

Young people's views and experiences of person-centred planning: A systematic literature review

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Abstract

Person-centred planning (PCP) is both a philosophy and method of service delivery across varied contexts. It is used in pathway planning for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to promote positive transition outcomes. Due to idiosyncratic use, it is unclear how PCP meetings are organised and structured and to what extent this reflects fidelity to PCP as a philosophy. It is also unclear how young people experience PCP meetings and how this impacts transition. To explore this further, a systematic literature review was undertaken from which six studies were included and their data reported using PRISMA guidelines. Drawing upon Gestalt theory as an interpretive lens, findings from these studies suggest that PCP meetings comprise intersecting 'foreground' and 'background' elements, making PCP meetings a complex space requiring skilled facilitation. Limitations and recommendations for further research and practice are included.

KEYWORDS

pathway planning, person-centred planning, post-16, transition, young people

Key Points

- While PCP is often seen as a key feature of service delivery, especially in relation to pathway planning for young people, there is little guidance on how meetings are organised and structure, meaning local practice can be idiosyncratic and diverse.
- This review of existing literature exploring young people's views of PCP meetings, found that salient features included: the content of and context for the meeting; relationships; roles and responsibilities; communication and interaction; outcomes and the agency of the young person.
- This review suggests that practitioners could use principles of Gestalt theory to consider "foreground" elements, such as location, attendees and documentation; and "background" elements, such interpersonal dynamics, identities and systemic factors, when planning, conducting and reviewing PCP meetings.
- Suggestions are made for improving practice surrounding PCP meetings within services.

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INTRODUCTION

Person-centred practice; the historical roots of the philosophy and its practice

Thompson et al. (2007) provided an overview of person-centred planning (PCP) which is used here to introduce this research and its context. PCP is a philosophy of care and service delivery which originated in North America and is associated with varied planning approaches. Kilbane and McLean (2008) stated PCP emerged through an interaction between political and social shifts in attitudes towards those with learning disabilities alongside theoretical developments in service delivery. These changes were advanced by ideas such as Wolfensberger's concept of 'normalization' (O'Brien, 1980, p. 1), which advocated greater social integration of those with learning disabilities through community presence, choice, competence, respect and community participation—concepts formative in the philosophical development of PCP. Gray and Woods (2022) noted that PCP often incorporates values from humanistic and positive psychology to promote co-constructed outcomes that are strengths orientated and realistically attainable.

Person-centred planning has a strong legislative basis in several countries. In the United Kingdom (UK) legislation has placed greater emphasis on social inclusion (Department of Health [DoH], 2001, 2002) emphasising rights, independence, choice, inclusion and PCP as a tool by which these principles can be enacted. *Valuing People Now* (DoH, 2009) further emphasised the role of PCP within areas such as education, work and life choices, before the DoH (2010) provided explicit guidance on the PCP process. Similar historical, cultural and legislative developments can be found in the United States (US) and Australia (Cavendish & Connor, 2018; Chandroo et al., 2020).

The practice of PCP

Person-centred planning is characterised by two distinct features: the philosophy of person-centredness, and how this is operationalised in practice (Kilbane & McLean, 2008). PCP is broadly represented in four planning methods: personal futures planning (Mount, 1987, cited in Thompson et al., 2007), essential lifestyle planning (Smull & Harrison, 1992), making action plans (MAPs; Vandercook et al., 1989) and planning alternative tomorrows with hope (PATH; Pearpoint et al., 1993). Each focuses on understanding what is important to the individual, their goals and identifying actions to achieve them. Artefacts, such as visual representations, are utilised to represent the content of the process and to ensure equity of contributions. Holburn (2002) highlighted the key features of PCP practice are placing the individual at the centre of the process, creating a shared vision, identifying strengths, supporting needs being met, building

relationships and community connections, developing action plans and establishing accountability. However, as Leoncio and Martin (2022) identified, the actualisation of these values is often impacted by contextual variables, such as funding and resource challenges and communication barriers, making the implementation of PCP often a complex process for practitioners.

The application of PCP in multidisciplinary contexts: A heterogeneous and international practice

Person-centred planning has been used in a wide range of service settings and geographical locations. Choy-Brown et al. (2020) examined the extent of person-centred care within eight US community mental health clinics, finding varied practices of PCP among mental health professionals. Ellem et al. (2019) evaluated a family resourcing and capacity building project in Australia, considering the extent to which it provided knowledge, skills and confidence to families of people with a disability to create a better life. In the United Kingdom, Hughes et al. (2019) and Morgan (2016) examined the role of using PATH in promoting organisational change, with school staff, and with a children's services department, respectively. McCausland et al. (2021), examined the role of PCP in promoting community inclusion in a learning disability service in Dublin.

In US educational settings, Cavendish and Connor (2018) examined the use of PCP in individualised education plan (IEP) transition planning, measuring student involvement. Chandroo et al. (2020), discussed the role of PCP within the Australian context, also facilitated using IEPs. Within the United Kingdom, Corriegan (2014) and White and Rae (2016) explored the role of PCP in promoting positive outcomes for young people.

Person-centred planning aims to act upon the views of the young person and their family, identifying, and meeting their needs, and ensuring they are adequately supported to take part in the process. Despite overlaps in legislation and practice, PCP in educational settings is often discussed in varied formats, with delivery being affected by the setting and other contextual variables.

PCP as an idiosyncratic and varied practice: An issue of operationalisation?

Person-centred planning's use means that it is an idiosyncratic practice characterised by variability, and the operationalisation of its principles is dependent on the skill of the facilitator, and frequently misinterpreted by practitioners internationally. While there is agreement on what PCP aspires to, how it should be operationalised appears to lack consensus. For example, the fidelity checklist of Choy-Brown et al. (2020, p. 914) looked for key indicators

of a person-centred approach, such as ‘evidence of direct input from the person’; and that ‘strengths, interests and current or desired life roles and priorities’ are represented in care plans. However, this measures adherence to PCP within a specific mental health context, which may only be useful in that context. While *Preparing for Adulthood* (*Preparing for Adulthood* [PfA], 2022, p. 1) produced a ‘minimum standards’ checklist to support the embedding of PfA principles within the offer of local authorities, this is defined within the context of using PCP as a tool for preparing for adulthood from a systemic perspective.

Critical accounts of PCP's effectiveness and overall impact reflect this view. For example, Robertson et al. (2007) stated that contextual factors, such as the facilitator having a high personal commitment to PCP, and the presence of a keyworker, significantly influenced the impact of PCP; and noted a high degree of variability within practice. Additionally, Claes et al. (2010) found it difficult to conclude that positive outcomes could be directly attributed to PCP. Small et al. (2013, p. 285) speculated, perhaps all PCP does is ‘prepare young people for transition into existing services in a person-centred way, not plan a person-centred service. Or perhaps transition planning is better summed up as a paper exercise’. Therefore, it is important as Ratti et al. (2016, p. 26) argued in their review, that the ‘active ingredients’ of PCP and how they lead to specific outcomes are identified; which further suggests issues affecting the replicability of PCP as an intervention.

Gestalt psychology as a lens to explore the complexity of PCP

Person-centred planning involves interpersonal, organisational and systemic variables. This makes it a complex process, comprised of varied emotional and psychological experiences, for its participants. To try to explore PCP from a theoretical perspective, the authors used Gestalt psychology, and its offshoot Gestalt therapy. As Käufer and Chemero (2021, pp. 96–97) outlined, Gestalt psychology emphasises how the individual encounters, and responds to their environment and its variables dynamically. To this extent, it helped the authors conceptualise how those participating in PCP experience and respond to the process. Within Gestalt therapy, the concept of foreground and background elements (Clarkson & Cavicchia, 2013, pp. 6–7), which reflects the emphasis on holism and interactionism within Gestalt psychology, was helpful in mapping the variables present within PCP and how interactions between them affect the overall planning process.

Research questions

To address the contentions within the literature this literature review aims to explore the core features of PCP, specifically how it is organised and structured and how

this reflects the operationalisation of the philosophy of PCP. Gestalt psychology's foreground and background model (see Clarkson & Cavicchia, 2013) is utilised to conceptualise the structuring of PCP and its relationship with broader contextual variables. Furthermore, given PCP's use in educational settings, and its strong legislative basis, it will explore how young people experience PCP as a process. In doing so, it will address two fundamental questions relating to PCP:

1. How are person-centred planning meetings organised and structured?
2. How do young people experience person-centred planning meetings?

METHOD

Search strategy

A systematic search of the literature was conducted using the following databases, using the title and abstract: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts; British Education Index; Education Resources Information Centre; Journal of Intellectual Disability Research; Electronic Theses Online Service; Google Scholar; PsycInfo; PubMed; Sage Journals; Web of Science; Scopus. Additionally, the British Psychological Society's (BPS) journal *Educational and Child Psychology* was searched directly as it is only available via the BPS portal. Searches were conducted between August and December 2020 using the following term: “person-centred planning”; with “young people” and “adolescents”; and “schools” and “transitions”.

The literature gathered through this systematic search was subjected to the following inclusion criteria: (1) describes the PCP process; (2) offers insight into how young people experience PCP; (3) uses a predominantly qualitative approach; (4) is with participants 13–25 years of age; (5) PCP is not used alongside other forms of intervention; (6) published 2010–2020. No additional exclusionary criteria were employed. The first author applied the inclusion criteria to each paper, which was then checked by the second author, in the role of academic supervisor, to increase the consistency and objectivity of their application. Because of the tangible nature of the criteria, this process was easily operationalisable.

Outcomes of systematic search

An initial screen of 63 papers was conducted by reading their abstracts, from which 49 remained relevant. From these, six met inclusion criteria, of which two were these. An overview of these studies can be found in [Table 2](#).

[Figure 1](#) shows the systematic screening process and how the six papers were selected for inclusion in

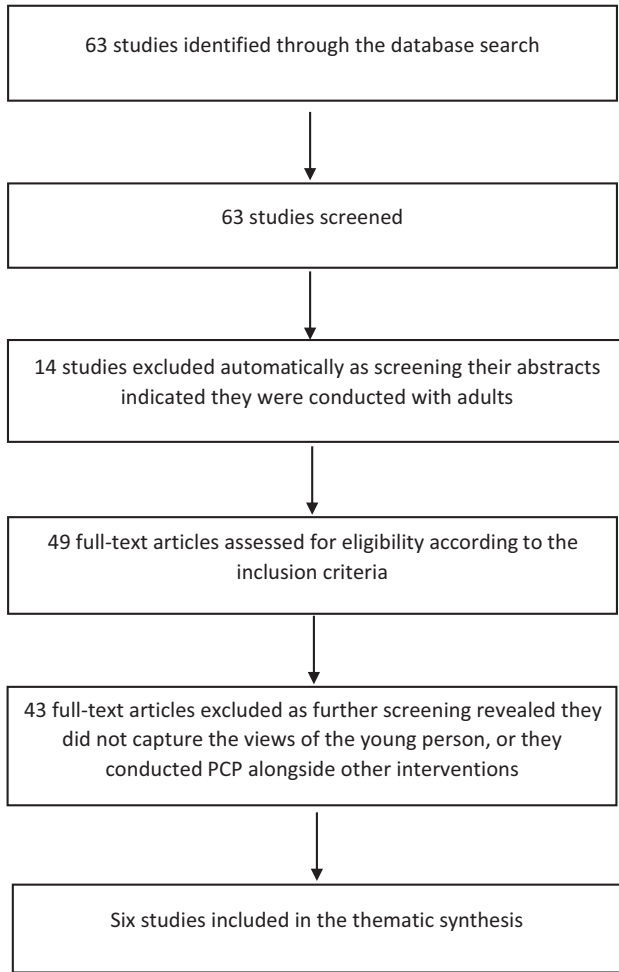


FIGURE 1 The PRISMA process (Moher et al., 2009).

this systematic review. The current view was guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al., 2009).

Quality assurance

The quality of the included studies was reviewed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2018) to examine the quality and evidential value of the studies based upon their methodological rigour. The authors undertook this process independently and then discussed their conclusions to decide on a final score. A scoring system was used with each individual judgement assigned an individual score: yes (1), partial (0.5) and no (0). Please see Table 1 for full details of the CASP scores.

Process of thematic synthesis and epistemological position

Thematic synthesis, as detailed by Thomas and Harden (2008), was used to analyse the included studies.

TABLE 1 The results of CASP scoring.

Paper	Was there a clear statement of the aims of research?	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Was the research design appropriate to address aims of the research?	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate?	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Is there a clear statement of findings?	Is the research valuable?	Overall score (max = 10)
Bason (2020)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	No (0)	No (0)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	8
Chandroo et al. (2020)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Partial (0.5)	Yes (1)	No (0)	No (0)	Partial (0.5)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	7
Kaehne and Beyer (2014)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Partial (0.5)	Partial (0.5)	No (0)	Partial (0.5)	Partial (0.5)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	7
Kusi (2017)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	10
Power (2019)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	10
Taylor-Brown (2012)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	No (0)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	9

TABLE 2 Overview of the included studies.

Author/year	Paper/country	Sample (number, age-range, gender, setting)	Research design	PCP delivered	Data analysis method	Findings
Bason (2020)	The practice of person-centred planning within transition person-centred reviews for young people with SEND at post-16 transition: Gains, barriers and challenges—UK	6 participants in years 12 or 13 (between 16 and 18 years of age) in a special school	Case study involving observing person-centred interviews, parent interviews, questionnaires to professionals and document analysis	Person-centred review prior to Year 14	Thematic analysis (used to analyse qualitative data)	Findings related to the PCR included: enhanced involvement of external services; awareness of how school could enhance student participation and pupil strengths and needs; those with limited verbal ability struggled to participate; variability of the quality of action plans; limited choice for school leavers with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
Chandross et al. (2020)	Is it really student-focused planning? Perspectives of students with autism—Australia	18 students with autism, (15 male, 3 female) between the ages 15–18; 17 of the students attended a support unit within a mainstream school	Semi-structured interviews	Person-centred transition meeting	Inductive content analysis	Four themes and ten sub-themes: transition planning process (the process of transition planning, IEP meeting); future plans (post-secondary plans, planning and preparing for life after high school, work experience); student and parent involvement (student involvement, parental involvement); factors impacting students (areas of concern, student experiences, support for students)
Kaehne and Beyer (2014)	Person-centred reviews as a mechanism for planning the post-school transition of young people with intellectual disability—UK	44 young people in a special school (secondary school leavers assumed to be between 16 and 18 years of age)	Documentary analysis and structured interviews with families of participants	Person-centred transition meeting	Novel coding template applied to documents from transition meetings	PCP may improve the involvement of stakeholders; the impact of PCP on developing transition options and service delivery may be limited; PCP can only influence outcomes for users if all stakeholders take part; PCP can remain a paper exercise unless services perceive it as a planning mechanism to develop a genuinely personalised service; services need to embrace PCRs as an integral part of their service planning
Kusi (2017)	Preparing for Adulthood: An exploration of the experiences of students with learning disabilities on their Person-Centred Annual Review (thesis)—UK	5 participants (4 females, 1 male) between 13 and 16 years old, in 3 mainstream secondary schools	Semi-structured interviews	Person-centred annual review	IPA	PCAR can provoke apprehension, caution, and anxiety; PCAR can be a place of discovery; links between changes in experience of school and PCAR make the meeting more meaningful; PCAR provides students with a sense they are moving into adulthood
Power (2019)	An exploration of how autistic young people are positioned in their Person-centred Annual Review (thesis)—UK	8 participants between 14 and 16 years of age; 3 parents/carer; 3 members of school staff; 2 mainstream schools, 1 mainstream school with an autism resource base	Semi-structured interviews	Person-centred annual review	Critical Discursive Psychology	Student's identity was negotiated, particularly their autism label; negotiation of epistemic rights; construction of autism as a difference versus deficit; adult negotiations of the 'severity of ASD'; family members negotiating the boundary of 'advocate' and 'equal partner'
Taylor-Brown (2012)	How did young people identified as presenting with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties experience a person-centred transition review meeting?—UK	3 participants, approximately 13 years old in a specialist school for social, emotional, behavioural difficulties	Semi-structured interviews	Person-centred annual review	IPA	Four superordinate themes linked to five sub-themes: power (presentation, social trust, levels of emotional arousal); holistic picture (new stories); psychological environment (person-centred versus behaviourist environment); difficulties with articulation

TABLE 3 Themes and their codes.

Descriptive theme	Codes
Meeting content	Presentation of information during process Topics discussed during process
Relationships	Power imbalance in process Trust in relation to the process Relationships within process
Context	PCP versus other types of meeting Systemic context in which PCP meeting occurs SEND in relation to the process
Communication and interaction	Communication in the process Inclusion in relation to the process Emotions experienced by young person during process
Roles and responsibilities	Parental role in process Professionals' roles within process Identity of young person (YP) during process Attendance at the meeting People present during process Staff views regarding the process Parental views of the process
Outcomes	Outcomes resulting from process Post-school options Preparation for adulthood Work Experience
Agency of the young person	YP knowledge of process Contribution of YP to process Aspirations of YP YP perception of the process YP view of their SEND needs Feelings held by YP about the process

The findings section of each study was coded using NVivo software which led to the construction of 28 themes. The first author coded each individual paper's findings section using the software package, which allows line by line coding of documents into 'nodes'. These nodes were then collated into main themes, which were discussed and refined with discussions between the authors. From the 28 themes, seven descriptive themes were constructed, representing themes across all included studies (presented in [Table 3](#)). The discussion section of this review details the analytical themes that were constructed from the descriptive themes and how this relates to the broader literature. The researcher adopted

an existential-humanistic epistemology to interpret the research findings (Spinelli, 2005).

RESULTS

Locations and sample

Five studies took place in the United Kingdom, aside from Chandroo et al. (2020) which took place in Australia. The samples were a mixture of males and females in both mainstream and specialist settings. The participants' ages ranged from 13 to 18 years of age. Kaehne and Beyer (2014) do not provide the specific age range of their participants but did state they were all leavers of a specialist secondary school, placing participants between 16 and 18 years of age.

Study designs

Four of the six studies used semi-structured interviews, while Bason (2020) used a case study design which also incorporated parent interviews, questionnaires, and documentary analysis. Similarly, Kaehne and Beyer (2014) used documentary analysis and interviews. A range of data analysis methods were used, including two instances of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; see [Table 2](#) for details).

Focus

All the studies included young people taking part in PCP meetings for varied reasons, including post-16 transition planning and person-centred annual reviews (PCARS). The studies covered varied aspects of PCP including functional elements (such as structure and organisation), as well as interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors.

FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of the included studies, the themes and sub-themes depicted in [Table 3](#) were constructed, to capture and explore the key components of PCP meetings. The themes (highlighted in italics) are discussed, with extracts from the papers used for exemplification.

The descriptive theme of *meeting content* is concerned with how information is presented within person-centred meetings (referred to as 'PCP meetings') and the range of topics discussed. How information was presented, particularly visually, was a recurring discussion, which linked to transparency and increasing the understanding and participation of the young person and their family. Taylor-Brown (2012, p. 60) stated, 'making the person-centred review better than traditional review meetings,

was the visual representation'; and further commented 'the visual representation also seemed to remove a sense of secrecy because everyone could see what was being recorded' (p. 60). Reflecting this emphasis on transparency and accessibility, Kaehne and Beyer (2014, p. 609) stated the main method utilised in gauging the involvement of young people was assessing the accessibility of information in transition plans, with emphasis placed on 'simple language used, pictures and photos used throughout the plan, acronyms and jargon avoided'.

The topics discussed during the meetings were wide-ranging, with Kaehne and Beyer (2014) noting discussions on school education and college, with health needs featuring prominently. Chandroo et al. (2020) noted that young people responded with varied accounts of the topics discussed, with seven out of 18 expressing uncertainties about what topics were covered. They further highlighted topics sometimes aligned with the needs or wishes of the young person, while on other occasions significantly misaligned. In one instance (p. 4) where a meeting focused on disability benefits; a young person commented, 'I don't deserve that, I should actually focus on practical stuff like actually looking for a job'. In a more positive instance (p. 4) a young person commented teachers supported her to 'choose decisions' by talking her through her options. This reflects the variability of how young people experience PCP and its effectiveness in future planning.

Relationships reflects sub-themes relating to power imbalances, trust in the process and the nature of the relationships within the person-centred meeting. These describe how the young person relationally experiences the process and the dynamics that occur between them, their families and the professionals present. References in Chandroo et al. (2020), Kaehne and Beyer (2014) and Kusi (2017) noted that participating does not guarantee shared decision-making and variability in how involved the young person felt and to what extent the discussion was focused on their priorities. Participant trust in the process appeared to be mediated by the relationships with those present; for example, Taylor-Brown (2012) highlighted that the meeting was negatively impacted by prior suboptimal experiences with professionals, particularly social care.

The next descriptive theme refers to the practical and systemic *context* in which person-centred meetings occurred, and potential tensions with the PCP ethos. Taylor-Brown (2012, p. 60) noted that participants contrasted their experience of person-centred with other types of meetings and that they were 'talked with' rather than 'talked to'. Further, there was a 'disjuncture between the psychology of person-centred approaches and behaviourist psychology' (p. 62) reflecting the tension between the person-centred meeting and the school's behaviourist behaviour policy. Kaehne and Beyer (2014, p. 609) similarly, highlighted the disconnect between the availability of suitable post-16 options and young

people's needs stating, 'person-centred planning during transition may contribute little to person-centred service delivery but rather prepare young people for transition into existing services in a person-centred way'. Chandroo et al. (2020) and Power (2019) discussed SEND needs, specifically autism; how these were conceptualised by the young people participating; and how this impacted the meeting. Power (p. 89) specifically noted the prominence of the young people's autism diagnoses, with one staff member stating it was 'implicit in everything you discuss because that's why you're having the discussion'. Power (p. 88) further noted the 'repertoires of deficit' in relation to how autism was discussed, reflecting a further tension between the espoused person-centred ethos and a deficit-orientated view of the young people's needs.

The descriptive theme *communication and interaction* explores areas of communication, inclusion and the emotions experienced by young people during person-centred meetings. In analysing the literature, a relationship between communication and inclusion was identified. Kaehne and Beyer (2014, p. 606) noted a higher level of young person involvement than 'conventional transition reviews' and that plans resulting from the meetings generally avoided jargon to increase inclusion. However, Taylor-Brown (2012) and Bason (2020) identified needs relating to expressive and receptive language as a specific barrier to participation.

Person-centred meetings emerged as emotionally complex experiences for the young people participating. Kusi (2017, p. 67) described a young person's experience of apprehension and relief, with them stating, 'it felt like when all the stress I had in my body I feel I let it out when I said my worries to [SENCo name]'. Similarly, Chandroo et al. (2020) discussed themes relating to anxiety.

The descriptive theme *roles and responsibilities* explores the roles of attendees such as parents, professionals, and school staff. Reflecting the importance of both family and professionals attending person-centred meetings, Kaehne and Beyer (2014, p. 606) stated 'One important aspect of transition support for young people leaving school is whether or not a sufficiently broad range of professionals and significant others participate in transition review meetings'. Parents are discussed as being advocates and a source of support; as well as a hindrance by Chandroo et al. (2020), as parental views could sometimes contradict those of the young person. Person-centred meetings also provide a space for exploring the identity of the young person and to revise aspects of it. For example, Taylor-Brown (2012, p. 62) stated 'This provided people in the meeting with the opportunity to reveal new stories or narratives about the young person' while Power (2019) discussed young people negotiating their identities. Power (2019) also discussed the views of staff and parents aligning in the belief, that generally they felt person-centred meetings promoted inclusion. However, both groups expressed concerns about meeting dynamics; Power (2019, p. 94) highlighted a staff member

expressed concerns that the annual review processes ‘fly above the head of the student’ and ‘Is it that we're just getting them to agree with what we think with these documents?’. Similarly, Power (2019, p. 97) noted a parent described themselves as a ‘warrior’ and that ‘I've felt like I'm going into battle because something's happened’.

The descriptive theme *outcomes* relates to what resulted from the person-centred meetings, particularly around post-16 options such as employment and preparation for adulthood. One key theme was the quality of outcomes from person-centred meetings, including action plans, were variable. Taylor-Brown (2012) highlighted that the quality of action plans was dependent upon who was present at the meeting. Bason (2020, p. 76) identified problems with ownership of tasks to be carried out resulting from planning, and that the lack of an ‘action-chaser’ negatively impacted outcomes. Similarly, Kaehne and Beyer (2014, p. 609) identified that goals associated with employment were ‘often vague’, perhaps reflecting Chandroo et al.'s (2020, p. 4) statement that only two of 18 students felt identified goals were based upon ‘what they were interested in doing in the future’. Discussions in the literature reflect participants in person-centred meetings identifying the importance of work experience, employment and independent living. Chandroo et al. (2020, p. 6) discussed that the young people in their study wished to develop skills to live independently and linked this to opportunities to build relevant skills. Chandroo et al. (2020) also discussed work experience—this being mostly organised by the school, but sometimes by parents.

The final descriptive theme is *agency of the young person*, the students discussed in the literature expressed varied opinions about person-centred meetings. Power (2019) highlighted that the young people interviewed, described person-centred meetings as focused on saying positive things about them, discussing their grades and issues they may be experiencing in school. Student aspirations also featured, with PCP offering a space to explore them (Chandroo et al., 2020; Kusi, 2017).

Within the literature, there are suggestions that aspects of person-centred meetings may undermine the young person's autonomy. In relation to young people's knowledge of the process, Chandroo et al. (2020, p. 4) found that 13 out of 18 young people in their research did not know what transition planning involved. Power (2019) discussed how some of the young people interviewed had a clear idea of what the meeting was about, while other expressed ambivalence. Similarly, Power (2019) highlighted that the young people's diagnoses of autism assisted in helping to define needs while also creating an element of tension, citing an instance where a young person was ‘resistant’ to being categorised (p. 77). The feelings held by the young people about the meetings in the literature were complex. Taylor-Brown (2012, p. 61) described participants as ‘polarised’ noting ‘at one end a sense of ease contrasting with apprehension or anxiety’.

DISCUSSION

The discussion will consider the research questions in relation to the findings of this systematic literature review. Consideration will be given to review limitations and future directions.

Within the thematic synthesis, descriptive themes were constructed which facilitated construction of analytical themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008). When constructing analytical themes, the researcher drew upon principles from Gestalt psychology. Troyer and Younggreen (2005, p. 532) discussed Gestalt psychology as viewing experiences in ‘holistic, dynamic and subjective terms’. This emphasis on holism and the experience of the individual was useful. Gestalt therapy's concept of ‘figure’ and ‘ground’ (termed ‘foreground’ and ‘background’ elements) was useful for mapping the features of PCP and their interlocking influence (Clarkson & Cavicchia, 2013, pp. 6–7).

Foreground elements relate to who attends and where, how information is recorded and presented, who facilitates the meeting, how outcomes are agreed and managed and the language used within the meeting (although language also has background element implications). Background elements are dynamics between those present, how identities are constructed and negotiated, power imbalances and the relationships between staff, families and young people and the systemic context in which the meeting takes place, such as how a school's behaviour policy may influence how the young person is viewed within the meeting or the limitations of post-16 options shaping feasible outcomes. These overlapping domains mean that PCP meetings are a complex space where practical foreground elements interact with the more subtle background elements, as shown in Figure 2. A specific example of the intersection of foreground and background elements can be found in the types of professionals attending (a foreground element) which can lead to tensions between how personal and professional views are expressed within the PCP meeting (a background element).

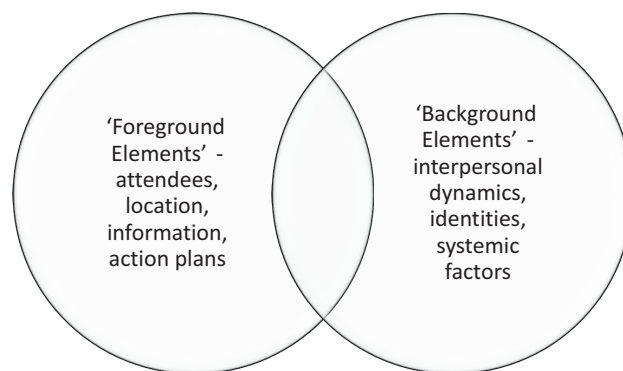


FIGURE 2 The overlapping elements of PCP meetings explored using Gestalt concepts.

In relation to the first question *How are person-centred planning meetings organised and structured?* all the papers in the review discussed the varied individuals attending, including school staff, parents, family members, carers and external professionals, such as social care which constitute a foreground element. There is often reported tension in relation to who is attending, the consistency of their attendance and the impact of their attendance on the meeting. Kaehne and Beyer (2014) referred to the importance of a broad range of professionals attending. Yet as Taylor-Brown (2012) identified, the presence of social care at meetings could be a cause of concern for young people and their families, and Power (2019), highlighted staff and parents clashing over to what extent the process reflected a person-centred ethos representing a background element. This complex mix of interpersonal and professional dynamics means that the PCP meeting is a sometimes tense space, where personal and professional concerns are expressed and can markedly differ, and where foreground and background intersect.

PCP meetings were organised by the educational setting and situated within pre-established processes to review the young person's progress, which on the surface, is a foreground element. However, within the literature reviewed, two unique background element challenges relate to this: that PCP meetings are organised within the broader system of the school's policies and systems (Taylor-Brown, 2012); that there is a disconnect between post-16 options available and the aspirations of the young person (Kaehne & Beyer, 2014). Robertson et al. (2007) highlighted contextual factors may limit the impact of PCP meetings; for example, Taylor-Brown (2012) identified how the school's behaviour policy predicated upon behaviourist principles misaligned with the PCP ethos.

School behaviour policies predicated upon a rigid and often selective interpretation of behaviourist theory are ubiquitous in educational settings internationally. In the UK examples can be found in legislation relating to behaviour and discipline (Bennett, 2017; DfE, 2016), which Bagley and Hallam (2015, p. 433) discussed as being 'low-tolerance behaviour strategies'. Similar examples can be found in the US (Wolf & Kupchik, 2017) and Australia (Sullivan et al., 2014). This presents a concern for practitioners and stakeholders, in relation to how behaviour policies and other systemic factors may influence or impact the PCP meeting.

Kaehne and Beyer (2014) observation regarding post-16 options reflects a significant background element relating to how educational systems meet the needs of children and promote inclusion. Ainscow (2020) observed that this is an issue internationally, while Yates et al. (2011, p. 517) highlighted increasing complexity in post-16 transitions where young people may not experience 'stable, linear and 'traditional' transition trajectories'. The process of forming a post-16 identity and transitioning into adulthood, is a challenging experience for young people with SEND or additional

vulnerabilities (Hudson, 2006), exacerbated further by a lack of post-16 options congruent with the interests of the young person. This may create an anxiety relating to authentic or meaningful outcomes, perhaps reflected in Taylor-Brown (2012) observation that the quality of action plans in PCP meetings were variable and ownership of tasks unclear. This suggests PCP meetings need clearly delineated roles in which stakeholders take responsibility for ensuring the needs and aspirations of the young person are reflected in meaningful outcomes. However, this places heavy emphasis on professionals rather than systemic or social factors. For example, Thompson (2017, p. 757) noted the post-16 options available to low-attaining young people are 'highly questionable' and that 'churning' (p. 760) through these options may be seen as a success for professionals, but their positive impact on young people is debatable. This presents an issue of social justice, which is a core concern within educational and mental health professions (Schulze et al., 2019).

Regarding the structure of PCP meetings, specific members of staff, often the school's Special Educational Needs Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo), were selected to facilitate the process in this foreground element. White and Rae (2016, p. 46) suggested that the skills of the chosen facilitator among the stakeholders present, can give the parents and young person a sense of the process being structured. It is important to consider who may be best placed to facilitate and guide the process. As discussed by Kaehne and Beyer (2014) and Taylor-Brown (2012), some PCP meetings were structured around a visual representation of the meeting. The process of creating a visual artefact suggests the need for a focal point to represent the information presented within the meeting and give a sense of the planning process. Visuals are a key feature in PCP meetings, which White and Rae (2016, p. 46) suggested may contribute to a 'fun, informal atmosphere'. Due to their prominent role visuals are a foreground and background element, serving as a link between the two domains within the meeting.

Regarding question two, *How do young people experience person-centred planning meetings?* young people's experiences within PCP meetings were nuanced, with positive and negative elements. Chandroo et al. (2020) and Kusi (2017) noted there was variability in power-sharing, decision-making and to what extent discussion reflected young people's priorities. This may reflect the aforementioned background systemic factors, and to what extent suitable options were available to match aspirations and meet needs. It may also reflect idiosyncratic practices relating to context or geographical location (see Table 2 for geographic and contextual factors).

This varied practice meant that some of the young people surveyed experienced a power imbalance, particularly when they were unclear what pathway planning involved. However, the picture and this

background element is complex, and in many instances young people expressed positivity about what was said about them and how they were included. This variability in PCP meetings may result from the skill of the facilitator and to what extent they mediated the power-imbalances and discussion within the meeting. As Corrigan (2014) and White and Rae (2016) highlighted, it is the role of the facilitator to ensure parity in contributions and navigating the richness of the discussions to ensure they facilitate a positive experience for the young person. Some of the papers suggested a background element like relationships with staff present also mediated the young person's experience of the meeting (e.g., Taylor-Brown, 2012). Corrigan (2014, p. 276) suggested preparation for the PCP meeting resulted in increased participation reporting one young person as stating, 'people know who I am'.

The language used within PCP meetings is an important aspect of the young people's experience. While a foreground aspect of meetings, Bason (2020) and Kaehne and Beyer (2014) noted jargon, and speech and language needs can be barriers to participation adding an important background dimension to the experience of participating. Bason (2020) further noted verbally more able young people were encouraged to participate more frequently, suggesting more adaptations may be needed to improve access for young people with language difficulties. Consequently, it is necessary for those facilitating PCP meetings to be alert to speech and language needs, particularly as these can go unnoticed in young people with other SEND needs (Timpson, 2019).

An important background element is one highlighted by Kusi (2017) and Power (2019) who suggested PCP meetings are also spaces in which the young person negotiated their identity, in relation to their planned future and the perceptions of those present. This constitutes a particularly complex background element within the process, at risk of being obscured by the focus on practical concerns such as academic attainment, material support and post-16 options. The young person's burgeoning identity and their experience of autonomy are continually present in the PCP meeting. This dynamic was identified by Chandroo et al. (2020), who noted instances of tension between parental and young person views. The young person rejecting the proposed view of them as a recipient of benefits, while affirming their identity as a person worthy of employment is an example. Power (2019) identified that the young people's diagnoses of autism gave their identity a salience which required navigating, suggesting that identity and narrative are central to how young people experience PCP meetings, reflecting Taylor-Brown (2012) discussion of stories and narratives. The emergence and potential thwarting of preferred identities within PCP meetings highlights the necessity of facilitators to respond skilfully. It prompts careful consideration of the repertoires of skills

necessary to do so, examples of which can be found in person-centred counselling (Rogers, 2004), motivational interviewing (Miller & Moyers, 2017) and narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990). This is not to suggest facilitators must be qualified in these approaches, but rather skills from them may be useful in ensuring the young person's psychological experience of how their identity is constructed and negotiated within the process, is done with skilled facilitation. It is hoped this would improve co-production of outcomes within the process and ensure the young person's voice is enhanced and received in its richness and complexity, given the active participation of young people can 'increase young people's ownership and belonging, self-esteem, responsibility' (Atkinson et al., 2019, p. 10).

Finally, psychological theories that are congruent with PCP, such as self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) may also serve to enrich and help practitioners to better align the philosophy of PCP with its intended outcomes. An example is Morgan (2016) using a solution-focused approach in conjunction with PCP.

LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations of this review. First, it is acknowledged that a systematic literature review of previous practice provides an incomplete picture of how PCP meetings are organised and managed, and young people's experience of them. While published literature is relatively recent, it is not extensive and involves generally small-scale studies, in within a constantly changing post-16 context. Despite using a systematic process, it is not necessarily easy to draw comparisons between studies occurring in different context. Additionally, it is acknowledged that the included studies did not necessarily aim to address this study's research questions. In future, further explorative approach, focused on specific instances of PCP being used with individuals may have allowed a richer and more nuanced picture of PCP and its utility to emerging practice.

The systematic literature review process employed in this paper included a PRISMA screening process (Moher et al., 2009), quality ratings using the CASP (2018), and thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008). There are alternative approaches which could have been considered, such the Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research framework (O'Brien et al., 2014) which could have been used, potentially with slightly different outcomes. Of the identified studies, two were doctoral theses, peer-reviewed via an academic process and viva, rather than through journal submission and its associated guidelines. However, Moyer et al. (2009), found that across several measures of methodological quality, there were minimal differences between theses and published articles, and theses were therefore worthy of inclusion in literature reviews.

Another limitation resulted from the search parameters which required included papers to describe the planning process and offer insight into how the young people experienced them. This meant that papers that gave a good overview of aspects of PCP but did not directly address the second aspect were rejected. This was also the case in contexts where PCP had been utilised alongside other forms of intervention.

Finally, all the papers included, except one, were in the UK context giving the review a UK-centric nature. This will have invariably limited its focus and have excluded forms of practice found in other geographical areas. There is a diversity of language used to describe PCP reflecting its use in varied educational, mental health and statutory processes. The UK-centric results may reflect narrow search terms that are more specific to practice within the United Kingdom. Further research using broader terms with language reflecting wider notions of PCP would be useful.

Despite the limitations, as indicated by the dearth of studies, there is limited research in this area, and it is hoped that the process has resulted in a conceptual representation which will be useful for practice and add to the knowledge base around PCP more generally, as well as potentially offering a testable framework for future research.

Recommendations for future research and practice

A key finding in this literature review is the varied forms PCP practice can take and how these influence the process. It is debatable to what extent a fidelity measure that

TABLE 4 Additional 'ingredients' for PCP practice.

1. Relationship building with young people and their families, outside of the meeting.
2. Adaptations for young people with SEND, particularly those with speech and language difficulties and social communication and interaction needs.
3. Training for facilitators on specific approaches within PCP and the associated skills to facilitate them.
4. Training in effective visual recording.
5. Pre-meeting preparation and post-meeting debriefing.
6. PCP as a process rather than a single discrete point in time. This should be reflected in opportunities for follow-up meetings or specific actions to occur to 'keep the momentum' of the meeting going.
7. An improved 'local offer' of post-16 options. This could be facilitated through greater liaison with placement providers and local business to provide supported internships and work experience.
8. Those tasked with ensuring the outcomes are actioned are given the opportunity to network with relevant organisations, such as further education settings, apprenticeship providers and local businesses.

is agreed upon by all practitioners can be developed for PCP given its rich historical and philosophical roots. Certainly, Choy-Brown et al. (2020) fidelity measure and the Preparing for Adulthood (2022) minimum standards checklist are useful and suggest measures of fidelity are possible in specific contexts. However, perhaps a more fruitful focus for researchers is identifying the active ingredients of PCP and how these relate to specific outcomes, which would serve to improve the replicability of PCP overall.

Another recommendation is for practitioners to consider the underlying background dynamics within PCP meetings and how these may intersect with the foreground or functional aspects of planning. As discussed, PCP meetings are complex spaces in which varied psychological and emotional experiences are negotiated. The Preparing for Adulthood (Preparing for Adulthood, 2022) checklist is useful in mapping this and gives practitioners a range of ideas to use within their approaches. While not an exhaustive checklist and systemically focused it provides a useful conceptual map of the features of PCP.

Finally, emerging from this current study are aspects of PCP which could benefit from specific consideration or refinement by practitioners with the addition of other 'ingredients'. These are detailed in Table 4 for practitioners to consider alongside their own use of PCP and approach. These suggestions are drawn from some of the limitations of the practice of PCP that emerged from the included papers and were constructed by both authors through discussing how practitioners could best address them.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study is a review of published studies and therefore secondary data. In accordance with the University of Manchester Ethics Decision Tool, ethical approval was not required for this study.

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