, analysed and contextualised the cultural and real shift from social housing to that of owner occupation both practically and culturally, there has been, as previously discussed, little commentary on the impact of these changes on women. Gilroy (1994), and Ginsberg and Watson (1992) have attempted to counter the balance by writing exclusively about women's inherent disadvantage through the fundamental change in mainstream housing tenure. The emphasis on home ownership and the more likely outcome for a man that he will access it prompts Gilroy (1994) to ask the question 'Are women still obliged to enter the owner occupation via the church or the registry office?' (1994:p. 47). This implies that home ownership is often only available to women through men and as a lone ranger, options for housing are potentially limited. The economic, practical and ideological shift towards the 'norm' of home ownership actively excludes women and denigrates them to forms of housing seen as second class. The issues of income inequality and greater caring responsibilities are perceived as a significant factors which prevent women gaining access to the owner occupation sector.

2.5.2 Domestic Violence and Tenure

The combined issue of housing, homelessness and domestic violence has been widely researched (Pleace and Quilgars, 2003; Abrahams, 2007, 2010; Baker et al 2010; Netto et al, 2009; Clough et al, 2014;, Poncic et al 2011, Tutty, 2014;, Kelly et al 2015; Botein and Hetling, 2016). These studies have overwhelmingly highlighted the difficulties women face in securing accommodation post separation.

When women choose to leave a violent relationship it often means that they also leave their home and possessions. In this scenario, leaving is not the end of the struggle rather just

another stage on a continuum of issues around safety, security, freedom and financial independence. Lack of resources can make this process arduous, long and difficult. Many women who flee domestic violence, in the first instance, approach a refuge for accommodation on a temporary basis. Since the 1970s there has been charitable refuge provision for women fleeing violence. Existing research recognises the critical role played by refuges and is powerfully articulated (see Homer et al, 1984; Abrahams, 2007; Baker, 2007; and Kelly, 2015). Prominent positive aspects are cited as safety, support, sharing of experiences with other victim/survivors, rebuilding of relationships with children, assistance to access legal services and benefits, and renewed confidence. However, in order to fully meet the needs of women and children in these circumstances it is necessary for robust provision of accessible secure housing. Although there are often protections in place Giulia Paglione (2006) argues that women suffering domestic violence should have a *right* to a violence free home and believes that this is not made explicit in international human rights law. Studies continue to show that:

Finding suitable accommodation of a reasonable quality within a realistic timescale remains the single most significant obstacle which women faced when leaving abusive relationships, and frustration and failure to be rehoused may well drive them back to their abuser (Abrahams, 2010, p. 44).

The Housing Act 1996, and subsequent Housing Act 2002 sought to increase the remit of who could be considered at risk, and produced a level playing field for all victims of violence which does not solely refer to violence in a family or home (Hester, 2007). The accompanying Code of Guidance (2006) was devised to assist Local Authorities implement both of these Acts and provides a broader definition for domestic violence reflecting the level playing field described in the law. These developments could be viewed as improving protection for women by swelling the circumstances where domestic violence can be viewed to occur, and therefore making more women able to access safe accommodation in time of need. However, 'frequently, women have limited means to purchase or rent private sector housing. This makes them disproportionately dependent on the shrinking social rented sector (Malos and Hague, 1997, p. 398)

It must also be restated that the Housing Act 1996 removed the link between an accepted duty and a right to permanent housing and therefore there is no obligation to provide a secure housing in these circumstances. This can be identified as an ongoing neo-liberal theme, whereby the scope for protection is enlarged but is resource-lite, and increasingly temporary in nature. Need to link this more clearly with the neo liberal arguments in the last

chapter. Survivors of domestic violence are directly suffering from a lack of social housing which is their only realistic way of securing a 'home' in the sense previously described.

2.6 2010 and beyond- More of the Same?

Surely it can be only under postmodern conditions that policy intervention based upon providing more affordable and decent housing could have become unthinkable (Burrows et al 1997, p.17).

Under the coalition of 2010, and subsequent Tory Governments of 2015 and 2017, many of the trends identified as present in the administrations of the last two decades remained. Social housing stock has continued to reduce and demand has continued to remain high, despite some reduction in recent years. It was reported by the Department of Communities and Local Government (2013) that from April 2012- March 2013 nearly 1.69 million households were on a waiting list for social housing compared with one million households in 2000. This is set out against a backdrop of only 1.68 million Local Authority owned dwellings compared to 1.85 million just the previous year (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2013). There is also evidence that beliefs about the political leanings of voters based on tenure still existed and influenced policy in this area. It is reported that Nick Clegg claimed that both George Osborne and David Cameron blocked plans to build more social housing because it would 'produce more Labour Voters' (Stone, 2016).

The Localism Act 2011 afforded to Local Authorities new powers that created a degree of autonomy regarding allocations and finance in relation to housing. This has resulted in a light increase in the amount of social housing being built. However the amount councils can borrow is limited, meaning that even ambitious local authorities can only operate plans on lower scales. In addition the national rent cut (2016) caused problems to previously drawn up business plans under the self-financing model, and the 2012 revamped Right to Buy has seen 51,352 sold against a funding of 10,644 new homes (Apps, 2017). Therefore any gains to the numbers of social housing is being more than offset by the continued selling off of social housing under Right to Buy.

Local Authorities can now prevent people from being considered for social housing if they are viewed as not being in need, with greater powers given to reduce the lengths of tenancies and which can be seen as a move away from lifetime tenancies as a standard. There is also greater leeway to deny people a local connection to an area and therefore

waive a duty where previously one would exist. Government assessment of situations where homeless people had previously received a permanent home is as follows:

Sometimes this meant that people acquire a social home at a moment of crisis in their life, and continue to live there long after their need for it has passed. Meanwhile there are people waiting for a social home who face much more difficult circumstances. This was unfair, and represented a poor use of valuable public resources (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2011).

Finally there are powers given to Local Authorities to let their homelessness duty to be released by an offer of privately rented accommodation. This has been argued to provide more suitable solutions for 'people experiencing a homelessness crisis', at the same time as freeing up social homes for people in 'real need' on the waiting list.

If a Local Authority owes a household a duty that household will have had to fulfil a number of criteria. A household will have to have proved they are homeless, proved that homelessness is no fault of their own, in other words unintentional, prove a local connection to the area in which they are applying and finally prove that they fall into a category of priority need for example they have children, are suffering from a mental health condition or fleeing domestic violence.

As Burrows et al (1997) have highlighted housing is different from any other form of benefit or service in that the level of proof required before help can be offered is unprecedented. This is pertinent when considering this relatively recent legislation. By the government's logic a household that has managed to prove all of the above are therefore in a state of 'homelessness crisis', and it is preferable for them to be housed in privately rented accommodation or short term social tenancies in order to free up permanent homes 'for people in 'real need'. It is unclear what 'real need' represents in this context but it would be difficult not to interpret this policy as one that seeks to provide housing only as long as is deemed necessary, with a re-entering of the market at the soonest possible opportunity, the ultimate aim. It is also couched in a language and ethos of fairness that seeks to redress the belief that some people were 'getting' at the expense of others without making any reference to the problems caused by stock reduction.

This policy personifies a neo-liberal approach. Fitzpatrick and Pawson (2014) carried out a comparative research project in the UK and Australia looking at the shift from 'public housing

to welfare housing'. They likened the changes to that of an emerging emergency service, describing the system as moving toward an 'Ambulance Service' Social Housing':

Underlying moves to phase out open ended security of tenure is a neo-liberal adherence to market service provision and the belief that state-subsidised housing should be reserved only for the most needy. Because matching tenancy term to the duration of need can also be presented as consistent with the promotion of equity, Fixed Term Tenancy reforms have been seen as attractive to right of centre governments seeking to occupy the political centre ground at a time when growing shortages of affordable housing are a salient policy issue (Fitzpatrick and Pawson, 2014, p. 611).

This depiction presents a very different role for social housing in that it performs a minimalist duty for short periods but in no way seeks to provide stability of accommodation or, a home. Short term tenancies have not materialised as a result of this Act at this current time but the neo-liberal ethos regarding social housing is easily detectable. This consistent departure from the provision of permanent housing both legislatively and practically is impacting on people experiencing difficulties on their lives and includes children who are living with, or fleeing domestic violence.

2.6.1 Women and Children's Poverty

The term 'feminisation of poverty' is simply an attempt to demonstrate that women, and therefore children disproportionately experience poverty compared to men on a global scale. In very broad terms this is because women earn less and they are more likely to have caring responsibilities, and often as a result are more reliant on the state for assistance. Therefore the recent agenda of austerity has effectively attacked women. It is essential to explore this reality fully in order to successfully analyse women's position within housing and the subsequent effects on children.

The Joseph Rowntree Report on Poverty in 2018 had this to say in their opening statement:

Nearly half of children in lone-parent families in the UK live in poverty, compared with one in four children in couple families. Over the last five years, poverty rates for children in lone-parent families have risen by around twice as much as those for children in couple families (Barnard et al 2018 p. 2).

As it is known that the vast majority of single parent households are headed by women, it can be argued that this condition is created by an increase in women's poverty. Beatrix Campbell's *End of Equality* (2013) is clear that 'neoliberalism is sexist' (2013:p. 27). Campbell cites the 2006 Equality Act as imploring public bodies to assess the impact of austerity on equality, and to 'do something'. The challenge to the government based on this legislation, against the 2010 austerity budget stated that the budget had 'allocated 72% of the financial burden to women and 28% to men' (2013: p27).

A number of organisations have further voiced concerns about the impact of Government spending decisions on women (Fawcett Society, 2012; The Women's Budget Group, 2015). These organisations have highlighted that the cumulative effect of fiscal measures taken to reduce net public spending will have a disproportionate effect on women, making many women poorer and less financially autonomous. The knock-on effects of this will be to turn back time on a range of indicators that concentrate on women's rights and equality.

The labour market statistics paint a decidedly mixed picture. While levels of economic inactivity have dropped to record lows among women, growth has come largely from part-time jobs, temporary work often in low-wage, feminised sectors of the economy. Employment in the private sector has increased by 1.9 million, while public sector employment, where women make up nearly two-thirds of the workforce, has declined by 372,000 since its peak in 2010 (Office of National Statistics, 2016) This environment may go some way to explain the Joseph Rowntree Findings that:

The rise in in-work poverty over the last five years has been driven almost entirely by the increase in the poverty rate of working parents. A working parent is over one-and-a-half times more likely to be in poverty than a working non-parent (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2018).

These increased rates in poverty can only negatively impact housing options, and the ability to achieve a settle existence. And more significantly affect the potential for a settled existence for children.

Gender differences regarding lone parents who are accepted as being owed a duty have been highlighted on p25. However, these tables are now discontinued and finding definitive, up to date and accurate statistics relating to women and homelessness and more specifically homelessness due to domestic abuse, is problematic.

The government currently releases figures on a quarterly basis detailing numbers of households currently living in temporary accommodation (TA) and numbers of households accepted as homeless by Local Authorities (LAs) with a breakdown of the reasons, including relationship breakdown and fear of violence. Although these figures can be deemed useful in one sense, the fact they are gender neutral makes any analysis of female homelessness, and the reasons for it, difficult. In England between 1 January and 31 March 2015, local authorities accepted 13,520 households as homeless and in priority need, 74% due to dependent children and only 3% cited as due to domestic violence (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2015).

It is clear from what is known about the levels of domestic violence within the population that it's likely these figures are unfeasibly low. For example the total number of households accepted as homeless in 2014-2015 was 54,000, however Woman's Aid report that in the same period nearly 12,000 stayed in one of their refuges (Women's Aid, 2015). It is also worth noting that these figures only represent households accepted as homeless and does not include households not accepted or households who have not approached the Local Authorities for housing.

Some of these issues are further explored in the next section.

2.7 Welfare Reform Bill 2012- Housing, Women and Domestic Violence

The Welfare Reform Bill 2012 is a highly significant piece of legislation with far reaching implications for a number of demographics, and which could be argued to have a direct relation to housing and how it is financed, both on a macro and micro level. Housing Benefit was subject to an array of changes, including the freezing of the Local Housing Allowance from 2013 which sets the maximum rate of Housing benefit which can be paid for tenants in the private sector, which has subsequently reduced the number of properties in any given area covered by Housing Benefit from three out of ten, rather than the previous five out of ten (Care and Repair, 2012).

The amount of Housing Benefit that can be paid to social housing tenants has also been capped for working age tenants, and reduced if there is more bedrooms in the tenancy that are deemed needed. This latter reduction is commonly known as the Bedroom Tax. Housing benefit has also been completely removed for 18-21 year olds unless in certain circumstances.

The benefit cap has been introduced, setting out a fixed amount of money per annum that no household, regardless of circumstances will be allowed to exceed. Community Grants and Crisis Loans have been completely abolished. There was also lesser known changes which have included the withdrawal of the Support for Mortgage Interest benefit. The support, which involved a contribution towards mortgage interest, could be accessed by people who had been on benefits including income support and pension credit for thirteen weeks. The benefit is now available as a loan but will not be available until benefits have been paid for thirty nine weeks. There are clear implications of this for housing and/or poverty levels.

2.7.1 Universal Credit

The biggest change to social security for people of working age is the introduction of Universal Credit which replaces six previous 'legacy' benefits (housing benefit, child tax credits, working tax credits, income support, job seekers allowance and income based employment and support allowance). A myriad of issues and problems regarding Universal Credit have been widely reported, although there is still limited information about the overall impact as a full roll out continues to be delayed. A number of commentators have highlighted the various changes in terms of the ethical, practical and moral focus of the new benefit (Dean, 2012; Dwyer and Wright, 2014; Millar and Bennett, 2016; Machin, 2017). The application of conditions, and subsequent sanctions, are a central tenet of this benefit and is seen to build on the increased emphasis on conditionality brought in under Blair. 'Universal Credit sees comprehensive conditionality become a founding principle of state financial support for people of working age in twenty-first century Britain' (Dwyer and Wright, 2014, p. 30).

The concept behind this benefit is 'it is like work' (DWP). Each claim requires a corresponding commitment, like employment, in a way that could be likened to a job description. This is sometimes described by DWP officials as the 'government being the employer of claimants'. It is also paid directly, in that all payments for different aspects of the claim will be in one complete payment which occurs monthly, which again is claimed to mimic work. However, Millar and Bennett (2016) dispute this claim by arguing that the conditions of Universal Credit are effectively a far more stringent arrangement than any employment contract in that, if broken, or deemed to be broken, sanctions can be instantly applied, with the ultimate sanction (until recently) being the loss of benefit for three years. They also make the point that the sanctions are not only applied to jobless people but also those in part time work who are unable to meet their claiming commitments regarding the pursuit of greater hours and/or pay. This is depicted succinctly by Dwyer and Wright (2014)

as the new 'welfare settlement'. There are two other points of contention with the 'like work' claim. One is that many jobs, especially lower paid ones still retain weekly wage payments, and the second being that many people in work receive housing benefit that is paid directly to the landlord so the idea that a direct payment is everybody's in-work experience is false. (Millar and Bennet 2016).

The other major reported issues include the five week delay for a payment, after applying for the benefit, and that all applications have to be made online which has caused difficulties for some people with limited access to the internet and/or limited experience of online forms. The consequences of these issues have been increased poverty for some people. The Trussell Trust have been very explicit in their analysis regarding Universal Credit:

When Universal Credit goes live in an area, there is a demonstrable increase in demand in local Trussell Trust foodbanks. On average, 12 months after roll-out, food banks see a 52% increase in demand, compared to 13% in areas with Universal Credit for 3 months or less (The Trussell Trust, 2019).

The increased use of foodbanks and more perhaps more importantly the 'normalisation' of foodbank use has been a significant change since 2014. The Trussell Trust are clear they are witnessing the sharp end of the reported failures of Universal Credit and other benefit cuts. Loopstra and Lalor (2017) carried out an 18 month research project for the Trussell Trust to look into the profiles of people utilising food banks. There were some key findings that related specifically to women and children and benefit delays, 'even compared to the low income population, lone parents and their children are particularly vulnerable to needing food banks' (2017: p. 2). Although Universal Credit is not referred to specifically they find that the majority of foodbank users have been waiting 2-6 weeks for a benefit payment from an initial application. This demonstrates that time delays between applying and receiving a benefit has a significant impact and the research highlights that this financial vulnerability, which they link to changes in welfare support, is leading to severe chronic food insecurity (Loopstra and Lalor, 2017).

This financial vulnerability is viewed to be exacerbated by the removal of crisis support, which included Crisis Loans, resourced by the now defunct Social Fund. Crellin and Royston (2018) authored a report for The Childrens Society entitled Not Making Ends Meet which focuses on the impact of the withdrawal of this financial support. It also analyses the effectiveness of the 'replacement', the Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) scheme which has devolved immediate crisis support to Local Authorities. There were a number of identified

concerns regarding this relatively recent change to how crisis support is delivered. Problems with benefits, with particular reference to Universal Credit, were cited as one of the primary reasons for people having to access crisis support although they found that there were often additional factors present including domestic violence. Crucially there was found to be a great disparity between numbers of people being currently helped under the LWA scheme and those helped by the Social Fund, with the former a small percentage of the latter. The report also claimed that in some areas the LWA was not effective or developed and charities were instead 'piecing together their own networks of support' (2018:p. 1). There was also a reported lack of awareness of the existence of the scheme which is seen as problematic.

The monthly payments and payment delays associated with Universal Credit have significantly impacted levels of rent arrears. 'Nearly three quarters (73%) of Universal Credit tenants are in debt, compared to less than a third (29%) of all other tenants' (The National Housing Federation, 2018). In July 2018 The National Housing Federation joined its Scottish and Northern Irish counterparts to call for five vital changes to Universal Credit. These changes included restoration of the work allowances that have been reduced compared to Working Tax Credits, abolition of the two child policy, and for payments to be made on time. The other two changes all related to support being more readily available for claimants that were struggling to manage. It is clear from these figures that Universal Credit is not providing a sound basis for managing and keeping homes, whether that be down to reduced and delayed payments or difficulties in managing a budget under the new systems.

Many of the issues associated with Universal Credit are reported to be effecting women and children disproportionately:

It has been claimed that Universal Credit is having a disproportionate impact on women and children involving an increase in hardship and poverty and threatening to make 'full time motherhood the reserve of the affluent (Dwyer and Wright, 2014, p. 24).

The Women's Budget Group (2017) have published a number of findings in relation to how women will be particularly be affected by Universal credit. They compared a range of circumstances and calculated the deficit between what women, in varying circumstances would have been received under the 2013 benefits model, and what would be received now. When looking at the impact for employed people with children it is possible to see that a lone parent working with three children is set to be £3,000 per annum worse off when considering

the reduction in the work allowance, the two child limit and 'other changes' (Women's Budget Group, 2017). Women make up 90% of lone parents in the UK.

The impact on housing options for these women has still not been fully appreciated but obviously when income is seriously reduced there has to be an impact on housing, regardless of tenure.

Bennett and Sung (2013) carried out some qualitative research looking specifically at the gender impact of universal credit. They highlight the potential for women to lose their financial autonomy. The first issue is that all claims are joint, with joint liability and commitment for the claim. The payment however is made to one person, the 'head of the household' within a couple, and the money paid is not explicitly divided into sections demonstrating what each amount is for. Therefore what would be the equivalent of Child Tax Credit is now indistinguishable from any other part of the payment and is likely to be paid to the man, who is not the 'main carer'. There is an assumption here about how resources are shared between couples which is not necessarily the reality of people's lives. Bennett and Sung (2013) found that although many of the couples had joint accounts, many of the women retained individual accounts which certain benefits and payments had been paid into, for example child benefit. This demonstrates that regardless of the internal financial arrangements of individual couples, women still tend to keep the benefits directed at them within their own financial jurisdiction. In the situations where there is domestic violence, of which financial abuse is now legally recognised, it is possible to surmise that monies paid with the intention of assisting in the care of child are being appropriated as a result of being received by someone other than the 'main carer'. Meanwhile the responsibility for care has not shifted.

There was also an issue with what is being called the 'second earner' with more benefit being lost per pound earned than for the 'primary earner'. As the 'second earner' is likely to be a woman this policy cannot be considered 'gender neutral'. Bennet and Sung's research demonstrated that women very much valued their 'independent income' and that this disincentive to carry on with work may well further jeopardise that autonomy in the future. It is also an interesting further contradiction to the 'like work', as wages are paid only to the individual who as earned them not to a partner.

There was also comment that while bills may be met with the monthly payment, other things like food and clothes would have been paid for in the past, by tax credits and income support which are paid fortnightly or weekly. Under the monthly payments, once money runs out and

there is no additional payments to see claimants through until the next monthly instalment leading to foodbank use. The issues experienced by women living with domestic violence may be more challenging.

Domestic violence charities have been vocal about their concerns about Universal Credit. Howard and Skipp (2015) completed research for Women's Aid and the TUC called *Unequal, Trapped and Controlled*, which looked at financial abuse and the potential implications of Universal Credit. The research centred on women's perceived concerns because at that time roll out was still limited and many were still in receipt of legacy benefits. However it provides insight into the specific implications of this benefit design where domestic violence is present. The respondents were able to articulate the ways in which their partners already controlled finances under the existing system, and the propensity to build up debt in the name of the victim. Concerns about Universal Credit included giving the abuser an even larger amount of money to misuse, limited ability to juggle finances due to the monthly payment and that partners would make online claims with no involvement from their partners. The option to request split payments were viewed unfavourably, with an overwhelming 85% of respondents believing it would be dangerous, in other words the abuse would worsen if this was pursued. Finally there were concerns about rent arrears, and women in this research thought that monies allocated for housing costs should be paid directly to landlords.

The issues highlighted here have strong echoes with the analysis put forward by O'Campo (2016), discussed earlier in the chapter, that housing instability and domestic violence should be conceptualised as a continuum of psychological instability rather than focussing on one particular stage of housing or homelessness. This would appear to be an increasing phenomena as a consequence of these policy changes.

Therefore it is possible to see the last few decades in terms of housing policy and other related social policy particularly Universal Credit, as running in two distinct but parallel directions. As previously referred to in terms of women fleeing violence, groups of people protected under homelessness legislation, and how they should be protected has generally increased in the last few decades, but the actual resources to realise that protection has reduced. This reduction serves to strengthen the neo-liberal agenda that has sought to create an environment and ethos of temporality regarding state assistance and an emphasis on assistance to access the private sector. The hostile environment that now exists in terms of what is now widely accepted as welfare rather than the previous label of social security, and the increased reliance on the private sector for employment and housing, contributes to

a greater precarity outside of the system and therefore is potentially evermore crisis occurring. Finally the massive cuts to Local Authority budgets (in some cases up to 60%) have left them in a much weaker position to negate some of these negative impacts.

2.8 Where Do We Live Now? The Proliferation of the Private Let

The words homeless and homelessness mean more than those without homes. They are collective nouns that include a wide variety of people who have no permanent address.

(Russell, 1991, p. 3)

2.8.1 Who owns the property?

As the availability of social housing depletes there has been an increase in the number of people renting in the private sector. Privately owned housing rose from 81.1% in 2011 to 82.4% in 2014. However, previous research, using Census data, found that the prevalence of owner occupied housing fell for the first time in a century in the decade between 2001 and 2011, while the portion of people living in private rented accommodation rose from 12% to 18%. Given that this trend has continued in recent years in England and Wales, this suggests that increases in the privately owned housing stock, were mainly driven by increases in private renting (Office of National Statistics, 2015). In other words more homes in private ownership are being rented out and are not contributing to an ideal of home ownership or ontological security highlighted earlier.

Furthermore in 2016-17, there were 14.4 million households that either owned their home outright or were buying with a mortgage. This represented 63% of all households. Outright owners made up 34% of households while 28% were mortgagors. Outright owners have made up a greater proportion of households than mortgagors since 2013-14. Home owners are older now than they were 20 years ago. In 2016-17, the proportion of home owners under 35 was 9%; two decades ago, this figure was 18%. This difference is largely explained by fewer mortgagors under 35. In 1996-97, 28% of mortgagors had a household reference

person (HRP) under 35. In 2016-17, this figure was 18%. Mortgagors and outright owners have different age profiles. Outright owners tend to be older, with 61% of such households having a HRP over 65. Only 5% of mortgagors are aged 65 or over. (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018).

2.8.2 The Implications for Ontological Security

If ontological security is associated with homeownership then it would be possible to conclude that this is to an extent the privilege of the old and is increasingly difficult to attain for younger generations. For the rest of the working age population more people, significantly a considerable amount of families, are now living in privately rented accommodation. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlights some of the issues faced by children as a result:

The proportion of children in the poorest fifth living in the private rented sector rose from 17% in 2005/6 to 37% in 2016/17. At the same time, the protection provided by Housing Benefit has been weakened. Since the mid-nineties, the proportion of single-parent households in poverty and claiming full Housing Benefit who have to use other income to help pay their rent, has more than doubled – from 17% to 43%. Over the same period, the number of couples with children in poverty receiving full Housing Benefit who have to do this has more than doubled – from 15% to 37% (Barnard, 2018, p. 4).

In many cases this reliance on the private rented sector represents a lack of permanency and security due to evictions or simply the ‘ending of a tenancy’, which is now the most common reason for homelessness. From 3rd April and 30th June 2018, prevention and relief duties ended for 10,800 households by securing accommodation for 6 months or more. In other words households in housing crisis are having their duty discharged by entering into a housing tenure that will potentially serve as a temporary solution and possibly return the household back into crisis. In another piece of research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation it was found that people on low income with only access to lower quality housing in the private sector struggled with ‘creation of home’ which implies an omission of ontological security (Croucher et al, 2018).

Easthope (2014) has sought to show that feelings of security can be reduced by theoretical risks, for example the ability of a landlord to evict a tenant for no reason, even if the likelihood of that occurring is extremely low. ‘Places are understood to result from peoples’

interpretation, understanding and experience of the physical environment' (Easthope, 2014, p. 581). Easthope focuses on the premise of place and the ability or scope for control of it with reference to modifications of the home and the freedom of personalising an environment. As Parsell (2012) comments:

Control over a space is important to people's understandings of what it means to be at home, because this control over a space also means the ability to exercise a degree of autonomy over their lives (Parsell, 2012 p. 160).

Therefore it is argued that essentially a lack of control exists in the private rented sector that is detrimental to ontological security and the accepted ideas and meanings of home.

What is not explored in Easthope's study is a discourse of class analysis similar to that associated with homeownership and social renting which could be characterised as the individual versus the collective. It may be possible to speculate that the nature of private renting and the related issues articulated promotes a kind of apolitical position resulting from an all-consuming survival existence.

As has been highlighted previously there is also a vast discrepancy between numbers of households on the waiting list for a social home and the number of available homes, with great differences depending on geography. It would seem the requisites for ontological security would be difficult to achieve in this environment. The film *Half Way* by Daisy May Hudson (2016) depicts one family's experience of the housing process from homelessness to settled accommodation. It is possible to see the deterioration of the protagonist (the mother) as the period of time under uncertainty increases. It would appear that for an ever greater proportion of the population ontological security is meeting precarity head on. If women and children living with domestic violence have historically been disproportionately affected by these issues it could be argued that realising the idea and meaning of home may be becoming more distant and harder to achieve. What is not explored in the film is the longer lasting effects, in other words the mental scars of sustained precarity, of that period of 'homelessness' well after housing has been secured.

The concept of residualisation has already been explored in this chapter and is not disputed. Shaw (2004) looks at public health in relation to housing and argues that there is a direct link. Much of the paper concentrates on the physical symptoms of living with, for example mould, poor ventilation and too few rooms. However there is also discourse about the effects on mental health of living in poor conditions and also refers to aspects of life such as

loneliness. There is significance placed on how areas are viewed in terms of stigmatisation and reputation and the meaning that is placed on that by the inhabitants. The cultural onslaught of association with tenures as a way of identifying the character of the people who live there is damaging for individuals:

Where the discourse is negative, signifying low status, stressing dependence rather than control and overemphasising the uniformity of need and aspirations, it is likely that housing options associated with it will have similar characteristics. People don't form their identities in isolation from wider societal factors (Clapham, 2010, p. 263).

In other words, although social housing might represent security in a way that private renting can't offer, the negative connotations of personal failure associated with certain housing types, as highlighted in section 2.5, can affect mental well being, and subsequently ontological security. It is also worth noting that ontological security is not necessarily experienced by 'marginal' homeowners who are struggling to pay a mortgage or maintain their property. People on low incomes with lower value properties, perhaps paying an interest only mortgage or having a mortgage stretching into retirement, the idea of asset based welfare is somewhat meaningless Croucher et al (2018).

2.8.3 Fleeing Domestic Violence

There are serious concerns now about the future of existing refuge provision. Pressures to refuges are now enormous and lack of move on accommodation means there is lack of flow resulting in a reduction in spaces. In its annual survey of women's domestic violence services in 2014-15, Women's Aid found that the need for refuges remained a necessary, consistent feature of support for survivors of domestic violence. (Womens Aid, 2015). In 2017 Womens Aid report Nowhere to Turn stated that:

Only one quarter of women seeking refuge were accommodated in a suitable refuge space, while only 7% of women with no recourse to public funds (barred from all public services due to their immigration status) were accommodated (Womens Aid, 2017).

In addition there has been a move away from specialist organisations providing services as Local Authorities contract more generalist housing organisations to provide accommodation and support. For example in Newcastle upon Tyne.

There has been three recent studies looking specifically at how women and children who have lived with domestic violence experience housing (Kelly, 2015; Solace Women's Aid 2016; Scottish Women's Aid 2016). The studies vary in focus but all highlight current problems for women both in terms of the service they receive and the pathways available to secure housing. Scottish Women's Aid conducted in partnership with survivors involved in a local health project. They found a comprehensive deficiency in understanding and appreciation of the dynamics of domestic violence amongst service providers in the housing sector. Women experienced a lack of control over the process, lack of involvement in decision making and a system that disempowered them. (Scottish Women's Aid 2016). Also many women reported the discrepancy between being told that the situation was not their fault but conversely being the ones that had to leave the family home, which they feared would affect their children.

Kelly's Finding Freedom Study (2015) which was completed in conjunction with Solace Women's Aid (2016) and the slightly later report by Solace themselves focussed more on the opportunities for a settled existence after fleeing. It has to be noted that these studies occurred in London where there is a well reported chronic shortage of social housing. However, both studies found that many women had been forced to leave secure tenancies in order to flee domestic violence and also found a similar lack of understanding of domestic violence evident. In terms of being rehoused there were many obstacles that link directly to the legislation (The Housing Act 1996) previously discussed:

A common response (from Local Authorities) was advising women to go down the private rented route. Hard fought for legislation that linked homelessness, social housing and priority for particular groups (including women who have experienced domestic violence) has changed, meaning that women (if accepted) will now have to go into bed and breakfast, hostels or private rented accommodation as homeless and apply separately for social housing under locally determined priorities which can include residence in the Borough for five years and working, volunteering or studying. That said some of the women preferred the private rented option due to the conditions of the local authority properties that they were offered (Kelly 2015, p. 60).

This quote effectively covers many of the hardships that women and children face after leaving and highlights the many moves that can occur before anything near a settled home can be achieved. The study also identified that many women who actually owned their home often lost it in the financial settlement of divorce despite having been the sole financial contributor, and that domestic violence was not being taken into account. However it must be reiterated that this research is situated in London. In other regions of the country it may be a similar situation to that described by Cloke (2000) when looking at the impact of the Housing Act 1996, in that Local Authorities will continue to interpret legislation depending on resources.

Recent legislation has delivered some alternatives for women living with domestic violence to remain in their own home. In 2014 Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) allowed police and magistrates, immediately after an incident of domestic violence to ban a perpetrator from returning home for 28 days. This may give women more 'space for action' (Kelly and Westmarland, 2015) and time to evoke further means to keep existing accommodation. The Sanctuary Model, part of the Homelessness Prevention Programme (2013) involves a number of measures for example a safe room, to enable women to stay at home. Evaluation of these schemes is limited however one study by Netto, Pawson and Sharp in 2009 concluded that while the model was useful in some situations it was important, that if safety could not be guaranteed, and women did not want to stay in their own homes this should be respected.

In all of these studies women reported being concerned about their children especially in relation to multiple moves and not having somewhere to call home for prolonged periods.

2.8.4 Where do We Want to Live?

There is still a recognised desired 'norm' regarding home ownership which currently endures in the UK (Kearns et al, 2000; Rowland et al, 2000; Heathcote, 2014; Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017; McKee et al, 2017; Foye et al, 2018). However, while it is not disputed that home ownership is culturally dominant there is a recognition that it is not necessarily what everyone wants. Some people may reject the idea of home ownership as it keeps us chained to our jobs and are 'literally a pledge to death' (Heathcote, 2014, p. 59). Equally an acceptance of home ownership as unachievable may also affect people's wants and needs.

It is essential to recognise that currently 1.2 million people are now on the social housing waiting list and therefore there is a significant percentage of the population who actively wish

to be 'residualised'. It is likely to be a higher number than that due to increased ways available to not accept households as statutorily homeless. Acute housing need may also account for this. The 'social norm' identified by Foye et al (2018) may provide insight into this in that an increased reliance on the private rented sector may be producing a reverse effect. It is possible that people's lived experience of the private rented sector means that they start to disregard some of the more negative cultural views and share a desire with others to gain some secure accommodation through social housing. Furthermore, for some sections of the population a privately rented property is desirable against a backdrop of homelessness and hostel accommodation (Maycock and Parker, 2020). Again, it is also possible that need simply trumps either views or norms.

There is a further indication that the figures may not reflect the real need for homes. There is an argument that the creation of new households does not just happen due to personal circumstance but relies in part on when and how new housing is available (Bramley, 2012; Gallant et al, 2017)

Household formation may be regarded as a measure of the volume of effective demand for housing, but as such it may reflect affordability and availability of/access to housing, in such a way that greater pressure in the market may be expected to suppress or delay new household formation to some extent. Also, we can see concealed household indicators as a sort of mirror image of household formation, with more of the former being associated with less of the latter (Bramley, 2012, p. 251).

This analysis would lend weight to the question posed by Kelly 2015 'will more women now stay with abusive men because the costs of leaving are now too high?' (Kelly, 2015, p.130). Women may wish to 'form' a new household but as women's awareness of the housing shortages, refuge cuts, welfare changes occurs it may prevent leaving abusive partners. In other words where women want to live is not being realised. This potentially results in children remaining in homes where they are living with domestic violence.

Clapham (2010) aims to explore whether housing policy can be concerned with meaning and highlights the contradiction between a meaning of home that stresses the security and self-esteem that home can generate, and housing policy that concentrates on houses as units of accommodation. It is argued that the role of housing in creating and sustaining well-being needs to consider four elements that are emphasised in the general debates. These are personal control; identity and self-esteem; social support; and inequality and housing policy

(Clapham, 2010). In other words, if housing policy is to be successful in the true sense of the word considerations have to be given to more abstract concepts. The idea of policy moving beyond the simple provision of accommodation is also highlighted in the Children's Commissioner Report (2019) in relation to children specifically:

Some of the places children are being forced into calling 'home', often for months or years at a time, are simply inappropriate places for a child to be growing up.....Most incidents of family homelessness in England are not the result of personal circumstances like mental health problems – primarily it is a result of structural issues, including the lack of affordable housing and welfare reform. (Longfield, 2019, p. 2).

It is difficult to envisage how accommodation which is lacking in some of the key aspects of a home can ever seek to improve lives, assist in moving forward, provide any sense of security, stability or privacy and crucially offer any kind of choice or control over space. Rather, many of the aspects of home which are experienced when living with domestic violence are replayed in the lived environment of temporary housing and private rental properties. Moreover, the cultural norms may need to shift to reject the 'moral distinction' made between renting and owning. This is in order that we might accept 'home' as something other than a mortgage and move to create a more positive opportunities for secure social housing for greater numbers than is currently possible.

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has attempted to provide an overview of popular ideas and meanings of home within society that are subsequently reflected as desirable. The primary critical discourse regarding these ideals have centred round the discrepancy and differing perspectives of women's experiences, and feminist analysis. There is further discussion regarding the lack of relevant literature with regards to children. The chapter then gives an overview of housing policy and welfare reform to develop an understanding of the current challenges facing many of the population, with an exploration of the political values underpinning these developments. There reference to women and children living with and fleeing domestic violence threaded throughout. Finally the links between the ideas of home and the likelihood or barriers of attainment of these ideals within the policy context are explored.

Chapter Three: Children, Domestic Violence and 'Resilience'

3.1 Introduction

Domestic Violence has invited a focus amongst activists, professionals and academic researcher, primarily on the impact of domestic violence on adult women. Feminist perspectives have ensured that individual situations are located within a wider political spectrum in that domestic violence reflects inequality, oppression and defined gender roles in a wider patriarchal society (see Chapter One). However, many adult women living with domestic violence have children (Mullender, 1994), and it has only been in the last thirty years that the impacts on children living within those environments have been considered seriously. Increasingly in research, it has been seen as imperative that the views of children and young people are taken directly rather than being provided by mothers, refuge workers, social workers etc.

Witnessing domestic violence has been formally acknowledged as damaging to children, with the Department of Health (1999) stating that, 'Prolonged and/or regular exposure to domestic violence can have a serious impact on a child's development and emotional well-being, despite the best efforts of the victim parent to protect the child' (Department of Health, 1999, p. 9).

There has been an important body of research carried out in this respect (see Abrahams, 1994; McGee, 2000; Mullender, 2002; Hester and Pearson, 2007; Hague, 2012). There are many common themes identified throughout this research perhaps most significantly that impacts of domestic violence on children are complex and unique. Effects can widely differ among different children even within the same family, because of a range of other factors including resilience, age, levels of support and the severity/frequency of abuse. However despite this, 'what is clear. . . is that a wide range of childrens' development outcomes are likely to be compromised by exposure to domestic violence' (Hague, 2012 p. 25). Although the primary conclusion was that there is no specified set of effects for children experiencing domestic violence, the ones that were identified were echoed throughout all of the core texts.

This chapter will start with providing an overview of some of the recognised aspects of domestic violence which effect adult women. This is useful as it allows parallels, or not, to be drawn in relation to children's experiences. There is then an exploration of what is known concerning children and domestic violence followed by a more indepth discussion regarding resilience and agency.

3.2 The Nature and Impact of Domestic Violence on Adult Women

The impact of domestic violence on women can depend on the individual to some extent, however it is recognised that women can be affected in far reaching and multi-faceted ways.

3.2.1 Physical Abuse

The impact of physical abuse can include injuries such as broken teeth, fractures, burns and bruising, disability, long term health problems and death (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Dobash and Dobash, 2004; Hester and Pearson, 2007; Ellsberg et al, 2008; Westmarland, 2016). In the case of the murder of women by men the term 'Femicide' is used as a feminist definition (Radford and Russell, 1992). The statistic that two women per week are killed by their partners or ex-partners has been widely quoted and reported for more than a decade, perhaps to the extent that it loses resonance. The project Counting Dead Women by Karen Ingala-Smith has included all women that are killed at the hands of men and puts the figure at 2.2 women per week for 2018 (Ingala-Smith, 2019).

3.2.2 Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is widely reported by survivors of domestic violence and is sometimes, similarly to coercive control, given less prominence in relation to domestic violence than physical injury. Rape within marriage has been recognised as illegal since 1994. However, it is still possible to witness narratives of men's entitlement to sexual relations with women in the context of marriage or a relationship. For example in a recent court case in 2019, involving adult social services and concern about a women's ability to consent to sex with her husband, the judge said 'I cannot think of a more fundamental human right than the right of man to have sex with his wife' (Sharma, 2019).

In Walby and Allen's study of the British Crime Survey they found that 54% of UK rapes are committed by a woman's current or former partner (Walby and Allen, 2004). Sexual violence within an intimate partner relationship is also said to be rarely a 'one off' and is often reported as being a regular part of an abusive and controlling relationship (Westmarland, 2016).

3.2.3 Coercive Control

The subject of coercive control has gained increased attention and can permeate all aspects of domestic violence (Starke, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Williamson 2010; Hardesty et al 2015; Pitman, 2017; Sharp-Jeffs et al 2018). Women's Aid provide a checklist of behaviours representing coercive behaviour in an intimate relationship. These include isolating someone from their friends and family, monitoring how time is spent, contact with other people, clothes worn, degrading or humiliating the other person, controlling finances and using threats or being intimidating.

Stark (2007) views coercive control as the lynchpin of domestic violence, and regards physical violence in a relationship as potentially 'not harmful' if it doesn't occur as a part of pattern of control. Stark also ascertains that coercive control is often *more* (my emphasis) harmful than physical violence and is more likely gendered.

The asymmetry in coercive control reflects the asymmetric nature of sexual inequality, not the fact that women are less aggressive, controlling or domineering than men (Stark, 2007, p. 378).

Domestic violence for Stark is one continuous incident which cannot be broken into specific events, and crucially can omit physical violence completely. Therefore Stark rejects the significance of major events and highlights the micro management of everyday tasks within contexts, particularly home, where 'persons are thought to be self-directed or involve routine activities like shopping in which a malevolent interest is hard to conceive' (2007: p. 390). That coercive control dilutes or potentially eradicates that sense of home in the broadest sense. This also relates to an assertion that coercive control occurs within the gendered remit of 'making your husband happy' (Williamson, 2010). In other words domestic violence is sometimes hard to unpick and recognise, from the 'norm' of complying with a man's wishes.

In Johnson (2008) all physical violence is harmful but is divided into separate incidents of 'situational violence' which essentially occurs in a vacuum, and then intimate terrorism which is essentially violence related to coercive control. Alternatively Walby et al (2018) theorises that all physical violence is coercive, and therefore any incident represents a manifestation of a degree of coercion regardless of the context.

These competing theoretical perspectives on the intricacies of how mental and physical abuse contrast and combine are useful to an extent, however all recognise that coercive control and physical violence, although not always mutually exclusive (Stark, 2007; Johnson, 2008) are features of domestic violence. It is perhaps problematic to create a defining model when individual experiences differ in terms of emphasis and circumstances.

Stark (2007) suggests that in order to understand how women are dominated and the nature of women's responses, it is important to understand how abuse works. Williamson (2010) describes it in terms of realities, in which the abused women must always seek to comply with the abuser's reality at the expense of her own. Williamson provides a number of examples of women's testimonies regarding their situations and responses to domestic violence that indicate how these alternative realities are embedded and incorporated and/or separated to maintain survival. One example is paralysis. 'The impact of living within an unreality of someone else's making is that you become paralysed...whatever she does is wrong' (2010: p. 1415). Stark (2007) would analyse this as an internalisation of the rules created by her husband, 'integrating his standpoint into her self-system so that self-respect and self-soothing comes from her own internalised version of the standards set by the person who is hurting her' (2007: p. 336). In other words the 'unreality' of the abuser becomes adhered to by an abused person in an automatic fashion.

However resistance does occur, and is able to be identified in a range of actions and behaviours, some of them not obviously recognisable. Stark argues that viewing women, or abused women, as predicated to be victims of abuse, and seeing self-harming behaviours as weakness is a fundamental mistake when attempting to understand the dynamics of coercive control. Williamson (2010) refers to this as an 'abdication of self', in what could be viewed as active resistance.

3.2.4 Domestic Violence and Mothering

The impact of domestic violence on mothering has addressed by a number of feminist writers seeking to explore and explode the 'mother blaming framework' (Edleson, 1998; Radford and Hester, 2006; Holt et al 2006; Romito, 2008; Douglas and Walsh, 2010; Lapierre, 2010; Humphreys and Absler, 2011). This framework essentially places the onus on mothers to negate the negative effects of domestic violence on children and pressure is exerted to exit the relationship

Domestic violence can impact on the capacity to parent. The dynamics of power and control in relation to domestic violence often involve a 'deliberate targeting of women's experiences of mothering by violent men' (Radford and Hester, 2006, p. 27). This can result in mothers being constrained or prevented from engaging in nurturing behaviours, or restricting children's freedom within the home for example keeping children quiet because of the perpetrator's presence. Mothers can also be compromised by mental or physical injury. This lack of consistency can result in 'disorganised attachment' for children whereby sources of comfort and fear are the same (Holt et al, 2006).

Perpetrators can engage in a number of strategies in order to undermine the mother's position. These can include seemingly innocuous acts such as providing a child with sweets in the middle of a meal that the mother has prepared, to physically and emotionally abusing the mother in front of the children (Mullender, 2002; Radford and Hester, 2006; Lapierre, 2010). It has also been reported that fathers can sometimes use children to abuse mothers, or abuse children as a way of hurting and abusing the mother, what Kelly (1996) calls the 'double level of intentionality'. "Oh, every time he wants to start abusing me he makes sure the children see, are there...and tells them lots of rubbish: 'Your mother is a slag'," (Mother cited in Mullender, 2002). Children can subsequently blame the mother for the abuse or take on a parenting role and feel responsible for their mother's well-being. Research also shows that perpetrators will use children in ways that prevent a woman from exiting the relationship. Strategies such as locking children in the house so a woman doesn't leave as she is unable to take the child, or making sure that one child is always with him for the same purpose.

Communication between children and their mothers during ongoing situations of abuse is identified as problematic. It has been noted in much of the research that children say that they sometimes feel unable to talk to their mothers about their experiences, and mothers continue to try and protect by a range of efforts to minimise the impact.

These affects can have contradictory consequences as the mothers' efforts to shield a child and a child's efforts to protect the mother contribute to the conspiracy of silence about abuse (Radford and Hester, 2006, p. 159).

This can create distance between mothers and children. Coercive control is deployed to ensure that the time spent in the home is prescribed by the perpetrator, and limiting time a mother's time spent with children is included in this strategy. 'Preventing mothers and children from spending time together by monopolising mothers' time maintained perpetrators'/fathers' dominance in families' (Katz, 2015, p. 12).

There is evidence to suggest that women are able to continue to parent their children despite the adverse conditions and strive to provide the same level of care available to children living without violence (Mullender, 2002; Radford and Hester, 2006; Lapierre, 2010). However, this recognition is placed in a context of an identified consistent bias within child protection, and other services, towards holding women accountable for their children's safety under the charge of 'failure to protect' while largely ignoring the perpetrator (Mullender, 2002; Radford and Hester, 2006; Romito, 2008; Douglas and Walsh, 2010; Lapierre, 2010; Katz, 2015). As Romito points out:

Mothers are considered responsible for everything that happens to their children, and by extension, the evils of the world (Romito, 2008, p. 58).

Research has found that even when male violence is well known there was still an emphasis on the capacity of the woman to protect the children. In addition domestic violence does not preclude an ability to be seen as a good father. Perpetrators were sometimes still viewed as good fathers regardless of the abuse levelled at women, and survivors have described how men have manipulated services in order to undermine the mother's credibility:

...male partners would use their supposedly 'better fathering' against women. In particular men would use talk of how they could do parenting better in order to put down their female partners. By not dealing critically with men's violence behaviour and disassociating it from their parenting some of the welfare agencies thus ended up colluding with men's abusive behaviour towards women (Radford and Hester, 2006, p. 139).

This separation of abuse toward women and the perceived ability or suitability to parent is also a central tenet of research conducted regarding the courts in regard to child custody and child contact (Eriksson and Hester, 2001; Barnett, 2015)

Where male violence is recognised as a risk to children, mothers are often expected to leave the relationship and failure to do so is again, 'failure to protect'. However the practical difficulties potentially faced by women when they leave, and the correlation between levels of harm and economic resilience are discussed in Chapter One. Running in parallel with the practical issues faced by fleeing there is also well documented evidence that it is in fact post separation that women and children face the greatest risk to their physical safety.

3.2.5 Post-separation Violence

Post-separation violence and abuse has been well documented as a significant issue for women fleeing domestic violence and potentially carrying a greater risk of danger than when they remained in the relationship. The abuse takes the form of stalking, violence and harassment, and various tactics are reported as employed including threats of violence to the woman and also other family members, verbal and emotional abuse, continued financial abuse and intrusions into the home to threaten, assault or commit criminal damage.

It is also acknowledged that men will sometimes report women to Children's Social Care for maltreatment of children and/or pursue women for child contact through the family courts as a way of using the 'system' to continue control and harass (Humphreys and Thiara, 2003; Varcoe and Irwin, 2004; Brownbridge, 2006; Stark, 2007; Holt, 2015; Westmarland, 2016). This situation can result in making it extremely difficult for women to find safe places to be and live, and some women having to report having to move several times. As one woman stated in Humphreys and Thiara (2016) 'I thought when I left it was a fresh start, but I didn't realise that my difficulties were just beginning' (2016: p. 195).

When safety is achieved it cannot be necessarily assumed that practical reality is enough to fully exit the relationship. Sharpe-Jeffs et al (2018) stress the importance of support that endures way beyond leaving an abusive partner or even staying in a refuge. 'Support continued to be needed so that women could begin to "feel" safe as well as "be" safe (2018: p. 183).

3.3 Children and Domestic Violence

It is clear that awareness of how the child can be affected has increased, and the prevalence of child abuse and child agency within situations of domestic violence is also now more fully appreciated.

The impact of domestic abuse on the victim and on children – even once they have achieved safety – is severe and long lasting. And families live with domestic abuse for too long before getting effective help – on average 2.6 years for abuse, and three years for medium-risk. Given that many children living with domestic abuse are very young, the impact on them is severe (Safe Lives 2015, p. 3).

However it could be argued there are still significant gaps in knowledge, and a sense that a full understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence as experienced by children, particularly in relation to coercive control is somewhat trailing behind that which has been developed in relation to adult women. Childrens' status in the context of domestic violence still remains, to an extent, as appendages of the 'victim' and their experiences seen as a by-product of the abuse suffered by their mother. In other words they are still seen as 'collateral damage' resulting from something that is bigger and implicitly more important. Therefore the literature is still providing a limited picture of how children experience and survive domestic violence.

It is unclear how many children witness domestic violence as there are few figures that attempt to provide an overall national picture, in addition due to under reporting it is probably impossible to provide an accurate picture. Radford et al (2011) conducted a study for the NSPCC looking at Child Abuse and Neglect which used a random probability sample of parents and children, young people and young adults in the UK. Out of the 1,761 young adults aged 18-24 years that responded, 23.7% stated that they 'had been exposed to domestic violence between adults in their homes during childhood.' (Radford et al, 2011, p47). More recently Women's Aid have estimated over 160,000 children are living with domestic violence currently (Women's Aid, 2017). The figure quoted represents calculations based on numbers of women accessing their services, hence the claim that the amount of children affected is more than the amount they projected.

It is not possible to translate these figures into a definitive national picture. However both of these attempts at providing an idea of the amount of children effected by domestic violence demonstrate that it is a significant problem of frequent incidence.

3.3.1 The impact established

As previously stated there is now widespread acknowledgement that children are significantly impacted by living with domestic violence (Abrahams, 1994; Mullender and Morley, 1994; Mullender, 1996; Edleson, 1998; McGee, 2000; Mullender, 2002; Brandon and Lewis 2005; Humphreys, 2006; Corrigan 2008; Holt et al 2008; Meltzer et al, 2009; Colis, 2013, Katz, 2015; Callaghan, 2017; Callaghan et al 2018). Common themes identified include a number of emotional impacts such as sadness, fear, anger, guilt and shame. Researchers have shown that these effects rarely occur in isolation from one another and can be felt differently depending on the age of children involved. In addition the way that emotions are expressed can be distinguished as either internal or external. The emotion

most commonly referred to by children when asked how they felt, or how they think they would feel if domestic violence occurred is sadness.

The theme of sadness in children in relation to domestic violence is perhaps less predictable by adults than that of fear...that is, it was raised both by children who had actually lived with violence and by others who were imagining those experiences (Mullender 2002, p. 58).

Sadness was also found to potentially escalate in the longer term into feelings of depression, isolation and sometimes self-harm or even suicidal thoughts.

Fear is a feeling that children living with domestic violence have repeatedly articulated in research (McGee, 2000; Hester and Pearson, 2007; Hague, 2012; Overlien, 2013). This is then linked with anxiety in that fears which occur during a specific incident can lead to a more general fear which sometimes continues beyond leaving. This fear is sometimes termed as hypervigilance as it is the feeling of being constantly aware that something bad might happen:

However (I understood the fear of the children as all-embracing and pervasive, affecting them cognitively, emotionally, bodily and relationally. These children, do not describe specific situations or episodes where they were fearful, but describe the fear as a state, as an integrated part of their lives and as embodied (Overlein, 2013, p. 287).

This state of fear and hyper vigilance leads to sleep deprivation and an inability to focus on other aspects of children's own lives such as school work or friendships. In relation to this state of hypervigilance, research is beginning to indicate actual trauma to the brain as a result of prolonged exposure to domestic violence which potentially hampers recovery and results in PTSD (Hester and Pearson, 2007). The prevalence and reality of the presence of PTSD in children who have witnessed domestic violence is still being debated.

Children also described feelings of anger throughout all of the research, often towards their fathers but also towards their mothers and other people in their lives. 'Because I wasn't really nice towards my family...I wasn't being nice towards my teachers and I was using abuse towards my mother...' (young person quoted in Collis, 2013 p. 57).

Physical manifestations of the trauma of domestic violence are recognised as occurring in pre-school children such as stomach aches, bedwetting, speech problems, sleep disturbances and behavioural problems. Behavioural problems including aggression have been cited as potential issues for all age children. However internalising emotions is more associated with older children and can include anxiety, depression, self-harm, eating disorders and drug and alcohol use (Hester and Pearson, 2007; Meltzer et al, 2009; Kelly et al, 2015). Although it is possible to ascertain that both age and sex of children can affect whether effects of domestic violence are external or internal, and also the extent to which the problem manifests, it is not clear when and how this occurs (Meltzer, 2009).

Both the emotional and physical affects articulated here can impact children throughout their lives, and in various settings outside the family for example school. McGee (2000) identifies three main ways in which education can be affected, which are displaying aggression in school, suffering from a lack of concentration and simply school refusal. All of these symptoms can be related to the fear and anxiety previously described and demonstrate the all-encompassing impact for children who are living with domestic violence.

Guilt, shame and stigma were also common themes, and related to these emotions were children's beliefs that they were to blame for situations at home. Previous research has shown that all age groups of children are reluctant to share their experiences outside of the family home (Abrahams, 1994; Mullender, 2002; and Buckley et al, 2007). Barriers to disclosure include fear of being taken away, fear of repercussions, desire to protect parents, anxiety about stigma, and being bullied by peers. This need for secrecy can adversely affect peer relationships, not only due to an absence of openness in communications but also an unwillingness to invite friends home or not wanting to spend time out of the home. 'The negative impacts on their ability to make and retain friendships applied to all age groups, not just older teenagers or adolescents' (Buckley, 2007 p. 303).

This reluctance to talk about what is happening also relates to the fact that domestic violence often occurs in the home which possesses an implicit meaning of privacy. The notion of space is explored in Chapter One, however in this context relates to disclosure. 'Indeed because 'private space' is supposed to be safe space it also encourages young people to deny or remain silent about their experiences' (Valentine, 1999, p, 150).

Mental Health- foreshortened future

3.3.2. Child Abuse- The Overlap

It must be noted there is a potential risk of an oxymoron when posing the question as to whether child abuse occurs in conjunction with domestic violence. Children living with domestic violence in whatever form are likely to be experiencing harm, and therefore it could be argued that living with domestic violence in and of itself, constitutes child abuse (Callaghan, 2016; Colleen, 2018).

It has been observed that research into domestic violence suffered by adult women, and child abuse respectively, have been pursued in parallel rather than in an interconnected manner. This separation is reflected in practice with services for 'battered women' and child maltreatment sitting within different systems and striving for different or conflicting outcomes (Edleson, 1998). However, there is a definitive dichotomy in relation to domestic violence and child abuse and there is a valid pursuit of recognition that where domestic violence occurs in a family there is a greater risk of abuse unequivocally directed at a child.

Research has highlighted the prevalence of domestic violence where direct child abuse is identified within a family, and vice versa, with the abuser being the same man (Abrahams, 1994; McKay, 1994; Edelson, 1999; Bowen, 2000; Avery, 2002; Dixon et al, 2007; Hester and Pearson, 2007; Postmus and Merritt, 2010; Radford, 2011). Rates of correspondence fluctuate greatly from study to study, ranging from 30% up to 70%. This may be due to the definition of abuse employed, the sampling method or varying rates of disclosure. However even taking the lowest figures of overlap on board, direct child abuse has undoubtedly been shown to be a serious issue when domestic violence is present.

There has been a consistency through the research which identifies a correlation between the levels of violence to which women and children are subjected. Essentially the 'best predictor of abuse of the children was the severity of wife abuse (together with frequency of attacks and frequency of marital rape)' (Mullender, 1996, p. 11). This is also borne out in a report by Brandon et al for the Department of Education in 2012, analysing serious case reviews relating to the death or serious injury of ad' child from 2009-2011. It was stated 'domestic violence featured prominently in these cases, and it was clear in several cases that the impact on children did not stop when the parents separate' (Brandon et al, 2012, p. 59).

Despite this recognised co-occurrence there is still perhaps a reluctance within academia, policy and practice to fully embrace this phenomena. This was profoundly highlighted in a

study by Hester and Pearson (1998) who, in conjunction with the NSPCC, looked to include frameworks for asking children about domestic violence where child abuse was thought to be present. This occurred within a project working with children who had been abused. In addition there was an assessment of impact of the introduction of the domestic violence as an issue, and also the implications for the work and in particular interagency work. Essentially, as stated in the title of the study, domestic violence moved from the periphery to the centre of the work. There were a few key findings including a greater understanding of children's experiences, a greater recognition of domestic violence as abusive to children, and significantly enhanced ability see children as experiencing abuse and domestic violence by the same man. Practitioners reported that the incorporation of domestic violence had helped with understanding of the overlap between child abuse and domestic violence, primarily that power and control were at the centre of both behaviours. The other vitally important admission by practitioners was that actually domestic violence was the 'biggest ingredient' in the whole problem (1998: p. 39). There was an understanding that the positioning of the woman in the context of domestic violence created a situation where child abuse was more likely to occur:

And then you can see why it was so easy for the sexual abuse to take place in the context of domestic violence which had made her appear to the rest of the family- the children, and herself- inferior, to blame. And then, of course, mothers who have children who are sexually abused get the blame and blame themselves, so looking at the blame, you had to look at domestic violence aspect of it because it was such a prime mover (Practitioner cited in Hester and Pearson 1998, p. 39).

This 'setting the scene' for child abuse in the context of domestic violence by the same man is incredibly useful as an insight into the link between the two forms of abuse. Bowen (2000) concurs stating that 'mothers of sexually abused children represent (another) group with high victimization rates' (2000: p. 38).

It is also interesting to note that in the research by Hester and Pearson there were some interesting parallels regarding child abuse and domestic violence. A 16yr old girl reported a 'relationship' with a care home staff member. The case was identified as child sexual abuse however there were incidents of physically threatening behaviour and sexual coercion by the man involved. Hester and Pearson (1998) further argue that by reframing the case to include domestic violence would provide an additional method to carry out recovery work with the young woman. However, a wider and more significant implication is that the

behaviours engaged in by perpetrators of both these crimes share more similarities than perhaps previously acknowledged.

There is still a mainstream narrative that depicts child contact with fathers as desirable even when men are accepted as domestic abusers within intimate partnerships. This demonstrates that associated abuses are not widely accepted. Crucially this juxtaposition is often readily accepted across a range of professions involved in family law including judges and the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) and can be combined with a lack of understanding re post-separation abuse. A number of studies highlight the consistent emphasis put on child contact for fathers, and the difficulties for women in raising actual safety concerns (Radford, 1997; Eriksson and Hester, 2001; Barnett, 2015). A recent campaign by Women's Aid (2016) seeks to prevent further child deaths (19 in the last ten years) occurring during court ordered contact with perpetrators of domestic violence, where mothers have raised safety concerns

'Family Court advisors have indicated that domestic violence is a regular feature in contested contact cases' (Hester and Pearson, 2007, p. 58). However despite this the vast majority of contact is approved. Therefore not only is domestic violence a potential precursor for direct child abuse within the family home it can often continue after the women has exited the family situation, because of court ordered continued contact between a perpetrator and a child.

Moylan (2010) conducted a study to looking at domestic violence and child abuse on adolescent internalising and externalising behaviours such as depression, anxiety, aggressive behaviours and what it termed 'delinquency'. The study did find some limited increased vulnerability from the dual exposure, particularly in relation to depression and stated that there was a 'need to disentangle the unique and combined effects of child abuse and domestic violence exposure in children, and to examine these effects in the context of other known risk factors' (2010: p. 62). This echoes some of the conclusions arrived at in the study by Hester and Pearson (1998) that work around child abuse needs to include exploration of domestic violence. Conversely it also suggests that the presence of domestic violence warrants investigation in terms of the abuse suffered by children both from exposure and potentially direct harm. While there is recognition that domestic violence 'harms' children, research suggests that in the absence of 'direct harm to a child' investigations by workers are limited with families referred to other services (Colleen, 2018).

3.3.3 Loss

As Collis (2013) has argued, loss 'is probably (in relation to children) a common denomination in relation to exposure of domestic violence' (Collis, 2013, p. 66). The range of things that children describe to have lost is broad and includes homes, family members, friends, freedoms, pets, school, mothers, fathers, privacy, pets, and possessions, sense of security, self-esteem and self-control. This sense of loss can particularly be felt when children have had to leave the family home which often happens quickly, without time to say goodbye or collect belongings. This can repeatedly occur either due to frequent returns home or movement between different types of temporary accommodation.

Parental loss whether physically or emotionally can be experienced deeply by children. Mullender (1994) highlights a number of Women's Aid reports that define the struggle for children who have been suddenly separated from their father even though they may also harbour feelings of fear and hate towards him. The loss of the mother maybe on an emotional level as her resources are drained by the abuser but again can be physical, if children are taken into care, live with another family member or the father gets custody. An adult survivor describes making the decision herself to be placed in a children's home as she became increasingly frustrated by her mother consistently returning to her violent father. However the loss was keenly felt. 'When I was away from home, I would become terrible homesick for my Mum and siblings' (Adult survivor cited in Hague, 2012, p. 86).

Repeated losses can also be a feature of a child's life even after the family have moved away from the abuser, due to the absence of a permanent home or the abuser finding the family. One young person in Mullender (2002) talks about the multiple losses she has suffered due to these kinds of circumstances. After being in three different refuges her father followed her home from school and despite doing her best to 'lose' him the fact that he was aware of her and her family's whereabouts resulted in another move as the situation was deemed to have put the family and the refuge's safety at risk. These multiple losses are recognised as highly detrimental to well-being and recovery.

3.3.4 Coercive Control- Emerging Understandings

As has been repeatedly stated the current conventional wisdom regarding domestic violence, in academia, the law and beyond, has moved towards understanding it as a pattern of behaviour. It has also been previously stated that in relation to children it is perhaps surprising that the focus of research has still largely been on the effects of

witnessing physical violence. It is acknowledged that some of this research has sought to raise awareness of children as victims, and influence practice within Social Work and domestic violence support services in order to 'see' and support children in an equivalent sense to mothers (Abrahams, 1994; Mullender, 1994; Edleson, 1998; Hester and Pearson, 2007). However much of this approach negates two central strands for children living with domestic violence, namely their indirect and direct experiences of coercive control, and also their ability be agent within their own lives. The limited material on these aspects of children's experiences renders understanding of the reality of day to day live currently inadequate and in need of further exploration, 'investigating the issue of children and domestic violence qualitatively is still a 'new' aspect of research in this field' (Overlien, 2013, p. 287).

Since this statement there has been a growing number of academics who are now unambiguously addressing children's experiences of coercive control and in doing so, are uncovering evidence of children's day to day existences when living with domestic violence (Overlien, 2013; Haselschwerdt, 2014; Katz, 2015; Callaghan et al, 2017; Callaghan et al 2018). As Callaghan et al (2017) point out, violence, intimidation and control are used to dominate both adults and children and goes further to state that research regarding children and domestic violence 'rarely focusses on their lived experience' (2017, p. 336).

In addition, Operation Lighthouse by Hart and Hart (2018) is a memoir of their life growing up with a father who exerted control over their mother, themselves and their sister, and provides a comprehensive depiction of a childhood lived within a pervasive arena of coercive control:

Our father had successfully created a world where we had no option but to confine ourselves to our prison. After a while, his words and actions crept into our minds, disabling our ability to fight back. With each infraction, the prison bars closed in further (Hart and Hart, 2018 p. 70)

This quote has significant echoes with the manifestation of coercive control in adult women. The description of 'his words... our minds' is difficult to separate from how Williamson (2010) conceptualises the experience of 'living within an unreality of someone else's making'. The consequences of this phenomena is also a relative duplication with little to distinguish between 'disabling our ability to fight back' and 'that you become paralysed' (Williamson, 2010). The reference to 'prison bars' is also greatly reminiscent of

Stark (2007) who uses the metaphor of the cage, 'the cage is made up of bars that imprison' (2007) and his assertion that domestic violence, through the utilisation of coercive control is essentially a liberty crime (Stark, 2007).

In other words, the consistency of control on the mundane occurs in order to effectively alter the victim's world and penetrate the victim's reality. The pervasive nature of domestic violence in the home which centres on coercion, control, and the fear and reality of aggression and violence ultimately has an affect on a child's perception, and sense, of self. 'The material and spatial experience of domestic violence has consequences for the way they understand themselves as embodied and affective beings (Callaghan et al, 2017, p. 337).

Hart and Hart (2018) again echo this:

Coercive control is the isolation created by invisible chains. It is the strangling silence where others demand evidence of 'a significant event' rather than understanding the effects of the accumulation of abuse. Currently the severity of coercive control is judged from the perspective of the abuse given and not the perspective of the abuse suffered (Hart and Hart, 2018, p. 79).

This assertion by the Harts, that the level of coercive control experienced is similar, regardless of the frequency of physical violence is echoed in the findings of Pitman (2017) who studied women living with coercive control. Crucially in further research by Katz (2015) into children and domestic violence it was found that children living in families where physical violence was infrequent, reported the same level of negative impacts as children living in circumstances where physical violence occurred was often or severe.

Coercive control has been strongly related to gender (Stark, 2007; Williamson, 2010) in that the arenas to activate rules relate to already accepted gender specific duties for example providing meals. The accepted balance of power regarding adults and children perhaps affords the same mask in that it is difficult to extrapolate 'normal' control from abusive and coercive behaviour.

These parallels are important because they imply that the recognised strategies in a campaign of coercive control potentially effects children in similar ways to adult women. This is not to categorically state that children are experiencing coercive control in the precise manner women do but rather to emphasise that children are potentially living an

existence with a perpetrator that occurs in its own right, and can be just as devastating. The observation that the experiences have commonality serves only to reiterate this point, and to provide even greater credence to the detrimental effects of coercive control.

There have been three relatively recent studies that have specifically investigated the presence and impact of coercive control with regards to children (Overlien, 2013; Katz, 2015; Callaghan et al, 2017; Callaghan et al, 2018). All of this research has involved speaking directly to children who had previous experiences of domestic violence with a percentage having spent time in a refuge. Katz (2015) also spoke to mothers of the children. Callaghan et al (2018) revealed that children are aware of the control that is being projected onto their mothers and the restricted amount of time children were 'allowed' with their mothers as a result. The children in this study were also able to identify controlling behaviours that were employed to restrict their own actions which included being given punishments for inconsequential actions such as touching a newspaper.

Much of the analysis cited in Katz (2015) actually concentrated on mother's accounts of their children's restricted lives in terms of attending parties, seeing friends and having any kind of life beyond home and school. It is in Overlein (2013) that children's direct experiences of coercive control really comes through, and the psychological aspects of violence also dominated the testimonies. The participants were all in their teens and they described behaviours by perpetrators such as having emails hacked, being secretly filmed, and the need for schoolwork, behaviour and appearances to be constantly up to a 'standard'. Overlien also depicts children experiencing dramatic shifts of behaviour by perpetrators, from aggression to affection which unnerves and creates fear, what one young woman described as 'dangerous madness' (2013: p. 281). Explicit threats were also prevalent as was severe actual physical violence.

What Overlien (2013), Callaghan et al (2017) and Callaghan et al (2018) stress, which appears to be absent in other research, is that children who are living with domestic violence of which coercive control is part, are experiencing the effects every day. It's an all-encompassing part of their lives that is preventing any kind of 'normal' life. The consistent presence of fear is described as living in a 'constant state of readiness' (Overlien, 2013, p. 283) which is similar to how Callaghan describes a 'strategy of monitoring'. There is also reference to the home and how the presence of the perpetrator extracts what is seen as the functions of the home such as safety, joy or laughter. The

actual physicality of the home is discussed in Callaghan et al (2018) with discourses centred round agency and spatial aspects of control. However, the presence of home in the research alludes again to a more comprehensive understanding of the children's experiences as lived every day, rather than occurring intermittently as a result of a particular incident. This encapsulated by Overlien:

The physical violence, the control, the threats combined were used in a way that dominated every minute of every day and excluded any other forms of everyday life. All his actions and those of other family members in the home were influenced by his violence (Overlein, 2013, p. 283).

An observation running through this research is that the behaviour perpetrated is done for the sole reason of control in the same way that that men seek to control women. Overlein (2013) uses Johnson's term 'patriarchal terrorism' (Johnson, 2008) and concurs with Johnson's analysis regarding coercive control that, stating that it 'is the defining characteristic of the violence to which children living with patriarchal terrorism are subjected' (2013: p. 285). In line with this, physical violence is combined with threats, to then make actual physical violence unnecessary for the control to be achieved. Overlien, and Callaghan, are the exception. Katz (2015) claims to shine a light on coercive control of children but actually the study quickly turns attention to agency and resilience, or the analysis actually centres around coercive control of the mother. A comprehensive understanding of a child living under a constant regime of control is to an extent, still elusive.

3.3.5 Knowledge and Awareness

Children's awareness of domestic violence comes across from the research, essentially in the discrepancy between what children report to have witnessed and what mothers believe them to have witnessed. Although women often cite damage to children as a reason for leaving, there is an often a reported disconnect between what children know and what parents think they know. In Radford and Hester (2006) the findings show that even pre-school children can articulate awareness of violence, and similar to other studies show that mothers often believe their children have no memories of events or situations that have occurred, and subsequently potentially misjudge the impact. Children were also consistently shown to have insight into different kinds of abuse and other methods of control employed by perpetrators, apart from just physical violence (Katz, 2015; Overlien, 2013; Callaghan et al, 2017). The extent to which they could see the situation with clarity was demonstrated in

Mullender (2002). 'There was considerable irony in the numbers of quite young children whose advice to mothers was to leave immediately when the violence begins' (Mullender, 2002, p. 171).

In Mullender's study (2002) involving 1400 children aged from 8yrs to 15yrs, children were found to have a profound understanding of domestic violence and were also aware that it was a common experience and it was wrong. It was, as expected, older children that were able to demonstrate the most depth of understanding. Significantly there was a gender difference in levels of recognition about where responsibility for violence is located.

By the age of 15, girls were far more likely than boys to recognise that domestic violence against women is both very common and unjust, that it is hard for a woman to leave situations of violence, and that pregnant women may experience violence (Mullender et al, 2002, p. 20)

In a comprehensive evaluation of a domestic violence recovery project for non-abusing parents and children, the knowledge children have of abuse is highlighted. There is a recognition that domestic violence promotes a 'conspiracy of silence' and that recovery programmes can be an opportunity to acknowledge both the individual and shared experience of domestic abuse (Sharp et al, 2011). One mother is quoted as stating, 'we though they didn't see' (2011, p. v) which encapsulates a somewhat conventional wisdom about children's ability to know and understand.

In addition, as discussed in section 3.3.4, the lived experiences of children living with domestic violence goes beyond an awareness of something occurring outside and separate, but can be argued, is embodied within them.

3.4 Resilience and Agency

Resilience is a concept that is utilised across academic disciplines, most notably in ecology. Resilience in this context contains two distinct strands or perspectives. The first refers to a system or material that is able to recover its original shape and the second refers to the ability of ecosystem to 'absorb shocks and maintain functioning' (Mackinnon and Derickson, 2012). Resilience is now applied to a wide range of people, places, objects and systems, such as economic, cultural and social which in turn foster a variety of definitions. Mackinnon

and Derickson (2012) highlight some of these, stating that in the case of the individual resilience it is 'the capacity for successful adaptation and functioning despite high risk, stress or trauma' (2012: p. 256).

Mackinnon and Derickson continue by transferring the concept of resilience onto a capitalist economy where there is a tendency to overlook the structural way in which resources are allocated. The consequence of this oversight is that when economic shocks occur, the concept that they are to an extent constructed, certainly compared to natural disasters, is ignored. The instability and crisis of the losers, usually smaller places and communities is seen as a lack of resilience because of their inability to adapt, or to 'create positive adaptations'. However, their damage is, fundamentally part of capitalism's resilience. In other words, the demise of the weaker parts of the system is a necessary part of the ongoing resilience of capitalism, and must be pursued in order to survive.

Both the ontological nature of 'the system' and its normative desirability escape critical scrutiny. As a result, the existence of social divisions and inequalities tends to be glossed over when resilience thinking is extended to society (Mackinnon and Derickson 2012, p. 258)

This provides food for thought in relation to domestic violence and resilience of victims/survivors. Similarly to capitalism, it is the patriarchy which is resilient and its continuation, as described above relies on the disadvantageous position of women and children, of which domestic violence is one part. This is not to render discourse regarding children's resilience as negated. However it does serve to place the conversation within a context where it is accepted that resilience, in situations of domestic violence, is demonstrated most fully by the perpetrator, and patriarchy more generally. This perception is not to doubt the legitimacy of research into identifying the factors which can foster resilience and coping strategies in children, but it does illuminate the potential powerful structures of oppression which overarch attempts to overcome or resist the damage suffered.

It is important to make a distinction between agency and resilience, in order to distinguish the ways in which resilience has been investigated in this context. The concept of resilience has gained significant traction in academic research regarding children and domestic violence. This has been predicated by an increasing analysis of how children experience and discern and understand the domestic violence they are living with, essentially by directly engaging with children, and hearing their voices. (McGee, 2000; Mullender, 2002; Radford and Hester, 2006). This knowledge has been developed further by a concentrating on

children's voices and the dynamic, reflective, and insightful agency which children can exhibit. The focus on this aspect of children's lives can be seen as a determined move to see children's agency within a context of domestic violence and to cease viewing them as simply witnessing or being exposed to domestic violence (Overlien, 2009; Overlien, 2013; Sixsmith et al 2015; Katz, 2015; Eriksson, 2016; Eliffe and Holt, 2019). In addition, there has been a growing interest in longer term resilience which extends into adulthood, for children who have lived with domestic violence (Humphreys, 2001; van Heughten and Wilson, 2008; Anderson and Bang 2012; Ungar, 2013; Jenney et al, 2016; Allagia et al, 2018).

Therefore for the purposes of this research the term agency will be used to refer to an immediate resilience, in other words actions that potentially seek to reduce the level of harm, or in some way change the state being experienced for either themselves or another family member, living with domestic violence in the home. Resilience will be referred to more as a process, or a series of positive adaptations that occurs over time which, make a contribution to the kind of adult lives which are desired by the individual. This definition of resilience assists in this distinction:

Resilience is a process of navigating through adversity, using internal and external resources (personal qualities, relationships, and environmental and contextual factors) to support healthy adaptation, recovery and successful outcomes over the life course (Make Resilience Matter, 2017).

Ungar (2013) goes further and suggests that it is actually the positive adaptations that are made which result in resilience. Both definitions described regarding agency and resilience are open to interpretation and challenge. The separation of these phenomena is important when focussing on domestic violence in childhood as it is vital to ensure there is no suggestion that the display of agency occludes long lasting effects of living with domestic violence.

3.4.1 Agency- The Here and Now

The theoretical framework for this concept of agency is explored in the Chapter One. As previously discussed, it is accepted that a child is active as opposed to passive, as far as the concept of dualism is useful. It is accepted that children are not autonomous, do not exist as separate entities from their families, wider society, and institutions, and don't ultimately have absolute freedom in any context due to their status. Therefore, their agency is relational and

must be understood within the specific context that their childhood is taking place. A focus on domestic violence in childhood provides this specific context.

Demonstrating agency is sometimes denoted as using coping strategies (Gorin, 2004). Children's actions undertaken in relation to domestic violence have been studied, with children directly contributing to findings (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al 2002; Gorin, 2004; Overlien and Hyden, 2009; Jenney et al, 2016; Titterton and Taylor, 2018). The key message to take from the research is that children are part of their household in the same way as adult women:

Acts of violence against women not only take place in the adult's lives, they also take place in the children's lives. The violence is something children experience from a position as subjects, and not as objects, as the concept of 'being exposed to' may suggest (Overlien and Hyden, 2009 p. 480).

Children's experience of incidences of physical violence occurs within an environment in which they are already living, although not always. Therefore, they will have an ongoing involvement and awareness which is likely to provide them with prior understanding about how, when and why agency is possible. Coping strategies are found to vary depending on age, with younger children potentially having more limited options for action, certainly in terms of movement however there has been an identification of themes across different pieces of research

The first common theme was that of distraction or avoidance which basically involves children attempting to ignore their problems at home. This might take the form of 'blinking out' what is going on by watching TV or hiding or identifying another place to go, a haven where they know they will be safe for example, a grandparent or friend's house (Gorin, 2004; Overlien and Hyden, 2009). There is evidence to suggest that this kind of strategy can lead to a greater likelihood of mental health problems in the future than direct action (Overlien and Hyden, 2009).

Children will sometimes make the decision to intervene and despite the caveat at the beginning of this chapter regarding children's ages, there are examples of very young children taking action. "She was always the one that told him off and shouted at him, even from two years old, she'd go away and say, Don't!" (Mother cited in Mullender, 2002, p 99). Direct intervention by children is also featured in previous studies (McGee, 2000; Gorin 2004; Overlien and Hyden, 2009). These included a description of two sisters aged between

12 and 15 who physically took their mother to a neighbour after seeing her lying on the stairs. They had hidden and waited to hear their father driving off before acting (Overlien and Hyden, 2009). This example shows that children are able to make decisions and act on them independently however, crucially it also demonstrates that there are contextual circumstances that change the dynamic or incidence of agency. The children had acted but only after their father has left the scene demonstrating that his presence prevented them from taking the actions they wished.

Studies have shown that children are aware of what they deem 'safe' and 'spaces' within the home, whilst acknowledging that the features of spaces can be subject to change (Sixsmith et al, 2015; Callaghan et al, 2018). This chimes with the observations regarding space referred to in section 2.3.2 which cautions against assumptions about what certain rooms or homes generally represent. Children have reported not feeling ownership of their home which potentially means they are not experiencing the positive aspects a home can provide. This denigration of home overlaps with research regarding mothering and domestic violence highlighted earlier in this chapter. However, children utilise space within the home in order to try and resist the effects of living with domestic violence is a way of further developing understanding of children's agency. Callaghan et al (2017) powerfully captures the complex dynamics of agency, space and 'home' in this context:

Further, children's use of space expresses the sense of constraint that characterises the spatial experience of domestic violence, and the material spaces of home come to signify the perpetrator and the violence. Simultaneously, though, children are able to use the material spaces of home to enable gestures of defiance (Authors, 2007), and re-forge and recreate a sense of 'home', through movement and use of space that enables a sense of control, and redresses some of their material experiences of power imbalance (Callaghan et al, 2017, p. 337).

Children report constantly being watchful of what is happening, 'children may monitor parents' movements in order to know where they are, what they are doing and when' (Gorin, 2004, p. 44). This monitoring may involve actions previously discussed such as staying off school or staying awake at night but also includes being mindful of behaviours that may be a precursor to abuse and then taking relevant actions, for example allaying themselves with the abuser as a way to protect the victim. This scenario is recounted in Overlien and Hyden (2009) 'Christine's father claims that her mother is sick, and although Christine has understood that this is not true, she pretends he is right to keep him in a good mood' (2009: p. 481).

Strong familial relationships are said to promote resilience, and the agency of children can be found within the dynamics of these relationships. In this context Katz (2015) challenges the traditional parent-child model which supposes that influence only travels from the parent, one way, and rather promotes a bi-lateral model (Kuczynski, 1999) which attains that influence is two directional. Katz argues that this model 'seems particularly helpful to understand recent findings that some children act to support their mothers' (2015: p. 71). There are a number of aspects of mother-child relationships that Katz identifies as being limited in understanding due to an absence of application of the bilateral model. For example, when considering child-adjustment problems there is widespread belief that they are almost solely determined by the how much a mother has capacity to protect, while children are viewed as passive. This approach negates to show the actions a child may be engaged in to achieve 'successful adjustment'. Where children are seen to be providing their mothers with support, in situations of domestic violence there is an assumption that mothers have engineered this, have directed their children into that behaviour This 'leaves no ground for considering that, in some cases children may choose to support their abused mother' (2015: p. 74) and also that it is not necessarily a negative experience for the child. Children supporting mothers may also be a factor in a mother's decision to leave as previously alluded to by Mullender (2002). Research describes children asking mothers to leave and sometimes taking practical steps to assist in making it happen for example phoning the police or other services or purchasing train tickets. Katz (2015) maintains that the implications of the bilateral model on families living with domestic violence is not fully appreciated but states that where support from children has been valued by mothers, positive outcomes have been observed. This narrative alludes strongly to a more fluid understanding of agency as set out in section 1.9.1.

Callaghan et al (2016) similarly highlights that children are active participants in relationships themselves and draws on research regarding sibling relationships and the agency performed in relation to this. There is a parallel analysis regarding children's caring roles as it is 'typically described as a premature adult role that 'robs' children of their sense of childhood' (2016, p. 651). Callaghan focuses on two case studies that were drawn from the 110 interviews completed by the project 'Understanding Agency and Resistance Strategies' (UNARS)', (Sixsmith, 2015) where testimony about caring for siblings was detailed. There is reference to an 11yr old girl who engages in a range of emotional and practical strategies to care for her 7yr old brother in order to reduce his suffering in relation to domestic violence. It is described how the act of caring and protecting can be positive for both parties and demonstrates a high level of agency:

Her caring role affords her a particular kind of strength, built up in relation to his apparent need for protection. She manages his emotions through active interventions- reassurance, distraction, humour. While her own need to be calmed or reassured is not directly acknowledged, nonetheless it is clear that, in soothing her brother, she is also able to manage her own emotional reactions to the violence she hears. In this sense coping is managed relationally. In focussing on his needs she is able to produce a safe space for them both (Callaghan et al, 2016, p. 653).

In the second case study the 'carer' is male and it is identified that although both children gain positive outcomes from being the 'big sibling' there is highly gendered differences in the way that they exercise their caring 'responsibilities'. The girl was recognised as re-enacting traditional feminised care-taking which potentially provided means for agency and resistance. However it was also seen as a situation where the girl 'subsumes her own emotional needs in the emotional labour she does for her brother and her mother' (2016: p. 662). The boy in the study was described as trying to help his sibling (also a boy) 'wrestle with the complexities of identifying as masculine, when their main model of masculinity is violent (2016: p. 662). Essentially Callaghan et al (2016) makes the point that for many children growing up in homes where domestic violence is present, behaviour strongly represents traditional gender roles which are demonstrated repeatedly. This is significant because when analysing caring and 'parentification' as a method of agency and resilience it is important to consider the potential gendered nature of this process. Moreover, it could be argued that expectations associated with gender limit agency by reducing the range of accepted behaviours. However, it is still important to value the meanings children put on their own experiences:

When working with children, it is important to focus on the meanings they attribute to their own experiences. Children do not understand their caring as 'parentification'. Rather it is embedded in a complex and highly located set of relational practices that make sense in the context of their own family. Furthermore, this caring is also constituted within both local and larger social constructions of gender and gendered relation (Callaghan et al, 2016, p. 664).

Therefore the cultural context in which children engage in agency is vital and also influences how those actions are interpreted by outsiders. In other words the existence of accepted norms may colour how agency is understood, as similarly explored by Valentine (1999), in relation to children's freedoms, referred to in Chapter One.

The concept of dualism between passive and active has already been identified as unhelpful, particularly in the context of this research. In this context, apparent passivity is not necessarily a result of inaction but could represent conscious and rational decision making. It could be argued to be a form of agency by effectively recognising how limited and possibly futile any other kind of agency would be. In a recent study by Eliffe and Holt (2019) researching police responses to children, when attending situations of domestic violence. Both police and children were interviewed as part of the investigation. It was found that police still interpreted domestic violence in terms of 'adult issues' and children were seen as secondary actors in the situation. However, when children were engaged in vignettes they frequently described performing actions such as hiding when they knew the police were due to arrive, and articulated a desire to become invisible as a protection strategy. The police relied on visible clues in order to recognise distress in children such as actively crying. Therefore the very definitive act of hiding is actually an indication of agency but also serves to prevent the children being seen as harmed.

The study also revealed a further dichotomy in relation to children's responses which is extremely significant in terms of developing understanding. The police perceived a sense 'of immunity' amongst children who had experienced numerous visits by police. 'The portrayal alluded to here of the child as 'used to it', implies a certain level of normalcy associated with the event for both the child and the officer (Eliffe and Holt, 2019, p. 593). However, the researchers termed the immunity as 'purposeful passivity':

If that same child grows up in a home where the police are called regularly and remove their father, only to see him return again and continue abusing their mother, then the police response for the older child, however still upsetting, becomes less of an event that triggers a visible emotional response. As the violence and abuse becomes an everyday part of the child's life, they may engage in such a process which involves them actively resigning. Indeed, resignation may also be used as a coping strategy by the child to deal with complex emotions and feelings towards a father whom they love and fear simultaneously (Eliffe and Holt, 2019, p. 597).

Therefore, when children cease to openly react to violence because of a previous failure for that display to incite change then that clearly demonstrates of limits to agency. Children can cry and show distress, they can tell people what is going on, and they can be visible to agencies but if those things do not affect change then there is little in terms of further avenues of recourse, which suggests their agency is finite.

In Henry's study, *Resilient Children* (2008) there is an interpretation of normalcy as resilience, in terms of providing a way of protecting the child internally. This theme of normalizing the environment is seen as an adaptive use of denial, strengthening the child's sense of control in a maltreating environment. The perception that an abusive home environment was not out of the ordinary provided a protective factor for resilience. This notion could be arguably demonstrated again in the study by Eliffe and Holt (2019):

In reflecting on children's presentation, particularly older children at a domestic violence incident, police in this study often referred to the lack of visible emotional response which they felt was incongruent with the highly emotive event taking place (Eliffe and Holt, 2019, p. 583).

Therefore, as has been consistently demonstrated, all children's responses can be interpreted in some way as agency while simultaneously highlighting the limits which are present. It is worth coming back both to the assertions of Williamson (2010) and the testimony highlighted in *Operation Lighthouse* regarding the notion of being paralysed by fear, and domination of thought. This analysis makes it problematic to equate passivity with agency but equally creates difficulty in conceptualising passivity as immunity or implying lack of reaction. Overlien (2013) has demonstrated that in cases where coercive control and extreme physical violence are present children often feel unable to intervene or 'act'. This represents extreme limits to agency, rather than an inherent lack of ability to engage in agency or display resilience present in individual children.

Perry (2001) is a child psychologist and has investigated the neurodevelopmental impact of violence in childhood. He refers to a dissociative continuum which a child engages in, when the outward signs of alarm that occur in times of distress are not responded to. This is sometimes called the 'defeat response'. This response involves shutting down and focusing on internal rather than external stimuli but can be interpreted as passive and 'robotic'. Perry states that this is more observable in young children partly due to an inability to escape, and the limited availability of options as previously discussed. However, 'immobilization, inescapability or pain will increase the dissociative components of the stress response patterns at any age.' (2001: p. 7).

Katz (2015) attempts to depict the ways in which children resist and show resilience towards coercive control. The resistance was found to be often done in collusion with their mothers and involved taking opportunities to spend time together or do activities when the perpetrator was out. There was also emotional support offered to mothers and a desire to remain close

and connected despite the perpetrators attempts to isolate, as previously discussed. Fellin et al (2019) also looks at how children resist coercive control, and focuses on play. It was found that children showed an awareness that their play is being restricted, and similar to the findings in Sixsmith et al (2015) were also aware of 'safe' and 'risky' spaces. Crucially children were also aware that their childhood was being disturbed and the lack of opportunities to be creative and free were damaging. When they did receive play time they used it to escape and 'remake' their world as an antidote to the over-regulated world they exist in.

Play can be all-absorbing, drawing them into a child-centred space in which they have a stronger sense of control...games offer spaces in which they can think, but that their thoughts are not resting on their family difficulties (Fellin et al, 2019, p. 132).

The growing relevance of agency in the study of children and domestic violence is contributing to the increased focus on children as direct victim/survivors of domestic violence. However the 'conceptualisation of children as social actors does not of course exclude the possibility that children might need protection and support from adults' (Eriksson, 2016, p. 7). Eriksson does not maintain that children receiving support, and recognition of agency are mutually exclusive, rather instead promotes the principles of 'care' and 'participation'. While Eriksson concedes that the two principles can sometimes be in conflict there is a conviction that by involving children in decisions about their lives and keeping them informed about situations that affect them provides some kind of validation, which in turn is supportive and aids recovery. It therefore constitutes a 'double view' (Eriksson, 2016). This 'double view' is cited as particularly relevant in cases where there is involvement in services or court proceedings are happening, in that the need for protection, voice and respect can occur simultaneously, and is desirable. It has been further documented that more support but also involvement, in an integrated way would greatly improve the experiences of children whose fathers/step-fathers are on domestic violence perpetrator programmes (Westmarland et al, 2012). Mullender (2002) successfully encapsulates this dual approach from the point of the view of the children spoken to:

In general, children in the study said that they wanted to be involved in decisions where this was possible and safe (for example, about leaving home and going to a refuge) and to be consulted beforehand about major life-changes of this type, rather than learning about them at the last moment, often as a total surprise and completely outside their control (Mullender et al, 2002, p. 214).

The literature demonstrates that conceptualising how children display agency is complex and does not serve to be viewed as simply the converse of passivity. Agency has many variations and is also limited by wider societal and institutional structures, cultural expectations, familial circumstances and also the unique situation of any particular child.

3.4.2 Resilience

Resilience in this context has been defined as ‘the ability to adapt and function successfully in a high-risk setting or following exposure to prolonged trauma’ (Howell, 2017, p. 564). Contextualising resilience in terms of positive outcomes for children who have lived with domestic violence has resulted in the identification of potential protective and risk factors that may be relevant in predicting a child’s capacity for resilience and recovery (Martinez et al, 2009; Howell, 2011; McFarlane et al, 2017). These factors can be referred to as the ‘main effects model’ and include variables such as income, race, positive parenting, child easy temperament, child cognitive ability, maternal depression, and stressful life events (Martinez, 2009). It is recognised that factors cannot be considered in isolation, and outcomes result in a unique interplay between them. Furthermore factors are likely to be related in a causal manner, for example the co-occurrence of maternal depression and chronic domestic violence suggests a correlation beyond simply happening at the same time.

Allagia and Donohue (2018) have undertaken a comprehensive review of literature and research looking at resilience in children who have been exposed to, what is termed as Intimate Partner Violence. This is in order to develop further discussion regarding how best to foster resilience and add evidential weight to what is described as a strength-based approach favoured in social work currently. The review highlights categories of factors that have been identified as contributing to the positive adaptations necessary for the process of resilience. The review is primarily concerned with studies looking at the presence of resilience in adults who are post-exposure to Intimate Partner Violence as children and is therefore focussed on positive adaptation necessary for resilience later. ‘Positive adaptation is a process when an individual adapts in healthy ways to adversity and achieves successful outcomes. Resilience is the outcome of positive adaptation’ (Allagia and Donohue, 2018, p. 30).

The first category identified is Intrapersonal Factors which is a focus on facets of individual characteristics that are viewed as contributing to enhance resilience. These include ‘self-

confidence, greater self-worth, emotion regulation, connection to spirituality, commitment to breaking the cycle of violence, motivation/goal orientation, academic success, internal locus of control, and an easy temperament' (Allagie and Donohue, 2018, p. 32). These characteristics are said to be located within the innate nature of an individual and to a certain extent are set and immovable. This is potentially a problematic supposition if it is considered that domestic violence can occupy a person's lived reality, see section 3.3.4. It is also interesting to note that the term 'easy temperament', which is also found in other studies (Martinez, 2009), is used. It is never explicitly explained and implies that children who are not 'resilient' are somehow 'difficult'. Moreover the knowledge that the effects of domestic violence are often internalised raises further questions about how this presumptive term is selected. While it is accepted that not all individual responses are the same in similar circumstances, it is impossible to isolate any of the attributes highlighted as solely innate, if the idea of the autonomous child is rejected (Oswell, 2013).

The second category identified across the literature was Interpersonal Factors which in essence relates to the personal relationships children have. There were identified variations on this theme however it was identified through the literature that secure attachment with a caregiver, usually the mother fostered resilience, and also protection by the victimised parent appeared to be linked with greater resilience later in life. It was also identified that wider personal relationships with peers and extended family could contribute to greater resilience in adulthood. Certainly someone to talk to, and support from informal networks appears to be greatly appreciated by children and this is articulated in other research. 'I can definitely turn to one of my best friends' mum because she treats me like. . .I'm her daughter or something. I really do think that (family friend) really helped me. (Young person cited in Morris, 2015, p. 31).

The final category is that of contextual factors which are defined as 'influences attributed to the individual's environment, such as neighbourhood, community, culture, and socio-political conditions that directly influence resource availability and supports' (Allagie and Donohue, 2018, p. 35). Examples of contextual factors are cited as access to childcare, affordable education and also other aspects, for example whether a mother works. Availability of resources is obviously subject to social and political priorities which ultimately impact on an individual's propensity for resilience. The current political climate, as articulated in Chapter Two, indicates that, for children living with domestic violence there is an increase in what is described as 'precarity', the contextual factors are doing little to foster resilience both now and in the future.

Safe havens for children to access during childhood or the ability to engage in activities outside of the home were also viewed as important but again are reliant on availab

Context also referred to the intensity and frequency of domestic violence experienced. This context was also dependent on resource. Early interventions may negate the most negative consequences and allow space for positive adaptations to occur and are more likely to be initiated if there is easy access to a range of services and support both general and specialist. Equally financial and practical considerations of the victim highlighted in Chapter Two, have potentially a massive influence on decisions that in large part denote how long a child is living with domestic violence.

Promoting resilience for children, in the form of intervention, happens in various forms across statutory services and third sector. Interventions usually occur after children victim/survivors have gained some kind of physical independence from their abuser. In the UK there is a tendency towards group interventions and the evidence is inconclusive in terms of their effectiveness, particularly in the long term (Macmillan et al, 2016). However, although research is limited, it is possible to ascertain positive movement for children and young people who have engaged in interventions (Macmillan, 2016; Callaghan et al, 2018; Sharp et al, 2018).

Callaghan et al (2018) conducted a study into the outcomes for children engaging in a group intervention after exiting situations of domestic violence. The aim of the intervention was to build on the strengths children had developed when living with violence and abuse. Importantly 'the focus of the intervention was not on the violence itself, but on the effects they experienced in everyday life' (2018, p. 522). The intervention involved building trust, sharing experiences of creative adaptations and having them acknowledged, discussion regarding myths associated with intergenerational transmission of violence and abuse. The children and young people reported several positive outcomes which included a realisation that other people had had similar experiences, positive improvements in relationships for example mother/child a renewed hope for the future. It was also emphasised that the intervention was not overly prescriptive and was more concerned with providing safe spaces of trust. Sharp et al (2011) found similar findings in their evaluation of an intervention pilot in Scotland, which children particularly citing improved relationships and more positive outlook for the future.

In Callaghan et al (2018) the process of building trust was given high prominence as it was recognised that trust has been lost as a direct result of violence and abuse. Ratcliffe et al (2014) identifies 'loss of trust' as a consequence of interpersonal abuse by describing how

traumatic events can alter and 'shatter' how the world is experienced and negates entrenched beliefs about whether people hurt other people or whether if help is given when suffering occurs. Ratcliffe also highlights that trust can be rebuilt albeit in a slightly different way from the way it originally existed:

Given that trust is a precondition for even entertaining certain possibilities, a degree of trust first needs to be restored. This is not to suggest that a victim of interpersonal trauma can ultimately recover the same style of unreflective trust that previously permeated her world. But she can come to relate to others and to the world more generally in a way that is compatible with moving forward into an open future (Ratcliffe et al, 2014, p.4).

This reference to 'moving forward' has echoes with the findings of the intervention evaluations already cited relating to improved positive outlooks for the future. This is massively important because it suggests that intervention can have longer term positive impacts on resilience whilst recognising that 'new' resilience may look different from the old. It can also potentially impact on what Ratcliffe et al (2014) refers to as a 'foreshortened future' which is described as a negative evaluation of the future and 'illuminates the nature of a poorly understood change in the overall structure of experience that sometimes (but not always) follows exposure to certain events (Ratcliffe et al, 2014, p. 2). In other words, trauma can affect how the future is viewed and conceptualised before it has happened. Therefore, the concept that resilience can be actively promoted has fundamental significance. even if, as previously noted, that evidence is emerging. It presents resilience as something beyond an individualised construct, rather it locates the loss of resilience and subsequent rebuilding, as external.

There are studies which have further sought to ascertain factors contributing to long term resilience for adults who have lived with domestic violence as children (Humphreys, 2001; Anderson and Bang, 2012; Gonzales et al, 2012; O'Brien, 2012; Jenney et al, 2016). Gonzales et al (2012) carried out a qualitative study with adult men who had experienced parental violence, and Humphreys (2001) used a similar methodology in a study involving ten adult women who had also experienced parental violence as children. Both researchers aimed to investigate and further understand the dynamics, and the individual and contextual factors that promote the process of positive adaptation and subsequent resilience. They therefore talked to adults who had relatively successful lives, in the face of adversity as a child.

There were identified findings in these studies that relate to Allagia and Donohue's categories. There is agreement that individual determination is a factor in overcoming and move on from childhood experiences, although as previously stated this is potentially problematic if viewed as solely innate. Safe relationships and safe havens are identified as central to positive adaptations in later life. There was also events and decisions in adulthood that were significant, for example getting a new job, aiming for success and getting married. Perhaps more significantly participants cited both development of understanding about domestic violence and the forging of their own identities as vital to progress. Gonzales et al (2012) in particular, spoke to adult males, and there was an identified process of redefinition of 'a man' to allow growth beyond the example they had been shown by their own fathers.

Anderson and Bang (2012) alternatively carried out quantitative research attempting to decipher the factors that might influence whether exposure to parental violence leads to PTSD in adult females. For example, they identified the employment status of the mother, the length of duration of the abuse and the mental health of the mother as significant. These are all external factors which also relate to wider societal trends, particularly employment status and relate to levels of marginalisation endured by mothers. McFarlane et al (2017) also identified levels of marginalisation of mothers following leaving situations of violence and abuse as significant in terms of a child's longer term mental health. This lends weight to the rejection of the resilience as an individualised construct and places emphasis on social an economic status of mothers.

A final important point raised in these studies is that resilience is not an indication of lack of harm or stress endured. Humphreys (2001) is clear that the women in her study relayed their ways of coping and the things that were existent in their lives both past and present, which assisted in promoting resilience. However, this is not an attempt to illustrate resilient children as not affected or in way impervious to trauma, quite the opposite.

Their stories also show that resilient children are not protected from the stresses experienced by others. The participants in this study were able to experience these formidable life events, and to overcome them, but not without suffering or lifelong struggle (Humphreys, 2001, p. 250).

This is an important point and is a key thread in this thesis. It is also vital to note that the term 'resilient children' does not indicate a 'type of child' but rather a complex interplay of factors that facilitates an ability to 'function' more successfully.

3.4.3 Intersectional Resilience?

The relevance of economic factors and resource for resilience is taken up by Ungar (2013) who effectively argues there is an overemphasis on personal agency and other aspects of what has come to be known as 'resiliency', 'which naively assumes that individuals survive only because of a positive attitude or other fiction' (2013: p. 256). Ungar refers to what he labels as 'social ecology' which is defined as formal and informal networks, which he cites as being primarily responsible for either 'constraining or liberating people's choices with regard to coping strategies that result in prosocial behaviour or pathological adaptation' (2013: p. 256). This focus on external factors is justified in a number of ways, namely how the environment in which trauma occurs, can moderate how the effects are felt and reacted to. Ungar argues that the political climate is likely to affect how people engage with outside resource in order to reduce harm, in other words affects the likelihood of a positive adaptation occurring. This may relate to how resource is made available but also how certain demographics can be marginalised or shamed by a particular political context. For example, the historical demonization of single mothers may enhance feelings of reduced self-worth caused by domestic violence due to a bigger negative self-perception based on societal projection. McFarlane et al (2017) provides longitudinal evidence that maternal mental health determines children's recovery from or persistence of behavioral dysfunctions. Furthermore, mother's mental health is stated as dependent on marginalisation and self-efficacy, which again can be located in the severity of trauma and social and economic factors. Therefore, several external factors will influence how likely it is that an individual experiencing trauma is able to foster resilience (Unger, 2011; Ungar, 2013). This resonates with the proposition offered by Shaw (2004) and echoed by Clapham (2010) cited in Chapter One, whereby the stigmatisation or reputation of place is transferred onto residents, and subsequently can affect mental health and identity of an individual.

Ungar (2013) develops this further by introducing three principles relating to the role of environment and resilience. The first is that 'nurture trumps nature' in which he ascertains that while there is an interaction between both individual and the environment they are not equally balanced. This is because 'a facilitative environment can change developmental pathways regardless of individual differences' (2013: p. 258). Ungar is also keen to explore more neurological explanations and evidence for his supposition and cites Perry et al (1995) who argue that resilience cannot be demonstrated by brain functioning, and that flight or fight responses are the adaptations children have to make due to the contexts in which they live. Moreover, these responses do not denote resilience but necessity which challenges the 'persistence of the myth of the resilient child that has us overlook the crippling effect of

trauma and the loss of children's capacity to realise their potential' (2013: p. 258). Essentially the external circumstances present have, probably a greater effect on efficacy than individual predispositions and any actions or otherwise are not necessarily borne of innate resilient features.

The second principle relates to the 'differential impact of environment on resilience'. This principle examines the macro and micro environment, the key being the differential impact, depending on the individual circumstances of the child in question. Ungar provides examples such as after school activities or the presence of an authoritarian parenting style, which may positively impact a child living in a disadvantaged community in terms of resilience. 'Specific aspects of their social ecology will account for very large changes in the children's ability to cope.' (2013: p. 60). However, for a child from a more resource rich background these factors may be less significant in terms of impact. This is important in order to understand how different dynamics and aspects of environment combine to enhance or reduce the capacity for resilience.

The final principle is the cultural variation to what is meaningful. In essence, Ungar argues that the values, beliefs and practices which are normalised and transmitted, effect how the individual interacts with the environment. In other words, cultural norms can dictate acceptable ways to deal with adversity. It is argued that theories regarding resilience often don't consider the cultural aspects of their subjects, which may influence the results and disregards demographic variance:

These variations tend to be most invisible when we make assumptions of homogeneity based on biased experimentation with populations that do not experience the same adversity as those upon which the theory of resilience is imposed (Ungar, 2013, p. 260)

A classic example of this is the well worn question, 'why does she not leave' which implicitly indicates a lack of resilience on the part of the person experiencing abuse. This is based on assumptions that don't reflect the reality of abuse but also doesn't consider the difficulties faced in establishing a life beyond that, because of economic truths. This bias and cultural variation also applies to research, in that indications of resilience are likely to be subjective. Ungar cautions against assuming certain behaviours or actions constitute resilience for a particular person or community. In other words, there needs to be reticence before labelling behaviours or actions as 'resilient' if cultural norms have not been fully explored or considered.

The acknowledgement that factors regarding resilience cannot always be readily transposed onto other groups is highly relevant for this research. It is therefore imperative that there is specific focus on how children experience, live through and move beyond a childhood living with domestic violence, as opposed to other circumstances. Talking to adults who experienced domestic violence as children gives an opportunity to think about both the lived experience and the identified aspects of positivity within that, which have promoted healing and access to a future of choice.

There remains a supposition that the most important indication of resilience is the interaction between the individual and the environment that occurs uniquely between individuals, communities, and the social and economic structure. However, the intention regarding 'resilience' in this chapter, is to establish an argument that seeks to moderate the significance of some kind of innate individual capacity, compared to the political and economic environment and cultural context in which people exist. That is not to say that resilience is predetermined or set, in that interventions can contribute to a promotion of resilience.

3.5 Chapter Summary

The research and knowledge accrued in this subject area of children is notable. This chapter has sought to set out the identified effects on children of living with domestic violence as learned through the course of research and study. It has been observed that there are some researchers who have been keen to develop the voice of the child and have argued that understanding is still limited due to a lack of direct investigation with children themselves. There are also clearly identified gaps of knowledge within the mass of the material, such as the 'lag in the adoption of coercive control' (Katz, 2015).

Agency and resilience have been explored with an attempt to clarify these terms and conceptualise further what they represent within the context of this research.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will set out overall aims, theoretical frameworks, and methodological considerations for the research as a whole. There will then be separate description and discussion dedicated to the two phases of the qualitative process, covering methods, sampling, ethical considerations, analytical tools and reflexivity.

4.2 Aims

The aim of the research was to gain understanding of the day to day lives of children who are living with domestic violence. In order to provide this insight the research was led by a focus on experiences through the lens of home.

The aims of the research, and subsequent research questions are rooted in the funding and partnership approach of this PhD. The original desire of Ruth Thompson OBE in her role of the High Sheriff of Tyne and Wear which was to push forward a project which concentrated on a goal of helping children affected by domestic abuse, came together with funding from several Housing Associations and overall supervision of the project by Durham University.

This resulted in a unique desire to explore how children living with domestic violence understand and view the idea of home. The research questions therefore combine to gain understanding individual experience of domestic violence, agency and resilience, how political and economic factors and resources can impact. The research questions also reflect the decision to talk to adults about their experiences as children living with domestic violence rather than children currently living in that situation, or recently exited. This was in order to gain a greater sense of reflection from participants across all aspects of the research, and also provide a greater sense of the interplay between the long term impact of domestic violence, socio economic factors, and levels of resilience.

Research Questions:

1. How do people who lived with Domestic Violence as children view the idea of Home?

2. How did people who lived with domestic violence as children, describe their experiences of home?
3. What are the factors associated with resilience for adults who lived with domestic violence as children?
4. To what extent, and in what ways, is current policy regarding housing and welfare impacting on children living with domestic violence?

It is important to note that the last question is very much linked to the preceding three. What is uncovered as desirable or otherwise in the first three questions is considered in the context of what is currently occurring in terms of resource and policy aims.

4.3 Methodological Approach

The approach to the research was based on a combination of theoretical framework, and consideration of the most effective ways to elicit insight into the research questions.

A broad feminist framework and subsequent theoretical understanding of domestic violence was utilised, as expressed in Chapter One. This understanding of domestic violence is essentially the belief that the proliferation and continuation of the dual issues of power and inequality regarding gender, allow male violence against women to remain largely unchallenged (Westmarland, 2016). In other words, the nature of domestic violence is explicitly understood as a gendered phenomenon in that it locates the focus of its determinants as cultural and structural rather than centering on individual responsibility (Romito, 2008; Westmarland and Bows, 2018; Walby and Towers, 2018; Kuskoff and Parsell, 2020). This understanding of domestic violence represents, what could be described as a broad feminist ontology, in that it depicts the 'reality' in which feminist research is rooted. It's important to recognise that within the feminist framework, including the domestic violence paradigm, feminists speak of multiple feminisms and intersecting oppressions including race, class, disability and age (McPhail et al, 2016).

The feminist research model which was borne from this understanding, set out to challenge the previous gender bias towards the privilege of male knowledge, experience and interest (Ramazanoglu, 1992). Therefore, it could be argued that the intention of what could be described as 'feminist research' is to deconstruct the 'malestrom', and shatter the idea that 'reality is constructed as one reality' (Stanley and Wise, 1993, p. 182). Therefore, a feminist

approach to research could be argued to be based on a more generalised concept in that 'what counts as knowledge must be grounded in experience' (Harding, 1983). This translates as a conviction that preconceived concepts cannot be upheld on the whim of the author, and it is vital that people's lived experiences are attempted to be relayed as accurately as possible.

However as Lykke (2010) points out it is also important to always be aware that the 'neutral knower is an illusion' (2010: p.127). Essentially it is impossible to shed all vestiges of personal experience, inherent unconscious bias and cultural norms, and prevent them influencing how testimony is heard, interpreted or analysed. Therefore, experience can never be reported solely in the context of the teller and moreover research and how it is presented and produced will always be 'anchored in a specific historical, societal and bodily material context (2010: p. 127). Ramazanoglu (1992) argues it is vital to be unambiguous about 'politics' of research and to take it into account subjectivity rather than vow to rise above it. In other words to claim neutrality when listening to 'reality' is illusionary, and potentially dangerous. However, this is not to denigrate the ambitions of a feminist epistemology which seeks to provide a platform for oppressed voices to be heard and has ramifications for this research. Reinharz and Monroe (2017) state:

Feminist research has aided numerous disciplines by making the invisible visible, by seeking to understand voices, not only 'research responses', by uncovering Western world bias, and by including factors of oppression in the understanding phenomena (Reinharz and Monroe 2017, p. 639).

It could be argued that in the same way feminists have challenged the male lens through which women's experiences were viewed, this research was conducted as an attempt to find out children's reality as separate from the interpreted reality of adults. As James and Prout (1997) argue the status of children as dependents is deep-rooted and children are often categorised the same as parents in terms of social and economic position. They are clear that children are 'invisible' as entities in their own right and should instead be viewed as independent social actors, as stated in Chapter One. It was from this basis that the research was undertaken.

The idea that a feminist approach is synonymous with a particular method has been largely rejected. Feminist research is now widely recognised as a perspective which employs a multiplicity of research methods and does not explicitly favour one type of process (Stanley and Wise, 2005; Skinner et al, 2005; Lykke, 2010; Reinharz and Monroe, 2017;

Westmarland and Bows, 2018). Beckmann (2014) argues that the principles underpinning the process of feminist research is how it is distinguishable in terms of how it uses methods rather than the actual methods employed. The principles articulated by Beckmann include power imbalances, which recognises that power disparities exist both structurally and culturally between researcher and participants and are relevant for all aspects of research. These power imbalances should serve to influence how questions are appraised in the 'wrong questions can lead to one-sided results that present a biased view of complex phenomena' (2014: p.167). The other principles cited are:

listening to women's voices and experiences', 'social relationships during the research process' which relates to 'ethics of care' and 'use of research results' which relates to putting research into practice and goes on to state that 'dissemination and application of knowledge gained through activism is deemed more important than dissemination of numerous publications in refereed journals' (Beckmann, 2014, p. 170).

Beckmann (2014) concedes that these principles may be easier to apply to qualitative methods of research, and it could be argued that qualitative methods were initially seen to be the vehicle that would allow the voice of women to be heard. Furthermore, Westmarland and Bows (2018) highlight that interviews have been continued to be a frequent method of research in the fields of gender and violence and abuse. It also pointed out that this method has been particularly relevant when researching subject areas where there is limited previous knowledge, for example female genital mutilation. This assertion is highly significant for this research because of the aim to gain insight into how adults view how their day to day lives as children living with domestic violence were experienced with regards to home, and how they subsequently viewed home, is an under researched area. It would be possible to argue that, in a similar way that qualitative methods were initially favoured at the beginning of new research into women's experiences there is a justification to strive for how adults view their childhoods living with domestic violence within a qualitative context, due to the relatively recent exploration of children

This is not to take an antagonistic view of quantitative methods or in any way argue that quantitative methods are discordant with feminist research. To explore this further it is important to recognise that the labelling of quantitative and qualitative methods, as inextricably linked with certain epistemological assumptions and values have been denoted as paradigms (Bryman, 2004). The first challenge to this 'paradigm' is that the distinctive aspects of both methods is not able to be realised. This conclusion is reached by

recognising that statistics are interpreted by subjective individuals and used to promote credibility of argument to a particular audience, and equally qualitative research often involves a degree of 'counting' with the use of words like 'often' and 'many' used in analysis, and the categorisation involved in coding (Bryman, 2004). It is therefore impossible to assign the terms subjective or objective to either method of attaining data.

A more significant challenge to this paradigm is the utilisation of a mixed methods approach within the same study or research project. Quantitative methods are invaluable to present the frequency or degree of phenomena, and crucially, as Silverman (1993) argues potential correlations between for example, exposure to a depictions of behaviour on TV and the likelihood of certain actions in real life. Further to this, as Hesse-Biber (2007) points out quantitative methods are 'particularly well suited to looking at 'cause and effect' relationships between a set of factors referred to as variables' (2007: p. 250). However, Hesse-Biber goes on to stress that it is possible to identify quantitative research that classifies women or girls in a reductive way, and therefore to strive to advance subjective voices through qualitative methods that crucially provides context, is still vital for feminist research.

It is also stated that quantitative methods may play a role in 'fulfilling research goals' and importantly highlight differences in how, for example, various demographics are affected by a particular phenomenon, which could assist in decision making by policy makers. This is key because the disseminating of information into practice is a principle of feminist research. Hodgkin (2008) echoes this sentiment by emphasising that those with the power to make change may be more readily influenced by types of data they value. Hodgkin argues further that a mixed method approach illuminates gender differences in a broad sense, creating a bigger picture while at the same time providing the 'personal story'. Quantitative methods in this sense largely refer to surveys or some kind of questionnaire.

In addition Silverman (2013) also addresses the notion of 'naturally occurring material' whereby in order to attain insight into a particular issue, pre-existing information can be accessed and analysed. This is practically demonstrated in studies that have combined information and statistics from government records regarding specific crimes and 'personal stories' of victim/survivors (Bow, 2018). This broad evidential spectrum is advantageous, in that has the potential to create powerful polemics across a variety of recipients.

The focus of this research was primarily on how children view and understand home within a context of domestic violence which was, in a sense abstract and difficult to quantify in numbers. It is also, as previously stated an area of research which is in its relative infancy

and therefore still grappling with the central strands. Therefore the decision to employ only qualitative methods rests with the rationale regarding the most effective way to investigate the research questions rather than any preconceived notions regarding epistemology and methodology. However it is important to state that it was also part of the research to provide a context of current support levels for women and children in order to envisage the older personal stories occurring within potential present policy situations and what therefore might hinder aspirations. It is imperative that current contexts are considered as 'recognition continues to grow that merely focussing on experience does not account for how that experience emerged' (Olesen, 2018 p. 159).

The whole study involved in-depth interviews, which were conducted with both professionals in a range of fields, and adult survivors of childhood domestic violence. The rationale for this decision is articulated by Westmarland and Bows (2018):

....semi-structured interviews are useful as they ensure certain questions are asked which address the overall research questions are asked which address the overall research questions, but allow flexibility to explore broader issues which, given the lack of previous knowledge, would be difficult to gather using quantitative methods or structured interviews (Westmarland and Bows, 2018, p. 49).

This applied to both sets of participants as often professionals are unused to being asked about children. It was also believed that professionals have insight and are often on the frontline of changes for example benefit changes, which perhaps survivors may not be with the same immediacy. The research questions were asked and framed, in order to afford the greatest scope possible for interaction. This was in order to place as little as possible as 'given' especially regarding the concepts regarding home, and therefore enhance the likelihood of not treating 'obvious actions, settings and events as potentially unremarkable' (Silverman, 2013, p. 152). In other words there was an attempt to provide a framework of discovery that was as loosely attached to preconceived ideas as possible.

Another key consideration when framing the questions was ensuring there was scope for exploration of the real lives of childrens, and real life solutions to identified problems. This reflected the priorities and concerns of the partners involved in this research who were passionate that more children should be helped, as a result of the findings and recommendations, by providing greater awareness and insight. Ultimately the partners envisaged potential changes to practice and/or policy therefore it was necessary to bear this in mind when constructing the interview schedules.

It would be envisaged that as a result of this research there may be more 'obvious' identified routes for further research to take place in this subject area.

4.4 Qualitative Data Collection Professionals- Research Design and Participants

Semi-structured interviews with a range of professionals were chosen to explore views and insight into the research questions. It was decided that the practitioners and policy makers working in the fields of housing and domestic violence respectively, with an attempt to workers with and children and young people. There was a deliberate intention to involve a good mix of participants to ensure that focus and perspectives were sufficiently varied. However it is was also envisaged that there would be certain amount of overlap between the key issues regardless of background. The aim was to interview between 15 and 25 professionals.

4.4.1 Recruitment

The initial method of recruitment was a combination of convenience and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling is essentially characterised as a sample that is easily accessible to the researcher (Bryman, 2004). This involved reaching out to contacts from previous employment and utilising existing social networks. There were also contacts accessed via the partners. Three of the professionals who took part were actually employed by two of the Housing Associations funding the PhD. In addition there were contacts provided by Ruth Thompson (the former High Sheriff) from her extensive experience working in and around the field of children and domestic violence. However although there were a number of convenient places to begin to recruit there was a still a degree of purposive sampling technique, in that it was important to find people who had the knowledge and experience required to provide sufficient information and insight (Etikan et al, 2015). This technique did not provide enough participants, however through the initial contacts made, further contacts were suggested. This could be described as snowball sampling in that one contact potentially led to three more. Therefore the process involved the seeking of knowledge from previously unknown sources. As Noy (2008) points out, by going with the 'flow', which is a feature of this kind of sampling, and is argued to be of a dynamic nature where 'knowledge is at the same time both researched and produced' (2008: p. 340) as opposed to a more 'static design'. This is demonstrated in this research as it was through snowballing that awareness was gained regarding a specialist children's recovery programme, which was relatively new.

The recruitment resulted in a mixture of managers and direct practitioners which provided a broad spectrum of perspectives. All the managers still had some direct experience of 'the work' and also supervised workers directly.

There were sixteen participants in total which comprised of fifteen women and one man. The details of their roles of organisations are provided below:

4.4.2 Roles and Organisations of Professional Participants

Table 1

Role of Participant	Organisation
Contact Officer	Children's Social Care
Housing Support Manager	Housing Association
Health Visitor/Former Health Visitor for Homeless Families	NHS
Temporary Housing Manager	Local Authority
Refuge Manager	Local Domestic Violence Service
Service Manager	Local Domestic Violence Service
Family/Children's Support Worker	Local Sure Start
Children's Worker	Local Domestic Violence Service
Children's Worker	Local Domestic Violence Service
Service Manager	Local Domestic Violence Service
Young People's Service Manager	Housing ALMO
Housing Support Manager	Housing Association

Housing Support Worker	Housing Association
Independent Living Refuge Worker	Housing Provider
Independent Living Refuge Worker	Housing Provider
Refuge Manager	Housing Provider

It is worth noting that there was some difficulty regarding recruitment which directly related to current funding cuts and changes to contracts. The Health Visitor rescheduled three times citing emergency meetings regarding the future of the service she worked for. In addition a manager from a local domestic violence charity declined to be interviewed as they were in the process of losing their contract to deliver services. The contract had been awarded to a generic housing provider. There was also issues regarding cuts when recruiting young adults that will be discussed in the next section.

4.4.3 The Interviews (Professionals)

The interviews were recorded audio interviews with prior permission of participants and then transcribed by myself. All of the interviews took place face to face, at the participant's place of work except for the first one which took place in a public space. There were twelve, one to one interviews. Two interviews involved two participants from the same organisation, being spoken to together. All of the participants were based in the North East except two that were located in Yorkshire and associated with a Housing Association funding the project. Participants were initially contacted via a mixture of telephone or email to explain the research and a follow up email sent with the research design.

The interview schedule was designed in a similar way to that characterised by Westmarland and Bows (2018) in that the schedule was divided in to sections. The first section was designed to ease the participants into the interview rather than going in 'cold' and beginning straight away with questions about violence and abuse. This is again recommended by Westmarland and Bows (2018) who argue that this is 'beneficial to the process' (2018: p. 52), even when interviewing practitioners. Therefore current roles were explored in the first instance in order to obtain contextual involvement in these subject areas. In the first section it was also useful to know levels of direct contact with children within roles, how children are

identified as living with domestic violence and what support might be available for children within particular services.

The second section of the schedule focussed on housing and domestic violence explicitly and included questions directly relating to the research questions. This invited professionals to think about how domestic violence might specifically affect a child's view of home, and factors relating to resilience. The questions were open ended and were designed in a way to engender discussion and provide scope for professionals to develop direction of the conversations. The last section focussed on the opinions of professionals regarding what they felt could make a positive difference.

4.5 Qualitative Data Collection Survivors

Semi structured interviews were again selected for this phase of the research. These were all to be carried out on a one to one basis, due to the potential nature of the experiences and information disclosed. It was originally intended that 20 young people/young adults who have lived with domestic violence in the past would be interviewed. The aim was to concentrate on an age range of 16/18 to 25 years old. It was expected that doing retrospective research would mean that the ethical issues of interviewing children and young people at a particularly traumatic and chaotic time in their lives were negated. It also hoped that it would mean that participants were able to think beyond immediate safety needs and reflect on their support needs at different stages of their childhood (including while in refuges/temporary housing, after they are rehoused and trying to fit in to a new school and area if relevant). The intention was that participants would be encouraged to reflect on whether/how their sense of 'home' was affected by domestic violence, and if, when and how those perceptions changed.

Recruitment was more challenging than had been anticipated and as a result only thirteen interviews were conducted. A significant proportion of the participants came from the North East and were in the original intended age range. However, as a result of low recruitment, the methods to attract participants were developed accordingly. It is useful at this stage to divide the recruitment into two stages. This is for two reasons, firstly the methods to engage participants were different, and overall the participants from each stage differed in demography.

4.5.1 Phase One recruitment

The initial phase of recruitment focussed initially, as with the professional interviews, on convenience sampling. Avenues for recruitment were concentrated on existing services for young adults and adults, which included supported housing, third sector services for a variety of support needs, and statutory involvement. Contacts from previous employment were telephoned, and emailed with prepared information sheets for potential participants. There were also cold contacts made with projects that were known but where there were no personal contacts. These contacts resulted in dialogue with managers and workers from a variety of support services involved with young adults. There was an element of snowball sampling present also as contacts would recommend other services to contact. There was also a form of snowball sampling from the previous phase in that opportunities to make contact with young adults were gained from participants taking part in the professional interviews. At this stage there was no direct contact with potential participants and therefore it would be difficult to argue that purposive sampling was occurring. The purposive sampling was in effect being performed by the workers in the projects. There will be more detailed discussion regarding gatekeeping further in the section. Crucially there were projects for young adults run by two of the Housing Associations funding the PhD. They were both contacted on my behalf, one by a manager of the organisation and the other by a fellow PhD student who was also employed by the principle funder. This contact was vital as it provided credibility for the research and potentially promoted a greater willingness to involve people. Two young adults were interviewed as a result of this process.

In total twenty eight projects were contacted, and out of those six participants were recruited from four of those projects. There were three additional young adults who initially agreed to take part but an interview did not materialise. There was a degree of persistence involved in that there were a couple of missed appointments and it was necessary to phone projects in advance to check whether people were around.

There were preliminary meetings with four of the six participants to discuss the research and go through the information sheets. Verbal consent was provided but written consent was only obtained immediately prior to the interview. Two of the six participants were not met prior to interview. Two participants had agreed to take part following a discussion with their respective support workers and the interview took place on the first meeting.

4.5.2 Gatekeeping

Phase one of recruitment relied completely on third parties, relaying information to adults they were in contact with through their service. There was a mixture of responses regarding how the information would be disseminated which ranged from agreeing to put up posters within a project, to actually directly communicating with individuals regarding participation. Where there was no obvious contact within a service, managers were contacted in the first instance and they agreed to share the information with workers, essentially via email.

Therefore gatekeeping was present at various levels. Gatekeeping could be described as the power, individuals within organisations, hold to grant or refuse access to participants or circumstances for the purposes of research (Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorket, 2008). There were attempts to negate this by offering to spend time within projects on an informal basis, in order to meet with young adults directly. There appeared to be a deafness to the suggestion that I might informally spend time with clients and address the research independently. The role of gatekeeper was retained by all of the projects contacted.

As Sanghera and Thaper-Bjorket further identify, there are also layers 'tiers of gatekeepers within groups and organisations' (2008: p. 540). There was certain amount of enthusiasm detected when some projects were initially contacted, however when this was followed up there was often a line given that workers had been emailed and there was no further assistance which could be offered. This was frustrating as it is known that workers will be inundated with emails requesting various additional input from them from various sources, and without a push, or a personal interest in research it is likely that the details will not be relayed to adults in the service. There is potentially a more a general issue at play in the work place, whereby emails are continually sent on until they effectively reach a dead end. The agreement to engage with the aims of an outside interest is subsequently, ultimately marginalised by the desire to have 'dealt with it' and 'tried'.

There were other situations where a worker would verbally identify someone for the research and agree to speak to that individual. However if it is recognised that it might take time to gain trust and respect and essentially engage with a young adult, this process was problematic. It is possibly unlikely that there will agreement to have a taped conversation with someone before they have even met them. It was usual, in a follow up phone call, to be informed that the young adult had declined to take part. It was impossible to challenge this however it was also impossible to know how the research had been explained and pitched. Wiles et al (2005) highlight this as an issue by asking whether a willingness to participate is

swayed by the way the research is presented in terms of both the research itself and consent.

It is also worth noting that a number of organisations explicitly referred to the 'vulnerability' of their clients and the desire to avoid distress. A drive to protect is a perfectly reasonable, if not desirable professional attribute when working in services for people who are experiencing difficulty. However there is a danger that perceived vulnerability is equated with an inability to adequately enact agency. Downes et al (2014) challenge how certain people come to be classified as vulnerable, expressing concern that capacity is linked to the abuse they have suffered which in turn further disempowers victim-survivors. Brown (2015) addresses this issue on a broader scale arguing that the political usage of the term, originating with New Labour and continued into the present day, promotes the idea that we must protect the most vulnerable in society and is linked to a moralising agenda in social policy which helps to create convenient divergences between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' within society. However with regards to citizenship within economic liberalism this has wider implications:

Notions of 'vulnerable groups' serve to underline the particular construction of individuals which is central to economic liberal models of citizenship; the citizen as a capable adult, unbound by structural constraints, who needs activating. In this sense, conceptualising groups as 'vulnerable' focuses attention on the individual and detracts attention from the structural forces that disadvantage people (Brown, 2015, p. 48).

This analysis is extremely relevant for this research as it is possible to speculate that gatekeeping is, in part, borne out of an underlying belief that it is the person themselves who is vulnerable rather than recognising the external circumstances which they have been subjected to. Brown (2015) goes on to argue that 'in classifying individuals as vulnerable, it would seem that there is also the implication that they need to be controlled' (2015: p. 47). Therefore it could be argued that the issue of a vulnerability classification is relevant for research and beyond.

A final salient point for this research with regards to gatekeeping relates to how the gatekeeper 'positions' the researcher (Sanghera and Thaper-Bjorket, 2008). Three participants were accessed through gatekeepers I knew personally from previous employment. Two participants were accessed through the main funder of the research, however, it was the efforts of a fellow PhD student who actually worked for the organisation

that was heavily influential. The last participant was accessed indirectly through a professional interview in the first phase of the research. This is extremely telling in that it would suggest without those personal contacts, research with vulnerable people is challenging. It is worth noting that even when these contacts are present, as previously stated the services contacted were not solely dedicated to adults who had experienced domestic violence. Therefore it was purposive sampling by proxy, in that it was necessary for the gatekeepers to identify people who they believed 'fitted the criteria' which relied on them knowing a certain amount about their clients' past.

There was one response that explicitly referred to funding issues as a major part of the reason that young adults from their service were not participating. This is potentially a more general issue for researchers, especially when looking at demographics that have been disproportionately affected by welfare changes and cuts to Local Authority funding.

All of the six young adult survivors interviewed at this stage, were in a process of resettlement in their own right, either due to leaving care or leaving the family home. Two had only entered resettlement as young adults and had not encountered the care system. Three of the five survivors leaving care had entered the system as teenagers. The remaining two had been removed from their families as children.

4.5.3 Phase Two Recruitment

The difficulties experienced in recruiting participants from the desired demographic led to a change of methods and an extending of the age range, which occurred twice. Posters were developed to promote the research, and social media was utilised. This sampling could be described as purposive because the criteria of potential participants was explicit and there was no other party involved other than the researcher. However when using this method there is limited explanation within a poster for terms such as domestic violence, and therefore the purposive sampling occurs within an individual to ascertain whether relate to the subject matter.

Through persisting with this method a further six participants were attracted. They ranged in age between 27yrs and 55yrs. One of the participants was actually a friend with whom there had been little contact and no face to face contact for about 8 years. He was also employed as a support worker at a college and he then recruited another young adult who then also took part in the research.

Contact was made directly using a variety of means including telephone and email. It was from that point that the research was more fully explained and participants were given further time to decide whether or not to proceed. There was one potential participant who decided not to take part citing that she had not disclosed to her family and was concerned about potential upset that might cause. Interviews were then arranged for a later date.

The six older survivors were more settled in their current accommodation and clearly had more distance between where they were now and their childhood. They were also from a range of locations across the country. Four of the six had spent significant amounts of time as children, in one family home with both parents present. Two survivors had experienced multiple moves as children, one with both parents and the other with one parent. Three survivors experienced family break up however housing did not present as an issue. Similar to the younger participants none of these survivors had accessed refuges and they had not, as children, experienced homelessness. The one younger survivor from this phase was living in supported housing having entered the care system aged 15yrs due to domestic violence and his desire to leave the family home. He had experienced multiple moves but continued to live with his mother and stepfather until he himself left.

At the beginning of this research it was anticipated that the views and experiences collected from survivors would be limited to young adults previously known to agencies, and therefore the findings could not be representative of all children who have lived with domestic violence. However the sample did not fit neatly into this category at all and conversely included more survivors who had had little or no outside intervention throughout their childhood than those that had.

Only two survivors had a long history of service involvement and in both of those cases the survivors themselves had been removed from the family. Three had later stage involvement and were also provided with alternative accommodation in their own right, following disclosure at the ages of 14 and 15yrs. Two young adults had access to supported housing post 16yrs with no disclosed previous service involvement. Five older survivors explicitly stated that there was no service involvement during childhood, and described how they exited their home situation independently when old enough. The youngest member of the older group had some experience of non-statutory service intervention however it did not involve any significant life events. Therefore the sample was more varied than was expected both in age and experience. However 'Qualitative sampling, is not typically intended to be 'representative' in the sense of seeking to approximate known population parameters' (Abrahams, 2010, p. 537).

4.5.4 Demographic Picture of Survivors

Table 2

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Illness/Disability	Occupation/Education
1 F	18	British Muslim	No	Fairbridge training course
2 F	19	White British	Yes- Mental Health and Hyper Mobility and Heart problems	Unemployed
3 F	17	White British	Mental Health	Employability course
4 F	23	White British		Unemployed
5 F	18	White British		Unemployed
6 M	29	White American		PhD Student
7 F	49	White British		Campaigner
8 F	18	White British		Full time mother
9 F	45	White other		Relationship therapist
10 F	55	White British		Events organiser
11M	19	White British	Mental Health	Volunteer mechanic
12M	45	White Irish		Student Mentor
13F	35	White British		PhD Student

4.5.5 The Interviews (Survivors)

The interview schedule was designed in the same way as the schedule for the professional interviews. It was divided into three sections and began with more general questions aimed at an easing in of the interview. There was also a deliberate attempt to present questions about home and childhood in a general way that could generate both opinion and experience which it was hoped would allow participants to make choices about the personal stories they disclosed. The questions were open ended, and the semi structured nature of the interview was essential to allow space for further exploration of the issues discussed and provide opportunities for follow up questions.

Participants were interviewed on a one to one basis either face to face or by telephone (due to location). It was discussed with participants where they would like to be interviewed, however choices were made largely on the basis of convenience. All of the participants from phase one (all of the young adults bar one who was recruited through phase two) were keen that I met them within the support services or accommodation they would be attending anyway. In phase two, one survivor was interviewed in the University he attended, three survivors were interviewed by phone, one survivor was interviewed at home, one survivor was interviewed in a communal area of a library and the final interview took place in the café area of a Premier Inn. The last two were interviewed in these locations as it had been necessary to travel to a different geographical area. Both the communal library area and café utilised were empty, and participants were satisfied with the setting.

The interviews were recorded audio interviews, with prior permission of participants. All survivors signed consent and had access to information sheets which were additionally read through with all participants, inviting any questions participants had. Interviews lasted between 40 mins and 2 hours. The first four interviews invited feedback on the style and content of the interview. The first two participants expressed no change necessary to my personal approach or language. One participant suggested a change in format to a question and it was changed as a result. There was a request to change the structure of the schedule. This came from a participant who was himself a PhD student, and expressed surprise that he was not asked to 'tell his story' at the beginning of the interview. Following this feedback it was decided that a choice would be given to participants to go with the questions or talk about their lives or story. All participants elected to start the conversation with questions.

It is interesting that it was a fellow researcher that challenged the format. It is possible to speculate that he felt more able to express dissatisfaction with the format however it is also possible that he had a preconceived idea about how the research would be conducted.

It is difficult to articulate the approach taken in interviews. Prior to academic research there were many years spent employed in various community and youth settings. The focus on engaging people, both service users and professionals was an essential part of this work. In addition, as a qualified youth worker, the emphasis placed on the value of informal conversation as a primary process for learning, is deeply embedded (Smith and Jeffs, 1999). The learning, in this context of youth work is implicitly two way, and there is a recognition that conversation, and therefore what is 'learned' is organic in nature. Obviously this cannot be directly related to research, in that the core agenda of discussion is already set, nevertheless these principles still influenced the approach.

In terms of qualitative research this could be loosely associated with the desire to achieve rapport (Fontana and Frey, 2005). However the concept of rapport is somewhat ambiguous. Jorgenson (1992) argues that although rapport is 'a term that resists precise definition' (p148) there are two important factors regarding how the term is situated in general usage. Firstly that a statement exclaiming rapport with someone is 'self-validating' in that it is valued for its own sake, and secondly that rapport is often 'characterised by asymmetries of role' for example a teacher has good rapport with a student. Jorgenson goes on to state that critically, rapport is viewed differently in research circles:

Rapport is a valued aspect of interpersonal relationships in research settings because it is assumed to further the investigatory purposes of the researcher. In interviews, which constitute a basic tool of data collection in communication research, the establishment of rapport is conceived as an aid in the elicitation of "candid" and full disclosures of information from the research participants (Jorgenson, 1992, p. 148)

The implication is that rapport is something only practised by interviewers while the role of interviewee is not mentioned. 'Classic' research guidelines, while highlighting a need to put interviewees at ease, also emphasises a retention of the need for objectivity and limits placed on self-disclosure. Rapport is judged purely on the, what has been achieved and what it has been produced, but only for one participant, the interviewer. Jorgenson argues that the process could be more accurately described as a joint accomplishment and also advises that when writing reports and analysing content, divergence from the 'topic' is worthy

of attention as it may represent shifts in how the interviewee is relating to the interview and positions themselves.

Oakley (2016) also addresses this issue by highlighting how 'rapport' is viewed as a means to generate data and simply a technical device to be utilised. Oakley goes on to state that in her research, she did 'not have to labour at rapport' (2016: p. 197) because the women she interviewed were enthusiastic and wanted to talk to her. However it is interesting that in this context, Oakley also discusses her decision to answer questions by participants regarding the subject matter of her research, namely motherhood. This stance is taken in order to challenge the idea that information passes only one way, and crucially to claim that 'refusing to answer (questions) was exploitative of interviewees and counterproductive in terms of gaining full and honest accounts (2016: p. 197).

This is a feature of feminist research and is essentially an attempt to negate and reduce the relationship of power, effectively hierarchy, between researcher and participant. However in light of the self-identified deviations from the socially constructed meaning and connotations of the term 'rapport', both generally and in a research setting it almost seems nonsensical to continue with this particular labelling of approach. Plummer (1995) argues that the story arrived at through interview is in fact a simply a 'joint action' whereby one person is storyteller and the other acts to draw out story. However it is always worth considering the notion that this assumption relies on an acceptance that one party has more 'power' than another. This will be addressed later in the chapter.

Therefore the approach in this research was one that aimed to minimise power relationships, and tried to ensure participants felt as equally part of the process as possible. This was about making sure that the participants could tell me if they felt uncomfortable, wanted to ask anything, wanted to stop completely or just needed the toilet, more than ensuring 'good information' was gleaned. It was also approached as a conversation. It was also communicated that the funders for this research were keen to embrace the research findings which provided tangible element to the reasons for the research. It was also made clear that there were no guaranteed policy changes as a result of the research.

A couple of participants asked if the information they were sharing was 'shocking', there were moments of self-doubt where they questioned whether actually what had happened was normal, whether what they were saying was completely abhorrent and there was a degree of exposure there, that they were different. The response given was listening to childhood experiences of abuse was always shocking but that unfortunately there was also

an awareness of the frequency and commonality of such situations. There were moments where self- disclosures were made regarding personal familial situations particularly with one participant, who like myself was pregnant.

As stated there were three interviews conducted over the phone. There was an individual system set up for this whereby the mobile phone was placed on speaker and placed next to the analogue digital recorder, propped up against a cushion. This was tested prior to interviews and proved to work well. The devices were propped up on cushions and so was the seven months pregnant researcher. All of these interviews took place in the home of both researcher and participant respectively.

All of the phone interviews involved people where previous email phone contact had occurred. Two of the main concerns relating to phone interviews are that it can be more difficult to establish 'rapport', and the loss non-verbal clues which are said to assist in relaying meaning (Irvine, 2010). However, McCoyd and Kerson (2006) highlight that phone interviews can allow participants to be more comfortable because they are in their own environment, and also may allow for greater anonymity. In terms of this research it was reflected that the phone interviews generated positive interpersonal conversation in that dialogue flowed and unique insights were achieved. It is interesting to note that the phone interviews took place in the latter stages of the research and therefore it is possible that a more relaxed approach was inevitable by the researcher. The participants were at home and in familiar surroundings but also performing the interviews at home of the researcher reduced the potential stress of trying to be somewhere, remember all of the stuff and set up the recording equipment ensuring there was charge and memory. Irvine (2010) found that researchers in her study reported that lack of rapport (in phone interviews) and or 'loss of meaning' were 'exaggerated or unfounded'. Irvine (2010) also reported that phone interviews tended to be shorter than face to face encounters due to lack of breaks and shorter closures, however the two of the longest interviews to occur in this research were over the phone.

Finally, the sample was slightly lower than anticipated which was disappointing. However there is still a dearth of research in this area, especially people who have not been to refuges. Nearly all of the survivors left their family themselves.

4.6 Analysis

The process of analysing data used almost the same process and method across both sets of interviews. The interviews had all been recorded on a Dictaphone, and were then

transferred to a computer, with anonymous file names, in order to be transcribed and listened to with reasonable audio quality. The interviews were all listened to initially with little or no notes taken. Interviews were listened to again with notes taken and were then listened to and fully transcribed. This was done routinely in this order following the professional interviews. The transcription of some of the survivor interviews were outsourced due to time constraints.

The reason for listening at least twice without transcribing verbatim, was to provide an opportunity to become immersed in the data. The first listening was often carried out while performing some other household task, usually painting. Braun and Clarke (2006) cite 'familiarisation of data' as a common theme in qualitative research however this action is associated with 'reading and re-reading' data, with listening only referred to as happening once. Therefore the familiarisation of data' in this case was achieved by listening more than once, which centred on a desire to know the voices and unique intonation of each participant. It was also more suited to learning styles present.

In keeping with the desire to relate fully to the actual interview it was important that interviews were transcribed verbatim. It was through this process that themes started to emerge. The analysis utilised was Thematic Analysis:

Thematic analysis is a common method in explorative qualitative research suited to describing patterns in qualitative research and to reporting the experiences and understanding of the participant. It can be understood as a process for encoding qualitative information (Overlien, 2013, p. 279).

The interview schedules contained open-ended questions and therefore coding was time consuming but also vital. All the transcripts were manually coded and categorised, which involved 'the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data' (Bryman, 1990, p. 61). Categorising data is described as the first formation of tangible product in the analysis process and is 'mainly used at the beginning of the theme development process to classify findings' (Vaismoradi et al, 2016, p. 100). There was then a process of finding themes within the coded and categorised data which involved identifying patterns, naming those patterns as themes, and then placing the coded data within those themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It needs to be noted that categorising data occurred as it was being listened to and transcribed therefore professional interviews were being organised, prior to interviews with survivors taking place. The creation of the final themes occurred after all the data had been collected and categorised.

Themes were not static and were revisited in order to make sure that they represented the stories within the testimony. This involved revising and sometimes merging or separating existing themes. Smith and Frith (2011) describe a process where data, categories and themes are returned to providing fluidity in analysis which leads to the 'emergence of the final categories and the development of the final conceptual framework' (2011: p. 8). The themes were labelled with phrases that intended to make the meaning of the theme clear and concise. The writing up, the final stage was intended to present a coherent narrative which provided useful insight and extend knowledge about the experiences of children who live with domestic violence and related subject matter, and also addressed the original research questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis is a way of making arguments and reinterpreting exiting literature in order to create more intricate and compelling data analysis.

An example of this in the research was a reinterpretation and more nuanced conceptualisation of the theoretical notion of the child as social actor which draws on the rejection of dualism, and more complex analysis of agency, as discussed in Chapter One. The research concurred with this analysis, however also offered further insight as to the impact of context and nature of that agency in the specific context of a child or children living with domestic violence. This was namely that the negation of action and responsibility by a range of adults, created the vacuums in which children's agency sometimes occurred.

It was also important when analysing the testimony from survivors to ensure that demographic factors were fully considered. This had relevance to differing long term experiences in relation to age, and also the gender of survivors in the context of the accepted analysis of domestic violence as a gendered phenomenon. In some cases it was important to look at the impact of this intersection for example the long term experiences of the one male participant who was older contrasted, in some ways, to that of the older female survivors although there was also significant similarities.

There is an attempt throughout the analysis to be creative, in the most positive sense of the word and present the information as an 'interesting' read. Richardson and St. Pierre (2008) argue that it is vital that researchers are not wholly constrained by following writing instructions:

Foisting those instructions on qualitative researchers created serious problems; they undercut writing as a dynamic creative process, they undermined the confidence of the beginning qualitative researchers because their experience of research was

inconsistent with writing model, and they contributed to the flotilla of qualitative writing that was simply not interesting to read because writers wrote in the homogenised voice of 'science' (Richardson and St Pierre, 2008, p. 819)

It is hoped that the writing and presentation of this research is interesting to read and contains the voice of the researcher. However there also a recognition that this involves reliance on what Brinkmann (2018) refers to as the 'big interpreter' and highlights the privilege inherent in interpreting what the interviewee really meant (2018: p. 589).

4.7 Ethics

All participants in the research received a written information sheet which outlined what the research was about, how information would be used, and the purpose of investigating the subject matter. There was information included about consent and it was made explicit that consent was ongoing in that it could be withdrawn at any time throughout the process. In other words it was advised that consent would be revisited throughout the research project, and always at the end of an interview or involvement. This was in order that consent was a fluid process and not defined by a single form or standalone conversation. In the case of survivors it was made clear that personal disclosure was not a requirement in order to take part. The information sheets were also addressed to participants verbally in order that every aspect of the written consent was explained in the manner of a conversation. The location of interviews were at the discretion of the participants wherever possible.

In the case of professional interviews confidentiality was important. This was particularly important because concerns about negative comments being associated with certain organisations. This had more prominent relevance regarding professionals who had recently been experienced a change of employer due to contract changes of certain services. It was hoped that promised and actual anonymity provided an arena for honesty, and that any scope for identification was deemed as breach of confidentiality.

In regards to survivors, doing retrospective research meant that the ethical issues of interviewing children and young people at a particularly traumatic and chaotic time in their lives were to some degree negated. It also meant that participants were able to think beyond immediate safety needs and reflect on their support needs at different stages in their lives. However it was always recognised that the 'past' is difficult to quantify and that certainly in the case of the younger adults, safety issues remained. These could include

continued contact with perpetrators, disclosures about younger children, and ongoing safety concerns.

Therefore in terms of consent, it was also imperative that the safeguarding responsibilities of the researcher were unambiguous, and it was clear that any indication of harm towards the participant or others would be acted upon. This entailed consent being revisited verbally, and a preferred practice for this research was that participants were able to articulate the confidentiality policy independently back to the researcher. to try to ensure understanding. This is an important part of reducing risk:

Ethical and safety protocols that emphasise a limit to confidentiality in violence and abuse research and engage with (rather than ignore) unanticipated ethical dilemmas will maximise the safety and well-being of research participants throughout the research process (Downes et al, 2014, p. 8)

Support for participants was identified in advance with agreement from all parties so that in the event of distress there was an agreed access to an already established relationship which could be professional or personal. Participants were kept anonymous in the research and it was important to be mindful of other ways that participants could be identified for example particular family circumstances or specific locations. Not all of the same issues are directly relevant for both professionals and young people taking part however the need to keep identities secret applies equally. There was also a necessity to acknowledge that while the research hopes to result in changes of practice/service delivery it is not guaranteed.

Westmarland and Bows (2018) set out three 'core values' which are recommended for ethical decision making in research about violence and abuse. The first named value is 'conceptualising victim-survivors and perpetrators as active agents (2018: p. 23). There has already been reference made to the problematic nature of who can be seen as vulnerable and how that impacts on the notion of agency and control (Brown, 2005). While of course safeguards must be in place and participants' well-being paramount it is perhaps stereotypical to assume that any effects of research in this subject area will be negative. Downes et al (2014) challenge how certain people come to be classified as vulnerable, expressing concern that capacity is linked to the abuse they have suffered which in turn further disempowers victim-survivors. This value was embedded into this research and is demonstrated by respecting participants' agreement to take part in the research and continuing check with participants their desire to continue and decline to answer any questions or continue with particular conversations.

The second value relates to 'empowering participants to make choices about their own lives' (Westmarland and Bows, 2018, p. 23). In terms of this research the victim- survivor participants largely fell into two categories. They were either younger and were in receipt of support or they were older and articulated help (both informal and formal) which they had previously received which they cited as enabling them to make choices and move forward with their lives.

The third value identified was 'maximising opportunities for positive experiences and impacts for research' (Westmarland and Bows, 2018, p. 24). As previously identified this involves recognising that participants have agency, ensuring researchers have the necessary skills to conduct research, recognising that consent and confidentiality are fluid and ongoing and the continuation of discussion and shared practice in research about violence and abuse. It has already been acknowledged that this research recognised agency in participants. The skills of the researcher were honed in practice where there is an expectation that ethical considerations will be consistently reviewed and an understanding that consent and confidentiality need to be constantly revisited. For example sometimes it necessary to remind participants about the circumstances where confidentiality may need to be broken. This may occur in the middle of a conversation in order that participants can make an informed decisions about continuation and assess what they are prepared to disclose. This is to maximise the positive experience by going some way to negate the possibility of any unexpected consequences from disclosure. However this approach is also in accordance with a belief that there is a duty to create spaces where people's real experiences are heard.

Therefore ultimately it was essential to remain vigilant at all times and make judgements throughout the interview process, requiring what can be described as 'Reflection in Action' (Schon, 1983).

This reflection in action occurred where participants became upset. It was asked of them whether they were alright and whether they wanted to carry on. There were also times where active distress was not audible or visual but due to the subject matter discussed or even just a 'feeling' from the researcher it was again asked if participants wished to continue. The wish of the participant was always to continue and that wish was always respected.

There was a commitment to ensure that all participants' contribution was acknowledged and that there was some form of contact post interview. This was in order to remember the 'human side of the work' (Dickson-Swift, 2016, p. 334). All professionals were sent

thankyou cards and invitations to contact the researcher if there was anything they felt needed further clarification. In the case of victim-survivors there were follow up phone calls made to either themselves or support workers in order to check whether there had been any negative impacts of the research process. It was decided in the interview where the phone call would be placed.

It will be an important part of the research that follow the completion of the project that all the participants are contacted again to review how their contribution factored in the research and what actions, if any, it resulted in.

4.8 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is essentially a reflection on the 'position' of the researcher in terms of 'time, space, body and history, and in terms of the context of intersecting power differentials in which he or she is inscribed' (Lykke, 2010, p. 152). Reflexivity is strongly associated with feminist research (Harding, 2007; Stanley and Wise, 2005; Reinharz and Davidman, 1992). Pillow (2003) points out that feminist theory and feminist researchers have 'furthered discussions of reflexivity by situating reflexivity as primary to feminist research and methodology' (2003: p.178). This section of the chapter will be separated, so that reflexivity in both the professional and survivor phases can be addressed in their own right.

4.8.1 Professional Data Collection

The primary conversation regarding reflexivity in phase one of the research relates to the position of the researcher in terms of 'insider' or 'outsider' status and how much those positions influence the data collected. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) refer to 'insider research' as 'when researchers conduct research with populations of which they are also members' (2009: p. 58). The advantages of being an 'insider' are reported as creating acceptance by participants and that this social proximity can have advantageous consequences (Ganga and Scott, 2006). In other words if a participant views the researcher as in some way part of the same 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991) they are more likely to share information. However it also noted that this closeness, may also serve to enhance subjectivity of the researcher (Adler and Adler, 1987). Outsider status is essentially the opposite whereby a researcher is seen to be wholly apart, from the demographic being researched.

These stringent demarcations have been largely rejected and there is an increased acceptance that it is unlikely that any researcher falls neatly into either category. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) refer to this as the 'space in between':

...as qualitative researchers we have an appreciation for the fluidity and multi-layered complexity of human experience. Holding membership in a group does not denote complete sameness within that group. Likewise, not being a member of a group does not denote complete difference. It seems paradoxical, then, that we would endorse binary alternatives that unduly narrow the range of understanding (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p. 60).

This is a particularly beneficial assessment regarding research into violence and abuse where researchers may also be practitioners, carrying out research in partnership with other organisations or involved in activism (Westmarland and Bows, 2018). It is probably beneficial therefore to comment on the aspects of this research where insider status could be identified, and go on to then temper them, in an attempt to find the specific 'space between'.

At the time of the fieldwork the only occupation held was that of researcher. However there had been previously long spells in practice, with the most recent involving seven years of both practitioner and management roles, within a third sector project which engaged with young people who went missing and/or at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation. In the geographical area where the project was housed, knowledge of the project, and the role held, was widespread. There was also a robust knowledge, through working there, of other projects and services, and there was an array of personal contacts made throughout. These were the preliminary connections made in relation to recruiting professional participants. There was certainly a degree of 'insider' status at play here, and as well as directly resulting in interviewees, there was also a willingness by participants to provide further contacts. There was an element of trust in intention due to a previous perceived integrity, which proved beneficial.

There were only three participants in the local area which were personally known through practice, however their knowledge of the previous project worked at created an 'insider' platform. There was implicit appreciation regarding the challenges of working full time with people experiencing difficulties, and the constant external pressure regarding funding, unsatisfactory responses from other agencies and the ever changing policy landscape. This could result in what could be described as a context of 'you know what I mean' in which a

participant describes a situation and there is an assumption on both parties that on some level the situation is relatable. This can become somewhat paradoxical and presents a challenge to interpretation. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) highlight this contradiction by emphasising the need to be 'acutely tuned in to the experiences and meanings of others' (1994: p. 123) while at the same time being conscious of how inherent bias may be skewing what is trying to be understood.

There were other professional interviews which took place across a number of geographical areas that had no knowledge of previous practice. Those interviews also took place within service areas (housing and domestic violence directly) of which there was little or no, direct experience. Therefore the feeling of 'insider' was reduced and there was a notion of feeling 'less at home' during these interactions. However during the course of discussion, some practice experience would be disclosed, and a familiarity of engagement with professionals would emerge.

From the perspective of 'insider' there was a twofold appreciation of the time provided by a professional. The first was a recognition of the potential situation faced by a practitioner or manager on the day of the interview. That feeling when work to do that day is the 'normal shit', and then after consulting the diary, or communal board, realising that such and such from wherever is coming in as well, and it's going to take time out of the day which perhaps wasn't expected and it's the kind of job where unexpected things happen anyway. There was an understanding of a desire to take part but a parallel concern about the impact on work commitments.

A further appreciation though was knowing that having allocated time to spend talking about practice and reflect on policy is valuable, but something in which there is often not space for in a normal working week. Henderson (2018) performed research in conjunction with a work role and describes how the time spent with participants was enriching due to having dedicated time to discuss issues in depth:

My work role does not always lend itself well to this (in-depth discussion) given most meetings and work based tasks have a reason and are outcome focused meaning that they must have a narrow agenda (Henderson, 2018 p. 137).

While there is clearly an acknowledgement that this statement comes from a different 'insider' status to the one present in this research, it accurately portrays how time to explore issues might have been valued by the participants.

The majority of the interviews with professionals engendered open discussion about the needs of children. This included not only acknowledgement of how children's voices are missed but also admissions that within their own organisations, children's needs were side lined or ignored. It is possible that this was partly a result of the insider status of the researcher, in that a shared understanding of the pressures involved in service delivery were acknowledged and therefore created an atmosphere of trust about disclosing shortcomings. However a further consequence of 'insider' status was a recognition that many professionals in these areas of work are open to looking critically at practice and how resources are allocated, as well as fostering a somewhat macro understanding of wider forces in society. And therefore it is possible that these testimonies would have occurred in differing research circumstances.

Despite the many elements of relatable experience both witnessed and articulated throughout this phase of the research there were also many instances where there was an acute feeling of being outside. Although there have been many years spent in practice, there were times when the time spent away from the frontline felt more significant. The requirement for the proverbial daily battle and the need to be 'on' every day, at times felt very far away from the current 'position'. Contact with professionals laid bare personal choices to take a different path, and fostered feelings of almost cowardice when confronted with people still fighting in the field.

Kerstetter (2012) provides an example of a researcher that has many commonalities with the people she is researching but states that 'her identity as a researcher clearly outweighed other identities and relationships she shared with her research participants (2012: p. 102). It is possible to speculate that, particularly within external geographical locations, the insider status is perhaps exaggerated, in order to preserve something within. In addition it was obvious that even within a few short years, the political landscape was creating situations for people of which I had no direct or indirect work experience, for example foodbank use. Therefore any 'insider' status was effectively historical.

4.8.2 Survivor Data Collection

Interest in how children and young people are regarded and treated has been an ongoing passion for twenty years. The majority of paid employment has involved direct work with young people and young adults, and there has always been a strong conviction that their needs are not always recognised or met, they are not always protected and valued, and their voices hold an undeserved lack of credibility. This perception is held with reference to

individual institutions and services where there has been direct contact, and also more generally on a wider platform both politically and societal. Therefore, the research was embarked upon with a clear mission to hear the experiences of children, even though it was actually a reflection on childhood by adults and it was hoped that the voice they had not experienced as children was heard in retrospect. However, the process of carrying out research has involved much questioning and reflection on this initial somewhat simplistic aim.

As previously stated throughout this chapter there was a demographic divide within the group of survivors. There were young adults living in supported accommodation, and there were older adults who had independent accommodation and who had been through a series of events and experiences. This division had resulted from different sampling methods (discussed in previous sections). However there was potentially an underlying acceptance that the older survivors were more certain in their desire to participate. In addition there was also a probable bias present in the assumption that the younger adults would be more chaotic and a 'process' of engagement would be necessary in order for an interview to take place.

There was a slightly unconscious lapse into work mode during the first phase of survivor recruitment. Previous employment required engagement with young people following periods of being missing, and potentially offering them a service from a project. There was no obligation whatsoever for the young person to agree, it was a completely voluntary service. Therefore initial contacts were important. Although there were identified issues in gaining access to young adults for this research, as previously discussed, when there was an opening, persistence was employed. Projects and individuals were chased up, and failed appointments were attempted to be rescheduled. When actual interviews did occur, there was also an identified fall back into 'engagement mode'.

However, in practice the engagement occurs in order to offer what is believed to be help and support. In this instance the end goal was information, and in retrospect this engenders feelings of fraudulence and the notion that people have been 'used'.

This uncomfortable reflection regarding engagement has remained and has contributed to a slightly negative interpretation of some of the literature centred round the interview process. As previously referenced Plummer (1995) describes the researcher as coxer. Ellsberg et al (2001) argues that in order to enhance disclosure it is necessary to *convince* (my emphasis) participants to speak openly about their lives and goes on to say that research design and

the ability of an interviewer to make a participant comfortable is vital. There is validation to the argument that research seeks to uncover voices and initiate wider change as a result. However it is not guaranteed, and is unlikely to substantially benefit the participant. Therefore, these words appear to represent an enacting of power within an interview process which jars with the idea of creating space for discussion. It is hoped that information in this research was not gained by convincing or coaxing, but concerns remain about whether skills of engagement were used too readily.

Conversely there was also perhaps too much emphasis placed on 'outsider' status where it mattered. Internally, and also on advice, there was a deliberate move to embrace the role of researcher and create distance between this role and previous roles, in relation to young adults. This was, in a way a protection from wanting to 'get involved'. There was, in keeping with ethical considerations, information available for survivors regarding various support if needed, and also prior agreement to avenues of support following the interviews. However, personal post interview contact was minimal. Following agreement with younger adults their support workers were contacted to check whether or not there had been a negative impact from the interview. None were reported. Older survivors were followed up by email or some form of messaging platform. In hindsight it would have been desirable to have personally undertaken these welfare checks, and emphasised 'work mode' more, at this stage of data collection.

Similar to Gatrell (2009), participants gave positive feedback regarding the interview and stated that they hoped what they had contributed might make a difference to other children. The word 'cathartic' was used by a number of the older survivors in relation to their experience. On reflection this immediate feedback appears somewhat one-dimensional and inadequate considering the level of disclosure.

However, I had no sense as to whether the interviews had affected the behaviour or attitudes of participants in the longer term, or whether my attempts to 'safeguard' respondents had been effective. This seemed an important omission- given the extent of my own concerns and those of others about research accountability (Gatrell, 2009, p. 114).

There has been much thought given to the survivors who took part in this research. The completion of the thesis has been anticipated, partly with a view to contacting them again in order to check on well-being in the longer term, and potentially discuss further avenues for their voice to be heard.

These thoughts and decisions have primarily arose through guilt about what I might 'achieve' as a result of their abuse. Dickson-Swift (2016) refers to researchers feeling guilty, but focuses on guilt about 'feeling excited' about 'good information'. In other words the realisation for researchers that they were regarding traumatic events in someone's life as significant data for their research, caused them internal conflict. It does not refer to guilt about potential career progression which is concerned with gaining qualifications on the back of misery.

Self-disclosure occurred in various forms for this research. As a pregnant women in the second/third trimester during most face to face interviews, it was an obvious talking point. It also led to other questions regarding whether there were other children. As Dickson-Swift (2016) points out 'qualitative research on sensitive topics creates a space for self-disclosure that may not be appropriate in other types of research' (2016: p. 332). Self-disclosure was more pronounced when interviewing older female survivors who were all also mothers. While there was no personal experience of domestic violence in the sense that is understood in this research. There was a relatively recent situation whereby crack and alcohol addiction had resulted in family break up, and resulted in single parenthood of a very young child. This extreme departure from the traditional two parent family was one that was easily relatable.

A noteworthy part of the findings appeared to indicate something different from an accepted academic narrative. The impact on relationships between mothers and children where domestic violence has been present has been well documented (Radford and Hester, 2006; Katz, 2015). Much of this research has focused on the difficulties of mothering in situations of domestic violence, highlighting the agency women display in order to continue to care for their children, victim blaming, and on mother and child relationships post separation with the perpetrator. It is easy to detect, in much of the post-separation research (Overlien, 2013; Katz, 2015; Callaghan et al, 2018), a narrative of healing and restoration. However this was not aligned with the findings in this research. As stated none of the survivors had fled with their mothers, and regard for them was unsympathetic in many cases. This led to reflection on established theory and narrative on this subject. Stanley and Wise (2005) argue that the 'personal' should not be disregarded if it does not fit with theory. This is important to consider in order to reflect on whether there is a bias towards 'fitting' the findings into recognised patterns of previous research and disregarding testimony.

Mauthner and Doucet (2003) also highlight the potential pitfalls of viewing only what the theoretical lens allows. They provide an example of a researcher influenced by a feminist epistemology and 'the notion of 'giving voice' to marginalised groups' (2003: p. 420) and

subsequently failing to offer analysis beyond 'women's words' to further conceptualise context. In relation to the research this creates a dichotomy. The testimony and voice of the survivors must be heard however it would be also essential to recognise what is known about how women are viewed in these circumstances particularly in relation to how the dynamics of domestic violence effect parenting capacity and how that relates to the wider patriarchy.

Reflexivity is an essential part of research but it is impossible to achieve full comprehensive reflexivity in any one moment of time.

There may be limits to reflexivity, and to the extent to which we can be aware of the influences on our research both at the time of conducting it and in the years that follow. It may be more useful to think of 'degrees of reflexivity', with some influences being easier to identify and articulate at the time of our work while others may take time, distance and detachment from our research (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003, p. 425).

This interpretation is useful as it allows reflexivity to be fluid and allow for hindsight to present differing reflections on a researcher's position.

There was not an anticipation of significant emotional impact of the research because of previous work experience and literally years of working with, and hearing about children who have been abused and neglected. There were unpredicted feelings of anger, particularly when re-listening to testimony following a year spent on maternity. Westmarland and Bows (2018) state that one of the main reasons researchers become distressed is the 'systemic neglect of victims' (2018: p. 63). The neglect which was described, by parents, teachers and other services left a feeling of anger, however the desire to personally right wrongs with some of the perpetrators was sometimes overwhelming when listening to testimony. When the interviews were returned to after a year of maternity leave, the personal circumstances of having a one year old baby definitely impacted on my emotional response.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has addressed some of the recognised aspects of reflexivity from a feminist perspective. In terms of professional interviews the concepts of insider and outsider status have been explored. In the research with victim survivors approaches have been explored with reference to levels of appropriate engagement, after care and power relationships.

Chapter Five: What are the Potential Impacts of Housing and Welfare Reform?

5.1 Introduction

The inclusion of this subject matter in the findings is that it directly links to the last research question and places the rest of the findings in a context. It has been well documented that women have been disproportionately affected by much of the social policy that has occurred since 2010 and therefore by default, and also directly, so have children. It would therefore be somewhat negligible not to place the subject matter of this thesis within this policy context, with comment and opinion from the people who are seeing the impact firsthand, on a day to day basis. As one housing practitioner commented:

Times are becoming very much difficult, welfare reform, all those things are complicating people's way of life and we're certainly seeing some of the difficulties unfolding over and over again and people's tolerance of having to face difficult times is getting lower and reduced, along with that is the cuts, the Local Authority cuts, services are expected to deliver more for far less you know, reduction in support services across the city is another one (Housing Association Intensive Housing Manager).

The findings of this chapter have three principal limitations. The first relates to issues raised in the methodology regarding differentiation of emphasis on the topic between discussions with practitioners and survivors respectively. Secondly while there is an acknowledgement, as highlighted above, that benefit changes are impacting on the ability to manage housing, there was limited direct experience, in either group of participants. And when reviewing the literature there was little research into this phenomena at this time. However, the impact of Universal Credit in relation to housing is being increasingly reported in some sections of the media and it is envisaged that there will be research into this trend as the roll out continues. The third limitation is that any impact on children is, to an extent, implicit rather than explicit in that the consequences discussed are often in relation to women, with an assumption that children are affected as well. There are some exceptions to this, most notably in the discussion about stigma.

The majority of the response, but certainly not all, in relation to this question came from practitioners. One reason for this is perhaps the current context. It is professionals who are working with women and children at the present time, and are directly supporting, or supporting staff to help, families to access accommodation and financial assistance. It is also

likely that practitioners keep updated and anticipate social policy changes that may affect their demographic. Practitioners in the field are also in a position to wage comparisons, in that it is probable for them to be able recall previous circumstances, particularly regarding benefits and housing, as different. For refuge workers in particular the contrast between how resources are allocated and organised, compared to even a few years ago, engendered much opinion and comment.

Survivors varied in terms of their experiences and opinions regarding housing and benefits. Some were older and relatively established in their lives in terms of property and income, and were not having current, direct contact with the state in terms of assistance. There was one exception of an older survivor who was experiencing some housing issues and her input is recorded in this chapter. Younger survivors who were starting out into independence were experiencing the system as it is at this moment, from that point in their own lives. It was difficult for them to reflect on the challenges facing children still living with parents, or conversely whether their current situation was harder than it would have been in say 2010. There was no marked difference relating to gender.

There were some general themes that arose from this area of discussion. There were identified increased restrictions on housing options for women fleeing domestic violence and concern raised about standards of housing and availability of emergency accommodation. There was a recognition that housing was harder to access however there was also a sense that women and children were still generally housed appropriately, and availability was not a significant issue. This is in stark contrast to several reports cited in the literature review that set out the dire situation being faced by women and children in housing need due to domestic violence and other factors, because of severe housing shortages. A likely explanation for this marked variance is the geographical area where research has taken place.

Lack of autonomy and choice for women due to inbuilt benefit delays and the withdrawal of other grants previously available were seen negatively by practitioners. The current trend towards monetary independence being replaced by foodbanks and charitable donation, particularly in the short term was cited as highly problematic. Practitioners viewed these developments as potentially effecting whether a women leaves an abuser or whether a women, having left, returned to her abuser. The impact of cuts to other services were frequently highlighted as causing additional complications for women and children, and adding to challenges for practitioners to work effectively. Finally cuts, and changes, to refuges themselves were seen as further strain on women and children, with direct services

to children often withdrawn when budgets are stretched. These findings reflect the disproportionate reliance on the state in relation to gender that was addressed in Chapter Two and in turn demonstrates how austerity impacts on women and children, and particularly those who have experienced domestic violence.

This quote from a manager working in refuge sums up the overall sentiment regarding the current condition:

Everything is harder, everything takes longer (Refuge Manager 2).

The rest of this chapter will be divided into sections that best fit the most prominent issues and allow the main themes to be heard.

The first section will address benefit changes with special reference to Universal Credit. Universal Credit had been fully rolled out in at least one of the geographical areas covered and was therefore frequently raised as an issue. This will be followed by a section on the reduction of additional monies, for example community care grants. The third section concentrates on the issues of charity and stigma and following there will be concentration on cuts to refuges and changes to service provision in this area. The last section will look at housing with an emphasis on availability, access and choice.

5.2 Universal Credit/Benefits

Practitioners reported being witness to the various ways Universal Credit is different from benefits they had dealt with previously. Universal Credit received no positive feedback in this research on a general basis, however there were also a range of additional concerns about the characteristics of this kind of benefit design, where domestic violence is an issue. One manager places these concerns within a wider context of increased financial constraints experienced by women living and fleeing domestic violence

Universal Credit is another one, whoever thought of that was crazy. You've got the perpetrator being in complete control of the finances so...(Domestic Violence Service Manager 2).

When a perpetrator receives all of the benefit entitlement in a lump sum it was foreseen by professionals, from a range of backgrounds, that there was a strong likelihood that housing situations could become more vulnerable.

It makes you wonder if you're going to see more evictions as well, not just around that, where if they get the money in their hand at the end of the month is it all going to be spent and they're not going to be paying their landlord direct, quite worrying (Former Health Visitor to the Homeless).

One professional further compared Universal Credit unfavourably with the old system in terms of women's independence and how that potentially impacts on decision making to exit an abusive relationship:

I think they are making women less likely to leave situations of domestic violence and make them more fear of change. The whole thing about who's account the money gets paid into, the loss of the separation of child benefit, the delays in getting that through, the little bit of independence that actually having a book that a woman can go to a post office and cash, and get cash, all those little things used to make a massive difference. They're all gone now (Refuge Manager 1).

There were concerns raised about the 5 week in built delay feature of Universal Credit. However, timescales for benefit payments were not mentioned exclusively in relation to Universal Credit, some practitioners also talked about delays in a broader sense. One manager from housing articulated how even just the anticipation of delays could dissuade women and children leaving an abuser:

Obviously lack of money causes stresses on any family but I also think the benefit changes and how you access benefits and Universal Credit etc is difficult in terms of, 'I'm going to have wait four weeks for money, can I put up with another night of him shouting and balling,' that's got to stop people. If you're constantly having to chase your benefits and then wait four weeks it's even longer than that actually, it's about 6. But also getting paid every four weeks and things like that I think that impacts massively on whether people stay and put up with stuff because it's such a lengthy process to wait for your benefits (Young Person's Service Manager).

This commentary is illuminating because it places Universal Credit as uniquely creating situations that are seen as set apart from 'normal' monetary stresses.

Professionals trying to assist women to make new claims found the requisite online verification process time consuming, laborious, inflexible, and often ineffective:

Honestly, even the application form itself, we do it online with the women. Then they've got to have a verification ID check. Trying to log on to it takes days. In the end we just rang the job centre and said we can't even get through on these ID checks, it's like a credit card check you have to give them their bank details, NI number and all this (Refuge Independent Living Worker).

Practitioners who were dealing with women who had recently fled situations of domestic violence made similar arguments that the system of Universal Credit could just not cater for individuals who had recently suffered trauma or who were in crisis. Again this aspect of the current welfare system was seen as inflexible and could be argued to be discriminatory:

Well, the biggest challenge is around welfare reform, much more focus on conditionality regarding seeking work and employment and in principle, where people want to and can work absolutely but we have a welfare system for a reason and that is to provide a safety net for our most vulnerable citizens. And I think you know quite often, financial control is a significant issue, even if it's benefits, it's being claimed in the man's name. So we have to go through that whole process of new applications and the conditionality of looking for work. And I think that can be overwhelming. Moving to a new home is hard enough but the pressure of managing money and benefits. It is making something challenging even more challenging (Local Authority Emergency Accommodation Manager).

Practitioners identified that the pressure on women to prove that they were looking for work despite having just left an abusive relationship and potentially relying on foodbanks to eat was unreasonable. One practitioner was able to recall how clients were treated prior to Universal Credit (UC), if they qualified for Job Seekers Allowance (JSA):

This is the grey area. When they were on JSA before the UC we used to apply for a job seekers exemption so they didn't have to look for work as they were classed as being in crisis in the refuge, but now cos it's UC we're trying to give them a letter when they go to the job centre along the same lines of 'she's in crisis, she's in a refuge she's unable at this point to look for work, can she be made exempt for so many weeks?'. And what they're saying is 'NO'. They still have to come up to the job centre and they still have to do that. So the easement, the JSA easement as such doesn't work for Universal Credit so we're having a nightmare at the minute (Refuge Independent Living Worker).

Although not articulated here, a possible implication of this continued emphasis on conditionality is that refuges and other support services find their time taken up with helping people with claiming commitments, resulting in a subsequent lack of focus given to the actual reason and need for the support. One manager that was interviewed from an ALMO noted this trend with some despondency, when describing how supporting young people prior to entering, or in receipt of a tenancy had changed recently:

It used to be, to be honest with you at the moment, particularly with resources we're not doing as much consultation. It used to be just consultation work and peer education that we did but now because of claiming commitments and welfare reform and all of that its, YP have to be employment ready because otherwise (sighs) they're not gonna be able to live independently so we've changed wer focus more on that. We still do the consultation stuff but we're kind of focussing, making sure that our young people can sustain their tenancies and you know keep their benefits in place and things and are getting to employment and financial inclusion (Young Person's Service Manager).

There was further comment about the claiming commitment and the threat of sanction that loomed for both the woman and the worker:

They've got a to-do list to do every week. They've got to make sure they log into their Universal Credit account cos if there's anything to do on the list and they don't do it it's a sanction (Refuge Independent Living Worker).

The litany of complaints and identified flaws associated with Universal Credit identified by practitioners combine to create an argument that the victim/survivors of domestic violence are being systemically disproportionately disadvantaged. Universal Credit is, in its own right, negatively impacting women living with domestic violence, a factor in dissuading women to leave abusive relationships and, if they have left, hindering recovery financially, practically and emotionally.

5.3 Crisis Loans and Community Grants

Professionals referenced the cessation of two previously available financial avenues of assistance that were often accessed by women who had fled domestic violence, namely crisis loans and community care grants:

Crisis loans, they've been stopped...so we've got women now who when they come into refuge if they haven't got a penny before we could just, the next morning, ring the job centre and say 'we need to apply for a crisis loan we've got a woman plus two children that needs food dah dah dah'. They would do the application over the phone and then say come into the job centre tomorrow and we'll give them a payment for. . . between £40-50 with children (Refuge Independent Living Worker).

The second one off payment that could be applied for was the Community Care Grant that was a one off payment, to enable people to set up a home for example to help furnish or carpet a property they had been allocated.

You used to be able to apply for a community care grant for carpets and they would give you the money and go and buy what you want (Domestic Violence Service Manager 2).

The impression given by experienced practitioners was that previously these payments were relatively simple to access in terms of the conditions needed to apply, and the methods used to apply, for example on the phone. There was also an appreciation of how quickly these payments came, which reflected the need presented. Professionals lamented these changes and clearly viewed helping clients to access these payments as a valued part of their job. The withdrawal of these allocations had an effect on professionals who felt it was now harder to assist clients to move forward with their lives, and gain independence. They still wanted to provide the same service for the women and children that came to them but found it increasingly difficult to deliver. There was a sense, particularly in refuges, that it was important to get the support right in those precious windows of opportunity, and the time lag for direct financial support was detrimental to longer term independence.

5.4 Charity Case/Impact of Stigma

The primary disquiet expressed by practitioners regarding the various changes described above was whether, having left an abusive partner, a woman and her children subsequently returned due to the financial situation they found themselves in. The resource gap has essentially been filled by charity, at least in the short term, for example foodbanks. However, some practitioners made a direct link between the way a resource was accessed and whether or not a woman and her children returned to an abusive relationship. In other words there was an acute awareness of how a subsequent lack of choices inherent in more

charitable forms of assistance, replicated abusive circumstances. They cited survivors feeling uncomfortable with the help offered:

They're embarrassed em, they feel like a charity case em and often when they come here they're feeling really really vulnerable anyway and they've made the decision to leave, they've been incredibly brave and they've been able to, and yet they could be waiting weeks for any kind of benefit so I think it cuts the likelihood of staying, at risk (Refuge Manager 2).

Therefore particularly in a scenario where a women and children have fled their abuser it is essential that tangible positive differences can be realised in the immediate. Ideally the previous situation should be compared unfavourably with the present. There was a significant appreciation by professionals that removing choice from women and children had an impact and they might feel stigmatised when having to rely on donations.

A manager of a domestic violence service alludes to this issue when describing how they help women access carpets for new homes:

But now they don't (give you money), they come and measure your home and give you the carpet, which is acceptable, it's OK but if you think in terms of victims of domestic violence, they are kind of told which carpet to have. I know it's a carpet on your floor but it's all about choice (Domestic Violence Service Manager 2).

The primary charitable resource accessed, and the one most frequently identified in this research, is foodbanks. This was demonstrated in practitioner interviews with foodbanks being mentioned fifteen times by seven practitioners respectively.

One manager from a domestic violence service talked about the regularity of making food bank applications and the sheer rise in use by them as a project:

OMG absolutely huge (rise in food bank use). One of the reasons we went through an influx of using food banks is when they first brought in the sanctions for your benefits. They would just stop your money so any changes they would just stop your money and ask questions later. Really? But how is she gonna get the kids to school, how she gonna feed the kids, how she gonna put gas and electricity on those meters. It was bad, I've just been speaking to C**** (a worker in the service) cos one of his

ex-clients came in who was in refuge. He's made four foodbank applications today alone (Domestic Violence Service Manager 2).

Another professional alluded to the pressure on staff:

The Universal Credit, the sanctions, it's all creating pressure on staff and clients. The clients are suffering and are relying far more heavily on foodbanks and charitable donations (Refuge Manager 2).

Professionals highlighted the limitations of foodbanks. This was seen as particularly pronounced for children, in that food parcels made it difficult to cater for special diets or intolerances children may have, or simply reduce the ability to provide child's favourite food. All of these things have the capacity to have a massive impact on the wellbeing of women and children and increase the difficulty of the situation.

And we (the refuge) provide as much as we can but it's little things like if children have favourite foods or children, if they're on the spectrum and they have special needs that certain food textures and things like that you're not gonna be able to cater for that at a foodbank it's your basic ranges isn't it so just yeah. It does impact on children massively (Refuge Manager 2).

Practitioners seemed resigned to this situation continuing and did not express any hope that foodbank use would reduce. Instead there was every expectation that it would continue and most likely increase.

Crisis Support is run by Local Authorities and provides emergency help for those in need. One refuge worker explained how it is used and when they access it:

Now what the council does it's called crisis support so to replace the DWP crisis loans each council has their own little pot of money for crisis so crisis support. When we first set this up we had lots of women coming in with no recourse to public funds and they weren't entitled to claim benefits. Benefits were in their husband's name, it takes two or three weeks. How they gonna be feeding themselves for two or three weeks until the claim came through so we accessed crisis support and what they do is they give us Tesco vouchers, bus passes so if they need to go to the job centre they can get a bus pass, food they can go to Tesco with the vouchers and tinned food in stock. So I think that's had a big impact on women staying cos it's like, do we

really want to be getting food parcels with children...If it wasn't for me knowing about crisis support from the old refuge, nobody here knew about it (Refuge Independent Living Worker).

Crisis Support therefore was seen as a better option than foodbanks as the vouchers offered some level of choice and control and took away the need for a food parcel and all the connotations of that. However it was clear when talking that the professional involved in this discussion found this option to be inferior to the client compared to the previous Crisis Loan as the support still represented a reduction in autonomy and independence.

Professionals frequently referred to children in this context and it was felt that it was especially difficult for them to be different, or to be seen as different. This was demonstrated acutely when a manager of a domestic violence service identified self-esteem as the most immediate consequence for children living in poverty:

The lack of financial help is massive. We've got the local welfare provision to make new carpet applications etc but is that going to be sustained? What will happen to all those children that have no carpets on the floor? What happens to their self-esteem? (Domestic Violence Service Manager 2)

Other professionals also acknowledged the impact, particularly on children, of not having the 'right' things. One professional doing direct work with children explained the impact of financial hardship on the children who had recently moved from one side of a city to another following time in a refuge:

They've moved schools mid-term. The middle son over eats so he's massively obese since it all kicked off and then he went into school and there was no uniform, she couldn't afford uniform so he was there in a jumper with a girl's name sewed in. It was everybody doing their best but kind of failing so we put in for grants and stuff, and I think in the meantime if you think about his emotional well-being (Third Sector Domestic Violence Service Family Support Worker).

With regard to the same family the professional described how the mother consistently refused foodbank because she did not want to be seen as in receipt of charity.

So she won't take food bank even though she didn't have food cos she didn't want people to know that they were delivering it to her house and she won't have a bus

pass cos it's the bus pass that you get off the job centre so she'd rather walk (Third Sector Domestic Violence Service Family Support Worker).

Although not specifically referred to in these quotes, this family were living in an area where Universal Credit has been fully rolled out. While it is impossible to say categorically, it is likely that this was a contributory factor to some of the problems that occurred in this instance. It is also possible to conclude that the stigma comes from visibility. No-one 'sees' a benefit payment but people 'see' the foodbank delivery and they 'see' the bus pass.

Another professional from housing thought that survivors of domestic violence suffered from stigma which was present ranging from their actual house to lack of material possessions. This professional also thought stigma was exemplified because of a focus on material items in a more general societal terms.

It's very much a stigma about what happens to victims of DA and their families when they go into refuge, start a fresh and they maybe haven't got everything new. I think we live in such a materialistic society and it's so much harder for children because it's expected that they will have an up to date iPhone, they'll all have IPADs, they'll all have Netflix and 300 channels on a massive widescreen TV and things. And I know that's very materialistic but when they're at school it's very much a competition (Housing Association Support Manager).

One final aspect of stigma that children were seen to have experienced related to dress, and again referred to the idea of having the 'right' things:

Massively, kids are cruel especially working in this area, working in [Byker], there's very much the thing about being uniform, they all wear the same coat and the same kind of shoes and anybody who's slightly different pays the price for it (Third Sector Domestic Violence Service Family Support Worker).

It is therefore concluded that although the woman is directly suffering from the various changes to welfare as described above and is, in her own right experiencing stigma, it is children who are often on the front line as the visual personification of financial hardship. Learning that an adult has to wait five weeks for a benefit payment perhaps does not have quite the impact of imagining a child waiting for the right school jumper five weeks after starting a new school. This lived experience is conceivably amplified by a context of consumer conformity and material expectation.

5.5 Refuge and Emergency Accommodation

Nearly half of the professionals that were interviewed worked or had worked in either refuge or other kinds of supported emergency accommodation. There were concerns raised about availability and sustainability of shorter term accommodation options for women and children particularly with regards to specialist refuge places. Three professionals had recently moved to brand new facilities that presented change from old ways of working and organising resources. Certainly the change to provision of refuge in one area covered in the research was seen to be due to be primarily due to increased budget constraints. A lack of funds post 2010 was seen to be leading to a move towards generic services operating on a one size fits all basis. The change involved the closing of two refuges, one that was solely for BME women and the other which was operated by a national charity specialising in domestic violence. The refuges have been replaced by one generic unit where outreach services are also delivered forming a hub for all domestic violence services in the area. It is run by a generic Housing Association with limited history of running refuges or domestic violence services. This was viewed as problematic by professionals involved in refuge work. The central tenet of alarm was that organisations did not have the specialist knowledge required to run an effective service and subsequently reduced the existence of the refuge movement. One manager commented:

Housing Associations deciding that they can do refuges has had a negative impact. Has deciding that rather than supporting the development of women led services and specialist services that they can just be generically delivered as part of their umbrella has had a terrible detrimental effect because obviously it's led to the shrinking of the sector (Refuge Manager).

Professionals felt that organisations had not armed themselves with the relevant specialist knowledge to run a service for women and children fleeing domestic violence. Therefore gaps were easily identified by experienced staff working in these provisions. In the new generic refuge catering for all it was stated that any specialist help based on background was likely to disappear.

Well there's not enough BME support, it's very English, it's very basic. There's not a lot of specialism needed. It's very hostel based, em you know cultures and em religions aren't taken into consideration here, you just come in you're in flat no.1 and that's it (Refuge Independent Living Worker 2).

There was also a feeling from practitioners that they had more knowledge than the organisation employing them regarding to how to access help for women and children. One professional gave an example of specialist knowledge unknown to her employer which is likely to have had a massive impact on the women currently living in refuge.

If it wasn't for me knowing about crisis support from the old refuge, nobody here knew about it (Refuge Independent Living Worker).

There has been much discussion in the chapter about a trend towards a lack of choices and autonomy for women and children experiencing or fleeing domestic violence. However through discussions with refuge staff it became clear that they were also experiencing curtailment in their ability to make decisions and in some cases cuts themselves.

As a researcher the most striking aspect, in terms of finance, of this generic style refuge service was that petty cash had not been included when the service was tendered for:

We don't have petty cash. In the old refuge we had petty cash and we had a crisis fund so if we had a woman coming in at 2 o'clock in the morning in her pyjamas and the kids were in their pyjamas, bare feet. At least we could, we had a pot of money, the next morning we could say right you can go get some milk, cereal, you can go down and get whatever. Here you don't have that so we were struggling when we first came in cos we had two Asian women who needed photographs. Taken for granted, photographs are £5 now for ID. Well they haven't got £5, staff haven't got £5, we haven't got any petty cash (Refuge Independent Living Worker).

When this was further explored in terms of how a service could be run without petty cash, it also transpired that any monetary donations made directly to the refuge had to go through a centralised system which again denied staff the autonomy to make judgements about how the money might benefit the clients.

It's (petty cash) not in the budget. We got some donations at Christmas so we got like a couple of charities that have donated some money but that cheque has got to go through [Thirteen's] finance department to get cashed and then we can say right well we need £20 for some new cot sheets for the refuge so we need whatever (whispers) But it's really hard because there's no money there and if I hadn't getting these bus passes they (women) wouldn't have been able to get to the job centre for Universal Credit appointments (Refuge Independent Living Worker).

The nature of refuge work and the propensity for women and children arriving with little or no possessions, and severely limited financial resource is challenging. Therefore an absence of readily available petty cash available for discretionary use by staff is detrimental to delivering a service that meets the needs of the clients. This is perhaps another example of a deficit in understanding of the issue by non-specialist organisations. It is impossible to say whether the contracting Local Authority was directly aware of this aspect of the tendered service however it is likely that the reduced cost to the service as a whole was a factor in when making the decision to award.

Another professional raised concern about reduction in human resources within refuges that again had a potentially detrimental effect on women and children, as well the staff themselves. These reductions in staff were directly related to cuts in budgets and constrained resources and there was a feeling that sometimes the commitment of the staff was assumed to be strong and able to withhold additional pressures. This is how one manager described it:

It's even staffing levels within existing projects and things cos the staffing levels are then cut even more and stretched. Staff are stretched and we are constantly being asked to do more for less and the staff who work in this field tend to do it because they wouldn't be working in this field if they didn't have that kind of attitude but when you're working in traumatic services, you know like a refuge, where you're hearing trauma every day, you're hearing those stories that's really tough on staff. Staff will be lone working more often than they used to be because of budget cuts em, which you know we have the procedures and the tools and techniques to make sure people are safe, but it's that being able to bounce off ideas off colleagues, that sense of team work that every day stress and pressure of the phone ringing constantly. If you're by yourself it's just tougher. And clients will suffer (Refuge Manager 2).

The theme running through the findings relating to refuge is that specialism is financially costly. As discussed in the Literature Review the cuts to some Local Authority budgets have been particularly severe and it would seem likely that regardless of any desire for specialism the bottom line of costs is the only consideration to ensure continuity of service.

5.5.1 Services for Children

In one refuge and in one emergency accommodation setting that were visited, specific support services for children had been completely cut. In both cases this was a direct result

of cuts to budgets. All practitioners lamented these cuts but there was little challenge on the 'inevitability' that when faced with cuts the services for children would be dispensable. It is possible therefore that even though children are recognised as victim/survivors and the voice of the child has been given amplified credence and validity, in practice they are still viewed and treated with secondary importance in relation to domestic violence when it comes to how finances are organised. One manager described the service that used to exist for children in emergency accommodation:

We used to have a service provided through [Children North East] and they would do activities with the kids, young children in that space but given the budget cuts and our proximity to places like [Ryehill] nursery and Sure Start [West] we couldn't justify continuing to have a specific service just for here (Local Authority Emergency Accommodation Manager).

The links with outside services for children may be useful however given the impact of stigma referred to in the previous section this may potentially prove, in the immediate, traumatic or problematic for children. Therefore it could be suggested that a dedicated service for children within the setting to which they have arrived would be more beneficial.

There was a recognition that not only are services lost in the immediate but that the cessation of a service involves a loss of knowledge and expertise that is then difficult rebuild in the event of a change of circumstances. And this links with the loss of specialist work more generally in the field referred to previously.

.....and we've already had a process of attrition with cuts so we used to have children's workers, we used to be able to do a lot of sophisticated work with children, we can't now cos we lost all the workers and we lost the capacity to invest in children's work and all those skills that people had, or knowledge that we had is beginning to disappear which is the sadness (Refuge Manager).

There will be extensive further discussion regarding children's services and how children are treated in refuge in other parts of this research.

5.5.2 Impact of Reduction in other Services

Practitioners identified that cuts in other service areas were impacting their ability to work with, and help their clients. One worker from a refuge described the promise of cuts actually materialising and becoming more palpable in recent years:

Now it feels like we're actually seeing it (austerity). Welfare reform, cuts to Local Authority, it's now we're seeing the real impact on services where services don't exist anymore. The needs of the clients that are coming in are more complex because thresholds are higher because resources are tight (Refuge Manager 2).

When the same worker was asked to provide details and examples of these cuts this is how she responded:

An awful lot of floating support and outreach doesn't exist anymore in [. I think they closed an awful lot of services just this year, 16/17 financial year they've made serious cuts. Our alcohol service is closed, that was residential support with alcohol problems em you know that service did absolutely immense work for years, saved lives but the amount that it would have saved financially was huge. If you think that how alcohol then will have costs on domestic violence services, court, police, health, it's crazy you know. If you could work out how much that actually did save but that's had to go because public health should have been funding it not adult services so if adult services have got to find, what did they need to find £20 million or something they can't fund services that should be funded by health but then health haven't got the money either. People are fighting over who should be paying for services now because their purse strings have been cut so much (Refuge Manager 2).

This description of funding is useful because it highlights the fact that domestic violence services do not sit alone, in isolation and therefore even if a refuge or service was adequately resourced in itself it would not be impervious to the influence of cuts more generally.

5.6 Housing- Availability and Allocation

When professionals were asked about their experiences of housing allocations and whether they believed that women and children were ultimately housed in properties that met their needs within an appropriate timescale, the overall consensus was one of satisfaction. That

the state allocation of social housing was adequate for women and children who were experiencing or fleeing domestic violence. It is worth noting at this juncture however that with the exception of one survivor this conclusion is based solely on the views and opinions of professionals and therefore cannot be taken as a definitive picture of this state of affairs without further research.

It was commonly agreed that social housing was the most desirable tenure for a move to a new home, with private rentals not favoured by professionals because of potential for evictions and general insecurity associated with that form of housing. It is notable that no professional ever discussed the possibility of a woman buying a property or securing a mortgage.

This short extract of conversation with a manager of a refuge highlights the above points. When asked what kind of housing her clients tried to obtain she responded:

Social housing just because it's more secure. Some clients will go into private rented and if that's suitable for them than that's suitable for them and we wouldn't discourage from it but we do try to use, tend to use social housing options if people want to stay in the Durham area (Refuge Manager 2)

When asked if she felt this process was straightforward she replied:

Yes I think it is (Refuge Manager 2).

Similarly when another professional was asked about responses by the Local Authority to victims who were already housed but experiencing ongoing problems from a former partner, this was the response:

If you have someone who is already housed who needs to be moved to another house say for constant harassment because he just knows where they live and he just won't leave them alone then that process within [South Tyneside] is pretty quick, they go on an emergency housing and they get a number of weeks to bid in top priority so that is usually within, don't quote me on this, I think it's usually with a 12 week time span. In 6-12 weeks you can more or less guarantee that family is going to move so if you could put in a safety plan in around them whilst they are in that home until they are able to move them then we can support with removals and things like that (Domestic Violence Service Manager 2).

One refuge manager though emphasised that in the past availability of housing was much higher and stated that sometimes this was even to the detriment of potential work and support offered to survivors:

At one time there was a confidence, if we're talking about [Sunderland] that 'we'll just go to the council and get another house next week' cos there was just that amount of stock. That would happen, people knew they could skip around areas and get properties and increasingly we know that ain't gonna happen. We used to have problems with people coming into a refuge and they would only be with us a week and the council would give them a house and they'd be off and we would be like, 'no she's not even ready, we haven't done any work with her, she'll be back here'. We just wanted to do some meaningful work before she's straight out the door to somewhere else (Refuge Manager).

There was significant discussion regarding the ways in which a survivor may experience barriers when trying to access housing. Professionals primarily referred to damaging aspects of survivor's housing history that could often be directly attributed to characteristics of domestic violence and therefore outside of a survivor's culpability. There was a feeling that a lack of understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence led to survivors being unfairly held responsible for these previous housing issues, and therefore suffering discrimination in their quest to be rehoused.

One professional from a refuge defined the problem in rounded terms and set out the issue as a whole:

One of the things we've talked about is em when people have come here they often have issues with their housing history whether that's anti-social behaviour, you know if you have references from previous landlords things like anti-social behaviour, significant number of repairs, and that is usually linked to domestic violence rather than that individualTheir housing history often isn't ideal so it's important that housing providers to have an understanding of that and understand that there may need to be some flexibility about that (Refuge Manager).

Rent arrears was cited as the other most common, specific obstacle preventing women either being accepted for housing, or afforded a choice about where they might live. It was recognised that rent arrears were often built up beyond the control of survivors due to limited or no control over household finances or financial decisions. As previously discussed, the

introduction of Universal credit, cuts to housing benefit and increased reliance on the private rental sector is expected to exacerbate this problem. One refuge professional described the process for women in this situation and the options open to them. Significantly she describes recent policy changes that are negatively impacting in her clients:

In [Newcastle] we apply for domestic violence priority, they check their housing history and if they've got a history of rent arrears or abandonments, they won't be able to have a choice of where they want to live in [Newcastle] they will just be offered a management let, a one off offer and what they're doing now from April, we've just found this out. If a woman had rent arrears previously with domestic violence, and they've all got rent arrears cos either the man's drinking them, drugs, as long as they made steps to pay the arrears and got a card and say, 'I'd like to start paying £5 a week' they didn't hold it against them but now what they're doing is if they've got more than £200 rent arrears they'll be offered a management let so they won't actually be able to go on to the housing list and bid they'll be offered a one off property and that's a bit worrying because some of the one off offers are nice but we've got a woman at the minute that's been offered one in [Gateshead] and it's horrendous. I'm appealing that today (Refuge Independent Living Worker).

When this worker was asked why she thought these changes were occurring she was very clear:

I think because there's not enough council houses surplus, there's not enough and I think a lot. I know they're doing it in [Liverpool] now what they're saying in some areas, before a woman is accepted into a refuge they've got to have a police crime number...They've got to have (to be eligible for housing) reported the domestic violence before they're leaving and put them into a refuge (Independent Living Refuge Worker).

In addition to this information a Local Authority emergency accommodation manager articulated her belief that even when policies to protect survivors remain intact they don't in themselves ensure practice adheres to certain values or ways of working. This manager had close links with the Local Authority ALMO and was also able to identify how the nature of housing provision by the state, made it more prone to influence by workers' prejudice and belief systems.

A victim of domestic violence doesn't have to prove they're a victim of domestic violence we have to take their word for it and you know I think that's absolutely right, however because people can be cynical, although our policies are designed to work on that basis how the policies are then interpreted by staff, particularly working in housing, there can be an unhealthy dose of cynicism that there are some women who might do it in an advantageous way in order to secure themselves some new acc. and I think that is dangerous so I think sometimes the policy narrative can say all the right things but policy is delivered by people and people can make judgements and misinterpret and...can result in the policy not being delivered as directly....And I think housing is a very easy example of that where you have a finite amount of acc. available and you know you have more demand than supply at times. There is that kind of prioritising and it can influence because there is that sense of fairness and I have conversations with housing officers who will be like, 'well you know why should that person be prioritised over that person' (Manager at Local Authority emergency accommodation).

This professional was essentially saying that sometimes the attitude of housing professionals when domestic violence is present negates the level of priority and consideration set out in a policy, which potentially then acts as a barrier to access.

There appeared to be a difference in how professionals viewed the idea of a management let and as previously stated, new policies in place from April 2018 in one Local Authority were potentially increasing the amount of survivors subject to this process. In other words more survivors of domestic violence would have no say or choice about where they were rehoused because of factors known to be associated with domestic violence and are known to be beyond control of the victim.

One refuge worker referred to management lets when verbalising praise for the Local Authority. The priority for this worker was safety and she did not

I have to take my hat off to Newcastle cos they treat the refuge people with housing so well. Usually nice flats in a block of three or whatever, management lets so that the women and the children are in a safe environment (Independent Living Refuge Worker 2).

Other professionals believed the lack of choice to be detrimental to the woman and children in some cases. When asked about the impact of a management let, another refuge worker responded:

I think there's a lot of choice taken away so I think you probably won't cope as well because if you think about children there's choices of schools and the first thing you do is say, 'what's the best school in the area, that's a good school'. Or if you're a Roman Catholic or whatever, I want them in a Catholic school so you would base your choices on well, I've known someone who lives there or the school has got good reviews, good OFSTED, all that choice is taken away, all that choice is taken away and taken away from the Mam never mind the kids because you haven't got a say in it, which school your kids go to because you're getting a one off offer (Refuge Independent Living Worker).

The subject of choice has been a constant theme throughout this research. While the availability of housing has not been identified as a problem as such, there is still a recognised increase in demand compared to a decrease in supply which is likely to be a driver for increased gatekeeping of choice based letting systems. Survivors of domestic violence are presenting with issues which could be seen to invite or make easier further restrictions on housing choice. The literature review has well documented the potential consequences that lack of choices has on an individual's ability to create a home for themselves. In addition the lack of agency present in domestic violence relationships can be seen to be replicated when the state takes away options post separation. It could be argued that Local Authorities are restricting entitlement of victims of domestic violence in order to make it easier to get rid of hard to let stock and retain the buoyancy of their choice based letting scheme. And therefore it could be seen as an example of the disproportionate impact on women of a reduction in public resource.

There was greater concern expressed about availability with regards to emergency and refuge space. Refuge workers described refuges as constantly full and experiencing a high turnover of clients whereby once a room or flat is vacated it is immediately filled. Other workers talked about families being placed in B&Bs and out of area because of lack of refuge space available. Crucially professionals felt that sometimes the accommodation on offer in the short term discouraged survivors to leave or felt they were inappropriate places for children.

So we have children that are living in an unhappy household and they have to go into refuge. We haven't got enough refuge space, we shouldn't be putting children in B&Bs for example.....We had a, not that long ago, we had a family in the homeless unit (LA one), not ideal. They're not ideal for adults, let alone children, they're not. They're sparsely furnished and you know do children really wanna live in a room like this, all cream, no they don't. So I do think we could do it better (Service Manager 2).

Some of the housing professionals were keen to express the impact of austerity and benefits changes on social landlords themselves. The literature references some of the financial difficulties currently experienced by a range of landlords which is linked to the introduction of Universal Credit.

While this issue may not be directly relevant to the research it is important anything that potentially weakens the ability of social landlords to offer services, grant leniency regarding rent arrears and financial difficulties, and generally make letting to disadvantaged clients is likely to affect women and children experiencing an fleeing domestic violence. A manager from one of the bigger social landlords in the area described the measures they are taking to try and counteract the more extreme consequences of Universal Credit.

OMG the resources, we have a full team at YHN that just works on UC. That's across the city so getting tenants ready for the UC change cos it's a massive shift And they've been in post for about three years so pre. If you imagine the impact this is going to have on rents. So what does the rent pay, the rent for all the repairs, pays for all the staff, it pays for other tenant related costs. If the money is not coming in we can't keep those services going that has a knock on effect on them. The most important thing is to get the rents in. We've got Income Recovery officers who literally, at one time their job was to phone somebody up and go, 'do you know you owe £602 in rent, how can we get you to pay that?.....Now we have Income Recovery Officers that literally going out to the house, helping them set up UC accounts, taking them to their appointment at the Job Centre to fill in the necessary paperwork. Their role has gone from office based, I'm checking the rent accounts to literally taking them to the job centre to get them to do that cos they need that rent (Young Person's Service Manager).

One of the other issues that emerges from the findings relating to social landlords is an increased liability of social responsibility. One manager working for a social landlord, with

responsibility for a service managing tenancies for vulnerable customers talked about the various roles now expected of a social landlord.

There a lot of expectations on social landlords now, they are not just providers of four walls and a roof they're expected to be SW, psychiatrists and teachers and parents and all those combinations and the biggest challenge is funding. The 1% rent cut across social housing is a difficult place to be (Intensive Housing Manager Housing Association).

It can thus be suggested that social landlords are experiencing increased pressure to provide services and help for people affected by changes to benefits while at the same time suffering loss of income as a result of those same changes. And it could be argued that putting in resources to deal with the fallout of benefits changes, essentially firefighting, takes away from providing services and creating policies to manage issues such as domestic violence.

5.7 Discussion

The overarching theme present in all of the findings in this chapter is one of loss and reduction of state resource, and an increased requirement of conditionality and proof in order to access benefits and services. The findings also demonstrate some shifts in the sources of assistance, and subsequently the methods that assistance is delivered, in other words the role of charity is seen to be greater than before. Taken together these observations represent a more limited and narrow arena within which women and children living with domestic violence can access support. Moreover, that the critique drawn in Chapter Two between austerity, housing and gender is shown to have a continued demonstrable connection in this research.

This research uses the term 'choice deficit' to characterise how these policy changes impact lived experiences. It is also a term that attempts to provide an overarching feeling that transcends the various elements that flow in the same direction, but also impact and interact with each other often exacerbating the already challenging nature of a particular policy. It is also a recognition that choice and personal control are linked with wellbeing.

In terms of accommodation the choice deficit can be identified in a number of ways. The increase in the use of management lets provides a one-off offer of housing that discharges a Local Authority of its duty to accommodate. This is a recent local policy development, and a

reduction in the availability of social housing is given as a reason. This particular change was described in the findings in negative terms. Lack of appropriate and desirable housing solutions, and effectively choice, have been routinely emphasised in research into women, housing and domestic violence (Malos and Hague, 1997; Abrahams, 2007; Ponice et al, 2011, Clough et al, 2014; Tutty, 2014; Kelly et al, 2015). These researchers have repeatedly called for flexibility and the need for service provision to adapt to women's needs (Ponice et al, 2011). Clough et al (2014) draws parallels between the experience of domestic abuse and the situations post separation, with testimony describing both as being at 'everyone's mercy'. Therefore, this research echoes previous research, in that the findings reflect a reduction in choice regarding housing, that is seen as detrimental.

In addition to the literature regarding domestic violence Clapham (2010) in his paper regarding housing policy and well-being identifies the notion of 'personal control' in relation to housing. Clapham uses the example of homeless young people to demonstrate that housing intervention that improves physical conditions but decreases control is liable to be counter-productive if the aim of the intervention is to improve well-being. In other words where choice is limited, in what Clapham calls the 'small' decision spaces, there is a negative impact on how housing and accommodation is viewed. Clapham ascertains that the way households are regarded and subsequently treated has important consequences for the people at the sharp end of policy and has an impact on how people view themselves especially, as in the case of increased management lets, there is a denial of involvement in the mainstream system available to others.

This also links to the Harloe (1995) and his assertion that social housing is now operating as a residual model rather than a mass model. The management let model could be viewed as the residue of the residue. It could not be assumed that women have no awareness of these concepts and where they stand in the system.

Where the discourse is negative, signifying low status, stressing dependence rather than control and overemphasising the uniformity of need and aspirations, it is likely that housing options associated with it will have similar characteristics (Clapham 2010, p. 263).

Therefore the choice deficit in relation to a management let is potentially hindering how likely it is that someone will be happy where they live. And this is an area for further research.

However if the management let is seen as a reaction to reduced resource then it also has to be recognised that a social housing solution is still being offered. Kelly et al (2015) found Local Authorities using the full force of recent legislation in order to discharge their duty by trying to find privately rented accommodation for women and children who had fled domestic violence. This could be viewed as reflective of the dire stock levels of permanent housing present in South East of the country. The situation identified in this research more reflects the kind of analysis Cloke et al (2000) provides in relation to the Housing Act 1996, which withdrew the link between homelessness and permanent housing. Cloke found that where Local Authorities were able, and even if the route slightly differed from before, Local Authorities continued to offer permanent housing to homeless households even though they were not legally obliged. Therefore, the choice regarding housing in this research is demonstrated as narrowed however, there is a recognition that availability is still relatively high when compared with some other geographical areas referred to in the literature.

In these findings where there was concern about policy preventing a woman leaving her domestic abuser the focus was more on benefits and specifically Universal Credit. This divergence from a focus on housing availability as a primary issue, as present in the previous research referenced, is again likely impacted by geographical area. In the area covered in the research social housing is still a realistic option for many survivors of domestic violence, and secondly Universal Credit was fully or partially rolled out in all of the areas in which the research took place with the exception of one interview.

The report for Women's Aid and the TUC (2015) focussed on the potential increased financial hardships caused by Universal Credit for women and children living with domestic violence. Essentially the research concentrated on the single payment and the immediacy of the consequences of lack of funds caused by the delay and length of time between payments. Additional literature regarding Universal Credit has investigated and criticised many aspects of Universal Credit with an emphasis on the ethos and associated conditionality, resulting sanctions and in general the increased state interference especially for people in work. (Dean, 2012; Dwyer and Wright, 2014; Millar and Bennett, 2016; Machin, 2017). All of these aspects of Universal Credit potentially affect women and children living with domestic violence although they are not referred to specifically. There have also been attempts to look at the specific aspects of Universal Credit that affect women and are argued to be inherently discriminatory, for example the Bennet and Sung (2013) investigation into the 'second earner'.

These concerns have been echoed in this research, however the implications have been developed and understood further, partly due to the advancement of the roll out. This research shows the barriers Universal Credit presents to women who wish to leave their abusive partners, and also the impact on life after leaving which is perhaps depicted more starkly. The research provides fresh insight into the more well-known aspects and reveals lesser known facets of the benefit that ultimately can prevent women leaving or encourage return. The five week wait for a payment and the immediate ceasing of any legacy benefits during this period has been demonstrated as having greater significance for women and children arriving in a refuge than perhaps other groups. The difficulties with ID verification, and the withdrawal of special circumstances (the JSA easement) regarding conditionality for women in the immediate aftermath of fleeing domestic violence are perhaps small footnotes in the avalanche of problems connected to Universal Credit. However they are significant for developing a greater understanding of how these policy changes impact women and children attempting to exit situations of abuse. The choice deficit is present here in the sense that the requirements of the benefit have to be adhered to in order to survive and in addition the financial gap created is likely to be filled with charitable donations that negate autonomy.

The removal of Crisis Loans was demonstrated in the findings as extremely problematic by refuge staff as it removed an important financial lifeline in the crucial immediate aftermath of post separation. This one change was seen as reducing the chance of women remaining in the refuge. The option of foodbank over a few pounds in the pocket was seen as a major issue. The stigma of receiving charity was seen in sharp contrast to a scenario where a woman, who with the help of a worker, could make a discrete claim for an emergency payment and then purchase food, clothes or household items of their choosing to suit their needs. The research also showed that practitioners felt that children experienced the visible signs of charity more than their parents and that autonomous payments to mothers, which were characteristic of legacy benefits instead provided pockets of normality, for example a favourite food or a new school jumper. The effects of this inability to provide the most basic facilitation of a child's needs in a dignified manner may send many women back to their abuser or effect their and their children's well being.

In *Not Making Ends Meet* for The Childrens Society (Royston, 2018) there is a clear argument that the withdrawal of national crisis support is resulting in unmet need and cite a lack of awareness of the Local Welfare Assistance replacement, as problematic. This exact issue was raised by one worker who did know about this local relief but stated that she was the only employee in her setting with this knowledge, which would back up the claims made by Royston (2018). Two of the case studies highlighted in the report involved women who

had fled domestic violence and therefore directly evidenced the increased reliance on the more charitable and community support in the absence of previous support.

The direct research into foodbanks undertaken by Loopstra and Lalor (2017) revealed benefit delays as a key reason for use and also that lone parents were disproportionately represented. This is relevant for this research as it is a direct reflection of the foodbank use described here in that it is women with children waiting for a benefit payment that are requiring workers to apply for foodbank assistance. However in the research regarding foodbanks there is no specific reference to domestic violence as a reason fuelling increased use and as it currently stands there is little evidence of the scale of foodbank applications by domestic violence services, or victims in recent years. While knowing the amount of applications may be useful to highlight need, what is fundamentally imperative to understand is that the benefit delay implicit in the design of Universal Credit and the absence of direct financial support in the form of a crisis loan is forcing charitable support that is prescriptive and undermines independence, the choice deficit.

The theme continues in discourse regarding the similarly withdrawn Community Care Grant which is recognised as detrimental to autonomy and well-being (Kelly, 2015; Crellin and Royston, 2018) concludes that the culmination of the changes and withdrawal of benefits, combined with the difficulty on attaining settled accommodation as constituting an erosion of rights. This research concurs with this analysis however the term 'choice deficit' seeks to more accurately describe the lived experiences of this welfare demolition in a more immediate sense.

Women's Aid have been consistently campaigning to highlight the difficulties faced by refugees services in a climate of austerity and welfare reform. The loss of specialist knowledge and expertise due to commissioning decisions was also a concern raised in the literature (Ingala-Smith, 2017). This research has exposed some of the consequences when commissions are awarded to organisations without a historic specialist knowledge of domestic violence. The research also touches on the potential impact for BAME women who may require additional support and cultural knowledge.

All of the information about how that support has been replaced, because professionals do not want clients to experience a reduction in assistance, has been about charity and donations. This shift has occurred in a relatively short space of time and has shaped a change in the landscape of what used to be referred to as social security. It represents a new normal where the welfare state is increasingly not providing an immediate safety net but

is actually a system beset with barriers relating to proof and conditionality. People are being left visibly in need. The unaddressed need that this new 'welfare settlement' allows to manifest can now only be met with charity that operates on the basis that it is met in a way that the giver deems appropriate. Assistance is a process of 'done to' rather than rooted in empowerment of individuals and families.

There are wider implications in terms of how victims of abuse are treated. As previously referred to, the choice deficit, now present in the welfare system replicates a similar dynamic present in relationships of abuse. It is important children see that, in the immediate and in the long term, life without an abuser is different and is not experienced as second class, or without autonomy. It needs to be seen that society respects victims/survivors by affording them the means to live free from abuse in a way that is recognised as normal and negates images of weak or less or other. When survivors are characterised in this way by the inescapable need for charity it strengthens the concept that somehow victims are to blame for their situation which is also symptomatic of a more general sense of the demonization of the poor. The dichotomy between the desire for empowerment of survivors expressed by professionals, and the reality of the choice deficit now inherent in the system supporting them needs further exploration.

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings and main themes associated with systemic and structural change within welfare and housing that are directly affecting women and children living with, or fleeing domestic violence. The majority of findings in this chapter have been gleaned from the semi-structured interviews conducted with professionals working in a range of services, primarily housing and domestic violence services.

The interviews have highlighted a general sentiment that the material climate surrounding women who are experiencing domestic violence is more difficult now than it was prior to 2010. This was in particular relation to changes to the benefit system. Professionals showed an awareness of the impact of reduced resource which was seen as beyond just a rudimentary lack of money. The impact of the increased role of charity on well-being and the propensity for punitive measures to influence whether women and children stay with abusers. A trend towards less choice and greater restrictions on housing allocation within current housing systems was identified. However availability of social housing in the geographical area covered in this research was not seen as significant and was reported in a positive light. Within refuge services there was a reported withdrawal of specialist knowledge

resulting from commissioning decisions. Overall the findings consistently demonstrated a systemic choice deficit, which participants envisaged as worsening in the future.

Chapter Six: How do Children living with Domestic Violence experience Housing and Understand the Idea of Home?

I never wanted to go home. A kid should want to go home - but I didn't (Survivor Eleven).

6.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Four, at the start of the research it was envisaged that at least some of the participants would have experienced, as children, going through a process of being rehoused with their mother, having fled domestic violence and the family home. None of the survivors participating in this research had that experience in the way it was envisaged. Instead, survivors had largely stayed with their families until they were either removed or fled in their own right. Professionals, however, were able to comment on how families experiencing domestic violence were, and are, being accommodated and provide opinion regarding how housing needs are addressed. Professionals also provided insight into the effects of different housing circumstances on children, for example when a child is subject to multiple moves.

Due to this lack of primary experience within the housing system itself, the emphasis of this chapter is squarely rooted in capturing an idea of home and then ultimately laying out how living with domestic violence impacts and interferes with that concept. Inevitably through this endeavour the physicality of a house or housing is given significant prominence either as standalone entity existing without the link with home, or an integral part of whether a property is, or can ever be viewed as home. Making these distinctions and connections has been a challenging aspect of the data analysis.

This chapter discusses findings that are applicable for this area of the research. The majority of the relevant testimony has come from survivors however there are also contributions from professionals.

The first section looks at the concept of home, what a home should be and discussion about an ideal home for a child. Exploring this aspect of the research affords distinctions to be made between a house and a home and allows the influences and dynamics, including DV, to be considered in this context. This section is essentially an attempt to catch the essence

of home and what it means for the participants, therefore serving as benchmark for how the rest of the chapter is viewed.

The second section focusses more specifically on the everyday aspects of fear and danger in the home. The research seeks to enhance our appreciation of children's lives in situations of domestic violence beyond the moment when 'Dad hit Mum'. The findings are an attempt to fill in the gaps, of experience in the home between these events, and to provide a broader understanding. The third section continues this theme of the 'day to day' by identifying control and oppression as something experienced by children in homes where there is domestic violence. The findings explore this symptom of domestic violence to provide insight and to contribute to a process seeking to conceptualise children's day to day lives when living in these circumstances.

There is then an exploration of how children become aware of homes different from their own. This is as an important aspect of the research as it affords a deeper understanding into the how children acquire knowledge regarding alternative home environments and how that impacts on them. This part of the findings is also important because it helps inform how children start to build ideas about what an ideal home means to them and how they might achieve it in the future.

The fifth section looks at how properties, physical features of a house and essentially inanimate objects can be associated with emotions. This part of the findings also look at how childhood family homes are regarded by adults when they are able to make independent decisions about where they spend time. There follows a relatively brief look into what happens when women and children flee domestic violence and how they experience accommodation and the housing process. As previously mentioned none of the survivors interviewed for this research went through this as children and therefore all testimony on this subject is from professionals.

The last findings section of this chapter seeks to discover how a childhood spent living with domestic violence in the home can impact on an adults' ability to make a home in the future. This is a highly significant part of the findings as it probes into the struggles and difficulties that remain beyond childhood and the direct experience adults face when creating their own home. This chapter concludes with a discussion section which subjects the findings to scrutiny in relation to the literature and previous research in this area.

6.2 Initial Thoughts about Home- Setting the Scene

It was thought to be useful to capture some of the initial thoughts expressed by participants regarding ideas of home, and the harmony desired, and conversely the dissonance between a house and a home. Participants sometimes referenced their own experiences as a way of demonstrating their beliefs about home making and provided examples of houses that they regarded as a home or described the factors present that acted as barriers. As previously mentioned this section is intended to set the tone for the whole chapter.

As part of this there is an exploration of an ideal home for a child. Participants once more drew on their own experiences to inform their notions and thoughts about the elements required to create a good home for a child. They also utilised their knowledge, either experienced or learned, of alternative environments. There is a recognition that an ideal home represents, by its definition, an unattainable model. However by discussing this subject it is possible to identify strong themes that represent a sort of non-negotiable baseline of features that are viewed as desirable for a child growing up. Some survivors identified their own transition into parenthood as changing their perception of an idea of home and what they pursued in a home as a result.

The overarching consistent theme running through was one of safety and the effect the presence, or not, has on the feeling and idea of home. Many of the comments also focussed on more abstract and intangible concepts of feelings, emotions and freedom of expression. The term home, and subsequent ideas of it, are obviously contentious in relation to this research therefore it was deemed as useful to determine a kind of anti-ideal and engage in discourse about what that looks like and feels like. It is anticipated and hoped that this exploration will form more of an opposite blueprint rather than drawing too heavily on the direct experiences referred to later in the chapter.

The idea that the presence of domestic violence in itself creates 'what is not a home' was strong from all participants. This statement from a manager of support services within a Housing Association summarises the idea that physical materials assembled to create a structure, really has no relation to the creation of a home. After making reference to the emotional and personal elements that he views as required for a home he then goes on to state the impact of domestic violence on those elements:

I suppose a home is not a house, it's not four walls, it's not bricks, it's not a roof, home is something that is meaningful, it's where you have affection, compassion,

relationships are built and exposure to domestic violence certainly takes all of that away (Housing Intensive Housing Manager).

This statement is powerful as it depicts what a child living with domestic violence, is living without. That is not to say that all children living with domestic violence never experience affection, compassion or any positive relationships but it is unlikely that an unfettered version of these elements is occurring. These elements could be said to be disrupted by domestic violence even if not fully eliminated. Another professional articulated a similar judgment about how the meaning of home is altered and polarised to an opposite extreme by the presence of domestic violence:

We assume you go home, you're in a safe place, you lock the doors and you're safe in there . . . All of a sudden that door is closed and it's not a place for protection it becomes a prison almost. . .it's where all the bad things happen (Housing Association Support Manager).

An echo of this theme came from a professional who made a very straightforward statement about children living with domestic violence:

They haven't got a home (Domestic Violence Service Manager 2).

One survivor very succinctly stated the difference between where she had lived with her family, where domestic violence had occurred, and a home. There is a strong implication, demonstrated by making this statement that there is a sense or idea of home that exists as a concept beyond a lived reality, and that that sense is developed enough to make such a unequivocal declaration of opposition:

My Mam's house is not my home (Survivor Three).

This theme provides a powerful premise which is that children living with domestic violence are not experiencing an idea of home which is recognised as desirable, and to an extent necessary. They are experiencing the polar opposite, they are experiencing what is not a home, the anti-home. This is not to underestimate the complexity of an individual's experience or to make assumptions about how an individual seeks to make sense of their lives. However it serves as a powerful premise that theoretically underpins this part of the research and informs further interpretation of testimony.

Safe is the word that just appears to be on repeat throughout this entire research. The word safe, prominently featured in responses from all participants both when discussing the meaning of the word home, and also when exploring what an ideal home might look and feel like. Out of thirteen survivors eight specifically mentioned the word safe when discussing the meaning and idea of home, and eight (not entirely the same eight) said the word safe in relation to an ideal home for a child. In this context one survivor provides a description of her own childhood, and her intentions to make a different life for her own child, thus seeking to demonstrate how a house for a child is made safe:

Clean...safe and stable. Really stable. Like, stable, like with my mum and dad it wasn't. Because there was always arguments and going without things and not being safe because of them, whereas like when I move, I am not going to have people in and out of my daughter's life and our home and people banging on the door and me arguing and fighting (Survivor Eight).

There was further testimony that provided specific example of direct harm that could be experienced in the home as a result of unsafe adults:

Well it depends who you let in your house really. If you let like sex offenders or anything in your house but you don't know that then obviously the child is just not gonna be safe or anything but if it's just like you and the child...then you're making the child happy (Survivor Five).

This survivor is able to explain ways to make a home safe for a child, again drawing on her own experiences, however the same survivor struggled to convey what would then make her safe in a home currently. This is discussed further at the end of this section.

Finally this childhood reflection delivers a vision of a child attempting to navigate through their life without the benefit of an unconditional place of safety:

I remember one of my kind of major memories of being a kid, primary school, is not feeling okay at home, really wanting to be at school, and then being at school and being bullied, and really wanting to be at home, and never actually being in a place where I felt safe (Survivor Nine).

This observation may serve to provide a likely explanation for the stress placed on safety as an essential ingredient in the creation of home. Frequently entwined with safe and safety is

the notion of security, sometimes referred to as being settled, and a feeling of permanency. This quote includes all of these notions when asked to describe an idea of home:

Home, is safety and privacy and continuity and um sort of grounded (Survivor Ten).

This quote links safety with continuity which indicates a different kind of safety and security that is positioned within consistency of experience. As mentioned in the introduction tenure won't be referred to in this section however this aspiration for feeling grounded implies that the home represents something solid and unmoving, a constant.

Following on from this, security and therefore a sense of home, is also seen to be in the form of people, which transcends the concept of specific buildings or location. This contribution is really interesting because it uncovers the safety and security of home within people. It could be explained as an emotional security.

One of the most powerful inputs into this perception that home, comes from a survivor who had a wholly unambiguous reference to home in relation to her marriage. Safety and security are again the primary and initial thoughts in relation to home but these features are rooted in this human connection:

So, safety and security and happiness and it is funny because in my husband's ...
Me and my husband's wedding rings; we have the word 'home'....We have travelled together and as long as we're together, it feels like kind of like home (Survivor Thirteen).

Another survivor who had left her family home, and also her hometown at 18yrs old spoke about attempting to find a home in what could be termed a settlement. The forming and creation of a new life and existence, a sort of starting again of the whole process of identity with place and formation of human bonds:

Friendships, so like not a home as in something physical but maybe a home in terms of being settled, having a job, having a community around me (Survivor Nine).

In further conversations with this survivor she valued the community she lived in and drew comfort and security from it. There was a definite feeling of safety in place as well as the home/house itself. Although, as previously discussed there will be a concentration in this

research on primarily looking at home through the lens of a house, it is not sensible to fully disregard other factors.

All of the themes identified represent a kind of permanency in different ways. The absence of reference to family through the process of dialogue about ideas of home and ideal of home for a child was remarkable. When discussing an ideal home for a child, participants were inclined to move towards more abstract concepts for example safety, and dissociated from overtly mentioning family. A couple of survivors used the word love with one specifically naming family as the vehicle for that love but it was limited and even the term family was vague in its meaning. One survivor described, in essence a feeling of attachment which would normally relate to a person, a parent but in this case was only referenced as the home:

Oh, gosh, just safe, I think. You know, so that you've got, that thing of like the, what would you call it now, the secure base, so when you take your kid to playgroup, they kind of know that they can like run around and like explore and play with everything, but whenever they look back and they see you, that that's okay, that means they can go and explore. And I think for me that's what home's about for kids (Survivor Nine).

However there were two exceptions. One survivor sought to detail her ideal home for a child by being very precise about parents, their behaviour and their marital status:

Two parents, and that's not arguing and not divorced (Survivor Six).

This young woman is 17yrs old and has lived in multiple homes since being brought into care as a child. This statement really struck because it is a sentiment rarely expressed beyond the confines of a right wing press where the nuclear family is held up as the bastion of virtue. The subsequent demonisation of families that divert from this 'normality' has conversely led to a reluctance within academia and services to make judgements about the various forms that families can take. However in this context a belief in the advantages for a child of a two parent family headed up by a heterosexual married couple cannot be dismissed so readily. The awareness that this surface ideal is in itself not a blueprint for an ideal home, not least that domestic violence may be present, does not necessitate a complete discharge of a vision expressed in an authentic and honest manner. It is likely that there is prospective pain and distress for children who, in the light of experiencing trauma, look to this ideal as a model free from abuse. The second survivor to reference parents had been abused by a stepfather and also had little lived experience of the nuclear family:

Mum and dad that loves them to bits (Survivor Three).

Additional significant themes to emerge from these discussions about ideas of home and a home for a child were the role of physical space, and freedom of expression. These themes are taken together as freedom of expression often requires physical space in order to be fulfilled. One of the survivors, effectively communicates the connection between the two ideas of space and expression. Not only does she describe what she wants to do but she then goes on to say that while having the freedom to express herself she wants to simultaneously move around:

Wear like whatever I want or go out looking like whatever, and do you know what I mean? Walk about looking like shite (Survivor Three).

This idea of home is compelling as it is immediately possible to imagine yourself or someone else looking however they want without conforming to expectations, and having physical space to enjoy being that way. And perhaps the only place that would be entirely possible is home.

Freedom of expression was also discussed in more particular terms in relation to speech and contribution to dialogue within the home. Although some survivors desired a home without arguments at all for a child and wanted people in the home to be happy all the times. This may appear unrealistic however, is an understandable reaction to experiencing constant conflict and abuse:

And, um, like, uh, uh maybe little brothers or sisters, but a nice environment for the little one, where everyone is happy and there's no arguments and there is no, like, like hitting and stuff; do you know what I mean? Like it's, it's a nice picture, do you know what I mean? (Survivor Three).

However this survivor described how he believed conflict should be managed rather than eliminated. He linked the shouting, violence and arguments he had experienced, as representative of the priorities present in the home. His picture differs from the previous one in that it acknowledges conflict but describes alternative ways to manage it. It is significant that he also gives the child agency in this ideal home. Agency to legitimately intervene, agency as a full member of a household with rights of expression and opinion without fear:

Like there's arguments but they're not bad arguments if you know what I mean. So, they're talking it out instead of shouting it out and the kids are the main priority above

everything. Where in my family it wasn't, it was obviously my dad was the main priority. He came first then the kids came after really, which was me and my brother. But that's my ideal home, like where everything is calm, nothing is shouted about, nothing heated about it and the kids are the main priority...Yes, freedom of speech where if the kids tell you to stop arguing, you stop arguing but in my house if you told them to stop arguing you'd probably get a slap (Survivor Eleven).

Another survivor was more explicit in associating the concepts of freedom of expression and space. This opinion hinted at an idea that a child needs to see themselves in a home and feel that identity with it. To assist in the understanding of what she was trying to say she used an example of a home she had experienced in a previous relationship:

That, you know, you can have your stuff around, you can make a mess, within reason. Home is like an expression of, everybody who lives there is able to sort of express their personalities. So, sometimes like you walk in (to an ex-boyfriend's home)...and the house was like a show home. But that's my idea of like, I can't imagine a child growing up like that because they wouldn't, it would feel, that would feel like a house rather than a home (Survivor Nine).

The idea of space was also discussed in precise relation to children, and their space within the home. The idea that there is shared space and also personal space was articulated in a way that meant a child had a retreat of their own within a home:

Um, in terms of like of a, a personal space if that makes sense, because I do think that there's a necessity for both and to, to be able to engage in the shared spaces but then also to still be able to retreat and have an element, like an inception, like a home within the home, if that makes sense (Survivor Four).

This was echoed by a professional working in a refuge:

Their needs, what they need, their own space, their own corner, their own drawer, something that belongs to them (Independent Living Refuge Worker 2).

One survivor makes an important distinction with regards to safety and freedom within the home, a distinction between being safe and free, and knowing you are safe. A knowledge of safety that exists as a feeling, an instinct, that cannot be intellectually quantified and whose

meaning is entirely subjective. It is conceivable and almost probable that this knowledge or instinct can exist in isolation from whether or not someone is *actually* safe or free but this feeling is seen as essential for a home to be felt as such, by the person living in it:

You've got to know you are safe and you've got to know you are free (in the home)...Well, it's just your instinct really that tells you if you are safe or not (Survivor One).

This is such a revealing and informative statement for this research because it perhaps provides an insight into the potential difficulties faced by children even when they are no longer living in a house where domestic violence is present. It also offers a valuable contribution into developing a more comprehensive understanding of difficulties faced by survivors in adulthood when attempting to create a new home following experiences of domestic violence. It is not clear how this feeling of safety is attained but it is evidently an important consideration when trying to achieve a home. These further quotes solidly reinforce this point, emphasising feeling not being:

I'm gonna feel better in myself if I feel safe (Survivor Two).

Like where I feel safe (Survivor Three).

Both of these comments were made during conversations about what made an ideal home.

6.3 Living on the Edge- Home is fear, Home is Danger

I just really remember that, like constantly feeling anxious that, that things weren't, you know, that something was going to go wrong at any moment you know? (Survivor Thirteen).

Living with fear, and awareness of danger characterised many survivors' accounts of life in a house where domestic violence is occurring. And in all of these accounts physical violence had been present to a greater or lesser degree. This section seeks to draw precise attention to the enduring presence of this element of domestic violence in children's consciousness even when incidents of violence are not happening. It has overlap with the next section, which addresses aspects of control and oppression, in that there is an attempt to portray an experience for children that is constant and all-encompassing rather than sporadic and isolated. However, during the process of analysis it was apparent that these two elements of

children's experiences were also distinct and separate, and necessitated focussed consideration.

The fear and awareness of danger that survivors described could be viewed as anticipation. However the anticipation experienced was often twofold in that there was fear some kind of incident that had previously arose would arise again while at the same time a fear that actually something worse than before might happen. Professionals recognised that children were acutely concerned and frightened of what might happen, usually to their mother, and they expected there to be a fear in children of a mother being killed. One professional challenged established convention which she believed was held by services when considering children living with domestic violence:

Living on the edge yeah but we assume that it's only the victim who is doing that but it's not until you kind of realise and talk to the children that they're living with that same fear that their Mum is going to get hurt (Housing Association Support Manager).

It is interesting to observe in this comment that although this professional is evidently keen to distinguish children as equally affected when domestic violence is present in the home, the adult is still referred to as *the* victim. This implies that despite an intentioned sentiment articulating how children live with the same fears as adults, they still fail to be awarded the status of victim in these situations. Language has not developed in a way that makes it easy to articulate children's victimhood as a given.

Acknowledgement of children's fear was echoed by another professional:

Fear, fear of the unknown, fear for leaving the parent, the risk. I think very much they don't know what they're coming into or how it's going to be when they come back or if their Mam's gonna be, sometimes parents will drink to take away, as a coping mechanism so is Mam gonna be pissed, is Mam gonna be up a height, on drugs or off on one. Is the house gonna be smashed up. They find it hard to then go to school and concentrate in their settings (Family Support Worker Voluntary Sector).

This comment highlights a further dimension of fear and danger in that there is recognition that feelings can transcend the physical embodiment of the home and be present in children regardless of where they are. This further evidences a perpetual and relentless manifestation of fear in children.

Survivors talked about actual events and incidences that had happened in their home which assist in generating a fuller understanding by contextualising the fear and danger children experience and the concept of living on the edge. One survivor recalled an episode of physical domestic violence that crystallised and concentrated his daily fear bringing the threat from the subliminal to the tangible, and therefore real:

When it really kind of went from being subliminal stuff to on the surface it was Valentine's. They'd been to a Valentine's Day dance at the club and it was just before I turned 14. And they came back and I could hear them shouting downstairs and the next thing my Mum's screaming and I went into the bathroom and my Dad's got my Mum bent over the bath throttling her and I just like fuckin grabbed hold of him and pulled him off and he was absolutely pissed out of his head and he just fell on the ground laughing and that's when it became this is what is really going on in the house kind of thing (Survivor Twelve).

This depiction places the constant fear in a context of an ongoing prospective of violence. Survivors also defined more general patterns of behaviour involving physical violence that they routinely witnessed and lived through. These descriptions of routine violence were accompanied by accounts of the distressing effects this behaviour can have on children. In a similar way to the previous comment the testimony serves to contextualise the fear, and the concept of living on the edge:

It, it is makes it devastating because I know; like I know how it feels to be a child, that child there and you have to like cry yourself to sleep. Do you know what I mean? Every night, and you have to, have to hear 24/7 arguments. Like you have to see your mum, being beaten all over and stuff like that and it, it is awful (Survivor Three).

This evidence of domestic violence through the eyes and ears of a child constructs a vivid portrayal of how shocking and extreme the experiences of children can be and makes professionals' suggestion of children 'living on the edge' plausible and credible.

For many of the survivors the anticipation of violence and abuse was not solely in relation to domestic violence between adults but also applied to violence and abuse directed at themselves, and in some cases even more so. Nine out of the thirteen survivors explicitly referred to being physically abused themselves by a perpetrator of domestic violence in their childhood home. It is imperative that these disclosures of child abuse are sufficiently documented in this research as something that directly relates to domestic violence. This is

to ensure that any support for the idea that domestic violence occurs in isolation, and as separate from children is avoided. The findings here clearly demonstrate that this notion is erroneous regardless of whether direct abuse is taking place. However the frequency that direct child abuse does occur, even within this small sample is significant provides further support for the hypothesis that the presence of domestic violence serves as a likely indicator that child abuse is happening in the home.

One survivor described how the actual physical abuse by the perpetrator was directed at the children in the house more than with her mother. What is striking about this quote is that it powerfully illustrates how quickly a situation at home can change and deteriorate on the whim of the perpetrator.

And he wouldn't, I mean he had some kind of physical fights with my mum, but the physical stuff was more towards the kids. He'd flip, and he'd just go for one of us (Survivor Nine).

The knowledge that this could happen to yourself or your siblings, based on repetition of experience, and potentially at any time of the day or night, helps us to understand how a child is described as 'living on the edge' as a persistent state.

There were further representations of how physical violence was used indiscriminately towards all family members by the perpetrator:

He hit, me, he hit my mum, he hit my brother...(Survivor Eleven).

This short and simple extract from conversation portrays the prevailing and dominant presence of violence which is being perpetrated universally. It is possible to conclude that when all household members are the potential victims the fear being experienced by children is multiplied and there are different associated feelings depending on whether the violence is happening to themselves or somebody else.

One further testimony provides a vivid snapshot of an act of violence actually taking place. Awareness for the reader, of the fact this is being enacted on a child, increases the magnitude of the event:

He has got me pinned up against the fucking wall, right, and he's saying, "I'll put my fist through your fucking head, blah blah" Like what the fuck? You know (Survivor Twelve).

That statement reads as a very frightening and intense situation. However through focussing the research around the home and the day to day lives there is a concentration that centres much more on the subsequent reverberations. The home is where the bad things happen so the home is a place of fear. Living in a continuous state of anticipating the next time the same incident might occur and predicting whether or not this time the 'fist will go through your fucking head' illustrates what home feels like for these children.

Two survivors disclosed being sexually abused by perpetrators of domestic violence that were living in the family home. One perpetrator was living in the family home in the role of Step Dad. This abuse was accompanied by extreme controlling and oppressive behaviour that will be fully discussed in the next section. The other one was the boyfriend of her mother and it is not clear whether he was resident in the family home or a long term partner. Significantly both of these survivors also talked about being held hostage by the same perpetrator who sexually abused them, respectively:

I watched my cousin's boyfriend pin her down and rape her and then he did the same thing to me. And then me Mam's boyfriend did it cos he also kept us hostage for a week. That was over a year ago now (Survivor Two).

In this case the home goes beyond a place of constant fear but is actually used as a weapon of abuse, the vehicle to keep a person hostage. To take the idea of home and completely reverse it by using it as a prison. Losing the freedom to leave your home at any time goes beyond a state of 'living in the edge' and puts a child, in these cases, in an immense state of fear and danger.

It is important to really convey the all-pervasive nature of abuse present in these findings and attempt to portray the levels of fear and danger present in an adequate manner. The final bit of this section will be devoted to uncovering how that feeling of fear actually manifests itself for a child at home, the waiting, and the bits in between.

The feeling of living on the edge was actually seen by the some survivors as the worst bit, worse than the incidents. The waiting for something to happen survivors recalled as agonising. There was a mixture of responses in that some remembered trying to prevent

situations escalating (which will be discussed in more detail in the chapter about resilience) and some took refuge in bedrooms and tried to avoid the imminent conflict. One survivor separated waiting into different stages, waiting for her father to come into the house and then waiting for him to come upstairs once conflict had already started. When reading this extract that feeling of anticipation is powerfully conveyed:

Yale lock, Yale key in the Yale lock and you think here we go, so your evening is spent waiting for the sound of a key in the lock and when you hear the key in the lock, then you're just waiting for it to kick off. And even if we were, like I said I'm the youngest, if me and sister, middle sister went to bed at the same time if it all kicked off and we were in bed already, my dad would come upstairs and bang our bedroom door open and flick the lights on and off and shout at us until we got out of bed and we'd have to go downstairs and watch him hit my mum...The worst sound in the world is hearing your father's key in the lock (Survivor Ten).

Another survivor portrayed a situation where she would try and prevent an argument between her parents ensuing, knowing that if an argument began it would only end in one way, in violence:

I remember telling them no don't, like it is going to cause a fight, like don't...and then what was going to happen, but obviously they couldn't help themselves and they would just be shouting and then my dad would hit my mum and I don't know. It was just waiting for it, it was just expected everyday really (Survivor Eight).

The majority of the participants, both professionals and survivors, talked about this constant fear and waiting for something to happen as a significant detrimental feature of life. This fear was identified as inextricably linked and associated with the home and as discussed later in the chapter often continues to be so beyond the removal of the threat. A final insight into the invasive and severe nature of this feeling is below:

I was talking with my brother um quite a few years ago and I discovered that he can't watch anything on telly with suspense either (Survivor Ten).

6.4 Home is an Arena of Control and Oppression

He had us all in a lock (Survivor Three).

This section seeks to comprehensively demonstrate one of the main premises of this research. Namely that children who live with domestic violence can experience it as a persistent and hostile pattern of behaviour in same way as adult victims. The almost universal acceptance of the conceptualisation of this behaviour as coercive control has, in the most part, remained exclusively to describe how a perpetrator treats a singular victim.

These findings will show control and oppression typifies many children's lives when living in a home where domestic violence is happening. This effectively occurs in two ways, firstly the direct control of the child, and also control of the home and the space within it.

The term coercive control was not specifically referred to by survivors however that is unsurprising, as has already been noted, the common picture portrayed of children experiencing domestic violence is seeing a single incidence of violence. It is only just beginning to be recognised that children experience the context both directly and indirectly, as well as the act, in the same way adult survivors do. However survivors were able to describe living in situations of coercive control and provided many examples of how this affected their lives and how they viewed their home.

There are descriptions of overt control by perpetrators regarding for example interests, friends, location in the home and sleep patterns. There is also information about subtle almost unwritten rules at home whereby survivors described just knowing that certain things were not allowed, for example bringing friends round, or an atmosphere being created or threatened which meant they didn't want to pursue things they wanted to do. The effects of this control and oppression on how they felt, and what the home represents to a child in these circumstances, gives an understanding far beyond that of witnessing violence and gets under the skin of this issue in a comprehensive manner.

Survivors were able to easily recall how an adult perpetrator used control and oppression to restrict their lives as children. These recollections occurred more readily when they were specifically asked about their day to day lives with particular reference to the home. This comment by one survivor provides a very straightforward example of control:

I don't know they (other children in the street) would play tag or something and they'd come and knock on the door and they'd say. 'You coming out today?' But straight away me Step Dad's like 'nah she's grounded'. And was I like, 'I'm not grounded', he went 'tough, you are now'. The only time I was allowed to go out was when I was going to school (Survivor Five).

This example demonstrates blatant coercion and complete disregard for the child as an independent being with agency and rights. And it is interesting to note that in this case other forms of abuse were prominent in the home. A similar manifestation of control was observed by another survivor where physical abuse was reported as frequent and severe:

He wouldn't let me out, I couldn't go out on my own, I couldn't... I don't know he was just controlling, I couldn't do what I wanted which... I mean with most kids there's a line, what you can do and what you can't do but this was a bit further than that. This was like you go to bed at this time, understandable for a five year old child but not for a 15 year old kid (Survivor Eleven).

There were also examples of how a child's sanctuary through hobbies and activities can be spoilt, which can be viewed as a form of control. Conversely there were reports of perpetrators denying a child autonomy by interfering in an independent interest to the extent that the child loses all agency regarding an activity, and an avenue of independence becomes yet another arena for control:

I was on the athletics team, but it was, um, he kind of colonised it, you know what I mean? It was like, you know, it was his. It wasn't mine. Why aren't you doing this? Why aren't you trying this? Why aren't you doing that? (Survivor Twelve).

Further into the discussion this survivor referred to other activities such as learning to play the guitar where his father had commandeered the process and subsequently berated him for not adhering to his version of how progression should be made. Oppression featured heavily in this testimony giving an impression of tentacles reaching into every area of a child's life. This finding has important implications for developing a greater understanding of how domestic violence is experienced directly by children.

An additional and more disturbing aspect of how children can experience coercive control was highlighted by two professionals one from a domestic violence service and another from housing. They both talked about a transference of control onto older children, particularly daughters:

If there is domestic violence in the home towards a Mum say from a male partner sometimes that can transfer to a female in the family. I don't mean physically I just mean controlling, If you are controlling your partner and you have a female 16yr old, the chances are you are not gonna view that person as equal. So I think there can be

quite a lot of control in older girls in families like that so they stay at home under the wing of the father. The control is not just Mum, it's you're a woman now, you know (Young Person's Service Manager).

A Domestic Violence Service Manager identified the same phenomenon and also added that the transference could occur quite quickly once females reached the ages eight or nine years. The tangible behaviours discussed in relation to this included reading diaries and taking an over active interest in a girl's personal life. However, there was no further articulation about whether this coercive control of older children may be symptomatic of other forms of abuse associated with domestic violence.

One survivor spoke frankly about her experiences of 'transference' in the family home. A family home where her Step Dad systematically physically and sexually abused her and subjected her to constant and extreme coercive control. He essentially abused and controlled her as if she was his partner and threatened physical abuse if she disclosed to anyone outside of the home. This statement from her regarding her opportunity to make friends encapsulates the essence of his motivation:

No hard (to make friends), really hard cos like me Step Dad wanted me all to himself (Survivor Five).

It is really difficult to make any kind of substantial distinction in terms of the forms of abuse she suffered, and the abuse perpetrated towards her mother. The distinction of course is that she was a child but the nature of the abuse was almost identical to that which is viewed as domestic violence. This analysis is given weight by how this survivor subsequently went on to understand and view the abuse she had been subject to:

Yeah and it wasn't till I went onto like, when I moved here and that lot and I went on to like the Freedom Programme which is about domestic violence, it wasn't until I went on that and then I clicked on. I went 'he's been controlling me and using us and abusing us' and I just had to stop it because it was just too painful to continue the course. Yeah cos like it was like when my Mum wasn't there I was used as practically, kind of like sexual abuse... (Survivor Five).

This finding is exceptionally significant in that demonstrates the insidiousness of domestic violence, and furthermore indicates the need for extreme vigilance in recognising that the

abusive behaviours a perpetrator is displaying towards a partner may be being replicated towards children in the home.

Some survivors felt that perpetrators created an atmosphere of oppression within the home environment, and it was not achieved by explicit means. Expectations of behaviour were explained as unspoken and maintained by fear, as previously discussed.

So, I would go home and I would ... Mum would be off making tea, I'd just be very quiet, maybe watch a bit of telly and then my dad would come home and everything would revolve, essentially everything revolved around him whether he was there or not (Survivor Nine).

This is an interesting observation because it provides an insight into the home itself which appears to retain the perpetrator's gaze, whether he is present or not. There is an impression given that the home itself possesses the oppression emanating from the perpetrator. For many survivors the home was a place that contained many moods and atmospheres that were hard to explain and identify in a tangible way, and this related to rules that existed, often in relation to going out or allowing friends into the home that were implicit and rarely challenged. One survivor recalled an occasion when a friend had visited his house. He was able to fully expound his emotions regarding the event, and clearly recalled making a decision to avoid repetition of the experience but there no actual description of an incident or situation that had transpired:

None of me friends ever came around...Um. When I was a kid, I don't know. I don't know, it was just one of those things that just didn't happen...Yeah. Um, I had one time on my birthday, one of me mates from school came around, and I didn't enjoy it. It was really embarrassing, it just felt really awkward and horrible and I didn't really enjoy it and I didn't want it to happen after that. I didn't want anybody coming around after that (Survivor Twelve).

It was notable in many of the conversations with survivors that the thing, the force that existed to cause or prevent things happening in the home remained elusive.

There were also descriptions of a kind of gas lighting on mass which would occur in the home following incidents of physical violence, where all adults were complicit:

Like, and my parents the next day afterwards (an incident of physical violence) never mentioned it. They would just, it would just be like, let's just move on, everything's great, let's have a nice morning. So, as a child there was this weird silence, this feeling everyone knows and no one's saying anything (Survivor Thirteen).

This combination of findings provides some support for a conceptual premise that there are largely invisible and abstract oppressive practices present in a home where there is domestic violence.

Homes, in that the actual physical manifestation of the home were also reported to be used as ways to control and oppress children in a variety of ways. One survivor recollected a situation where she was moved to another town, a significant distance from her home city, with her mother and brothers, by her Step Dad. She talked about the restrictions placed on her once the move had taken place emphasising difficulty in contacting family members which they had left behind. This survivor was relatively close to this event due to her age (17yrs) but effectively demonstrated that she was acutely aware that the aim of her Step Dad was to gain control of her whole family:

Like, he, like, done something to the computer and stuff. I couldn't get on to speak to my dad or nothing, it was Skype them days. And he just used to like batter wer (us) all...It was his way or no way..... (and that was) about him having control of all of us, even though we weren't his kids (Survivor Three).

Another interesting example of a home being used in the pursuit of control is set out below:

I would get sent to my dad's house as a punishment, but then when my mom wanted to sort of control my father and make, get more alimony or get more child support or whatever, we wouldn't be allowed to go to dad's house...Half of the time it was a punishment, and half of the time it was a reward for him, and it was ... it sort of just completely undermined what my father's house was to us (Survivor Four).

This testimony provides further insight into how children's perceptions and views of home can be influenced by the actions of adults even when abuse is not actually occurring within the home. Awareness of how houses, in terms of how contact is arranged post-separation, were being used to facilitate ongoing control, coloured and confused how he felt about his home with his father.

Space within the home was referred to in a number of guises. Survivors frequently mentioned their bedrooms in conversation. Bedrooms were viewed as sanctuary, somewhere to be away from whatever was going on in the house, somewhere to be able to do activities such as play x-box or read. However the sometimes brutal ways and means that disruption of that space took place were also expressed. Doors slammed open followed by demands to complete tasks or to go into another part of the house to witness violence were part of the discourse. Therefore, it is likely that for children who live with domestic violence there could be said to be no ultimate, guaranteed safe spaces within the home.

Communal space was characterised by physical disrepair and either ripped or non-existent décor and furnishings. It may be possible to interpret the prevalence of this theme as a recognition that the state of disrepair is, for a child, an unrelenting physical reminder of people's actions, and events, inside the house. It could be conceivably argued that the manifestation of this constant visual memento is control and oppression. One quote from a survivor poignantly pronounces the look of her childhood house in a way that it is impossible not denote wider meaning for the home in general:

We had this ... it was a really, it was the sort of house where everything is a bit broken (Survivor Ten).

There was also recollections of curtains closed all the time and other physical representations of oppression. There was no sense of being able to move freely in the home and enjoy the space it provides.

This theme was identified by refuge and temporary accommodation staff when talking about how children adapted to living in a communal setting following fleeing domestic violence. They commented on how children used and experienced physical, and particularly communal space. There was a belief expressed that children who had fled domestic violence benefitted from the freedom of space beyond their own front door. This testimony from a Refuge Manager eloquently portrays a fictional scenario of a child living in a communal space and the value that the child gains through this experience:

So run properly (a refuge) a child, say is just going to start nursery, they wouldn't just come out of their flat and go out the front door to nursery, they would have been down an hour earlier, romping around in the play area, maybe with other children there or other mothers, maybe having a communal breakfast down there, play in the play room, saying good morning to other staff, they would have come down and

shown the other women and the staff, 'look my uniform, new shoes', they would have got praise for that. They would have had a sense of, there's spaces I can move freely in in which I will be listened too uniquely, not as the child of somebody but as a shared event and experience (Refuge Manager).

There were different expressions of a similar theme that centred round having to repress emotions and aspects of personality as a direct result of the environment:

Because you em have to be a different person ...In your in your when you're like not in the place you can be yourself, you can't sleep properly, you can't eat properly. You kind of, you just feel dragged down (Survivor Three).

This comment could be read as a feeling of isolation but actually is more significant and devastating than that. It translates into an enforced denial of self and therefore development, and is in complete opposition to a stated and treasured feature of an ideal home. The relentless nature of the effects was further amplified in this comment:

I was under massive amounts of stress the whole time, and it's only now, being a mum myself and making a different environment that I can see that that was just completely wrong, really harmful. Just awful, you know (Survivor Nine).

This comment comes from a period of reflection, and real experience of an alternative home for a child. The term 'really harmful' stands out as it leaves no room for interpretation and clearly sets out that living in these situations, and existing in perpetual states of oppression has damaging effects on children.

This quote creates a vivid and powerful analogy of life for a child living with domestic violence. It could have been realistically included in any of the sections as it provides a complete picture and includes many aspects of what is covered in this research. It encapsulates a family home, and provides a glaring and uncomfortable reality that children are living with:

All right, well if you go to A&E in the middle of the night and I've had to once or twice, everything is too bright because obviously it has to be but there's like strip lighting, um you have to wait a long time in a really uncomfortable chair and you're eyes hurt because you know it's four o'clock in the morning and, and um you've been sitting in a horrible plastic chair under strip lighting and all you want to do is have a

comfortable bed and dark and quiet and people are shouting and everything is too bright and chances are that if you're in A&E you're in pain or you're anxious...and I'd look back on my family home and it's like having been in A&E for 16 years in the middle of the night, everything is too bright, I'm too tired and anxious and I can't get comfortable (Survivor Ten).

Another survivor also captured the experience of oppression succinctly:

It's, I don't know how I can explain it, it's like being in a prison (Survivor Eleven).

It is noteworthy that for two of the survivors this form of control was not overtly raised as an issue and it is possible to draw parallels between them. Physical violence and intense conflict were frequent, in one case cited as daily. Drug and/or alcohol abuse were also extremely prominent in the lives of the adults present. Both of these survivors were removed from their family homes by the state, and for them it would appear that neglect accompanied incidents of physical violence perhaps more so than explicit attempts at control and oppression by other means.

It is also noteworthy that two aspects of control were identified, but not able to be fully explored in this research, but are nonetheless significant. Firstly that control and manipulation of children post separation is often present, and that children sometimes mimic what they have seen and take on the role of the perpetrator against mother as they get older and enter adolescence.

6.5 Awareness of Contrasting Homes

The findings exposed how alternative ideas of home might be formed, when children became aware that it is possible for homes to have different dynamics and engender positive feelings. It was also an aim of the research to try and discover how that knowledge made them consider their own environment and how that dissonance is managed. The conversations that occurred during the research involved depictions of sporadic observations at friend's houses or birthday parties but also significant relationships outside of the family home in which an alternative home was experienced in a meaningful way.

Many of the survivors also spoke with great affection and gratitude to people who had offered them time and space, and simply a different way to be. It is notable that a significant minority of the survivors did not report experiencing this close bond or safe haven that could

provide respite, and could only cite their bedroom as providing some relief from the pervasive nature of domestic violence. Another aspect highlighted was the possibility of a home within a home. Time and space in the family home when the perpetrator was absent provided a different reality in the same physical environment.

An alternative, regular, meaningful home was discussed at length by one survivor who consistently credited her Aunt, her father's sister, with 'saving' her. She described how she and her siblings, often separately, stayed at her Aunt's and was passionate about the sanctuary and benefits it supplied. The survivor continued to see her Aunt into adulthood and talked about the actual flat and her associations with it. The physicality of her home was intrinsically linked with the person:

And then the, it's a lovely lovely flat and the reason it's a lovely flat is because it was my aunt's flat and she was a place of safety for all us kids (Survivor Ten).

The absence of violence and the pursuit of safety was explicitly discussed by survivors in relation to experiences of other homes. The clarity of demarcation expressed was striking:

Like I always used to like feel safe like when I was up with my Nanna and my Aunt's cos them, like them didn't want like violence coming in their house, so I used to feel safe with my nanna and my aunt (Survivor Six).

The physicality of homes, again was referenced in this context. One survivor expressed how another home was different by simply saying:

There was like no glass or anything on the floor (Survivor Five).

Another survivor recalled how observing contrasts in the physical environment of two homes respectively, contributed to the questioning of her own circumstances and the validity of how her home was run:

No, I used to go to my friends' house, like all my friends' houses and the houses would be nice and tidy, and nice and mum and dad, and then I had to go back to mine and think well, what is this? (Survivor Eight).

One of the most interesting aspects in this section of the research related to the exploration of contrast taking place actually within the family home. As previously stated, for some

survivors the control was almost embedded in the walls but for others there was a distinct contrast in experience dependent upon the presence, or not, of the perpetrator. One survivor experienced this exponentially:

You know, but there would be lulls because a lot of the time, at this point, he wouldn't be home until late. He would go straight down the pub from after work, a lot of the time now. So, he wouldn't get in until like nine o'clock, so it would be like go and see me mum and my sister and it was all right. So, there was a lot of time ... it was just, I think we all ... I think there was like an un- understanding between all of us that we all knew it was better when he wasn't there (Survivor Twelve).

The final quote in this section is articulated in a way that sets out a process of realisation clearly and precisely. This survivor makes an overt moral judgement about his upbringing when asked about whether he was aware of his home being different:

I wouldn't say I was a clever child but I knew how the world worked if you know what I mean, so I knew every parent had their own way of bringing up a child. I didn't think my dad's was a wrong way, I thought it was just another way. But then as I started growing up and I started going to more mates houses, seeing there were similarities in like another mate's house to this mate's house, like the parents were sort of the same. That's when I started realising that I'm probably being brought up wrong if you get what I mean (Survivor Eleven).

These disclosures about levels of awareness shown by children about the variances between homes where domestic violence is present and homes where it isn't, is consistent with a bigger theme of the research that states that children's concept of domestic violence and its impact on their concepts of home entails much more, and is significantly more complex than seeing physical violence. None of the survivors were able to put forward any obvious pathways to take as a result of the realisation that their home was functioning in a different way to others. However, as has been previously discussed, the majority of the survivors were able to readily provide notions and ideas regarding an ideal home for which their experience of alternatives may have contributed.

6.6 Houses as Memories- place of no return

The idea of houses and housing provoking memories and also feelings and emotions was one that many participants, particularly survivors articulated. Emotional responses to

physical buildings or features of buildings were described as fully present in adulthood, sometimes many years after any actual events had occurred. For example one survivor talked about painting the walls of privately rented properties because white walls served as a reminder of homes she had lived in as a child. The walls had to be repainted again when she moved out. This is a powerful demonstration of how the visual impact of a home can reach beyond ascetics and actually evoke memories and feelings that are so uncomfortable they need to be altered in order for a person to be able to remain.

One practitioner described the reaction of a small boy to returning to a house where violence happened:

That little boy was placed in grandma's care but went round for his tea, Dad ended up in prison, but he was that on eggshells he couldn't be in that house because of what had gone on there, he was having really physical, being sick and it took a long time to get him to the point, he wouldn't stay there and everything freaked him out you know like all the noises, rattles and he would say, 'he's coming' (Family Support Worker).

One of the survivors experienced domestic violence as an adult in addition to living with it as a child. Although this testimony slightly digresses from the main thrust of this research it is highly relevant to further understanding of how houses can store emotions and sentiments which then continue to perpetrate damage to those that have suffered abuse within that vicinity:

The house was literally, it was a beautiful, beautiful home but it was keeping me back in developing and moving forward with my life because of the memories that were in that home...I was still going to sleep in the bedroom where violence and abuse had happened. I was still cooking in the same kitchen where violence and abuse had happened. Things like that- I was just ... It was the house; the house was I wouldn't say possessed, I am not going to use the word possessed; but it was actually (Survivor Seven).

This theme was extremely consistent amongst survivors in relation to their childhood home and provides powerful insight into the lingering impression from physical buildings where abuse has occurred. There is a number of statements cited here, and taken together the point is made indisputably:

I mean, it was funny, because my mum then, because she got, she got the house when they divorced. Um, we, my mum had that house up until like, two years ago. So, so she had that house for another like good 14 years. And I hated being in there because it was just full of memories really. I don't think um, I don't think, I don't anywhere the abuse happened could be a sense of home. And my mum was the same really, she felt the same like, she kept trying to paint the walls and rearrange the furniture, and trying to change it. But it couldn't take away like, it was like ghosts in the house, you know, like it's, we all I think could like feel all these bad things that had happened there all the time. And, um, you know, there was just no moving on from it, I think. Well, certainly for me like, there was just so many bad memories there (Survivor Thirteen).

There's nothing, I can barely sit there in my old family home and have a cup of tea (Survivor Nine).

Um, so it's potentially an absolutely lovely house but nothing would induce me to live there, it's like it's full of ghosts and I don't believe in ghosts. But I can't think of another way to explain it (Survivor Ten).

These three quotes have been lined up to demonstrate the consistency of feeling and substantial reaction to bricks and mortar, as a result of domestic violence. A house maybe unable to be labelled as a home but actually that can go beyond indifference and represent a kind of anti-home and this sentiment is telling when considering the extent of how this behaviour impacts.

6.7 Making a Home in the Future- The Long Echo of the Abuse- Still Waiting

This part of the research is important because although it somewhat deviates from the main focus of the research it is significant in highlighting the ongoing problems faced by people who have experienced this trauma as children. Home is viewed as such a fundamental aspect of life with widely accepted benchmarks of the virtue it possesses. If these benchmarks have been systematically destroyed in a person's childhood it is reasonable to assume that in adulthood it is potentially problematic to create something different and to attain that ideal of which there has been limited example.

A major part of making a home in the future is fleeing situations of abuse. Many of the professionals interviewed had directly worked in refuges and/or emergency accommodation

therefore were able to offer insight into how children experienced this process of creating a future home with their mothers. However in the context of this research the primary examples of fleeing involved young adults leaving their entire family as a result of domestic violence. Over half of the survivors could be classified in this way. This is an important element of the research as fleeing is principally associated with adult women leaving abusive partners either alone or with children. Children who grow up to take the initiative themselves to leave are perhaps an under reported aspect of domestic violence research.

The role of refuge for children prompted significant discussion amongst professionals. There were strong voices regarding many aspects of refuge which included what type of organisations should run refuges, how space is configured within refuges, what support is offered and how, and what resources should be available. One professional described how children would be treated when arriving in a new refuge where she was recently employed, which accommodated women and children in self-contained flats.

If the Mam comes in with the two kids, the kids are there, you're talking to Mam, the bairns are standing, Mam's filling all the forms in. Ok we'll take you up to your room, there you go see you later. Next time you see them you say, 'you alright Mam', 'yeah I'm fine'. No-one's even said hello to the kids. So the kids are like tappy lapping behind the Mam. So I think it's very important for the kids to be included and valued (Independent Living Refuge Worker 2).

This worker contrasted this new 'home' for children unfavourably with previous refuge experience where she believed children benefited from more collective space, and available children's workers.

For a child or young person taking actions to exit situations of abuse within the family it is arguably a bigger decision than a women leaving, as they are leaving as a single person and it could argued 'breaking up the family'. There was a distinction in routes between survivors' experiences of leaving dependent on age. Younger people who had left their family had either disclosed to Children's Social Care as teenagers but pre16yrs, or had accessed some kind of supported housing post 16yrs. One survivor who left his family home at 15yrs, and was 18yrs at the time of interview, lived in supported housing but was originally housed in a hostel immediately after disclosure:

When I first moved out at 15 years old. I was homed in a hostel and I was in there for six, seven months...which didn't feel like a home, it felt like a prison more than

anything, it was just a bed and a sink. That was it, that didn't feel like home, it felt more like ... I don't know how to explain it, it felt more like a prison basically. You got kicked out at nine in the morning and only went back at ten (Survivor Eleven).

A reliance on state assistance was a significant feature of the lives of the younger survivors and discourse regarding employment, or accessibility to housing outside of the state sector was limited. For older survivors who had fled or moved out as young adults their routes involved private arrangements and employment, or university places that took them out of their home town:

I was 16 when I moved out of home, I basically went to my mum and said like, yeah, so I went to my mum and said either he leaves or I do and I knew she loved me and I knew she'd never leave him so I left (Survivor Ten).

When survivors talked about making a home in the future it exposed the complex nature of the concept of home when domestic violence has been present in the childhood home. In many of the conversations there have been desires and difficulties articulated regarding securing a home in adulthood that relate to general issues that much of the population face for example choice, tenure, type of house and area. These concerns mixed seamlessly with struggles described as a result of previous negative experiences of home. For some survivors, as stated earlier, they reported being content in their current home however there was still a narrative relating to problems in the process of finding and creating a home. There will be an endeavour to try and disentangle these matters, however inevitably there will be a degree of overlap. For example negative feelings about the insecurity of private renting may be exacerbated by a damaged connotations of home.

The majority of the survivors referred to tenure both explicitly and implicitly when talking about future and current homes in adulthood. There were strong opinions about the importance of tenure and how that affects how a home is understood and experienced. This quote demonstrates some of the freedoms and advantages that some survivors associated with owning a home:

I don't want to rent, I want to buy the house if you get what I mean, so no one has a say. Because then no one can kick us out and it's our life, not if you get what I mean. Like if the landlord gets in debt and he has to sell the house that's like your house done with, you have to find somewhere else where as if you buy it's yours you can do what you want with it. That's my dream house, if it's mine (Survivor Eleven).

Some survivors anticipated the same kind of freedoms being possible in social housing and similar to participants who either owned or wanted to own property, strongly identified security as something to be valued.

But I wouldn't call this (supported housing project) my actual home because it is not permanent.....And like obviously the support and stuff which isn't a bad thing, but when I move out, that will be home because it will be mine and L****s with no support and not any staff. Do you know? Because this (supported housing) is what I would call housing (Survivor Eight).

That distinction made between home and housing is significant. The clear idea expressed about what a home should constitute is potentially realised for this survivor by permanent social housing.

Social housing was seen as beneficial, although it was not explicitly referenced in terms of creating a home, due to being able to decorate and the security associated with it. The survivors who expressed this were exclusively younger, who were living in some kind of supported housing. One possible explanation is that for this group, who were already dependent on state assistance, owning a home did not seem a realistic option for them in the future. The only survivor living in these current circumstances who specifically talked about wanting to own a home in the future was also the only male. This raises questions about people's perceptions and understandings of who in society is likely to be a typical home owner, and illuminates the gender dependent expectations, which exist within a context of realism.

Two survivors identified social housing as having negative elements, in particular relating to choice and the limitations on people's ability to be in control of their home, especially the location. There was only one survivor from the older cohort that lived in social housing. She expressed gratitude for her accommodation and acknowledged that housing shortages were making it hard for many to achieve secure homes. However she lamented her lack of options inherent to being in a system of social housing:

Choice has a massive impact. Choice has an absolutely massive impact but when you are fleeing something, doing a managed move or anything like that, your, your choices are drastic, you look at the social housing sector and the choice is taken away from you. You have to go where they say (Survivor Seven).

It is interesting to note that the two survivors who expressed wanting to own a home but didn't, had more negativity towards social housing than survivors who did not mention home ownership as important. However the primary theme to be drawn out of these comments and opinions is that actually security and permanency are routinely viewed as important regardless of the tenure within it is achieved.

There were varying degrees of experience of private renting, with five survivors spending a significant proportion of their adult life in this kind of housing. Apart from one, all of those who had had those experiences were living in different tenures at the time of this research and three of those now owned the house they lived in. Significantly all of those home-owners had children of their own and cited this as a major reason for no longer wanting to privately rent. This survivor was typical of this group in that she reported being quite happy to rent privately in the past and specifically stated that she had a lack of interest in creating a home or any kind of permanency in her life. Private renting had suited her and her lifestyle until she became a mother:

Until I had a kid of my own, it didn't matter at all. But when you have a baby, it (transient living) is not doable and that's when sort of security and longevity suddenly kick in as a thing that matters (Survivor Ten).

One survivor stood out as living in the unusual tenure of a co-op. This was following years of private renting which he described as chaotic, and unsatisfactory in terms of feeling anywhere was home. He described what he liked about it:

I think the co-op thing, you know, it is actually a secure tenancy, it is not like a six month tenancy. You know, I am involved in the co-op. Involved. I am on the committee (Survivor Twelve).

One possible implication of 'involved' is that it can also be described as being invested. It is possible to speculate that involvement may serve to engender the same positive feelings people reported from owning their own property. Therefore this is why this survivor felt similarly to his home-owning counterparts in this type of property.

Much of what has just been articulated could be testimony from a general selection of people of different ages talking about their housing history. However the additional impact of a childhood where domestic violence was present was evident in all of the survivors involved in this research. It is possible to identify a theme running through all of the conversations

regarding difficulties in attaining or retaining an attachment to a home which was exhibited in a range of ways. One survivor articulated how experiencing domestic violence and that lived reality, manifested itself now in an expectation of the same:

Just...Obviously when I was little I thought that was home (violence and abuse) so everywhere I go I kind of expect that to happen again. So it's not til I know that nothing is going to happen that I actually I start feeling a bit more settled if that makes sense? (Survivor Two).

This sense of a childhood home continuing to echo and exist into new housing and accommodation was common, and shows how hard it can be to leave traumatic pasts and experiences behind. As referred to earlier some survivors reported being happy to live relatively transient lifestyles and avoid roots as such. However this choice was sometimes made due to a lack of belief that a home could be made. It felt like some survivors had avoided attempting to make a home perhaps because the task was so enormous. There were also articulated worries and concerns about entering and being, in any kind of new accommodation. One survivor talked about his feelings when starting any new tenancy or living arrangement:

Quite a few times, um. So, the idea of having somewhere permanent never seemed like realistic, do you know what I mean? It was always ... Everything was ... I always felt like I was on the verge of disaster or catastrophe (Survivor Twelve).

Another survivor directly connected her problems in finding a home with her experiences of violence and abuse as a child.

My experiences, um, haven't, don't have a very good fit on me. I wanted to be successful. I wanted to have me own home, I wanted to have my own car by now. I am nearly 18 (Survivor Three).

One of the older survivors powerfully described how other people's homes seemed different to anywhere he had lived or was currently living. He talked about always thinking that he may have to leave any minute implying no sense of the permanency. There was also a recognition that aspects of his behaviour, which he at least in part attributes to his childhood, were having a negative impact on his ability to deal with managing a property.

Um, and one of the things that always struck me is like when, when up until now I go around other people's houses. My sister's place and everybody else's houses always felt like somebody lived there, do you know what I mean? I don't know if it was the ... it was just their personal touches and all that. Wherever I lived, it always just felt like it was a room with some stuff in it. You know what I mean, I always felt like I was always ... I never used to like fully unpack. I think it is me as well, I have just kind of, you know, a lot of the issues that, that were impacting me before, like with drink and, and, and that that were stopping me from being able to do basic things like pay rent and obviously I don't do that anymore. I haven't done that for a while (Survivor Twelve).

The phrase 'it just felt like it was a room with stuff in it' powerfully encapsulates many of the sentiments expressed by survivors in this research when thinking about home. It is almost like they are unable to match a situation to any kind of feeling. These findings help us to understand that there may be a kind of unconscious memory that acts as a barrier to home-making for adults.

A strong theme that emerged from this section was the desire to make homes ascetically pleasing, taking the form of decoration and how a house is presented. It was interesting to note that for survivors who were yet to attain a home of their own, of any tenure, there was a belief expressed that decorating a property would be crucial to creating a home. This possibly links back to the states of disrepair that characterised many of the childhood homes described in this research. A survivor with a new flat move which was imminent expressed it like this:

Well, all the nice things, buying ... Like when I want to go into my flat I want to buy loads of nice stuff that will make my flat feel like my home. So, like my favourite colour is purple, some frames, some pictures of family that make a flat, a house feel like a home and stuff like that (Survivor One).

There was a sense that survivors were trying to decorate away memories and feelings about home. There was a feeling that the broken ascetic and environment of physical disrepair some had experienced as children had to be fixed in order to make a new experience of home. However for one survivor who referred to the decoration of a variety of housing nine times throughout the course of the conversation, the achievement of a visually pleasing house proved to be not enough to make a home. This young woman was a care leaver and experienced extreme abuse in her previous family home. The flat she lives in is rented from a housing association and she reported having little choice about where she would be

located. This quote summarises the struggle to make a change from how home was as a child. The survivor eloquently purveys a mental picture of her previous and current home, and then sadly defines how her efforts have not overridden her past, or created altered emotions in relation to home:

Cos like, I'm not disrespecting my family but my family home was always like full of like smashed glass, like untidy, it wasn't like decorated or anything it was basically like a pigsty. You couldn't move you couldn't see the floor or anything. So like it's hard to like actually get my flat into a home where I can go in every day and go 'finally I'm home'. But I don't I just go in and go, 'Ah I'm in this thing' I don't see it as home even though I've decorated it and I've made it look nice but it just doesn't feel home to me...I've tried decorating it nice colours like calming colours, like baby blue, cream, all the different colours but every time I walk in I'm like 'this just does not feel home' (Survivor Five).

One survivor talked about painting the walls of rented properties and then having to paint them white again. Having grown up in the military she had moved around a lot and all of the properties she had lived in as a child had plain walls. There was also domestic violence:

Yeah I just can't stand white walls. I can't stand plain...so it's nice to own a house and to be able to, you know, make every room different and make it very personal...When I was renting I didn't have a child...so it (renting, insecurity) didn't bother me then (Survivor Thirteen).

This testimony again reminds of a continuous will to paint away the past, to make sure that anywhere that is lived does not visually resemble homes from childhood.

There was a marked difference between how the older survivors achieved their independence and how the younger survivors were try to achieve theirs. All of the older survivors had left their family home by independent means in that they had found employment and accommodation or they had gone to University. They all talked about a desire to leave home and having an awareness from a young age how they could make that happen. The younger survivors were more reliant on the state and lived in supported housing or had recently left to take on a tenancy in social housing.

It is possible that the reasons for this lie in the fact that in order to recruit the younger survivors there was more of a reliance on going through services, and that older survivors

volunteered on their own terms after seeing information about the research. However it is also likely that access into routes to independence both practically and financially have been significantly reduced in recent years. A few examples of this phenomenon would be, reduction in benefits for under 25s, wage stagnation, lack of access to housing and tuition fees. The older generation seemed to be able to grasp independence from a much younger age and on their own terms. One older survivor who had left home at a young age due to domestic violence recognised this difference:

I mean my own kid is 15 and the idea of him being able to sort of move out and find a room at 15 quid a week is so wildly implausible ...I don't know how a 16 year old now could possibly do it. I do not know how it would be possible (Survivor Ten).

As previously referred to some of the older survivors gave evidence about their current home that demonstrated many of the features of an ideal home. There was a great appreciation of all the feelings that the home could offer and an impression of sanctuary from the world:

But I always- whenever I'm coming home...I get a real sense of joy the closer I get to home, and I know I can shut that gate, I can shut that door, just feel at peace, feel loved, feel warm, you know, feel safe, and that's just an absolutely incredible feeling (Survivor Nine).

There was further testimony that demonstrated that the finding and achieving a sense of home was often coloured by previous experience. Fighting against the past consciously, coupled with favourable outside influences, both state directed and also serendipitous, were seen to contribute to achieving future home:

Oh, a lot. I have managed to fight. I feel like, you know, I am really lucky. I have managed to find a family and have a home and, you know, make a life that is completely different to what I had. So, everything is different, and I am really lucky about that (Survivor Thirteen).

Sadly a couple of the survivors were still having difficulties capturing that feeling of home despite residing in relatively stable social housing:

But when I sit in it, no, it is not my home. It doesn't feel like my home, it feels like a temporary place to stay. Whether that is my state of mind, whether that is where I am in my life; I really don't know. But from the moment I have moved in here, it has

never, ever felt like my home. To be honest, I don't think I have ever had a home, except for my grandparents when I was a child, and that was owned by them. It wasn't owned by me, but it was the only, only house, place to live that I can say I have felt as if that was home. So, no, I have not had that and that is something that I want. I want a home again. It is what I am aiming for in life (Survivor Seven).

There were also a number of survivors who were still to move into an independent accommodation and it is likely that they might struggle to make that place their home in ways that they may well not yet fully appreciate.

A professional working in housing for the Local Authority provided this information about the backgrounds of rough sleepers she encountered which provides further insight into the probable complications that a childhood lived with domestic violence may lead to.

As part of my work re rough sleeping quite often the people with the most complex needs have had experiences of domestic violence, the care system, unstable family relationships (Emergency Accommodation Manager Local Authority)

It is possible to conclude that for children who have experienced domestic violence in their family home it is likely that they will experience problems when trying to secure and create a home for themselves in adulthood. This could be argued to be felt beyond the issues that may be felt more generally and potentially transcend other aspects of demography for example gender or class. These issues are not always easily identified or related to childhood and may cause additional trauma and distress.

6.8 Discussion

Throughout the findings the concept of home is constantly returned to, as it is through this lens that the research has been conducted. Testimony from all participants embraced a discourse that challenged the likelihood of children experiencing the recognised tenets of a home, if they were living with domestic violence. This overall finding is arguably best reflected in Wardhaugh (1999) who asserts that for women experiencing abuse within the home they are essentially 'homeless at home' because of the negation of a sense of self and a safe haven. Therefore for children living in similar circumstances of abuse it is an easily transferable concept, and fits well the conclusions of this research. The overwhelming refrain from the findings is the absence of home within four walls, both at the time of abuse and

beyond. 'Homeless at home' perfectly encapsulates this and transcends the understanding of home, both past and present, in childhood survivors of domestic violence.

All participants were able to articulate what a home should be, their ideas, meanings and ideals. Essentially, personal experiences did not negate the ability to portray, often in detail what was viewed to be the aspects and ingredients of a home. There was clarity in the assertion that a physical building could never, in itself be enough to provide a home. These sentiments were comprehensively reflected in the literature cited (Douglas, 1991; Chapman, 2001; Mallett, 2004; Blunt, 2006; Heathcote, 2014; Fox, 2016; Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017).

The views expressed by survivors largely conformed to the picture created in the literature relating to a western idea of home, namely a place of comfort, privacy, relaxation, personal control and pleasing ascetics (Rybczynski, 1986; Heathcote, 2014). However, there was an emphasis explicitly placed on safety, with that specific word used repeatedly throughout the findings. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs safety is placed second in order of importance behind the physiology needs of shelter and food. However in much of the literature, safety is present, and is often implicit, within other terms such as haven or refuge which are in turn also inextricably linked with privacy and freedom from the outside world (Saunders, 1990; Bachelard, 1990; Mallett, 2004, Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017; Atkinson and Blandy, 2017). The direct and singular use of the word safe in the research precludes it from being muddled with other aspects of home in this context.

Academic discourse explicitly regarding safety is focussed in more detail when the dual aspects of safety both within and without the home is debated. In other words the safety of the home is correlated positively with the danger outside (Bachelard, 1994; Chapman, 1999; Saunders, 1990; Chapman and Hockey, 2001; Fox, 2006). Fox (2006) addresses the potential oxymoron that arises when safety and home are unequivocally related, by recognising that for women and children the home can be a place of danger and where harm occurs. However the issue of abuse within the home has been primarily addressed by feminist writers (Dobash and Dobash 1992; Hester and Pearson, 2007; Stark, 2007; Romito, 2008; Kelly and Westmarland, 2016; Botein et al, 2016). They have strongly argued that the central tenets of the home can be experienced in a directly opposing manner for woman with emphasis on domestic violence. It is in this context that the importance of safety within the home is specifically referenced and is therefore interesting to note that in terms of an ideal, safety featured so prominently amongst survivors. Testimony regarding safety was not couched within any wider context of home as a haven or refuge which has connotations of

privacy with an assumed safety feature, but was rather specifically and repeatedly referenced as primary element similar to the way it is referenced in Maslow.

Safety was more readily aligned with other elements of home for example security and stability by survivors. Words vocalised in the same breath as safety included continuity, grounded, and stable which strongly resembles and resonates more with the notion of ontological security. Ontological Security is also known as the security of being, and the 'confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity, and in the constancy of their social and material environment' (Giddens, 1991, p. 95). There has been a focus on the material aspect of ontological security to the extent it has been inextricably linked with home ownership (Saunders, 1988; Giddens, 1991; Dupuis and Thorne, 1998). However although safety was linked with stability in the findings it was not explicitly associated with homeownership in dialogue regarding an ideal home. Home ownership is referred to in the findings however it was often mentioned in the context of personal circumstances, for example having a child.

The concept of privacy and the role of home to actualise the demarcation between public and private existence is a fundamental facet present in literature about home (Saunders, 1988; Bachelard, 1994; Dupuis and Thorne, 1998; Mallett, 2004; Blunt, 2006). Privacy is associated with the private in the sense of promotion of individualism versus collectivism, and linked again with home ownership. This sense of the private and privacy in relation to an ideal home did not come through in the findings. Survivors valued the freedom of expression, and the ability to be yourself as fundamental to the creation of the home but did not emphasise privacy as such, even though it would be possible for these feature to be linked. In a similar vein to the way safety was emphasised in a slightly different way in these findings to the general literature, the tone of testimony regarding freedom and particularly being able to be yourself was embedded in self-expression and not explicitly referred to as an experience separated from the outside world. It may be possible to speculate that to conceptualise privacy in an abstract form does not provide positive connotations for survivors in the same way that it does when domestic violence or other forms of abuse have occurred in childhood. Awareness that what is happening in the home is not under the public gaze is not necessarily something to be replicated.

The ideals articulated were often based on lived experiences. For example one young woman described what it is like in a home where there is no freedom to be yourself. This quote was initially misunderstood as an expression of feeling isolated but actually it is

interestingly a comment that directly states the opposite of one of the treasured outcome of being at home, in other words the anti-home.

The capacity to visualise and imagine a home even when a person is not in a position to experience it in that sense, has been highlighted in discussion with a number of demographics in previous research (Wardhaugh, 1999; Parsell, 2010; Kidd and Evans, 2011; Natalier and Johnson, 2015). In the findings, as previously mentioned safety was viewed as particularly vital part of a home. There were similar differences of emphasis depending on the priorities of a particular group, for example shelter was seen as a crucial part of a 'home' by people who were homeless and 'control' was a vital element of a home for young people who had lived on the care system (Natalier and Johnson, 2015). There was also a more general sentiment found in the literature that a lack of home does not result in a lack of idea of one.

Therefore this part of the findings form a crucial part of the research in that they set the direct experiences of home by childhood survivors against this 'ideal' that many of us take for granted. The statement 'I'm going home' implicitly refers to home as somewhere desirable and it is this 'given' that lays the reality for many children experiencing violence and abuse so stark.

6.8.1 Hyper-Vigilance

There is consistent reference to fear in much of the literature regarding children and domestic violence however it is often cited as just one of a number of emotions that children are experiencing (Abrahams H, 1994; Mullender and Morley, 1994; Mullender, 1996; Edleson, 1998; McGee, 2000; Mullender, 2002; Brandon and Lewis 2005; Humphreys, 2006; Corrigan 2008; Holt et al 2008; Colis, 2013; Overlien, 2013; Katz, 2015; Callaghan et al 2018). There is recognition in these studies that the fear experienced can be described as a hyper vigilance, a waiting for something to happen, however the literature still places this in the context of one impact of domestic violence on children.

A study by Overlien (2013) exposes fear as an all-encompassing presence that permeates day to day life, which relates to the findings of this research more readily. Survivors described fear as a way of being, an integral part of their childhood, which Overlien captures in a way that resonates with the lived memories expressed. In a similar way to how safety is portrayed in the findings, fear and hypervigilance are also described as continued into

adulthood. Overlien (2013) also found that children who expressed strong fear in relation to domestic violence also reported high levels of coercive control.

6.8.2 Control and Oppression

Survivors described being directly controlled by perpetrators of domestic violence in a number of different ways. Fundamentally the experience of coercive control was found to be prevalent in childhood. There is limited research on children's experiences of coercive control. This is potentially due to a continued reluctance to view children as direct victims. This stance has been challenged significantly by the UNARS project (2016) that states that the 'distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' victim, or between 'adult victim' and 'child witness' is not sustainable (Callaghan et al, 2016). Related to this challenge is the notion that to understand how children experience domestic violence it is imperative that to explore how it pervades children's everyday lives (Katz, 2015). It is where these premises are acknowledged that coercive control is more readily demonstrated and researched (Overlein, 2013; Katz, 2015; Callaghan et al 2018).

An obvious symptom or sign of control, and one that was described by survivors, was a lack of freedom to socialise or to see friends, engage in activities or host friends in their own home, a control of movement. This observable form of control was found described in the literature cited above. Overlien (2013) highlights this form of control however also portrays a wider range of controlling behaviours that were also present in the findings. Significantly they included hacking emails and taping conversations which was in particular reference to two young woman. This is interesting to note as there were two young women in the findings who also experienced levels of monitoring and, in different ways, were prevented from having any kind of life outside of the home or having contact with their biological father. This was a facet of coercive control which was also identified by two professionals as something they were confident was an expected experience for young women living with domestic violence.

Whether or not levels of control are linked to levels of physical violence is subject to debate. All of the survivors experienced physical violence, either towards themselves or their mother, or in most cases both. However the reported extent of coercive control varied and it is difficult to draw correlations between the levels of two aspects of domestic violence. Overlien (2013) found there to be a clear link between coercive control, and extreme and frequent physical violence. However Katz (2015) argues that levels and effects of coercive control on children were similar regardless of the severity or regularity of physical violence. This echoes

assertions by Pitman (2017) and Stark (2007) in relation to adult women. Hart and Hart (2018) are clear that no physical violence was present throughout their childhood. In the findings where there was severe control there as also extreme physical violence, and in one case sexual abuse however there was also control identified where physical violence was more sporadic. As stated in the findings there were two cases where physical violence was prominent but notions of control minimal. It may be possible to classify this in line with Johnson's situational couple violence (Johnson, 2008). This not to deny that harm is caused to children but that the consequences in these cases were more readily identified as neglect rather than any kind of control. However, Walby et al (2018) argues all violence is coercive and harmful, and this analysis makes more sense in relation to these findings. The knowledge that survivors had, that violence was likely to occur, engendered feelings of fear, and necessitated them to engage in certain activities, for example attempting to prevent it starting. The violence then, is in itself controlling as it is dictating the feelings and actions of children in a way that is not necessary for children not living in these circumstances. Therefore even when overt controlling behaviour is not present if there is physical violence then it could be argued that control still exists for children through justified fear of harm for themselves and their mother.

The unspoken rules of the game, the knowledge imparted without words, the pervading weight of oppression was consistently referred to by survivors. There was also a strong sense in the findings that the effects of control by the perpetrator were present regardless of whether or not the perpetrator was present. Hart and Hart (2018) provides a unique insight into this day to day existence for a child living under a regime of coercive control. It refers to a process whereby the child internalises the words and actions of the perpetrator and 'disables the ability to fight back' (2018: p. 70). This phenomena is also referred to in Callaghan et al (2018), the almost taking over of the child's mind by the perpetrator, 'the inescapable nature of internalised psychological abuse and control' (2018: p. 1561).

These insights have significant parallels with the assertions of Starke (2007) and Williamson (2010) where coercive control is conceptualised as located within the victim/survivor and routinely acted upon, irrespective of the relationship status of the survivor. This behaviour is connected to the use of the word 'prison' in both testimony from these findings, and the description offered by Hart and Hart (2019). Williamson sees this as a survivor's existence located within a world created solely by the perpetrator. This conceptualisation of coercive control is almost presented as a brain injury and this concept is also linked to the premise highlighted earlier in the section, that being safe is not the same as feeling safe. As stated in the findings the childhood home, and the violence and control which it contained continues

to echo and is an area of children's experiences of domestic violence, which again requires further research.

Williamson (2010) asserts that sometimes coercive control is often difficult to identify due to the existence of due to the 'normal' expected behaviours associated with gender. It could be possible to translate this analysis with regards to children in that parents are expected to 'control' their children and set boundaries in a wide range of areas. It is acknowledged that parents exercise varying degrees of control over their children based on a range of factors that influence their decision making. Therefore to disentangle the children living under 'normal' rules compared to children who are living under a regime of coercive control is challenging.

Following that proposition a study by Valentine (1999) which looked at how parents set boundaries and rules about children's spatial independence and found gender differences in what was allowed at certain ages. These differences took the form of girls being found to be more sensible in the home but having to be older than boys before being let out. Most of the survivors are female and it is possible when they were experiencing coercive control it was interpreted as protection and rendered appropriate considering the gender.

6.8.3 Direct Abuse

The focus of the research is to decipher and analyse direct experiences of children when they live with domestic violence. There is an implicit recognition that children are inherently victims in their own right which could also be argued as present in much of the literature that has shown that children are significantly affected. However, there has still been a pervading feeling that children, although recognised as experiencing harm, are still viewed as appendages of the victim, and can be damaged by what they effectively 'witness'. Callaghan et al (2018) argue that:

This produces a disjuncture in academic and policy discourses of children who live with domestic violence. positioning them simultaneously as damaged by the violence they see, but not as victims of it (Callaghan et al, 2018, p. 1556).

Therefore there is fundamental question about whether 'direct abuse' of children can justifiably warrant a separate discussion and it could be argued that by addressing the abuse of children in this way dilutes the status of all children living with domestic abuse as victims/survivors. However for this research the separation of this issue is essential to

highlight the prevalence of child abuse, and contribute to the understanding that domestic violence is potentially a sign that children are being abused in the ways that the 'victim' is. Following on from this point, it is clear that the previous research cited, and the findings of this research relating to children, that there is an implicit recognition that children are victims in their own right and therefore suffering direct abuse.

More than two thirds of the survivors explicitly referred to experiencing physical violence directed toward themselves, roughly two thirds of survivors described experiencing direct coercive control and one survivor described being sexually abused. It could be argued that the sample is too small to draw any conclusions however the prevalence is still significant as the only survivor who did not identify any tangible direct abuse was removed from the family home as a young child. However taken together with reported direct coercive control, every single other survivor recalled abuse that was directed towards themselves in some form, which is over 90%.

These figures are much higher than that of much of the literature regarding this issue report which ranges from 30% to 70%, which disparity, as has been previously stated, may be due to how data is collected or how disclosure is mentioned. McKay (1994) claims that 45% - 70% of women in refuge disclose abuse towards their children by the perpetrator and states that even when taking the lowest figure still results in a 15 times bigger risk of abuse for children living with domestic abuse. It also possible that there is reluctance to disclose by mothers as highlighted by Homer et al (1984) whereby the public scrutiny associated with disclosure was cited as a factor.

Conversely in a study by Hester and Pearson (1998) which piloted the inclusion of a framework regarding domestic violence in a child abuse project found that, using the new framework, where domestic violence was identified it was much more likely to be disclosed by the mother. In one case file period 56% of mothers disclosed domestic violence while only 11% of children did. Therefore it might be possible to conclude that depending on what type of abuse is uncovered first, and toward whom, may then influence who subsequently discloses what could be termed secondary abuse in that context. In other words domestic violence victims are disinclined to report child abuse and children experiencing abuse are reticent to disclose domestic violence. In the findings the high number of direct abuse disclosure may be explained by the fact that in all cases the survivors were adults and no longer living with the families within which domestic violence had occurred. It may also be explained by the emphasis on the home, and investigation into the day to day lives of a child living with domestic violence. Crucially a significant proportion of the survivors recalled that

they had not disclosed either abuses at the time they were happening. It can therefore be assumed that domestic violence, and child abuse is an underreported issue.

There was identification by two professionals that perpetrators sometimes transfer control onto children and particularly daughters. There was also a survivor who's disclosure of abuse by her step father bore every hallmark of domestic violence. Even though ethically this is a problematic statement, it highlights that the methods of abuse used are often very similar. A study by Hester and Pearson (1998) that sought to introduce domestic violence more prominently into the practice of a project working with women and children where child abuse has occurred, has been addressed in the literature to add weight to the contention that child abuse and domestic violence have a high correlation in instance. Sitting within the text of this study is a case of a 16yr old young woman who was essentially being abused by a staff member in a care home however she viewed it as a relationship. The study offered the opinion that by categorising the situation as child abuse the project were limiting the amount of resource available to the young women both in relation to knowledge and also resource for example refuge. In the findings the young woman who disclosed the abuse by her step father did in fact access the Freedom Programme but felt that she could not continue as it was revealing to her too much information that she was not ready to receive. However what it does highlight is perhaps the need for not only a recognition that child abuse and domestic violence can co-occur but also that work and resources associated with both of these issues are more fluid and transferable, as understanding of abuse becomes more comprehensive.

6.8.4 Space

Throughout the findings the survivors were drawn back to the idea and theme of home, and therefore the concept of space was a theme that infiltrated many aspects of discussion. These concepts of space were referenced in relation to a number of aspects of home. There was an obvious orientation towards space and the whole home environment however there was also more specific testimony regarding the space within that, in particular bedrooms. In the literature the home is conceptualised initially as physical space that has been placed under control in some way (Douglas, 1991; Mallett, 2004; Heathcote, 2014; Atkinson and Jacobs, 2017). Crucially the private element of home defined in this way implicitly links to the idea that the space is controlled in order to create a haven from the outside world, where individual control is limited (Saunders and Williams, 1988; Bachelard, 1994; Chapman and Hockey, 1999) or as phrased by Mallett, (2004) 'removed from public scrutiny' (2004: p. 24).

Goldsack (1999) argues that awareness of harm within the home directly correlates with this idea:

The more that home is constructed as space vulnerable to incursions from a threatening external world the less evident the interpersonal dangers within domestic space becomes (Goldsack, 1999, p. 121).

This also relates to the concept of the 'locale' (Giddens, 1984) as a place that holds significance in terms of the expected actions and situations that occur within it. This has resonance in this research, when addressing the locales within locales, for example a child's bedroom. Overlein and Hyden (2009), Wilson et al (2012) and Callaghan et al (2017b) have sought to increase understanding of this intrusion of space with regards to children and domestic violence. In these studies, it was found that children experienced space in a way that could be interpreted as dictated by domestic violence. This included sensory experiences whereby audio evidence of domestic violence was heard within the confines of the 'safe' space, in other words the shouting and violence was coming through the walls.

Furthermore, as Callaghan et al (2017) argue, the controlling aspects of abusive relationships increasingly limit the victim-survivor's use of the physical spaces of the home, their access to resources, and their ability to connect to others beyond the home. This was profoundly illustrated by the survivor who describes waiting to hear her father's key in the lock which signalled their space being taken over by a force, her and her sisters could not control regardless of whatever room in the house there were in. The home frequently, if not always, did not represent a haven from the outside world but was more like a prison, and within that bedrooms were often invaded by perpetrators with any notions of privacy, and sense of 'home' diminished.

There is testimony by survivors referencing two particular incidents of physical violence perpetrated towards their mother by their father that occurred in the public domain. Meth (2003) makes the assertion that domestic violence can occur outside of the home and is a more fluid phenomena which overrides conventional divisions between public and private. Meth argues that there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of home in relation to spaces when investigating domestic violence due to ambiguity of 'home' as lived by many women living in poverty or who are homeless.

The last aspect of space which is significant in the findings is the physical state of the home that many survivors recalled growing up. As stated in the findings it is possible to view this

constant visual reminder of abuse, in a sense another form of control as it conveys damage and harm, and represents the perpetrator's strength of force within the home. The importance of décor and comfort is highlighted by Chapman (1999) when discussing the 'dream home'. Rybczynski (1986) also draws attention to the importance of comfort in the home and the pleasure experienced by physical attributes of the home. Aside from the literature there is a definitive narrative through advertising, and more generally in mainstream media (especially in children's TV) of how a home should look. The 'broken' home is not readily observed and therefore it would be logical to assume that the understanding that their space is different from others is likely.

There was little in the literature regarding the idea of houses as memories, that was so powerful in the findings. This is likely because the research focussed on adults recalling their childhoods and for some participants their family homes were still occupied by family members or had been in the recent past. Research involving children has contained less reflection in relation to family homes, however Sixsmith et al (2015) put forward one small testimony from a young man who described his house as having 'the spirit of the quarrel'. This quote relates to the feelings expressed in the research.

6.8.5 Making a Home in the Future

It is clear from the findings that the possession of ideas and knowledge about what makes an ideal home is difficult to realise in reality, for survivors of childhood domestic violence. Wardhaugh's term 'homeless at home' Wardhaugh (1999) remains fitting, and has resonance beyond the cessation of domestic violence and dawn of a new residence. Where a survivor is able to proclaim that her 'Mam's house is not my home' it possible to assume that the blueprint for the 'home' that she aspires to has not been experienced.

The findings are full of testimony that describe how that lack of blueprint creates complications when making a home for the future. These testimonies ranged from describing completely decorating a home and doing everything physically possible to create a 'home environment' but still experiencing feelings of 'homelessness', to feeling like every independent space experienced as an adult as simply 'a room with stuff in it'. Both of these extremes resulted in what could be described as the 'homeless at home' feeling that Wardhaugh (1999) encapsulates. This also relates to Kelly (2015) and her contention that being safe does not necessarily equate to feeling safe.

Specific feelings towards certain tenures in terms of a home in the future is difficult to unpick. In initial discussions relating to an ideal home it was not referred to at all however in discourse regarding future homes there was some precise reference to tenure. It is interesting to note that when tenure was explicitly discussed in a positive manner it was always in relation to home ownership. However it is also noted that elements such as security, choice and permanency featured heavily regardless of the type of tenure.

It may be possible to draw on the ideas of 'social norm' (Foye et al 2018) to explain the fact that many of the younger survivors, while often not explicitly referring to social housing, were clear that when they left the 'supported housing' they were currently resident in, they would be rewarded with a 'home' which represented all the aspects of an ideal home they required. While their tenures of childhood was not discussed, the fact they were in supported housing where the 'move on' procedure was the offer of accommodation within the social housing sector may have instilled that 'social norm' regardless of previous experience. Older survivors with experience of private renting had limited positive accolades to attribute to it. However as stated in the findings it is difficult extrapolate those views from sentiment many people have regarding privately renting which include issues of precarity and control. Home, with regard to the ideas set out in both the findings and the literature is also difficult to achieve for many citizens regardless of childhood experiences.

Clapham, (2010) argues that the provision of accommodation is negligent without proper consideration of wellbeing, and what he states as central tenets of a home which read as personal control; identity and self-esteem; social support; and inequality and housing policy. Shaw (2010) highlights the lack of control people feel when living in areas of residualisation. The reality for families and young people who flee domestic violence is that are likely to rely on social housing, or private rented accommodation in the future. How that accommodation is sought, allocated, paid for and experienced may have massive impacts on whether that accommodation is experienced as 'home'. As Clapham (2010) argues, to talk about housing is in a way to miss the point and it should be possible for the barriers to creating a home to be more fully considered both in housing policy and housing practice and perhaps other policy areas such as social security.

6.9 Chapter Summary

Children who are living with domestic violence are often experiencing home in way that deviates from the expected virtues that a home is supposed to provide. Therefore the way that feminist theory has sought to analyse the way in which abused women experience has

relevance when trying to conceptualise the reality for children in the same situation. Talking to survivors about domestic violence through the lens of home has uncovered significant findings regarding how children experience coercive control which affords a more comprehensive understanding of day to day to lives. The use of space within a home where domestic violence is present has been illuminated with insight into how assumed norms often stand contrary to experience. Finally, the findings demonstrate how experiences in childhood that generate a negative model of home continues to impact in adulthood and the creation of homes in the future. The chapter starts to link this with wider housing policy and proposals for the future, which are then explored further in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Seven: What Factors are Associated with Resilience for Children Experiencing Domestic Violence?

'Why should children have to be resilient? (Survivor Twelve).

7.1 Introduction

The findings will not look at resilience in a vacuum but will first look at the awareness and knowledge children show in relation to their situations. There will be then be discourse shared regarding voices of children and whether they are heard, how they are heard and the consequences or subsequent actions associated with those voices. There will be then discussion around agency, in other words immediate resilience, actions that were taken during childhood to try and minimise harm for either themselves or others in the household. Relationships with mothers, essentially the non-abusing parent will also be examined in the context of resilience.

Finally, longer term aspects of resilience or positive adaptation will be discussed. This longer term outlook is twofold in that there will be testimony articulating the ongoing negative impacts of childhood throughout life, heavily implying an impossibility of absolute resilience. However there will also be a section devoted to optimistic and encouraging aspects of a future life for children who have lived with domestic violence through the testimony of adult survivors who have moved forward with their lives and created their own existence that stands apart from their beginning.

7.2 Children's Awareness, Credit, Voice and Belief

There was a strong belief articulated that the perception that children don't see, hear or understand domestic violence because they were upstairs or in another room or just too young to comprehend what is happening, was reported by professionals, as still very much prevalent. This belief is a contributing factor in the continued lack of credit children are afforded for what they know and understand. Resilience was linked to how much credit children received:

And I think there's still a massive thing about parents thinking if they're upstairs in bed and there's stuff going on downstairs that nobody picks up on it and the kids don't know, still think that's an issue, that we still haven't got past that (Family Support Worker).

In other words, children are sometimes not afforded the awareness of their own experiences, feelings and opinions. This was also identified in the testimony of survivors. One survivor succinctly articulated this sentiment:

I don't think a lot of adults understand that children experience emotions in exactly the same way that adults do (Survivor Nine).

This statement is sad as it reflects, an arguably present, lack of empathy with children and a lack of full realisation about the depth of emotion occurring. It also refutes the credit children deserve. Failure to understand and appreciate that children can be the experts of their own reality negates their credibility that denigrates their value.

7.3 Does a child disclose?

An issue that many survivors were keen to emphasise is how frightening it can be for a child to tell anyone outside of the family what is going on at home. This was essentially due to two dominant factors involving stated consequences which are somewhat contradictory. The first factor was regarding fear of immediate physical reprisals in the home if the disclosure was shared with a perpetrator, following a failure to act, by services, in a timely and effective manner. The second factor was that as a result of disclosure, parents would be in trouble and a child might be removed from the family home.

This survivor stressed the need for immediate action following disclosure in order to protect the child:

It's frightening in case you tell them, and they don't do nothing till the next day and you have to go back that night and you have to take that hiding and what you get for telling (Survivor Three).

Where loyalty to parents occurred, any desire for help that existed was overridden by a pressure to protect them from negative consequences. One survivor articulated that sentiment:

Because it is hard for kids to talk and like saying what is wrong, what is happening. But some kids really do care about their parents like I did, and I didn't want to get them in trouble, so I wouldn't say anything (Survivor Eight).

For another survivor there was an absence of process when making a decision about disclosure in that consequences, as such were not considered. This survivor encapsulates how even a process of deciding to disclose is not present. There is no cognitive dissonance occurring, there is an innate sense that the life as they are living it, is frozen solid.

I think at the time I didn't identify it (home life) as abusive....It was only through training later on in my life. I knew it wasn't good and I knew I wanted to get out but I think I just believed that that's what home was like and that everybody wanted to leave when they were 18 and not go back (Survivor Nine).

If children are too frightened to tell there was conversely, a notion that adults were frightened to ask. What emerged around this subject was how conversations with children are framed. There was a belief amongst some practitioners that children could not be probed or lead, or asked outright about possible scenarios they were living in. An Independent Living Worker from a refuge, with years of experience in the field made clear a distinct difference between the way women and children were engaged and assessed in this setting:

Children's workers are not there to probe them or ask them about the domestic violence, you know how we speak to the Mam. So we would obviously, we would have to ask really personal things and we would do the RIC checklist, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse (whispered). Obviously children, you don't (Independent Living Refuge Worker).

A note of caution is due here since this is only one testimony however it does indicate a two-tier system of support even when children receive their own dedicated workers. In addition a range of professionals identified children as being excluded from processes, assessments and decisions. Overall, there is a picture of a dual process operated by services when dealing with victims of abuse, depending on position in the family. One survivor took issue with this approach and vehemently set out her opinion that children should be regarded in their own right:

And I think this whole thing, that it is common to say that the best way to protect the child is to protect the mother. I think it, it is almost giving professionals, like the easy get out that you don't need to speak to the children, because as long as you're providing for the mum – don't worry, they'll, they'll look after their children. But, I think that is a real shame and I think it is leaving children feeling less heard, you

know. They could be in a refuge and still no one has talked to them about domestic violence. I mean that is crazy, isn't it? (Survivor Thirteen).

These lack of opportunities to talk and the concerns about consequences of disclosure serve as potentially limiting the likelihood that children will enact agency in these circumstances.

However, two children's workers based in the third sector, who run a specialist group programme for children who have experienced domestic violence, talked about how they have departed from this approach and how their own confidence in this method of working was growing and yielding results in terms of children opening up and moving forward. They recognised that they were freer than other professionals to adjust their working styles and it also must be noted that the children taking part were already known to services regarding domestic violence. The recovery programme was relatively new (going for roughly two years) and the workers had changed and amended content as part of the development of the work. The workers in this case effectively run own their programme and their work, which potentially allows them to move away from established norms in children's work, as stated previously.

Surprises for me is how honest the children are when you actually work with them. We are not as restricted as a SW would be in that we are able to ask questions and we are able to have honest conversations with children whereas SW's might be deemed as that as a leading question. So we are at a total separate criteria to that so we are able to have conversations and say, 'well how do you feel about that?', 'what impact has that had' (Children's Worker).

As stated, it had surprised them how effective it was to be more direct. One conversation further uncovered and evidenced some differing responses in children when engaged in this particular service compared to what they had shared in the past:

And I think surprising to us as well, can I also say, we've had children come here that have worked with us for ten weeks and have disclosed to us things that they have never said to anybody to before. Like they've been going to school for four years and they've never said anything. They've had Social services, they've had outreach workers, they've had SIPS they've had support in school. They've never told anyone anything (Children's Worker).

It is important for this research that these workers were directly asked why they thought this had occurred and what conclusions they drew about what should be out there for children generally in those circumstances:

It's an interesting question cos we kind of just deal with it there and then. We think brilliant, this is a breakthrough for this child, that's what we focus onI think probably more so that, that they're not being asked. Because I think when they go to services, half the time they're probably not asked a direct question of how they feel or what they want or what they think (Children's Worker).

The workers had not previously conceptualised their method of working in a specified way prior to this research taking place and they were interested in exploring this further. It is perhaps necessary to present this way of working within a theoretical framework that provides a process of naming and defining, and validation. It must be noted again that this work was carried out with children where domestic violence had already been identified as an issue.

One survivor recalled an incident where she was spoken to in a direct way by a family member due to concerns that this family member had. The way the survivor describes the situation has thought-provoking implications:

It wasn't until my Aunty clicked on that I wasn't eating or drinking for like ages and in me room a lot that she clicked on that there was something wrong. So she sat there and went on and on and like forced me to tell her. So I did and I opened up to her and I told her everything and then when she went straight away you need to take you to the police and get some support. I said 'I don't wanna' cos my Step Dad turned round and said 'if you get the police involved that's it, I'm gonna be black and blue (Survivor Five).

In this case the survivor did go to the police with the support of her Aunty and there was an immediate response.

The words 'forced me to tell her' are instructive. There was no suggestion from this survivor that she was forced in a physical or coercive way, rather in order for her to tell someone what was going on, the investigator needed a strong belief that something was not right, and persistence. This is an ethically challenging method of engagement involving any person, never mind a child and it is imperative to state that it is possible for a family member, who

knows a child well and has a relationship with them, to approach this kind of subject matter in a way that may deviate from acceptable communication from professionals.

It was repeatedly highlighted by professionals that when children attempted to speak their truth they were shut down by a variety of sources, including both parents, and prevented from being honest about what they are seeing and hearing. One refuge service was clear that children are service users 'in their own right' and are not the property of their parents. The manager of that service described children talking about their lives on their own terms as 'owning their own reality'. This was seen as a poignant phrase as it encapsulates the moment when a child is given credit:

We are about empowering children to own their own reality, not be gas lighted, to understand that people should not be allowed to deny them what they saw, understood and heard, which happens and what happens with mothers and fathers. People trying to shut them down so they didn't tell the social worker things (Refuge Manager).

These thoughts were echoed by a range of professionals with many recognising that children look to their parents as a way of asking permission to say things or have their parents actively dispute a child's version of events.

Following on from this point there was testimony from one survivor regarding how children can be presented to adults outside the immediate family which characterises them in a certain way and damages their credibility. This is a process with stark similarities to the way adult women are sometimes presented by perpetrators. This is important because it has to be recognised this can be influential in how situations are interpreted, dialogue is framed, and potentially affect whether decisions are made to intervene:

She (my gran) blames herself, I don't know why it's not her fault. She blames herself for not being able to tell what was going on. Cos when I went too her house I would have marks and that off my Mam. She would just get told, 'she fell down the stairs, she fell over'. And obviously I've always been clumsy. And she (Mam) was quite believable.....it's what my Mam used to say, that I was clumsy, when I was covered in bruises and bashes (Survivor Two).

It is possible therefore that children's credibility is being compromised which is potentially damaging if and when they decide to disclose or speak out. This also occurred in

interpretations of children's behaviour by authorities, that is again already colouring how information might be understood. This was demonstrated by a school report one survivor had uncovered. This quote demonstrates how behaviours or actions can be interpreted and by adults, and assumed to be true, without the child themselves being engaged:

And, and when I read my school reports a couple of, like last year or something we dug them out the loft, because we were moving. And they said that I was attention seeking..... So, I don't think they would necessarily deal with it now, but I was completely shocked by their lack of trying to look any deeper...You know, it was all just, it was like no one, no one ever ever asked me, is everything Ok at home? You know (Survivor Thirteen).

It was explicitly expressed that children needed to be listened to, talked to and asked questions about their lives and experiences. In other words children's voices need to be heard in their own right without prejudice, as autonomous beings with their own unique experiences and opinions.

Some survivors experienced disbelief in an extreme manner by adults in their life when they were children, and sometimes continued into adulthood:

I think my Mum should have clicked on more, getting bruises like every day cos it was only like me and him in the house cos my brother was living with his girlfriend at the time but me Mum didn't click on she thought I was like doing it for attention. As I say Mum it's not me honestly, it's him abusing us and she didn't believe us and she still doesn't (Survivor Five).

In terms of resilience it can be thus be suggested disbelief has a negative impact. To go through abuse and then be dismissed by a parent must be extremely difficult to accept and process and is perhaps as challenging as the abuse itself.

One survivor in particular had some major concerns about how authorities behave and are obliged to behave when confronted with children and young people disclosing abuse by parents. He challenges assumptions regarding parents propensity to protect themselves and the rights that parents have regardless of allegations made against them. He is essentially highlighting the dynamics of domestic violence and what he sees as failure to recognise those dynamics by the authorities investigating it. This is what he had to say about a lack of prosecution of his father after a disclosure of physical abuse on two separate occasions:

Well, he (the father) got a slap on the wrist this time. But it's still like ... I don't know how to explain it, like I've put my trust in the system and it's failed me because my mum, my dad and my brother have all said it's not true because they are scared of my dad but the police don't see this. The police don't see that, they just ... I don't know it's hard to explain. Like I don't understand why a 15 year old kid would go through all that time and all that hassle just to be ... One of the things they said to me when I was 15 was that a lot of kids come to us and say the parents are hitting us when they're not really they just want to go to parties and get some freedom. I don't see why that's a stereotype for kids, that's probably why most kids don't go. I have no trust in the police now; I have no trust in the system because they failed me twice, I've trusted them twice and they've failed me twice... Yes, they don't see that but I think if you're a servant to the public and you're clever enough to catch murders and criminals you should be clever enough to look past this false façade of nothing happened (Survivor Eleven).

He also talked in more general terms about physical evidence and the emphasis placed on it to prove abuse is happening. He is clear that verbal reports from a child are more important and that disbelief and a reliance on such evidence discourages children from talking about their home life or experiences:

But why would I have bruises, three week, four weeks after it's happened? They might have been all physical evidence but I sat there again in the police station telling you that this has happened... If there's two consecutive reports saying the same thing from the same child something should be done and this is why little kids are getting killed by parents. Because social services go around, there's no bruises on the kid, there's not this, everything is fine and the next week the kid is dead. I think that's why lot of kids feel like there is no escape because there is no point in telling the authorities because they are not going to do anything (Survivor Eleven).

The words that he uses here, 'kids feel like there is no escape' is a pretty damning indictment of how he feels children experiencing domestic violence view their prospects of their situation improving. A feeling of hopelessness about whether a situation is able to be changed, massively effects whether or not a child makes a decision to attempt to make a difference to their own lives. The reaction of adults and authorities to a child's disclosure agains serves to place limits on whether or not a child discloses in the future.

There is a further set of circumstances that move beyond disbelief but actually involve children being acutely aware that other adults around them have full knowledge about the domestic that is occurring in the home. They are situations where full knowledge fails to prompt any corresponding actions. Survivors described that particular experience in a negative way and reflected some of the confusion they felt as children. The voice of the child is rendered somewhat null and void if everybody knows anyway. One survivor described a physical assault on her mother that happened in a public space and was therefore known about but she did not recall any intervention taking place following the incident:

And, you know, I remember growing up knowing that, for instance, my dad had, had beaten up my mum outside the local pub, and everyone knew it. Like everyone knew my dad was abusive...And even when we had moved to certain areas, he had a reputation, and people would know, but no one ever said ... As far as I was concerned, no one ever said anything or did anything (Survivor Thirteen).

It is possible to suggest from this testimony that the voice of the child is twofold. It exists in a literal sense that involves actually speaking words or actively communicating. However there is also another sense of a child's voice, whereby there is active recognition by adults outside the home of the existence of the child, as being present, and living and breathing within these conditions of control and violence. When a child knows that everyone knows but there is a failure to acknowledge or act, their human presence as well as their voice is denied.

But I felt like everyone, if I could have told, I think everyone would have already known in a way. Like it is a weird feeling, I don't know, because if they did know and nothing happened until I was like 14...I just feel like...But then I feel like I should have told someone because if I did, then maybe something would have been done earlier (Survivor Eight).

In these situations, agency may seem to be futile and pointless and therefore limit it by demonstrating how pointless it would be to disclose. How these situations affect longer term resilience or the ability to make positive adaptations for a successful life for the future is not possible to ascertain here. However blatant failures to protect and believe is likely to damage self-worth and therefore resilience in the future.

7.4 What do Resilient Children Look Like?

The findings provided a picture of what is viewed as a resilient child. The quiet child, the studious child, the child who spends a lot of time at home, the child who does not react to situations in an external way. They were children who did not appear to be angry and were not displaying outward facing behaviours that were problematic in an obvious way.

Many survivors identified as high achievers at school and academically, during their childhood. The concentration on academic advancement was seen as a way of excluding the outside world physically and psychologically and could be regarded as a sign of resilience. Working hard at school was also associated with maturity and sometimes linked to other 'mature' behaviours such as helping in the house. This survivor encapsulates many of the features highlighted:

Yeah, yeah, and I think that's where I got this kind of, that's where this idea of whole resilience comes from. Like, I was doing well at school, and then I was helping a lot at home, and anyone from the outside would have looked and been like, oh, she's, you know, grown up, especially for a teenager, like perfect. Because I didn't go out very much, and I didn't have friends in (Survivor Thirteen).

These themes were echoed across the testimonies of survivors. However, there was also a pattern of recognition that achievement at school arose in parallel and occurred simultaneously with a deficit in emotional literacy:

The fact that the other kids played together outside school...I was so responsible and so focused on my studies, you know...I had, I was pretty advanced in terms of like reading skills and stuff, because that's all I did. I just kind of you know, buried myself in the school work, but if you had asked me what emotions I had, I wouldn't have been able to ...(Survivor Nine).

This declaration implies an internal repression of emotion as well as a lack of external expression of trauma experienced. The use of the word 'buried' is interesting in this context as it offers an easily imaginable metaphor. To describe studying as burying yourself gives an impression that there was an attempt to exclude all other facets of life and therefore is more suggestive of a mode of survival than resilience.

Another survivor referred to high achieving as a phenomena affecting him and all of his siblings but from a slightly different standpoint in that he saw the focus on study as a way of rising above rather than being buried in. It may well actually result in the same coping mechanism but seen in a disparate way:

We're all (him and siblings) kind of high performing... High achieving, yeah we always kind of were, um, performing if that makes sense. Whether it was athletically or academically (Survivor Four).

To do well at school is universally seen as a desirable outcome for children. It's potentially problematic to assess academic achievement in a negative light or view it as being used to mask something else going on in a child's life. Where it is known that domestic violence is occurring or has been present, achievement is likely to be seen as a positive factor however what is emerging in these findings is that there is likely latent harm when achievement is potentially being used to suffocate emotional consciousness.

All of the survivors who discussed the issue of achievement associated lack of time spent with peers and an expectation they would be at home as linked factors. These features of a child's life may be included in an analysis that concludes that a child who is focussed on school work and prioritises achievement, is perhaps seen as mature. As one survivor states in a previous quote, she was seen as grown up. However this research has successfully demonstrated that these features can also be a sign that coercive control is being exercised in the home, and shaping and directing children's actions. In this context the resilient child is actually the controlled and oppressed child who is denied any other form of expression.

Despite some of the viewpoints previously expressed, professionals did unequivocally express concern about the lack of help and support for children who were deemed to be resilient but were potentially experiencing similar level of trauma. Professionals also shared their fears that children who acted in a resilient manner when they were young sometimes went onto display more outward signs of distress when they reached adolescence. Many professionals thought that children who had experienced domestic violence should be routinely helped and spoken to but were quite clear that this was not happening:

Some people would ...say well there is an element of children that are just resilient and don't need those interventions but I would say, how do we know unless they have the same opportunity to explore it (Former Health Visitor for the Homeless).

A family support worker overtly referred to a specific lack of service for children who appear to be resilient:

Yeah it's thought that they're (children who are doing well) dealing with it better and I think they hold it in and it comes out later and I think there isn't really, if I'm totally honest, here isn't a service for children like that. If they're doing alright then they're doing alright (Family Support Worker).

Where this applied to survivors there was no sense at all that they were 'doin alright'. Perhaps one of the most disturbing themes from survivors is the feeling of invisibility in these circumstances which is revisited later in the chapter. One survivor was hopeful that if she existed as a child today the factors discussed in this section would be recognised as symptoms and signs that domestic violence was occurring in the home:

I think now, probably, somebody would notice that. They would think, well, where, when does this kid have fun? This kid's like really, really kind of serious and like hyper, uh, responsible (Survivor Nine).

Unfortunately this testimony is not backed up by the current professionals in the field who are absolutely resolute that this kind of 'resilience' is not met with help and support from services. This final quote encompasses the feeling of hopelessness a child may have in these positions:

So, I just, I spent a lot of childhood feeling like unnoticed (Survivor Thirteen).

There was discussion regarding whether living with domestic violence can be normalised for children, resulting in a limited or complete lack of tangible response to their situation, either generally or following an incident of physical violence. There was discourse exploring the concept of familiarity in this context and whether traumatic experiences can be viewed as routine. In other words do children, 'get used to it', and if that can be recognised as a reality, can it be interpreted or translated as resilience. This testimony from a housing professional explicitly assents that children who have consistently lived with domestic violence from a young age are somehow not as badly affected as children who experience it following a period of relative normality:

I think it's when they're growing up in that environment, some children are used to that environment and that's what they see and these are the ones that have got the

cyclical programme. They see this happening and that's their normal way of life so that's the way they grow up. The harshest cases are where the kids are just, they've had a like a normal life, as such, and then violence and domestic violence has just started through a reason and that's the most harshest of cases cos they don't understand what's happening (Housing Association Support Worker).

There is no suggestion in this research that this expression implies that there is no recognition of harm. However, it is an illuminating testimony as it does give weight to the 'get used to it' belief system, and evidences that this belief currently exists in practice. It is essentially an incongruent concept as it states that the more a child experiences trauma the less they are affected by it. And this is ascertained, in part because of a preconceived notion about how children demonstrate a reaction to trauma. The absence of this reaction is taken as resilience even if not in an entirely positive way. This second quote from a professional condenses this way thinking further:

And then the other concern is that it was almost normalised and they were resilient, sometimes there would be things going on and the child wouldn't bat an eyelid (Former Health Visitor for Homeless Families).

Survivors fully acknowledged this phenomena but had significantly diverging ways of understanding what was happening. The following testimony provides a powerful antidote to any perception that children 'get used to it':

I remember just the fact that they (the police) thought that I was together enough (to tell school about an incident of physical violence in the home), because I wasn't crying. Because I didn't really, you know, by the time you have seen things so many times, you don't cry, and you don't get, you know, because the only point of crying is just someone's going to notice. Do you know what I mean? (Survivor Thirteen).

The idea that children stop reacting to situations after a prolonged period of being ignored and their needs not being met, is a starkly contrasting analysis to 'getting used to it'.

Another survivor did give some credence to the concept of normalisation but shunned the indication that it implied increased resilience:

I don't know. I don't know about resilience, I think, you know, I don't think its resilience, I just think when, when you're that age, you just kind of, you accept

whatever is around you is normal, even if deep down if you know that it might not be right, you just go on, that is the way it is (Survivor Twelve).

This testimony again provides a differing analysis of children's acceptance of their situation. There was no survivor that highlighted repeated exposure to domestic violence as a factor in increased resilience. Therefore using this model can be seen as a potentially dangerous way to assess children's needs and their capacity for resilience. When these kinds of concepts are established as almost conventional wisdom it is possible to predict a process of 'othering' whereby 'normal' children are seen as in need of support but children from certain families or demographics are seen as conditioned to these situations and less deserving of help and support.

7.5 Agency – A Vacuum of Responsibility?

The theme of agency, immediate resilience, also emerged in the findings denoting the narrative of the resilient child. Testimony relating to this topic is heard in contrast to the idea of a child 'witnessing' violence and effectively demonstrates a far more complex and nuanced response. However, recognising a tangible divergence from passivity does not necessarily lead to a conclusion of increased resilience and it is important to consider the context where agency occurs. Decisions to act are not automatically interpreted as conscious resilience but potentially as a way of coping in the only way that seems apparent to that child at that moment. It is also possible to interpret agency as taking responsibility for situations. This testimony from a housing manager refers to an emotional agency that seeks to smooth over situations of conflict and violence:

No matter how young they are they go into that trying to make somebody happy, they very much kind of trying to please and trying to make up for the bad atmosphere the bad kind of things that are happening so resilience wise they display a massive amount of resilience but are they really is that just a coping technique because that's kind of what happens after an argument after an incident, is that resilience or is it just a case of so you know what this is a normal behaviour, this is what we do but actually inside they don't know what else to do there's no other...(Housing Association Support Manager).

The professional in this case appears to describe a kind of emotional responsibility that she has observed children displaying when living with domestic violence. The attempt to try and create an atmosphere within an entire home and family, in order to modify the worst effects

of domestic violence is an incredible feat and is almost pronounced here as a potential feeling of obligation or a duty.

A refuge manager develops the theme of children's agency and responsibility further by referencing the care aspect of children's lives as well as the emotional concerns already mentioned:

And some of them have become mini adults and little carers at the age of 8, 9 or 10 are the ones that look after their mother and try to keep the peace and have adult responsibilities way beyond their years because they've grown up with domestic violence (Refuge Manager).

By using the term mini adult it can be therefore be assumed that this professional has witnessed some degree of a childhoods lost. From an outside perspective they have the maturity to take on adult roles and responsibility, and that 'resilience' is impressive and beyond what could be expected of them. However, to return to a key feature of these findings, resilience in this context can be viewed more as doing what has to be done in the absence of actions from adults. It can also thus be suggested that although in that moment they may seem resilient, the longterm effects are unknown.

One survivor echoed the comments articulated by the previous two professionals by describing taking on the practical responsibilities within the home in an endeavour to create space in a physical and emotional capacity that may prevent violence occurring:

Like, you know, I spent a lot of time when I got a bit older as a teenager, you know, I was cooking them meals and doing the housework before my parents got in, and trying to like, make everything as right as it could be...So that maybe they would come in and nothing would go wrong (Survivor Thirteen).

The findings demonstrate that the lines between agency, responsibility and resilience are extremely blurred. This testimony from a survivor may support the hypothesis that these things are occurring in parallel and delivers an extreme example of all three that shockingly lays bare the extent that children sometimes have to step up:

So, me and my twin brother made a plan that he would go with my dad and I would go with my mum, so they went along...because remember, we were scared in case like my mum would drink and fall and hurt herself, and my dad would do the same...I

think that happened when we were about 12, that we made that decision (Survivor Eight).

The last four words of that statement supremely resonate when you consider the age of the children involved and the momentousness of that decision. It is unlikely that the term resilience can adequately explain or account for the variables involved in this situation. This is agency of borne out of necessity, this is filling the void in the absence of any tangible response by adults. This 'vacuum of responsibility' requires somebody to fill the void, and in the absence of another adult, children feel that they are obliged to act. Is that resilience or is that survival?

The last area of agency which will be covered in these findings, is intervention during incidents of physical violence. The first survivor described routinely responding by physically trying to halt violence as it was occurring:

And as I got older my role was essentially, my dad would hit my mum, I would hit my dad and he'd come after me, because coming after me was better than him going after mum (Survivor Ten).

These actions demonstrate a definitive and perceptible reaction by children when faced with violence in the home. It would be possible to provide resilience as a possible explanation for this, in that it can be viewed as seeking to protect from negative impacts. The cessation of violence against a child's mother is protecting them from further shortterm trauma. However, the cost of that is potential violence directly against the child, which in the immediate may cause physical damage but also raises questions about long term negative consequences and future ability to positively adapt.

There was another survivor testimony which described physical intervention in a slightly different context. Rather than interfering routinely this was a recollection of a significant incident that represented an extreme change in response, triggered by an age related increase in physical strength and size. In similarity with the previous statement, the intervention was made in order to protect his mother. The gender of this survivor is relevant as his physical presence eventually outweighed that of his father's:

I said, "You put your fucking hands on my mum again and I will fucking kill you, you cunt." Now, by this point, I was, I was physically bigger than him by this point...Um, and I just got the better of him. I have got him on the floor, and then I am just ... I

remember, I just started kicking him in the ribs, and then me mum comes down and pulls me off. After that, the power balance changed (Survivor Twelve).

This seemingly sudden reversal of physical dominance strikes of opportunity and obligation and again survival, rather than a recognised contributor to longer term resilience. These findings do not seek to deny the existence of a child's agency but instead seek to place the agency displayed within a specific context in order to try and understand it more fully. The context is here is analysed as a 'vacuum of responsibility' occurring as a result of domestic violence.

7.6 Oh Mother- Survivors' perceptions

Two of the survivors were in the custody of the state from a relatively young age and there were also a further two survivors which were looked after by the state from 14yrs old and 15yrs old respectively. Therefore it would be reasonable to state that eleven out of thirteen survivors involved in this research had spent the majority of their childhoods with their mothers. There was a notable lack of positive sentiment towards mothers and an articulation of negligence by mothers. Only two survivors reported a positive and strong relationship with their mothers.

Testimony regarding mothers made reference to them not always believing children had been abused and siding with perpetrators. Many survivors stated that their mothers had historic and ongoing problems with alcohol and conveyed a distance existing from childhood through to adulthood to the present day. This phenomena is encapsulated here:

But you know when my dad left my Mum still had a drinking problem....And even now still has a real, has a drinking issue (Survivor Thirteen).

There was not an absence of empathy, which is demonstrated by an understanding of a mother's situation or predicament and sometimes a well-developed appreciation of the dynamics of domestic violence. However there was a theme of frustration that a recognition from mothers about the reality of the survivors' lives as children was not forthcoming. This survivor talks about a general obstruction to truth facilitated by her mother that is ongoing and contributes to a prevention of resolution:

It's impossible to talk about without it sounding like a criticism on my mother, because in reality it is a criticism on my mother. But she would make excuses for my

dad. Um and she did it when he was alive and she did it when he was dead
(Survivor Ten).

The impact of domestic violence on relationships between mothers and children was also discussed by professionals. There was an identification of damage that is evident post-separation:

To be the peacemaker (in a relationship characterised by domestic violence) is not allowing the children to be children. Actually when the perp has gone, and in the aftermath, you find that you have a lot of resentful children and you haven't got a relationship (with the mother) there (Family Support Worker).

7.7 It Never Leaves You

'It never leaves you' was stated by a professional who was also a survivor of childhood domestic violence. It encapsulates and echoes what every survivor relayed in some way. Which is that the effects of living with domestic violence as a child remain into adulthood and remain throughout entire lives, and there is no bullet proof vest that mitigates all the effects of this childhood. Resilience is not possible in some kind of Black Mirror esq fashion, where the domestic violence which has been lived through and experienced, is eradicated from the memory to allow future development. There is no absolute resilience even when life appears on the surface to be stable and a survivor has successfully departed from the blueprint of their childhood. This was evident from this testimony:

Um, and we are all (her and her siblings) however good or bad our lives have been at various points, we're all shaped, very, very much and I don't think you ever escape it
(Survivor Ten).

There was a consensus that there were reverberating effects throughout the transition from childhood to adulthood. And there was very much a sentiment that the effects were actually felt more keenly after the fact. That the damage is present more fully in later life, as the enormity of the events takes hold on the person.

It (domestic violence) really fucks you up when you're older, it does it really fucks you up
(Survivor Three).

Survivors specified particular aspects of their lives they felt had been impacted by their childhood. Struggles with mental health featured heavily in accounts and survivors were able to identify reasons for these issues that related directly to their unique family experience. One survivor described how her mother labelled her and her siblings as unable to deal with stress and made that the focus of difficulties they were facing:

So, then of course, when I got depressed, because of the way I'd grown up it wasn't about the behaviour or what I'd experienced, it was about something about me. I'm defective. I can't handle stress, like my mum's thing is that, 'oh, you guys get stressed, you can't handle stress', and she still does that with my little sister. But actually it's, my little sister's got a completely normal response to an abnormal situation (Survivor Nine).

For another survivor significantly less time had passed since the abuse had ended and she had been directly abused by her Step Dad. It was obvious that the effects of the abuse she had suffered were still very much in her present:

Yeah cos like it was like when my Mum wasn't there I was used as practically, kind of like sexual abuse cos like the full three years and now it's just affected me like big time. I started like self-harming cos of it and like making myself ill because all the domestic violence I've seen in the house and what happened to me it's just like keep running back, like nightmares for us (Survivor Five).

Difficulties in adult relationships were referred to explicitly by two survivors. One woman talked about problems in expressing herself in a relationship if she felt unhappy with another person's behaviour:

I find it really hard to sustain relationships with men...I would be very unlikely to have like an angry outburst. You know, some people in couples, well I see this, you know, they love each other, but the woman feels perfectly able to go, 'you did this and you did that' and then they work things out. I couldn't do that. I think I would just freeze, I wouldn't ... I just couldn't do it, because all that stuff, that default stuff that has been kind of instilled in me just says no, you can't do that because potentially, you know, you're in danger (Survivor Nine).

This testimony demonstrates, in a similar way to many survivors of domestic violence, that even when the threat has been removed the behaviours remain the same because the fear

has not been removed. This has parallels with the previous section that highlighted the difficulties for adults securing a home in the future by exploring the idea that being safe in a property does not equate to feeling safe. It is possible that this survivor could be safe in a relationship but not feel safe, and not feel safe to articulate sentiments and opinions. The domestic violence experienced in childhood continues to silence the adult in their own relationships and hinders their expression of self- interest and protection.

A male survivor also discussed difficulty in adult relationships but had a slightly different emphasis. It is possible to identify a gender variance in how domestic violence lived as a child effects the adult in the future in this context:

And that can contribute probably to a lot of what we have talked about, you just feel like you have got some kind of, I don't know. I used to think of it, it is like a cancer. Like there was something growing in me that was going to take over, and I was going to turn into this terrible ... And then that obviously has impacts on intimacy and relationships and stuff like that (Survivor Twelve).

This quote discerns a converse situation from the previous one. A female survivor scared to be vocal in a relationship because of safety concerns and a male survivor scared that they will become a perpetrator themselves. Therefore the negotiation of intimate relationships for adults who lived with domestic violence as a child is potentially problematic.

There was a definitive theme that emerged in which it was relayed that some days are coped with better than others. This provides an impression that resilience is, especially in the long term, fluid in the sense that it ebbs and flows depending on a variety of external and internal factors:

And it, it will ... Well, it, it has fucked me up for life...Yeah, it's, it's not always at the front of me head, but it is always at the back...But sometimes it does come; it sneaks to the front and then that is the days that it is not good for me. Not good days for me (Survivor Three).

Finally in this section one survivor talked powerfully about the value of emotional security and how that is a prerequisite for attaining other forms of security. It is important for this research to recognise this thought because it has implications for ideas about resilience. It is likely that children growing up with domestic violence are missing that base of emotional security to grow from and are therefore potentially at a disadvantage. The survivor again

references the theme of fear and anticipation, and its continuation beyond the removal of the immediate threat:

And I think if you don't have that emotional security, you are not going to get any kind of financial security, you are not going to get any kind of physical security, you are not going to get any kind of stability in your life because, you know, like I said, I just felt like for a long, long time that any minute now, everything was just going to go wrong. It was just going to just all, and a lot of the time I just self-destructed, just because then I think it was over. Here is the disaster, I can cope with it now as opposed to waiting for the fucking thing (Survivor Twelve).

The childhood need for the fear to be realised, as preferable to the anticipation would appear to continue through into adulthood and subsequently can translate into housing situations, relationships and life in general. This is an overwhelming facet of this research and illuminates the encompassing nature and durability of feelings of fear. This long lasting remnant hinders resilience as it prevents mental and emotional progression.

Another way of attaining emotional security is to withdraw and retreat from the outside world. One survivor described continuing this behaviour into adulthood:

And, you know, I think that is probably never going to go away. That sort of protection thing which ... and, and I think, you know, there are lot of coping strategies that I probably did as a child that I am still doing, I still have. I think I still find it quite hard to make really good friends and let people in really, because, you know (Survivor Thirteen).

That self-protection once present is difficult to leave behind and relates to fear again, fear to relate to people, fear of engaging with people outside the home environment.

7.8 Resilience Matters- It's My Life Now

However much it has been important to highlight the devastating effects of living with domestic violence as a child, it is also vital to show the strength of the human spirit and share as part of this research the positive outcomes that are possible. One survivor was very clear that being removed from her family had provided her with a basis for her life that she would not have otherwise had:

Cos I've been in care like most of my life, I've like changed loads, like cos I'm not violent or nowt, like ... cos my family wants us to be violent, but like I've been in care, so I know right from wrong (Survivor Five).

Another survivor who had experienced an unusual (in terms of this research) amount of transience as a child identified that being constantly put in new situations as a child has given him skills that have served him in adulthood:

I think it is a strength of mine and it is something I have identified as, in my career moving forward; I am not going to get a job because I am the best writer or anything; I am going to get a job because I don't have any problem walking up to someone and talking to them and having a conversation and just interacting and building rapport and that is definitely something that has come from ... it is a negative being turned into a positive (Survivor Four).

There is even testimony that locates actual situations of violence directed by a domestic violence perpetrator towards a child as providing preparation for circumstances faced in adulthood. One survivor was clear that facing conflict as a child had increased her resilience:

And the thing that I learnt from him that actually did me very well at Greenham and in my subsequent life, was I learnt how to stand up for myself and this sounds, I know really a dramatic way of putting it, but quite a lot of the time, if somebody is threatening me, I will go towards them rather than away (Survivor Ten).

Three of the survivors had gone into study and work with direct or indirect connections with domestic violence, and reported learning about domestic violence and surrounding issues as extremely beneficial in terms of moving forward:

Um, well, certainly my work obviously. I am kind of on a crusade now, really. I have spent so long studying and working in this sector, it is basically all I have ever done. And that makes me feel sort of like at least I am trying to make it into something positive and trying to turn it into something positive, rather than it just being negative. Um, and I guess I am definitely feminist because of it. Um, and sort of an activist like that, because I am, you know, really angry about it (Survivor Thirteen).

It is possible to interpret the anger about childhood as fuelling resilience and purpose in adulthood. A resilience occurring in spite of experiences not because of them was widely

conveyed in survivor's accounts of how they coped with their lives as they created their own existence. It is impossible to legislate for how individuals will respond to situations of abuse and ultimately this research shows that every person is different and that has to be considered when thinking about reactions to children's conditions.

Um, and I think I, I faced the challenge where I can either just carry on doing that, or I can take this and turn into it something good. Well, I knew I had to make the choice to do that. It wasn't something ... These experiences didn't kind of ferment and then create this wonderful beautiful flower. I had to look at it and reshape it and remould it into something. It makes me much more empathetic, I think (Survivor Twelve).

7.9 Discussion

The notion of resilience was discussed at various points throughout the research and not necessarily directly in response to questions relating to this subject area. The subject of resilience engendered a range of views and opinion from both practitioners and survivors. Insight has been provided into what children themselves felt made them stronger. In other words actions that were seen to negate harm at the time, and beyond into adulthood are referenced in relation to resilience. However there were additional and relevant consistent themes which emerged with perhaps the most significant being a constant challenge to the assumed features of resilient children especially in this context.

Some participants questioned the idea that something could be present in children which could mitigate the effects of growing up with domestic violence. It was also questioned whether it is reasonable to expect or foster resilience in children, on the pretext that ultimately children should be not be in situations that require resilience to this extent. Some practitioners also, in some cases, presented a weariness of the term as resilience can be perhaps an overused notion in practice relating to a strengths based approach now popular in social work. When children appear to find and immobilise strategies which appear to be enabling them to cope with domestic violence, both in the home and outside of it, it does not follow that they are not being negatively impacted. This is relevant both in the short and long term.

There is potentially an argument to say that all the survivors involved in this research are to an extent resilient or could be said to be demonstrating resilience by simply taking part, which is a point made by Humphreys (2001). To that extent it could be argued that this is an unrepresentative sample in that there may well be many adults who have experienced

domestic violence in their childhoods who would not feel able to talk to a researcher about their experiences. The first requirement for taking part in this research is the ability to recognise behaviour as abusive, which is an incredibly hard step to take. To then be able to step outside of that and answer questions about those experiences, knowing the overall aim of the research requires a further level of understanding and acceptance. Humphreys (2001) has this to say about the adult women who participated in her research:

Women's participation in this study was a manifestation of their ongoing adaptation, healing themselves, and uncovering the past. The findings indicate that the practice of trying to 'shield' children from family problems by withholding information may be misguided. For the participants in this research, withholding information often contributed to confusion, misunderstanding, and greater fearfulness' (Humphreys, 2001, p. 250).

7.9.1 Children Know

The conceptualisation of children's awareness and levels of knowledge about domestic violence in the home was primarily referred to in the context of denial by parents. In the findings professionals identified a continued trend for parents to minimise what they believed children were aware of by still making statements such as the 'children were in bed'. Numerous studies regarding children and domestic violence have highlighted this discrepancy (Mullender 2002; Radford and Hester, 2006; Overlein, 2013, Sixsmith et al, 2016;, Callaghan, 2017).

Research in this area (Abrahams, 1994; Mullender 2002; Buckley et al 2007; Katz, 2015) has demonstrated these discrepancies between parents (primarily mothers) accounts of what a child is privy too and the versions of events recounted by children. However, these revelations have taken place within a research arena. Professionals in these findings are demonstrating real time gas-lighting of children when they attempt, or might attempt, to talk about aspects of their lives.

Acknowledgement of conscious awareness of domestic violence, in children who live with it, is now embedded in academic research. However, following from that awareness is then child's right to articulate situations as they see and experience them. In the findings professionals highlighted examples where they believed that children were asking their parents, sometimes non-verbally, for permission to speak, to tell their own truth, or as one manager put it, 'own their own reality'. Professionals felt children were being monitored

against disclosure by their parents. This situation has echoes in the analysis provided by Oswell (2013) which places a child within narrative structures and in the context of other characters with agency. In other words their agency is fluid and dependent from one moment to another on how adults are utilising their agency.

An obstacle to disclosure cited in much of this research is fear, which is essentially what is going on for the children described by professionals here. This fear has also been described by survivors. The reasons for fear provided in these findings have involved physical repercussions if parents found out, and conversely fear that their parents would be in trouble. These findings fit succinctly with previous research (Overlein, 2009; Overlein, 2013; Callaghan et al, 2017).

There were some survivors who stated that they would never have disclosed to anyone because they did not have an internal discourse to suggest what was happening was wrong, or they did not possess language that would have accurately portrayed their situations. One survivor in particular experienced direct physical violence but only saw her mother being physically hurt occasionally. In the testimony by Hart and Hart (2018) they portray their naivety as children, as they only regarded physical abuse from a father to a mother as indicative of domestic violence. They also, had nothing to tell, nothing to disclose. However there is another parallel with this survivor and their experience and that is repression of emotions and a dearth of emotional illiteracy. The survivor in question, and the Harts were high achievers, had no outside reference to their experience and were also not always able to locate how they were feeling. There is a reflective recognition of living under coercive control as children but there is nothing that could have been spoken out loud at the time.

In direct relation to disclosure, the findings further explored whether adults were reluctant to ask children about their lives in a more direct way. Some of the information provided by professionals indicated a two-tier system of support in housing, refuge and some family support services, in that children were not afforded their own time or recognition as victims. A range of professionals identified children as being excluded from processes, assessments and decisions. Survivors took issue with this approach and they vehemently set out opinions that children should be regarded and listened to in their own right. One service that exists exclusively for children which was included in the research did openly ask children about their experiences and found it to be beneficial to the children's progress and ultimately their resilience. Their different approach, which sat in opposition to the general ethos behind discussion with children cited by other professionals, resulted in disclosure previously unheard. While children regaining trust was not explicitly referred to as an aim of the

intervention, by the workers, there was a sense of a similar ethos of providing safe spaces of trust and promoting resilience found in other targeted interventions for children who have lived with domestic violence (Sharpe et al, 2011; Callaghan et al, 2018).

The research has been able to find evidence that there are still beliefs present that some children are resilient because they 'get used to it', which implies that for those children it somehow isn't as bad. Professionals interpret children's lack of visible reaction to situations of domestic violence as an indication they are not being affected, or as resilience they are discounting the possibility of the 'defeat response' (Perry et al, 2001). This occurs when a child discontinues outward displays of distress due to a failure by adults to respond. This accurately mirrors the words of a survivor who explained her lack of outward response by saying 'because the only point of crying is just someone's going to notice' (Survivor thirteen).

Eliffe and Holt (2019) set out specifically to highlight the response of children during a police call out for domestic violence, and called out the notion of 'immunity' by stating that children were in fact 'actively resigning' which is enacted due to a variety of possible motivations. This research involved children who lived in houses where the police were regular visitors. Therefore it would be logical to conclude that those children knew that other people (the police at least) knew their situation and the absence of long term action in relation to their situation. Two survivors recalled public incidents of physical violence involving the abuse of their mothers by their fathers. They also recalled no further action taking place despite other adults being aware of the abuse. Both alluded to the learned futility of response to incidents due to the lack of action by other adults who knew about the abuse.

The literature offers alternative explanations for the 'used to it' presupposition which is useful to consider before resorting to somewhat lazy conclusions about repetitive exposure.

7.9.2 How Agency is Viewed

The findings reflect a wide range of agency displayed by children when confronted with domestic violence which has been referred to in this research as an immediate resilience. These findings align with research in this area which has aimed and driven to depart from the idea that children are passive beings within their own reality, by using the concept of agency as a prominent focal point regarding children and domestic violence (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al, 2002; Gorin 2004; Overlien and Hyden, 2009; Katz, 2015; Sixsmith, 2015; Callaghan et al, 2016; Callaghan et al, 2018). For Callaghan, Katz and Overlein a concentration on agency also links to the contention that children living with domestic

violence are victims in their own right and are not appendages of a 'primary victim'. This again relates to these findings as the emphasis has been on direct experiences of childhood.

This recognition of actions and thoughts has undoubtedly been extremely beneficial to furthering understanding of children's experiences particularly in light of their previous status that rendered them witnesses, observers or appendages to victims. However agency has been conceptualised in much of the literature as resilience, in that it has endeavoured to show children as actors and directly involved, and to an extent shaping in their situations. In essence they have shown children taking action to reduce harm.

There are numerous examples of agency in the findings and they all, as stated, in some way involve trying to avoid harm for either themselves or others. However it is hard not to be left with a sense that actions undertaken by children were an attempt to close a gap that was gaping open due to domestic violence and the detrimental impact on adults' ability to fulfil their obligations regarding their children. This analysis relates to situations described where children are cooking, cleaning up after incidents, ringing police, looking after smaller children. There is also agency displayed by children regarding more fundamental issues that perhaps hint at a wider negligence by adults that goes beyond the immediate family. There is testimony in the findings that references decisions being made by children about the living arrangements for themselves and their parents following a separation. This example of agency is quite extreme however there were comparable descriptions in the literature. In Overlien (2013) a fourteen year old boy is described as taking, 'major responsibility for his mother and her well-being' (2013: p. 281). He describes how he always stays in the house during incidents so that he can prevent his father from killing his mother. He doesn't believe he can stop his father beating his mother but potentially stop a murder. All of these situations These situations were portrayed in a way which depicted gaps in responsibility and but again placed children's agency within a context of reality constructed outside of their control (Oswell, 2013; Hammersley, 2017).

It is argued therefore, that the findings of this research shows that, while the focus on agency in children has been valuable in the pursuit of a greater understanding of how children experience domestic violence, agency is often a consequence of a 'vacuum of responsibility'. In addition by framing agency as resilience leaves open the possibility, as Perry et al (1995) argues, that the long term effects of the trauma suffered and encountered are somehow disabled. An act of immediate resilience does not provide any kind of forecast or prediction about the ability for that child to create a successful life in the future.

Eriksson (2011) is an advocate for children's participation in their own lives and sees resilience as fostered when children are listened to, their experiences acknowledged and also allowed to have some input into decisions that will directly affect them. To an extent this could be described as agency however children do not participate due to necessity and crucially it is paired with 'care'. This 'double view' is centred round an idea of empowerment within an arena of protection.

7.9.3 Parental Loss

In accounts of the experiences of home from survivors, positive recollections regarding mothers were limited. Feelings of frustration, disappointment, anger and confusion were directed at mothers. This is perhaps due to prevalence of survivors who remained in their home until they themselves left the family home. It has been recognised that domestic violence impedes mothers in their ability to parent in a number of ways. (Mullender, 2002; Radford and Hester, 2006; Holt et al, 2006; Douglas and Walsh, 2010; Lapierre, 2010; Katz, 2015). It could be possible to speculate on the various aspects of obstruction to parenting that perpetrators can exert over mothers, as identified in this body of literature, for example controlling the amount of time can be spent with children, forcing children to witness or participate in abuse of the mother or behaviour modification of the children due to an abusers presence. However due to the absence of the mother's voice in this research there could not be an accurate or authentic analysis provided.

Positive relationships between children and caregivers has been recognised as important for children's resilience with particular emphasis on the relationship with non-abusing parent (Gonzales, 2012; Jenney et al, 2016; Allagia and Donohue 2018). As previously stated it is with only one survivor that a largely positive relationship with the mother was reported. It is extremely difficult to offer any analysis relating this, and the resilience status of that survivor. However it would be possible to conclude that the long term resilience of the group as a whole, in terms of where they were in their lives, greatly varied. Therefore the single variable of relationships with mothers could not be taken in isolation as definitive of resilience levels based on this research.

Katz, (2015) depicts children and mother working together to resist the perpetrator in a variety of ways. There is study also involves descriptions of precious times spent between mothers and children away from the perpetrator either in or outside of the home. Again there is only one survivor who openly discussed this kind of event occurring. There was a consistent feeling represented by nearly all participants of mothers failing to be mothers by

being in denial about the abuse happening in the house, by drinking, by allowing abuse happen, by defending perpetrators and ultimately failing to exit the family home.

The concept of loss in relation to children who live with domestic violence is part of the discourse in much of the literature. Colis (2013) argues that loss is a central tenet of the experiences of these children particularly when they have had to leave their family home. Mullender (1994) highlights the issue of parental loss with an emphasis on fathers. This concept of loss has relevance to the findings but perhaps in a slightly different context. The younger survivors had 'lost' their entire family as it was them themselves that had fled. They left their mothers and fathers/step fathers in one act and because of the contact had been ceased on mass. Distress was expressed because of subsequent lack of contact with younger siblings who they missed and worried about. Many of the older survivors had experienced the death of their father which resulted in complex feelings and emotions. There was contact with their mothers but relationships were described as fractured and damaged. The concept of loss for the survivors in this research is manifest however it veers from the way loss is defined in the literature and adds weight for the need for further investigation into the experiences of young adults who flee domestic violence in their own right.

7.9.4 The Long Echo of Abuse

The findings reveal that for many survivors the effects of living with domestic violence as a child carry on into adulthood and there is no defining moment of complete closure. Therefore the issue of whether or not resilience is present, or is able to be located is ongoing, way beyond cessation of the situation. However even cessation is nuanced, and in many cases has elements of continuation regardless of whether actual abuse is taking place. The discussion regarding home highlighted the experiences of some survivors who returned to their family home to visit their mothers, or siblings that had been unable to leave. Memories contained within physical properties, and negative feelings towards mothers were still there and still having to be regularly addressed. Conversely there were also survivors who no longer had contact with family or were not confronted with physical recollections that might remind them of abuse. However this severance had its own longer term effects and so resilience or positive adaptations were required in order to be able to adjust to this separated reality.

Stemming from childhood and beyond, resilience and positive adaptation is being enacted in order to maintain survival. However it is debatable how much of that resilience is located within a person and how much is down to environment or external factors, or the unique

interaction between the two. Ungar (2013) and Jenney et al (2016) assert that the concept of 'social ecology', in other words the formal and informal networks available to a person is essential to understanding resilience, in that the choices present regarding the ability to cope, are dependent on them. Jenney et al (2016) argue that it is through qualitative research that the greater understanding of resilience is realised.

Some of the elements of these networks have been referred to in other parts of this discussion particularly strong familial or otherwise relationships. There has also been reference to the lack of services for children and the importance of the validity of children's experiences being recognised. Ungar (2013) however also highlights political processes, and Allagia and Donohue (2018) cite socio-political conditions within their contention that contextual factors contribute to positive adaptations.

The notion that not only the social ecology but perhaps a 'political ecology' creates the available choices has resonance for this research. The older survivors in this research made their own way out of their family homes. They were able to recognise that there were means available to them to achieve this either through work or education that are not necessarily available for young people now. There were possible routes to independence for young people then that are perhaps more difficult to realise in 2019.

The younger survivors were all in some kind of supported housing or social housing that had been allocated after a period of time in supported housing. The numbers of survivors involved in this research makes it impossible to draw any definitive conclusions regarding these differences however it is worth speculating on some level. The social/political ecology is still providing housing options for young people who can no longer live in their family home. However, the constraints currently being placed on young people in this situation are significant. The intrusive nature of Universal Credit and the necessity to maintain claiming commitments has been identified as a barrier to more positive empowering work by housing and refuge professionals. Discrimination faced by young people in terms of pay and benefit levels despite being affronted with the same living expenses as any independent adult, a likely lack of control likely when seeking a future home, and the current expense levels associated with further education render the 'choices' limited. Clapham (2010) has already impressed the need for housing policy to include notions of well-being, and it is not a difficult leap to additionally link this also to resilience.

Ungar (2013) also argues that the cultural context is important in that influences may be interpreted or actioned differently, in other words, values, beliefs and practices which are

normalised and transmitted effect how the individual interacts with the environment. An obvious example in terms of the findings might be that a free further education may have been more accessible for the older survivors involved in this research due to the socio economic status enjoyed as opposed to the availability itself. In other words the normalcy of further education present in their backgrounds despite an environment sullied by domestic violence might be more significant than whether or not the education was theoretically more obtainable. A more nuanced and complex example from the findings in relation to this concept is perhaps the subject of siblings.

Survivors described, in some instances, siblings who they felt and believed were suffering more in adulthood, as a result of their childhood, than they were. This phenomena of differing long term outcomes for siblings within the same family lends itself to a one dimensional analysis of what Allagia and Donohue (2018) describe as interpersonal factors. If those factors were taken in isolation and the lives of adults that grew up in the same family are vastly opposing, then it must be as a result of varying inherent aspects of their personality. Certainly in one case the sibling was actually a twin so this argument may hold some weight. However it is interesting to note that three survivors specifically referenced young siblings. In two cases the siblings referred to were significantly younger than the rest of the children in the family. Due to the young age which survivors and their close siblings left the family home, and subsequently had limited contact, the last sibling spent many years as essentially an only child. It is also possible to speculate that the domestic violence may have escalated (Stark, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Walby and Towers 2018). Therefore even within one family the experiences of each child may involve a slightly different social ecology, which might be more significant for their resilience than the individual traits they possess. In other words the assumption that nature not nurture is the deciding factor in relation to resilience maybe even questionable within the same family.

Many of the survivors were able to identify aspects of their childhood that 'made them who they are'. There was a sense that experiences enabled greater empathy and understanding for others and also gave them a blueprint of how not to be, of how not behave toward their partners or children. This is an identified theme in the research by Gonzales (2012) and Jenney et al (2016) who identified a desire in adults, present from childhood, to not replicate the violence that characterised the actions of their fathers.

All the survivors expressed hope for the future and a desire to persevere in their quest to improve their lives and achieve their goals. Humphreys (2001) refers to positive turning points in the lives of adult women that made a difference to their life experience such as

going to college or getting married. Humphreys identifies that the turnings represent the, what and when but adaptations are the personal responses to those events. This has relevance for this research in that the acquisition of a permanent home had either occurred or was cited as the dream for the survivors. However the responses varied in that the facets of the home that were expected were not always realised. It would also be possible to speculate that the future acquisition of a home may not categorically result in all the positives hoped for.

This sentiment was also reflected in Jenney et al (2016) who reported that the participants in her study held on to a 'belief in something better (2016: p. 70). However there was also a noted recognition that immediate resilience or agency in childhood could not negate abuse happening and its affects. Furthermore there were recognised aspects of experience, for example sexual abuse or poor interpersonal factors, for example no supportive caregivers that limited opportunity for immediate resilience. It was cited by one participant that support from a therapist in later life helped navigate these negative impacts. Similarly survivors in this research referred to support they had received as adults that had assisted them what Humphreys see as uncovering the past and the ability to heal self.

The survivors in this research have not 'recovered', their resilience is an ongoing process involving turning points and adaptations. As Humphreys (2001) concludes that:

...the challenges of coping with violence are lifelong. Resilience is not a static characteristic. Persons who previously were adapting well at times may still require intervention to return them to successful pattern of coping (Humphreys, 2001 p. 250).

7.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has set out the findings from this research which relate to awareness, agency and resilience which children demonstrate when living with domestic violence. There are challenges to the concept of resilience, and insight into the longer term impacts of domestic violence and positive adaptations made throughout life to combat negative consequences of trauma in childhood. The discussion addresses the parallels with other research in this area and identifies potential areas for further study.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

Ensure that you make clear statements about the **theoretical and practical contributions of your thesis**.

This research set out to explore how adults who lived with domestic violence in their childhoods view, understand and experience the idea of home. This research has also incorporated investigation into resilience, children's agency, and the impact of housing policy and related changes to benefits and services.

The previous three chapters have demonstrated the key themes which have emerged from the qualitative interviews that have taken place. This chapter will now bring together these findings and consider what they mean more broadly in relation to the research questions.

The first two questions will be addressed separately however the discourse relating to contribution to knowledge here will be taken together, as these aspects were so strongly related in this research. The last two questions will be addressed entirely separately in regards to both of these aspects.

The chapter will then discuss what can be learned and what can be recommended for future practice and policy. This will include discourse about the importance of how home is experienced as both a consequence and a reality of domestic violence.

A brief discussion regarding the limitations of the research will be followed by a fuller discourse detailing potential future areas for research. There will also be an emphasis placed on the benefits of researching issues, such as abuse, through the lens of home, and focussing on day to day living which illuminates experiences as more real and less 'other'. When research takes this angle, the abuse isn't viewed as an aspect of life but is life and therefore provides deeper insight into the overall impact.

Research Questions:

1. How do people who lived with domestic violence as children view the idea of Home?

2. How do people who lived with domestic violence as children experience the idea of home?
3. What are the factors associated with resilience for children who live with domestic violence?
4. To what extent, and in what ways, is current policy regarding housing and welfare impacting on children living with domestic violence?

8.2 Overview of findings and contribution to knowledge

This research contributes to childhood research and has implications across research, policy and practice with regards to children, domestic violence and housing. As highlighted in Chapter Four using exclusively qualitative methods can be justified to ascertain key themes and/or issues needing further exploration, when knowledge in the subject area is limited. The principles of feminist research in 'making the invisible visible', (Reinharz and Monroe, 2017, p. 639) combined with a desire to take a direct perspective from childhood experience (James and Prout, 2017), has driven, and cut across the research to make a significant contribution.

When adult survivors of childhood domestic violence are invited to share their experiences, there is no obvious route to deferment in terms of perspective, or explicit barrier to disclosure. This does not occlude the possibility of a somewhat limited picture but it perhaps opens up perspectives which might not have been previously available. The scope to reflect from adulthood is useful and in this research the age range meant that as well as reflection from different stages of life there were also experiences of differing political and economic climate. To date, very few studies have explored the direct experiences of children through interviews with adult survivors, and there is no known research that has also combined this with professional testimony.

The whole focus of the research centred on how domestic violence impacted various real and imagined ideas of home for children. Conducting research continuously through the lens of the home has contributed knowledge about how children live, day to day in circumstances of domestic violence and therefore has inevitably provided insight into more insidious elements, namely coercive control. As well as highlighting more ongoing issues for children regarding domestic violence, this research has highlighted how domestic violence can interfere with, and sometimes devastate any reality or concept of home, that is recognised

as positive. It has also uncovered how an understanding of home in a broader sense both in terms of ideals and ability to achieve homes in the future is shaped. Therefore this unique approach has, in itself produced a contribution to knowledge, in that there is evidence of illuminating data made possible by this method. Some of the findings have overlapped with previous research however this research was unique in the concentration on home and children and domestic violence.

8.3 Research Questions 1 and 2

8.3.1 Research Question 1 Findings Summary

The findings revealed that an idea of home, or more specifically a notion of an ideal home was strongly felt and articulated by all participants. This was particularly significant for survivors as it demonstrated that even extreme negative experiences do not negate the ability to envisage something different, which often incorporate the conventional qualities associated with home.

However, it was notable that certain aspects of home were discussed and explored more readily. Safety was heavily featured as an ideal aspect of home, as was space and freedom of expression which included physical appearance and speech. There were also a number of aspects of an ideal home that collectively identified with a concept of permanency.

In terms of an ideal home for a child it was noted in the findings that family was infrequently explicitly referred to rather love and the environment of the home were mentioned more willingly.

The desire for a home was revisited throughout all the conversations with survivors.

8.3.2 Research Question 2 Findings Summary

The idea that the presence of domestic violence in itself creates 'what is not a home' was strong from all participants. Professionals and survivors were succinct in their assessment that domestic violence created an 'anti-home', the opposite of home, and this sentiment was demonstrated by the various unambiguous statements shown in the findings.

The findings were broken down into the elements of experience that make up this anti-home. The two most significant being a permanent feeling of fear and anticipation, and control and oppression.

Space was also a significant theme and was referred to in relation to the home in different ways. Survivors described how space could be taken from them or controlled and how fear and anticipation was often related to the knowledge that a perpetrator would soon be in the space. Domestic violence interfered with accepted norms about what spaces, or locales were for which severely impacted notions of home. Professionals working in accommodation settings were keen to extoll their observations of the benefits of fluid space for children that provided a sense of ownership and belonging.

There were examples of alternative 'homes' for survivors' experiences through a variety of experiences involving friends, extended family, or even prolonged time at home when the perpetrator was not present. These exposures to alternatives were largely significant for those that actually experienced them as was evident by their willingness to talk about them and their acute awareness of those homes being different.

A revelatory experience of home was the memories and feelings survivors retained in relation to bricks and mortar, and sometimes geographical location where, as children they had lived through domestic violence.

8.3.3 Research Questions 1 and 2 Contribution to Knowledge

There is a unique contribution to knowledge from this research.

Discussion through the lens of the home has drawn out an all-encompassing experience of domestic violence as it is lived by children day to day. The term 'homeless at home' (Wardhaugh, 1999) perfectly encapsulates the essence of the findings in that what survivors describe is an experience that vastly diverges from everything we positively associate with home. Therefore, this research widens the scope to children living with domestic violence for this insightful conceptualisation.

The fear and anticipation that children live through as a result of domestic violence has been previously identified in research. And this has been further described as hyper vigilance, a feeling of constantly being on alert. However, this research furthers understanding, as it places this feeling within a constant and forever feature of home. This research also contributes to knowledge about how space is used, controlled and invaded demonstrated by

the description of specific occurrences, for example the testimony of waiting for the sound of the key in the lock.

Through this 'home' investigation, coercive control of children has been unearthed beyond anything in previous research in this area and there is a plethora of examples where control has been obvious and directed. The research has also provided a picture of a childhood surrounded by unsaid and unwritten rules relating to them, and their home. As stated in the findings, the exact term coercive control was not referred to but big words like, lock and prison were used and there were also descriptions of how control was exercised over their lives as children for example restricting going out, dictating how space and time was used within the home and excessively interfering in hobbies or interests. These experiences again encapsulating this concept of 'homeless at home', living in a house but bereft of safety, privacy, of a sense of haven. Many of the survivors had spent their entire childhoods in this environment therefore the insight was comprehensive rather than limited

.A crucial part of the contribution to knowledge was the increased understanding gained regarding how experiences of home in childhood influence ideas about ideal homes and impact on future home making. In other words how actual experience, and the ideas and future home making, interconnect. The process of trying to create that new home with little or no previous blueprint is a significant part of the contribution to knowledge. In other words this research offers an understanding, not just of the experience of home how that impacts for many years afterwards. This is perhaps particularly pertinent because many of the survivors fled their entire families on their own and were/are resource lite, which adds another layer of difficulty, discussed later in the chapter.

The concept of being safe but not feeling safe has been a particularly interesting element of discovery which has increased understanding about how difficult it can be for survivors to attain a 'home' in the future. This phenomenon has been touched on in previous research (Abrahams, 2010 and Kelly et al, 2015) in relation to adult women who have fled domestic violence but has not been explored with reference to childhood, especially in relation to establishing homes of their own. This research demonstrates how long term the impact of living in an 'anti-home' or being 'homeless at home' is, and the extent to which it echoes into new environments.

8.4 Research Question 3

8.4.1 Research Question Three Findings Summary

The findings demonstrated that resilience is a complex and multifaceted concept. There was a challenge provided into what constitutes resilience, and alternative explanations were put forward in order to appreciate that there may be a variety of dynamics present which result in children taking action rather than assuming the child as autonomous. Resilience was characterised as something that needs to be considered as a fluid process. The survivors participating had all exited their situations of domestic violence in their family. They were able to recount situations in their childhood where they had experienced trauma and their response to it at that moment. However, they were all also able to articulate how the progression of their lives was and is still frequently coloured by childhood experiences. The fight for resilience is ongoing and this research demonstrates this convincingly.

There was a recognition that children often find it difficult to disclose domestic violence outside of the home. The findings show that being proactive about asking children what is going on for them can help the process of talking and was seen to promote resilience as it made children feel valued and that their thoughts and feelings were important. However there were also damaging examples where disclosures had been made and there had been a less than appropriate response by a range of adults from police to non-abusing parent.

A major issue in relation to resilience is how children's behaviour is viewed in the context of domestic violence. A key theme identified was that quiet children, especially those who are working hard and achieving can be seen as coping, not having problems and essentially resilient. This view was strongly challenged in the findings and it was recognised that these 'resilient' behaviours did not negate damage. Professionals readily acknowledged the lack of services, response, credibility and support children receive and also demonstrated an acute awareness that some children, the 'resilient' ones, are still less likely to receive interventions because of their ability to cope. Professionals also referenced children's absence in some of the assessments and decisions that affect them.

The notion that resilience in children can be demonstrated by the agency displayed was also a significantly challenged concept in the findings. The importance of viewing children as more than just passive observers in their own lives has been discussed fully in Chapter One and Three. However this research has reinterpreted agency as more than the action of resilience in the immediate, and has shown that actions are sometimes taken by children in the absence of any other forthcoming interventions from adults. There is a recognition that children's agency occurs within a constructed narrative and is often influenced by the agency

displayed by other actors. Therefore taking this analysis on board in this research the findings describe, what has been conceptualised as a 'vacuum of responsibility'. In other words children act in order to fill the gaps left by adults. And this is sometimes what leads them to be viewed as 'mini adults' because they are being thrown into situations where they feel they have to make up the difference to try and influence outcomes. It was also again noted that these actions taken do not negate long term damage or trauma as is borne out by the testimony of survivors provided here.

Fundamentally this research recognises that while of course, positive adaptations (long term resilience) are possible, the experiences of childhood remain with individuals throughout their lives.

8.4.2 Research Question 3 Contribution to Knowledge

The contribution to knowledge through the process of addressing this research question is significant. Considering children's agency in situations of domestic violence has been positively developed in previous research as highlighted in Chapter Three. The significance of this previous research is essentially that it represented a move away from viewing children as passive witnesses in homes where domestic violence is happening but viewed them as agent and consequently the focus was not simply on the 'effects'. However, this research has developed theoretical understanding of children's agency and resilience by identifying why agency by children occurs. This research puts forward the concept of 'vacuum of responsibility' as an attempt to put forward factors that lead to 'immediate resilience'. The example of Chloe is powerful in this context.

One crucial aspect of the findings for this question is to simply recognise that some children show resilience in a significant and critical way in that as soon as they are, or on the cusp, of young adulthood, they take decisive actions themselves to exit the family home. This research amplifies this phenomena and provides a further dimension to the notion of fleeing domestic violence, which is normally reserved for adults, and more specifically women, fleeing intimate relationships.

Similar to research highlighted in the literature, older survivors were able to identify positive aspects of their childhood that assisted in creating resilience in adulthood and also moments of 'positive adaptations', for example getting married or finding a home. This has contributed to existing knowledge in this area and developed it further due in part because of the qualitative approach taken and also the focus on the home. For example the importance of a

supportive relationship with another adult outside the family was more fully explored in this research and the significance of that for some participants was more fully recognised.

Conversely where this research deviates from previous studies, is regarding the emphasis on the importance of a secure relationship with a main non-abusing caregiver as an indicator of resilience. The majority of the survivors reported dysfunctional relationships with their mothers with continued frustration and distance into adulthood despite leading relatively successful lives.

Therefore it is still an incomplete picture as to which features can enhance resilience further in life. In other words there are no set identified circumstances that lead to resilience, however this would be in keeping with early research which cites the unique experience every child encounters.

A further insight regarding this question is the tentative comparison between available routes out of home between the older and young survivors. It was notable that the older survivors had been able to access employment and/or further education which then allowed independent living to occur. Younger survivors were accessing independence through supported accommodation and living on benefits. As has been previously stated this may be due to how participants of different ages were recruited, however it highlights how economic and political factors potentially impact on resilience and create, or not, a climate where independence can be attained. This adds insight into claims by Ungar (2013) who argues that resource, formal and informal networks and the political climate are significant factors regarding resilience, and that personal agency is overstated. In this research personal agency is shown by the act of leaving but the opportunities to progress are vastly different.

This research highlights that for children living with domestic violence there are ongoing impacts that transcend any form of 'resilience' that might be acquired through various factors present. There is sometimes a long road to anything that could be considered robust resilience and shows the long echo of abuse in a range of ways that have previously been discussed.

8.5 Research Question 4 Findings Summary

The findings overall presented a reduction in resource across, housing, benefits and services. The resulting picture was one of diminished material access for women and children both living with domestic violence, and also fleeing.

There was a focus on the introduction of Universal Credit and its impact on financial autonomy, poverty and housing for women and children. There was also focus on the abolition of the Community Care Grant and Crisis Loans and how the absence of these one off payments were negatively affecting resettlement. It was found that charity and local authorities are partly filling the gap left by these changes to monetary payments but this was found to be inadequate. Moreover the stigma attached to receiving charity, and removal of the ability to 'choose' a carpet rather than being provided one was defined by this research as the 'choice deficit'. This 'choice deficit' represents a significant shift in welfare and housing provision generally but is particularly relevant and poignant in relation to women and children, and domestic violence.

Professionals across services identified that an ever increasing proportion of the work with clients is taken up dealing with various aspects of benefit changes. This support ranged from assisting to keep up with 'claiming commitments' and accessing charitable support on behalf of clients for example foodbanks. The emerging theme was that professionals felt frustrated at being taken away from their core business to deal with external issues resulting from changes to help available. In relation to this theme were additional difficulties identified by services, caused by the reduction or withdrawal of outside services as a result of cuts to local authority funding for example drug and alcohol services.

The findings showed in relation to housing and refuge accommodation there were again depleted resources, which an added reduction in specialist knowledge and experience. Services for children were reported to have been reduced or eliminated due to lack of resource, in a number of settings.

8.5.1 Research Question 4 Contribution to Knowledge

The contribution to knowledge for this research question is noteworthy primarily because it is timely, it relates to current developments where insight is inevitably limited. The impact of Universal Credit and other changes are still being realised, in particular with reference to certain groups or demographics.

Previous research cited (Bennett and Sung, 2013; Dwyer and Wright, 2014 and Howard and Skipp, 2015), and also organisations such as Women's Aid and Safe Lives has started a dialogue regarding many of the issues covered in this research. However this research provides direct familiarity from professionals with the issues day to day. It encompasses not only the impact on the clients in terms of their individual circumstance but moreover a hidden

consequence relating to the available scope for the relevant and specialist work attempting to be done.

The overall analysis and conceptualisation of a 'choice deficit' is an attempt to move current knowledge forward into a more overarching theme and consequence of recent changes. This analysis also seeks to provide a specific focus on the experience of women and children living with or fleeing domestic violence and draws parallels with that experience, and the experience of the new regime. Crucially this research has highlighted, although limited in scope, an attempt to demonstrate the direct impact on children as a result from changes to financial and practical support.

Finally it is shown that these changes are also affecting young adults who choose to leave their family homes because of domestic violence.

8.6 Overall Contribution to Theoretical Knowledge

The three principle theoretical conceptualisations in this research interconnect in significant and important ways and contribute to an overall understanding about children, domestic violence and home both in childhood and beyond. As previously stated, by conducting research through the lens of home it has been possible to gain a unique insight into how domestic violence is experienced in childhood and also the broader impacts in the longer term. The concept 'homeless at home' generates a powerful picture of the severity of the negative effect of domestic violence by suggesting that the existence of domestic violence destroys the ability of a home to serve as one. It is suggestive of the context that domestic violence creates. The research recognises that children do not simply exist in their home but also can be active and agent within the constraints of their circumstances. The idea of a 'vacuum of responsibility' adds an extra layer of conceptualisation because it is important to acknowledge the gaps that adults leave for children to fill which sometimes leads them to 'act' in ways that children would not normally be expected. The 'choice deficit' primarily reflects the direction of travel regarding social security and housing in an age of 'austerity'. However the research also highlights how the effects of domestic violence in the home can have long term implications for future home making which is exacerbated by the systems in place to support.

These interconnections are convincingly demonstrated by one survivor's testimony. Having lived through domestic violence and direct abuse towards herself as a child she had extremely negative recollections of her previous 'home' and did not regard it as such. She

had to disclose her situation herself to the police, albeit with the help of a relative but not before being disbelieved by her mother. There were years spent in care before she was provided with a flat of her own. This survivor did not feel at 'home' in this flat and cited her lack of choice about where the flat was located as the main reason for this. She also described how she had tried to make it a 'home' but was finding it difficult to disassociate from the feelings of home she had had as a child.

This research uniquely draws the experiences of childhood and places them in the context of current social and economic politic.

8.7 Implications for Policy and Practice

It was always intended that this research would seek to produce recommendations for future policy and practice which reflects the initial premise by the High Sheriff, the funders and CRIVA which was to improve the lives of children. It is clearly recognised that some recommendations are easier or more straightforward to implement than others. In addition significant policy changes, particularly on a national level, are difficult to achieve even with a sympathetic administration. However that will not deter this research setting out the recommendations as they are concluded.

8.7.1 The need for increased awareness in practice

There is an overall recommendation that could be regarded as an inescapable truth, which is that children are victims and survivors of domestic violence in their own right which echoes previous assertions made by Sixsmith et al (2015) and Callaghan et al (2018). The research invites professionals in practice to recognise children as these victim/survivors rather than appendages of adult victims. It is also urged that extreme awareness and vigilance is shown regarding the possibility that the abusive behaviours a perpetrator is displaying towards a partner may be being replicated towards children in the home. Perhaps the most significant element of this appreciation would be a greater explicit awareness of coercive control. This assertion from Stark (2007) regarding adult women in the US perfectly encapsulates the findings of this research with regards to children, and lends weight to the premise that awareness of this aspect of abuse is imperative for any persons attempting interventions or assistance.

Without an 'audience' for their victimisation the 8 to 10 million women experiencing coercive control in the United States remain in a twilight zone, disconnected and

undocumented. This exclusion process reinforces the secrecy and isolation that are core tactics in coercive control (Stark, 2007, p. 110)

The research advocates that all professionals recognise that children can be highly controlled both inside and outside the home and that this extremely hinders their ability to speak or act outside of these parameters. This recommendation for awareness also strongly hints at the need for reflection regarding the assumed norms about a parent's role in a child's life, particularly in relation to gender, which potentially influence perceptions of familial situations. In other words it is possible that a perceived 'over-protection' of particularly a female child, is actually control.

This also relates to assumptions made about resilience as referenced in the findings. Essentially that quiet, studious children are not necessarily resilient or suffering less than children who are expressing more visible signs of distress. Professionals are encouraged to think about how acts of agency are viewed and interpreted and consider the assertion made in this research that agency is always contextualised and occurs within a construct. Therefore when children 'act', full consideration should be given to those specific contexts and thinking devoted to identifying the spaces in a child's life where gaping holes of protection are evident.

In terms of awareness regarding home, ultimately this research is inviting recognition, that because of domestic violence, everything home represents, especially for a child, is being potentially experienced in the reverse. They potentially are 'homeless at home'. In addition feelings and emotions were highlighted as being strongly associated with particular houses where abuse had occurred. This is relevant for professionals working in housing or domestic violence because it increases knowledge about how children may feel about their home environment. Related to this is the notion that being placed into a different home environment does not necessarily remove the feelings of fear or oppression that were present in the home where abuse occurred. This continued impact, sometimes years after safety has been achieved, whereby being safe does not equate with feeling safe, is a vastly important notion to be appreciated.

This research highlights an inherent and embedded reluctance to address and speak to children in a direct way. However there is also positive testimony about the value of direct conversation, particularly where there are evidential concerns. There is a comprehensive understanding of the need for sensitivity, safe environments and likely a positive relationship with a trusted adult. However ultimately this research demonstrates that children like being

asked, want to be asked, and feel pretty let down when they're not asked therefore taking a more pro-active approach with regards to engaging with children is something the research suggests is more widely adopted.

This would perhaps require training to improve confidence to talk to children and also confidence and support regarding what to do if disclosure occurs. The research would recommend embracing the 'double view' (Eriksson, 2016), in that the need for protection, voice and respect occur simultaneously, and is desirable. This research has shown that listening to children and giving them credibility is extremely important and also links with the positive impact of a trusted adult, all of which are connected to resilience.

Finally, in terms of awareness this research wants to challenge the notion that children 'get used to it'. The research has demonstrated that a perceived lack of response to domestic violence does not indicate an immunity to negative impacts of domestic violence and moreover that 'not responding' can be an active choice in the same way more affirmative actions are. Professionals need to be mindful that every child experiencing domestic violence is being affected regardless of external displays of distress or agency.

8.7.2 Societal and Policy Trends- Awareness of impact and recommendations

In this section there will be discussion regarding how external policies and conventional wisdoms impact on perceptions of children's experiences. There will also be specific policy recommendations.

8.7.2.1 Children, and Children and Domestic Violence

Following the recommendation in practice that children are considered as direct victims of domestic violence there is a further recommendation that this is formally recognised in policy. The most obvious arena for this to take place is within the realm of the long awaited domestic abuse bill which had its first reading in March 2020. This research concurs with two leading children's charities which have urged that children are regarded as victims in their own right rather than witnesses (Gierson, 2020). It is known that policy does not always result in behaviour change, especially in the immediate, however failure to directly refer to children would suggest it is more unlikely that children are recognised as direct victims in practice.

This policy has change has occurred and children are now recognised as victims.

Societal acknowledgement that domestic violence is a crime which is prosecuted in the public domain, is based on an acceptance, to an extent, that the private is also the concern of the public, and women are autonomous beings or citizens not owned by their husbands or partners. Children are protected from abuse in law however there is still a belief that children are to an extent owned by their parents and don't enjoy rights or autonomous status in the same way as adults do. This research urges policy to recognise children as autonomous beings in line with Eriksson's 'double view', which involves simultaneous protection and participation and ascertains that greater involvement actually promotes protection.

However, participation involves being able to talk and contribute freely and the findings and the literature have highlighted how difficult it can be for children to talk about what is happening for them. The findings also revealed how little children are asked about their lives and the possible benefits of a more direct approach, as stated by both professionals and survivors. Therefore this research would recommend that children have access to an independent trusted adult based on the social pedagogy model. The Social Pedagogy Professional Association defines the premise as thus:

Those practicing social pedagogy are concerned with the formation and on-going development of the whole person – their physical, emotional, intellectual and social well-being is central to social pedagogic practice (Kyriacou, 2014).

An offer of social pedagogy to all children for sustained periods would go some way to addressing some of the issues outlined in this research regarding resilience and issues related to the home and coercive control. This policy could underpin the recognition of children as independent beings.

It is also recommended that children, and some of the situations children may be living in, be more fully considered across a range of policies in terms of the impact on them specifically. Particularly in relation to benefits, housing and more general economic policies. This is especially relevant for housing policy. Clapham (2010) highlights contradictions between the accepted meanings of home and housing policy which has focussed more on the shelter and accommodation. There has been acknowledgement through both the findings and the literature that home-ownership can sometimes foster more significant feelings of ontological security or emphasise the concept of home. However the findings also showed that social housing, or other types of housing for example co-operatives can also achieve a sense of home. Private rented housing was seen to lack some of the fundamental aspects of an ideal home and it is likely that any negative impacts from this kind of tenure is being experienced

by children as much, or even more, than adults. This research recommends that the availability of social housing, let on a permanent basis, is a crucial to improving the well-being of children, and children living with or fleeing domestic violence.

There also recommendations on a more general level that relate to longer term resilience and positive adaptations, which are often shaped by the wider societal factors. Older survivors were in the main quite settled and content and they cited positive opportunities such as free higher education, employment, and chances to access housing which featured in their journey. There were more serendipitous events mentioned, for an example inheritance, getting married, or a chance to join a housing co-operative. However there were still many difficulties reported due to childhood experiences. It is hard to imagine how this process will play out for the younger adults who took part in this research. The assertion made by Ungar (2013) that socio economic factors are far more important in relation to resilience is significant. If resilience is to be realised then life chances need to go beyond support in childhood. On a general level there needs to be incorporated into society as many opportunities for positive adaptation as is possible. Therefore this research recommends an end to austerity and cuts to services, welfare and housing as they all potentially hinder the chances of long term resilience for adults who have suffered abuse in their childhoods.

Finally this research recommends specialist supported housing provision for young adults fleeing domestic violence, in the same way that refuges have supported women fleeing intimate relationships.

It must be stated in this section that these final thoughts on this research are taking place in a period of unprecedented times in Britain and the world. The presence of coronavirus has resulted in many health and economic impacts which have necessitated nation states to take equally unprecedented steps to protect its citizens including massive economic giveaways in order to prevent mass poverty and destitution. What this demonstrates, which unilaterally supports Ungar's position, is that socio-economic factors are far more relevant than any individual effort when it comes to resilience and survival.

8.8 Limitations of Research

This research used only qualitative methods which has been explored and justified in Chapter Four, however it is still potentially limiting as there is inevitably a lack of context for the findings to sit within. This is something that could be addressed in future research.

The survivors that participated in this research were of a wide age range and experience, and this provided a rich diversity of data. However the sample was small and the number interviewed was slightly below that which was originally anticipated. This was potentially a result from gatekeeping, which was fully explored in Chapter Four, however this has resulted in a reduction in the amount of young adults taking part in the research and therefore a reduction in the amount of participants who are 'near' to the experience in terms of time. It is possible that more of a concentration on this age group would have produced slightly different data. It could be argued that a failure to speak to actual children may be regarded as a limitation however this research has shown that speaking with adult survivors does not dampen the sharpness of the experience and in fact can bring additional dimensions of hindsight and reflection.

The sample of survivors were, with one exception, white British and therefore the experiences of other ethnic groups were not fully explored.

A further limitation relating to the sample is the inevitable bias towards people who have already displayed a degree of resilience which is demonstrated by their willingness to participate. Many of the survivors described siblings that were experiencing greater difficulties than they themselves were, therefore it is likely that the overall picture of resilience may well be skewed by this factor.

8.9 Priorities for Future Research

There is a standalone priority for future research which stems from this thesis and is primarily regarding the lens through which this research was conducted. By investigating an issue through the lens of the home and additionally asking how certain experiences influence how the home is experienced and viewed has proved extremely illuminating. It would be recommended that further research regarding domestic violence is undertaken in this manner but also it is envisaged that other issues could be looked at in this way in order to provide insight previously undiscovered.

There was a qualitative approach employed in this research however there were aspects of the research which might be furthered by an approach that included quantitative data. Many of the survivors had had no contact with services during their childhood, therefore the issue of children living with domestic is clearly under-reported, as is also borne out in the literature. There may be potential for a quantitative survey of adults on a relatively large scale to try

and get a better understanding of this. Perhaps with a targeted population, prisons, supported housing or even more general settings like adult groups, professions etc.

The research highlights how little children are considered in the light of social policy and how changes like Universal Credit affects them specifically. It is appreciated that within the current structures of society direct research with children can be problematic, therefore it would be suggested that some kind of ethnographic research, in a setting such as a foodbank or other community venue might allow trust to build and provide scope for children's voices and experiences to be heard. This could also be linked to the factors contributing to resilience.

It would be interesting to explore the concept of 'situational violence' as described by Johnson (2008), in relation to children. In other words to investigate whether physical violence could occur towards children without coercive control being present, and in fact result in limited 'harm'. A proposed title for this future research is 'It never did me any harm'. This would also link with Overlein (2013) who asserts that there is still a substantial lack of knowledge regarding different groups of children experiencing domestic violence.

The concept of being safe but not feeling safe was a powerful one and lends itself to further investigation into the longer term consequences of domestic violence and the ability to make a home in the future. This concept being particularly pertinent with regard to the transition from childhood spent in situations of abuse and the ability to create a home in the future.

Finally, it would be interesting to take the three primary concepts fashioned in this research. Firstly 'Homeless at Home' which originates from Wardhaugh (1999) in relation to adult women but has been commandeered in this research to particularly refer to children living with coercive control. Further research is needed regarding children and coercive control, and through the lens of the home.

This research has conceptualised agency within a context, recognising that dualism such as agency vs passive are not useful, as children don't exist or act in an autonomous way. This research has put forward the notion of 'vacuum of responsibility'. It would be interesting to explore this further through qualitative research with both professionals and adult survivors.

The concept of the choice deficit was formulated to cover the experiences of individuals and families in light of developments regarding recent welfare and housing policy and the use of charity to fill the gaps. This is potentially far reaching not only for the people affected but also

how they are viewed from outside. There is scope to investigate this more fully and to link it with concepts of misplaced 'vulnerability' or 'deviance' which are more exposed due to need for charitable intervention.

8.9 Conclusion

This conclusion has attempted to draw together and summarise the most important strands of this research and place them within a context of existing knowledge. There has been an identification of where findings have made a further contribution to knowledge and also how the concepts offer an interconnected analysis of the research questions. In addition the findings have been analysed in terms of their potential impact on practice with a number of identified recommendations as a result. There are a number of broad policy suggestions which have been rooted out of the research. Finally, there is a discussion regarding the future direction of research in this area.

Appendix One: Copy of email confirming ethics approval

From: BONAR F.E.
Sent: 12 August 2016 09:29
To: HALL K.E.
Subject: Ethics Approval

Dear Kirsten

We have received confirmation from the Ethics Committee that your receive Ethics Application has been approved and you may now proceed with your research.

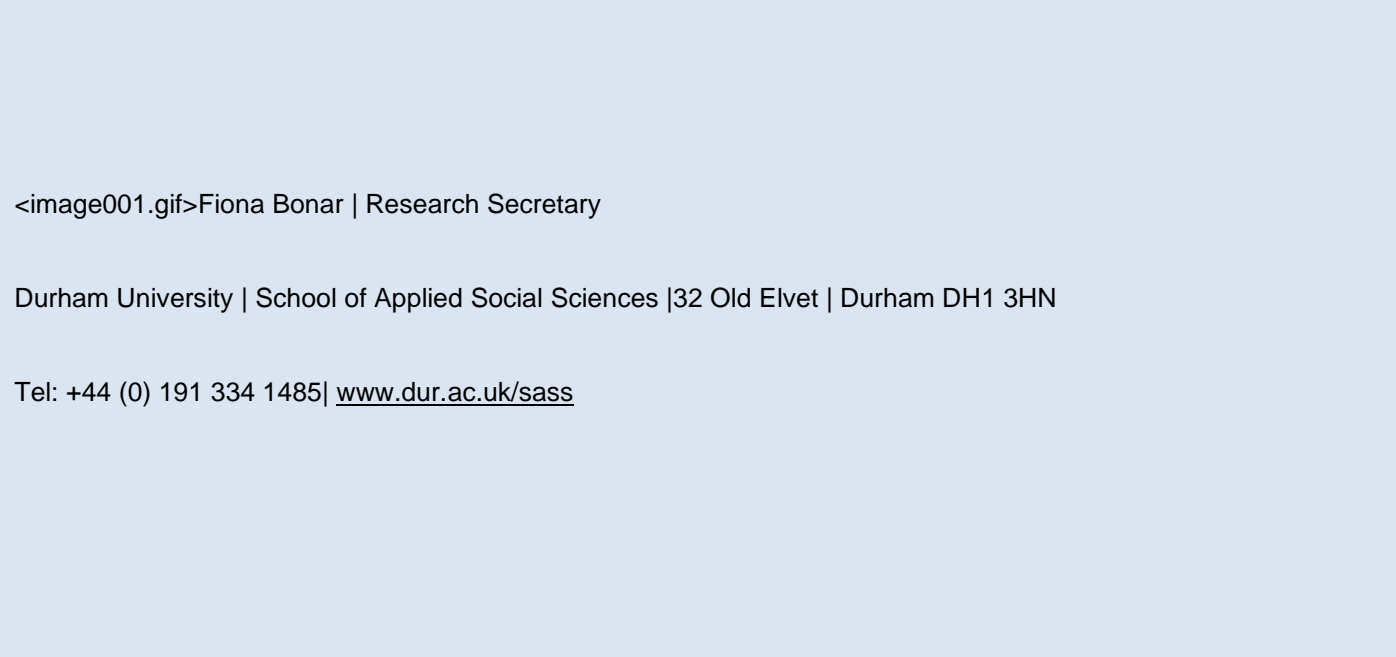

Congratulations on reaching this stage of your PhD.

A hard copy of your Ethics forms will be held on your student file but a copy of this email confirming Ethics Approval should be kept in your own records and with you when you undertake your research.

Best Wishes

Fiona Bonar

□



<image001.gif>Fiona Bonar | Research Secretary

Durham University | School of Applied Social Sciences |32 Old Elvet | Durham DH1 3HN

Tel: +44 (0) 191 334 1485| www.dur.ac.uk/sass

Appendix Two: Information Sheet for Professionals



This sheet explains what the research is about, why I'm doing it and what we might achieve. The idea is to give you enough information to decide whether or not you want to take part.

Background to the Research

This PHD research project came from a desire to learn more about housing issues faced by children who are living with domestic violence. The catalyst for this was the High Sheriff of Tyne & Wear and alumna of Durham University, Ruth Thompson OBE who's stated goal for 2015 was 'to help children affected by domestic violence and abuse'. The project has been sponsored by a consortium of donors from the housing sector led by the Gentoo Group, but also including Poplar Homes, Incommunities, Grainger Trust (Grainger plc), North Star Housing Group, Derwentside Homes and Home Group via Stoneham. The PhD scholarship forms part of the Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA) at Durham University.

Therefore the aim of this research is to try and gain further understanding of the experiences of children who live with violence at home. More specifically how those situations affect how children feel about home, both as a reality and an idea, and how they experience housing, which might include times of having to move, or live with other people. It is also anticipated that insight will be gained into what promotes resilience in children. Ultimately it is hoped that the research will have some impact on future service provision.

Why have I been asked to take part?

I am asking practitioners and policy makers in the areas of housing and domestic violence services to take part in interviews, lasting up to an hour. It will be invaluable to hear about your views, experiences, opinions and ideas in order to inform the research project.

What will happen to the information I provide?

Interviews will be recorded on an audio dicta phone, and then transcribed and analysed. The findings will be included in my doctoral thesis and also shared with the sponsors of the project. There is also the possibility that the thesis will be published in an academic article. Information that is shared in the interview process will be kept confidential and your details, name, location, project name etc. will be anonymised. However it will be necessary to include roles and nature of projects in the thesis so it may still be possible to identify participants. The final report will be stored online in a Durham University Repository.

If you agree to take part you will not be required to answer every question and you can stop the interview and/or withdraw consent at any stage.

Any Issues or problems? Contact me or my supervisor.

Researcher: **Kirsten Hall**- 07522311988- kirsten.e.hall@durham.ac.uk

Supervisors: **Dr Donna Marie Brown**- donna.m.brown@durham.ac.uk

Professor Nicole Westmarland- nicole.westmarland@durham.ac.uk

Appendix Three: Consent Form

Views of Practitioners and Policy Makers on How Children who live with Domestic Violence experience Housing and the Idea of Home-Consent form



It is important I make sure that everyone who agrees to take part in this research has given their informed consent. This means that I have a responsibility to make sure that you fully understand what is involved and you know exactly what you are agreeing to. Please go through the list of statements and answer yes or no. Just ask me if you have any questions about the research project and your involvement in it.

	Yes	No
I have read the information sheet and been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research project. My questions have been answered in a way I am happy with.		
I agree to take part in an interview with the researcher.		

I understand that I do not have to answer any question I don't want to, or discuss things I don't not feel comfortable with, and that I can leave or take a break at any time.		
I give my permission for my interview to be audio recorded and written up by the researcher.		
I understand that the audio recording and all data will be stored securely, and audio recording will be destroyed at the end of the project.		
I know that my name will not be used and that my identity will be kept anonymous in any publications related to this research project.		
I understand that I am free to choose whether or not to take part in this research project, and that I am also free to withdraw from it at any point both during and after the interview has been completed.		
I understand that I can keep a copy of this consent form.		

Having read the information sheet and consent form, I confirm that I understand what is required of me for this research project and that I am happy to take part.

Signed: _____ (Participant)

Signed: _____ (Researcher)

Date: ___ / ___ / _____

Appendix Four: Interview Schedule for the Professionals

Interview Schedule for Practitioners

Just to be clear about definitions:

1. The Home Office definition of domestic violence (2013) is:
Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse>)

This broader characterisation as led some academics to use the term Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) when referring to violence that takes place between partners and ex-partners. However for the purposes of this research the term domestic violence will refer to the identified behaviours above, solely in the context of violence or partners and ex-partners, therefore excluding wider familial violence.

2. Children and young people means from baby to 18yrs.

Schedule

Part A- Your organisation and children/young people and domestic violence (the first set of questions are about you and your organisation generally)

1. Could you start by telling me a bit about your organisation and your role within it?
2. How do people in your organisation identify children and young people who are living with domestic violence?
3. Can you talk me through what happens next after a child or young person is identified? Examples could include interventions, services, actions etc

4. Do housing workers provide support for children and young people living in these circumstances?

Part B- Housing and Domestic Violence

1. From your experience, what do you think are the main concerns of children and young people who are still living in a household with domestic violence? (prompts could include whether it is the same or different for children versus young people? Or other factors such as gender or socio- economic status)
2. Now the same question but for children and young people who have had to be rehoused due to domestic violence in their household?
3. How do you think children and young people's sense of 'home is affected when domestic violence is, or has been present, in their household? (can this be affected by age, gender, class etc for example does age have a bearing whether they have an 'alternative' view of home that contrasts with their experience?).
4. What housing related factors do you think increase the resilience of children and young people (e.g. participation, rehoused in the same area, access to extended family, having siblings, friends etc) What are the mechanisms for promoting these things? (e.g. advocates..)
5. Now the same questions to reduce resilience?

Part C- Making a Difference- This last section is about what is currently externally impacting children and young people living in these circumstance and seeks to explore your views on what would make a positive shift.

1. What would be the core components of a children's 'home', in an ideal world?
2. Is there anything housing providers could be doing to improve experiences for children?
3. To what extent do you think that current housing policies serve to alleviate or exacerbate the effects of domestic violence on children? (prompts- thinking about short and long term affects)
4. To what extent do broader welfare changes serve to alleviate or exacerbate the effects of domestic violence on children?
5. To what extent do you think that gender inequality in terms of these two things directly affects children?
6. And finally, what single change do you think would have the greatest benefit to developing a positive sense of 'home' for children and young people who have lived with domestic violence?

Appendix Five: Participant Information Sheet

Views and Knowledge from adults about how children who live with domestic violence think_of home and experience housing- Participant Information Sheet

This sheet explains what the research is about, why I'm doing it and what we might achieve by doing it. The idea is to give you enough information to decide whether or not you want to take part. It is important to read it carefully, but myself or someone else you work with will go through the form and answer any questions you may have. You do not have to decide straight away and if you do decide to take part you can change your mind at any point.

Why is this research happening?

I am doing this research to try and understand what it is like for children who live with violence at home. More specifically how those situations affect how children feel about home, both as a reality and an idea, and how they experience housing, which might include having to move or live with other people. I also want to know about other things that help children in these situations. The only way to truly know about this is to ask people who lived through it.

Who is doing this research?

I am a PHD student at Durham University and this is my project. The research is funded by a consortium of Housing Associations led by Gentoo. They have funded this research because they want to know if they can do more to help children who are living with violence at home.

Why have I been asked to take part?

You have been asked to take part because we would like to ask you about your views on what it is like for children who live with violence at home. You are the best person to discuss

these issues, and it is important that people who make decisions about children's lives, hear from you.

What will it involve if I take part?

If you decide to take part it will involve talking to me for somewhere up to an hour. It is difficult to put an exact time on it because it depends on how much you want to say. I will be flexible about when the discussions take place and will always aim for them to take place somewhere you go anyway. You do not have to answer all the questions just let me know if you ever feel uncomfortable and we can move onto something else. If you want to stop the interview at any time just say and I will be checking with you at various points that it's fine to carry on.

Can people find out that I have taken part?

NO! All information that could identify you, for example, names, where you live, your family set up, and anything else that might identify you, will be changed. This means that what you say will be anonymised. The only person that will see your real name and any other information that could identify you will be myself. That information will be kept separate and secured and once the project is completed all that information will be destroyed. There will be no identifiable information in the final report.

Who happens to the information that I give?

The information that you give will be recorded on a Dictaphone (not visually recorded) and then written up by myself. It will then be included in my final report that will be seen by my examiners to see if I have passed. It will also be shared with all the Housing Associations that provided the money for my research to be done. This is because they want to see what I have found out, and develop ideas about how better to help children living with violence. The report will then be stored online through Durham University and findings may be included in academic journals.

What are the risks of taking part?

Hopefully the risks are small. There are two kinds of risk that may take place. The first one is that you might feel upset during the discussion. I will check in with you throughout the interview to make sure you are OK to carry on. Before the interview happens you will have

the opportunity to provide a named, trusted person who knows the discussion is taking place so that they can be contacted if you feel you need support after the interview. I will also have information about other agencies I can contact about any issues that arise during the interview.

The second kind of risk is if you tell me that either yourself, or someone else is in danger of serious harm. If this happens, I will talk to you about it, what might happen if you continue to talk about it and how you want to deal with the situation. In an extreme case, where a child is at risk and we cannot come to an appropriate resolution I might have to disclose the information to other relevant agencies.

What are the benefits of taking part?

Services for adults and children experiencing violence are under pressure due to economic cuts. There is a need to for more direct evidence to be heard about what works, and what is needed. By taking part you might be able to help services improve and help other children who are living with violence at home. You will also receive a voucher for taking part.

What should I do next if I want to take part?

If you are interested in taking part in these interviews you can either:

1. Contact me and arrange a time to meet.
2. Phone me directly on the number below.

If you have any questions or want further information the phone number is:

Kirsten- 07522311988

Any Issues or problems? Contact me or my supervisor.

Researcher: **Kirsten Hall**- 07522311988- kirsten.e.hall@durham.ac.uk

Supervisors: **Dr Donna Marie Brown**- donna.m.brown@durham.ac.uk

Professor Nicole Westmarland- nicole.westmarland@durham.ac.uk

Appendix Six: Consent Form for Participants

Views of young adults about how children living with domestic violence think about home and experience housing: Consent form



It is important I make sure that everyone who agrees to take part in this research has given their informed consent. This means that I have a responsibility to make sure that you fully understand what is involved and you know exactly what you are agreeing to. Please go through the list of statements and answer yes or no. Just ask me if you have any questions about the research project and your involvement in it.

	Yes	No
I have read the information sheet and been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research project. My questions have been answered in a way I am happy with.		
I agree to take part in an interview with the researcher.		
I understand that I do not have to answer any question I don't want to, or discuss things I don't not feel comfortable with, and that I can leave or take a break at any time.		

I give my permission for my interview to be audio recorded and written up by the researcher.		
I understand that the audio recording and all data will be stored securely, and audio recording will be destroyed at the end of the project.		
I know that my name will not be used and that my identity will be kept anonymous in any publications related to this research project.		
I understand that what is discussed in the interview will be kept confidential, but that if the interviewer feels that myself or somebody else is at risk of serious harm, they may need to disclose this to relevant agencies.		
I understand that I am free to choose whether or not to take part in this research project, and that I am also free to withdraw from it at any point both during and after the interview has been completed.		
I understand that I can keep a copy of this consent form.		

Having read the information sheet and consent form, I confirm that I understand what is required of me for this research project and that I am happy to take part.

Signed: _____ (Participant)

Signed: _____ (Researcher)

Date: ___ / ___ / _____

Appendix Seven: Participant Interview Schedule

Questions for Adult Participants

Introduction

I'm just going to give a quick recap of what I am hoping might happen today:

1. My name is Kirsten and I am doing research about children, domestic violence and housing and home. A few Housing Associations have paid for this research because they want to know how they can help children more who are living in situations of violence. I am interested in your opinions and expert knowledge but I'm not going to ask you to tell me things about your childhood that you don't want to discuss. You can stop the interview at any time.
2. For the purposes of this research the term domestic violence will refer to controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, solely in the context of violence between partners and ex-partners.
3. Thank you for agreeing to take part

Schedule

Part A- The first section is just a chance to get a bit of a picture of you and where you're at the moment.

1. Do you live locally at the moment and do you live alone or with friends/family/partner?
2. What kind of things are you into? Music, films, internet stuff?

Part B- This section is going to ask your thoughts about the following things: Home and Housing

1. What does the word home mean to you? (What does it look like/feel like?)
2. What do you think an ideal home for a child would be like?
3. How does a house become a home? (What attributes does it need e.g. tenure, location, people, things, safety, freedom)
4. How important is it to have choices about your home (Location, décor)

Part C- This section is going to ask your thoughts about the following things: Children and Domestic Violence

1. What is it like for children when they are living with domestic violence? (How does it affect their day to day life at home)
2. Why is it difficult for some children to talk about what is happening at home? (Are there other ways children show that things are wrong)
3. What kinds of things do children do themselves to try and make their lives better? (safety zones)
4. What kind of issues do children face if they have to move home?
5. What additional factors can make things better or worse for children? (Does the presence of friends and extended family give children greater resilience?)
6. Do you think there is enough help out there for families? (Is there enough access to financial help and suitable accommodation?)
7. Do you think adults, including parents and workers, explain things to children properly? (Are children asked for their opinions or thoughts about changes that affect them?)

Part D- Making a difference- This section is about what you think might advance things in the future

1. If you could choose three things to change that would improve the lives of children what would they be?
2. How do you think your experiences have shaped the person you are today?
3. What are the best things about your life now?
4. Thank you for your time, is there anything you would like to add?

Part E- Demographic Information- This last section is just about collecting a little bit of anonymous information about you

Age:

Nationality and ethnicity:

Postcode of current address:

Do you consider yourself to have an illness or disability?:

Occupation/Education:

Email or contact arrangements for voucher:

If this one of the first three interviews then explain that this is a pilot:

1. Do you think I should make changes to how I contact Young Adults?
2. Do you think I should make changes to the questions?
3. Do you think I should make changes to the personal approach of language?

4. Appendix Eight: Signposting Information for Adults

Local and national support services related to domestic violence.



If you or someone you know has been affected by any of the issues raised in today's interview, you can access support from the following organisations:

National

Men's Advice Line: Advice and support for men experiencing domestic violence.

Freephone: 0808 801 0327. Open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, or you can leave a voicemail.

E-mail: info@respectphoneline.org.uk

Respect Phonenumber: Confidential information and advice to help perpetrators of domestic violence stop and change their abusive behaviours.

Freephone: 0808 802 4040. Open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, or you can leave a voicemail.

E-mail: info@mensadviceline.org.uk

Survivors UK: Provides support for men who have been raped or sexually abused.

Textchat: 020 3322 1860, Webchat: www.survivorsuk.org/speak-to-us/.

Open Monday-Friday 10.30am-9pm, Saturday-Sunday 10am-6pm.

E-mail: info@survivorsuk.org

National Domestic Violence Helpline: A national service, run by Women's Aid and Refuge, for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.

Freephone: 0808 2000 247 (24 hours)

Local

Wearside Women in Need (Sunderland): Provides advice, support and safe accommodation for **women** and children experiencing domestic violence.

Tel: 0191 567 6649

Newcastle Women's Aid: 24 hour safe, emergency accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic violence, abuse and/or control. Outreach service also offers telephone support, advice and advocacy.

Tel: 0800 9232622 or 0191 2652148

The Safe Project (Newcastle): Practical and emotional support and advice and support to victim and survivors of domestic violence and abuse. Also provides specialist support for victims and survivors of honour based violence and forced marriage.

Tel: 0191 2734942

Anah Project (Bradford): Provides safe and secure accommodation and support for lone black, Asian and minority ethnic women fleeing domestic abuse, as well as 24 hour telephone line support for anyone needing advice.

Tel: 0845 9606011

Blenheim Project (Bradford): Offers quality service provision for homeless women and children in Bradford, including temporary accommodation, childcare service, resettlement and community based support.

Tel: 01274 495834

Appendix Ten: Recruitment Poster

People (aged 16-30yrs) Needed for Research on



Housing and Home

I would like to talk to people who know what it is like for children who live with domestic violence, and how they experience housing and home

- ✓ Do you have knowledge and opinions about how children are affected by violence and conflict in the home?
- ✓ Do you want to help increase our understanding of children's lives?
- ✓ Do you want to improve services and experiences for children in the future?

If you agree to take part all of your personal details will be kept confidential and you will not be named in any part of the research. You will not be asked to talk about your own personal experiences unless you decide that is something you want to do.

For more information on this research or to volunteer please contact: [Kirsten on 07522311988](#) or kirsten.e.hall@durham.ac.uk



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