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**Emotion and professional identities: A comparative study of  
professionals in Further Education and learning disability  
support services**

**Victoria Marie Byrne**

**A thesis submitted to the University of  
Huddersfield in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Science by Research**

**The University of Huddersfield**

**June 2011**

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to say an enormous thank you to my supervisor, Dr Pamela Fisher, for encouraging me to undertake a Masters degree in the first instance. She has provided me with absolutely fantastic support throughout. I could not have wished for more.

I would also like to thank Dr Chris Gifford, my secondary supervisor, for his help and support both over the last year and since the final year of my undergraduate Behavioural Sciences degree.

A big thanks to my mum, dad and Jess for cheering me on!

Finally, thank you to the organisations and individuals without whom this research would not have been possible. Not only did they freely give up their time to take part in my research, they did so with enthusiasm and good will.

## Abstract

This research observes and compares the emotions and professional identities of professionals working in Further Education in the Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees, and for a learning disability charity in the North of England. I wanted to identify the rewards and pressures in order to develop an understanding of how emotional demands inform professional identities.

In relation to this, both groups of professionals have obligations with regards providing care for the people they serve, whilst also fulfilling other responsibilities which appear to contrast with this. Education professionals must facilitate achievement, whilst support workers must enable service users to live as independently as possible.

Twenty semi-structured, intensive interviews were conducted with participants who were gathered using purposive sampling. It was an exploratory study, broadly following an interpretive grounded theory approach.

My findings indicate a positive sense of professional identity is facilitated when the professionals feel they are significant within their professional environment; have a certain amount of control or agency; and hold values which are aligned with the organisation. Professionals were most passionate about their work when they were working with underprivileged or 'forgotten' members of society, such as low achieving students and people with learning disabilities.

Decisions made outside the working environment seemed to negatively affect professionals most. Issues relating to current policy, targets and management pressures were evidenced as concerns for professionals in Further Education. Professionals at the Mencap affiliated organisation involved in the research cited increased paperwork as an issue as it undermined their sense of agency; they felt they were being unnecessarily monitored. The professionals working with people with learning disabilities have great pride in their organisation and worry about the prospect of policy altering the way they work.

The findings indicate that greater agency; a less businesslike approach; and the alignment of organisational and personal values proves beneficial to professional identity.

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Word count: 27,074

# 1. Introduction

The aim of the present research was to develop an understanding of how emotional demands inform and shape professional identities. This was done by observing the effects of rewards and pressures, as well as and the impact of emotional labour, on those working in Further Education (FE) and at a local Mencap affiliated organisation, which I will refer to as 'Local Mencap' from this point on.

The two professions have similar obligations with regards care and protection; education professionals must cater for the wellbeing of students, at the same time as instilling discipline and the goal of achievement. Whilst the learning disability support professional must enable service users and promote independence, alongside supporting and caring for their needs. The professionals' duties of care are set out by the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) in the *Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers* (GTCE 2009) and by the General Social Care Council (GSCC) in the *Code of Practice for Social Care Workers* (GSCC 2004). The *Care Standards Act 2000* (DoH) requires the GSCC to produce the codes and keep them under review, and the GTCE is a regulatory body, independent from government, responsible for awarding Qualified Teacher Status. As the professions are similar with regards their obligations, the codes of practice are also alike. A teaching professional must;

Put the wellbeing, development and progress of children and young people first...strive to establish productive partnerships with parents and carers; Work as part of a whole-school team; Co-operate with other professional colleagues...uphold public trust and confidence in the teaching profession. (GTCE 2009 p7)

A social care professional must;

Protect the rights and promote the interests of service users and carers...Promote the independence of service users while protecting them as far as possible from danger or harm; Respect the rights of service users whilst seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people; Uphold public trust and confidence in social care services; Be accountable for the quality of their work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills.(GSCC 2004 p12-13)

Both roles are set within the narrative of protection, but this protection must be assimilated alongside achievement and discipline, for teachers, and enablement, for learning disability support professionals. David Congdon, Director of public affairs at Mencap, makes reference to this duty of care in relation to the failings of social services with regards obligations to promote the independence of service users whilst also supporting and caring for them;

With adults there is always going to be the issue about how 'vulnerable' you are...We would always support the right of someone with learning difficulties to have autonomy and to lead an independent life. But that doesn't mean they should just be left to their own devices. Unfortunately, because so many local authorities are so strapped for cash that's what can happen. (Hunter 2008)

In relation to the emotions such a role will arouse, as well as other emotional demands placed on the professionals, I refer to the work of Hochschild (1983). She coined the term 'emotional labour' to refer to the regulation and management of emotions at work, in order to display appropriate emotions to the people receiving the service. She saw emotion management as a

stress inducing activity. In reference to this I wanted to learn how large a part emotional labour plays, if indeed it plays a part at all, in the lives of the professionals.

I refer to people who work in education and social care as 'professionals' throughout, therefore I will explain here how I use the term. According to Evetts (2006) it is not as important to define 'profession' as it is to look at the appeal of 'professionalism' to occupations and I agree. The concept of professionalism is applied to a wide variety of occupations, often used as a tool to elevate them to a more prestigious position (Evetts 2006). People are expected to place their trust in professionals; these professionals in turn must prove themselves to be worthy of such and are rewarded with authority and high status. Evetts highlights how the concept of professionalism is increasingly used as a mechanism to facilitate and promote occupational change; exclusive ownership of a practice appeals as organisations wish to show they have something unique to offer the market. I therefore use the term 'professional' as a concept, rather than a word that can be neatly defined.

Having recently interviewed the teaching professionals with regards a research project conducted by my supervisor at the University of Huddersfield, I was in a good position to look further into the issues they raised with regards emotions in the workplace. Their discussions of the emotional demands placed upon them gave me the idea to take this further and interview other professionals in emotionally demanding jobs with regards the impact of this on their professional identity. Although I now work for Local Mencap, prior to the organisation becoming involved in my research I did not have any kind of relationship with them. My employment at the organisation began in July 2010; ten months after my research had begun, and after all my data had been collected.

I thought it would be interesting to compare findings from public (FE) and third-sector (Local Mencap) organisations. The idea to conduct my research with professionals from Local Mencap came from having a friend who worked there. I contacted the chief executive of Local Mencap and was granted permission to involve them in my study. Based on the information I gave her (I wanted a mix of front-line and managerial workers) she then put together a list of willing participants. Upon meeting the participants for interview I explained the aims of the research and presented them with a consent form (Appendix One) to ensure informed consent was reached.

My methodology details my use of Charmaz's (2006) interpretive approach to grounded theory. Charmaz's approach to grounded theory is not only an approach to gathering data, but a methodology which is embedded in the whole research process. Central to this approach is recognising that people construct the world in different ways, and the influence of the researcher on the data gathering process. In line with the basic, widely agreed principle of grounded theory, my research process followed an irregular order; after familiarising myself with basic policy in relation to education, I conducted the interviews with education professionals, as opposed to first conducting a full literature review and then carrying them out. This was in line with

grounded theorists (Charmaz 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Dunne 2010) recommendations that conducting a literature review before data collection will mean the researcher is influenced with regards what they look for in the data.

I then went on to conduct the literature review in relation to both education and social care, then carried out the final ten interviews with learning disability support professionals at Local Mencap. To have followed grounded theory properly I should have conducted all my interviews first, and then the literature review, however, I will detail my reasoning for differing from this in the methodology section. My literature review and analysis follow; the analysis demonstrates the emergence of three themes running throughout the data:

- Organisational identity
- Professional identity
- Emotions

My findings indicate that the removal of professional discretion due to neo-liberal strategies of accountability and targets (Larner 2000; Kolthoff et al 2006) negatively affect professional identity, whilst more holistic, 'emotional' approaches to practice serve the professional better. Emotional investment is necessary in both professions in order for the professionals to carry out their roles in the best way; emotions appear to underpin commitment. Issues such as management pressures, policies and targets seemed to be the biggest cause of negative emotions.

With regards my recommendations for future research, I observed a concern amongst many of the participants that the government has an ideology of the idealised citizen, with those who do not live up to the blueprint the government has created being deemed second class citizens. In terms of education I refer to academic standards; if pupils do not achieve to these standards they are seen as failures. At Local Mencap there were frustrations that the government see an ideal citizen as being independent, working and living on their own; the professionals do not believe this should be expected of all service users.

Finally, I detail my contribution to knowledge in this area. I have studied the impact of recent policy; compared the public and third sector in terms of their management strategies; and I have conducted this research in the Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees where such research has not before been conducted. As a result of my research I have also contributed to two peer reviewed conference presentations; presented my research at the University of Huddersfield 2010 Research Festival; and contributed to a paper which has been accepted by the journal, *Sociology of Health and Illness*.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

After gaining ethical approval from The School of Human and Health Sciences at the University of Huddersfield, I conducted two small scale qualitative studies involving twenty intensive interviews in total. Ten were with teaching professionals in FE colleges, and ten with professionals at Local Mencap. The participants were gathered using purposive sampling; recruiting participants based on certain criteria, which in this case was that they were professionals from one of the FE colleges or Local Mencap. I also sought a mix of professionals working at different levels within the organisations. The interviews took place in the participants' workplace, were audio recorded, and I made notes following each interview if anything of interest was communicated afterwards. Recording the interviews meant I could devote my full attention to the interaction between myself and the participant, which was beneficial in terms of the data generated. Appropriate action was taken to ensure the participants knew their data would remain confidential and their identities anonymous, with pseudonyms being used when the research was written up. Research participants were also assured that they were able to withdraw from the process at any time; including being able to withdraw their interview data after the interview had been conducted.

I did not mislead my research participants as to the aims of my research. Knowing the aims of the research may induce participant bias; in an effort to aid the research process they may give information they believe is helpful, such as focusing on a subject that may not, in reality, be of great importance to them. However, because it was an exploratory study the topics were broad and the aims of the research were not clearly identifiable.

The participants from education included three lecturers; a counselor; five people from student support/care; and a college principal. The three organisations I visited were very different in terms of their intake of students; there was one where issues relating to underprivileged or underachieving students was a key issue for the staff; one which seemed to sit in the middle ground, where issues beyond education itself still seemed to be a concern, such as language barriers and difficult home lives; at the third, a high achieving college such issues did not appear to be a concern.

At Local Mencap the participants consisted of staff working at different levels within the organisation, including six support workers and four people working at managerial level. The support workers included two people working in the community team, whose roles involved visiting people who lived independently to help with day to day living; three people from a day centre; and one person working in a group home. The managerial staff included the Executive Director of Local Mencap (who was happy to be identified). The managerial staff seemed connected and involved with the support workers and service users, even though they do not work with them directly.

My interviews were semi-structured, with a list of topics I wanted to cover rather than specific questions; I wanted to discover views and interpretations, rather than force opinions and statements. I tried to direct the interviews towards the topics I wanted to cover, but also allowed the participants to direct them down different routes. However, this meant that in some instances the interviews went off subject to a greater degree and the information gained was not always relevant to my research. This, I believe, was part of gaining a good relationship with the participant and allowing them to feel comfortable enough to talk freely, as well as gaining unanticipated information. Some interviews lasted longer than others because of this. After allowing the participant space to talk and a certain amount of control, I would revert back to my list of topics in order that we cover my research objectives. In many instances, after initially directing the interview topic, the participant would cover many of the topics without prompting.

## 2.2 Theoretical Approach to Data Gathering

My research followed the interpretive grounded theory approach of Kathy Charmaz (2006). Charmaz's approach represents a radical departure from the positivism initially applied by the theory's founders, Glaser and Strauss (1967). The two approaches must not be confused; although the theory emerged at the hands of Glaser and Strauss based upon positivist assumptions, it was developed by Charmaz (2006: 9), who states;

In their original statement of the method, Glaser and Strauss (1967) invited their readers to use grounded theory strategies flexibly in their own way. I accept their invitation and return to past grounded theory emphases on examining processes, making the study of action central, and creating abstract interpretive understandings of the data.

Grounded theory emerged at the hands of Glaser and Strauss (1967) during a time when methods were dominated by quantitative inquiry. Grounded theory is not a research method which seeks to represent a wider population in the way quantitative methods do, but is a way to approach the research process, explain that which is being studied at present, and generate theories and concepts that can be used for further inquiry. The ultimate goal being that new data no longer alters the theory which has emerged and a new theory is formed. Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe grounded theory as a method which involves constant comparison of data gathered, with the development of a theory taking place throughout the whole research process. In relation to the present research, I wish to explore emotion and professional identity, drawing implications that can be used to study them further in environments where caring for the welfare of others is central.

Glaser and Strauss separated in terms of their take on grounded theory, taking the methodology down different routes. Glaser continued trying to discover new theories using a combination of positivism and pragmatism; seeking to combine a common sense and scientific approach to data gathering, whilst Strauss was more interested in developing an interpretive approach.

Charmaz's (2006) development of grounded theory is akin to Strauss' approach; it is not a rigid way of conducting and theorising about research, but a tool to aid the research process – a principle, not a prescription. Charmaz's grounded theory is based on an interpretive, constructionist epistemology whereby it is impossible to remove the researcher from the process, with total objectivity being an unattainable goal as people simultaneously interpret and construct their worlds in different ways. The research findings can never be an exact representation of the world because of their involvement within it; subjectivity must be acknowledged. I am in agreement with her desire to see the pragmatic foundations of grounded theory built upon, as well as the acknowledgement that findings will be a construction of reality. In contrast to Charmaz, when founding grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) spoke of theory emerging from data, not acknowledging the influence of the researcher upon the construction of this theory. Their approach involved positivist assumptions regarding objectivity, whereas Charmaz (2006) believes that the acknowledgement of researcher influence is

beneficial to the research process and outcome as it will produce an honest account of it. Charmaz's constructionist approach is embedded in the whole research process, as well the researcher's mindset throughout.

Grounded theory presupposes if the literature review is conducted prior to the data gathering it will negatively affect the data gained. Influenced by the findings in the literature review, researchers are likely to have preconceived ideas about what they will discover and be possibly led down one route at the cost of overlooking others (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2006). Glaser and Strauss (1967) explained;

An effective strategy is, at first, literally to ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study' (Glaser and Strauss 1967 p.37).

Charmaz concurs, explaining a literature review is conducted post data collection in order;

...to avoid importing preconceived ideas and imposing them on your work. Delaying the review allows you to articulate your ideas' (2006 p.165)

Charmaz (2006) states that a researcher, irrespective of the method they use, defines what they can see in the data. Being aware of this, meant I was able to view the research process and the data in a broader, reflective way, mindful of the fact that what I make of the data is my own interpretation and construction. In relation to this, it is advised that a researcher does not merely concentrate on conducting interviews that will produce quality data, but that they immerse themselves within the data in order to really 'see' the data. Immersion in the data should be done mindfully, with care being taken to look outside our own thoughts and beliefs, trying to see the process from as many perspectives as possible. Subjectivity is inescapable; I was ever aware that my research is a reconstruction of a reality created in different parts by myself and the participants. In line with this, Findlay (1998; 2002) states research should embrace subjectivity; every individual's interpretation has the potential to be different and this should be acknowledged in a positive manner.

With regards to immersing oneself in the data, before and during the first set of interviews in FE institutions I attended Kirklees College's Health and Emotional Wellbeing Group (KCHEWG) meetings to which all FE research participants were associated, and the majority attended. In doing so I was able to familiarise myself with the participants, listen to their concerns and observe how they interacted with others. The time spent at these meetings was wholly beneficial in relation to my relationships with them, and my understanding of their current agendas. It also gave me more of an understanding of the institutions I would visit to conduct the research.

With regards Local Mencap, I also visited the organisation before conducting the interviews. I spent time there, casually talking with the staff about the culture and values of the organisation and forming relationships with potential participants. I tried to be self-aware and reflexive about my input when visiting both Local Mencap and the FE institutions. Reflexivity examines bias within the research process; it does not claim to be able to counter this bias, but acknowledges that it is there, as opposed to believing there are ways to remove it from the research process,

and thus it affecting your research because of this lack of recognition. During analysis, Findlay (2002) asserts that the researcher should reflect upon the interpretations they have made, asking why data has been interpreted in certain ways, and what these interpretations say about the researcher's role within the process. She advises that we return to the data, re-analyse and reconsider our own motivations in order that we may attempt to safeguard against making the data suit the outcome we expect or desire. This was something at the forefront of my mind throughout my research journey.

## **2.3 Collecting Data: Further Education**

In line with Charmaz's approach to grounded theory, I conducted my first set of ten interviews with the education professionals prior to my review of the literature. Other than studying the policies and legislation in relation to education (DfES 2003; DoH 2004) I went into the interviews with little knowledge of other research conducted in the field. Also, as advised by this approach, my interview schedule developed based on the interviews conducted; as I interviewed participants, new topics arose that I had not thought of, or did not realise were of importance to the group being studied, which I later incorporated in my list of topics. I say topics because I attempted to always be aware of leading the participant by the way I phrased my line of questioning. Where possible I tried to use open questions in order to avoid leading the participant, such as; "Can you tell me about..." and "What is your opinion on..." in order to gain responses that were as spontaneous and genuine as possible. Consistent with Charmaz's advice, in order to allow for disclosure I sometimes framed questions so that a respondent felt able to answer. For example, if a topic was somewhat contentious and I could sense a participant was reluctant to respond, I would mention an opinion from another interview I had conducted to encourage them to open up. This invoking of an absent other in order to create a common in-group has been discussed in detail by Abell et al (2006). They concluded that using such a strategy must be applied with caution as there are pitfalls involved; in creating similarities between the interviewer and participant there may also be opportunity for differences to become evident. Furthermore, the showing of similarities must be done in a manner that is mindful of the problem that showing too much familiarity may lead to the participant believing the interviewer has greater prior knowledge of the subject being discussed, therefore providing a less detailed response. I was also conscious of inducing participant bias by using this technique as in an effort to please or give what they see as the desired response they may agree with the opinion of the absent other.

## **2.4 Analysis of Data: Further Education**

Consistent with Charmaz's (2006) interpretation of grounded theory, analysis took place throughout the entire research process. It was important to recognise topics which were not mentioned, as well as those that were, in order to direct future interviews. When the first set of interviews were complete, I read through the transcripts and wrote memos when something of interest emerged. Memos are preliminary analytic notes and ideas. This was followed by initial and focused coding. Initial coding involves reading through each transcript and highlighting areas that seem significant. Focused coding was not necessarily something that followed this, but ran alongside, and was more theoretically led in that it looked to past interviews, seeking similarities and differences in data. Twelve categories emerged (see Appendix Three for an illustration of all the categories that emerged from the data), from which four themes were evident:

- Professional Pride
- Stress
- Government Legislation.
- Management Pressures

## 2.5 Collecting Data: Local Mencap

Based on the categories from the first set of interviews I went on to carry out a further ten interviews with professionals working for the learning disability charity, Local Mencap. Grounded theorists (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2006) acknowledge that a researcher does not have to stick stringently to a recommended process. Having followed the advice not to conduct the literature review before my interviews with regards the education professionals, I then undertook the literature review before the interviews at Local Mencap. I therefore entered into the interviews with Local Mencap professionals much more informed; it was impractical to leave the literature review until all my data had been collected. I was also increasingly wary of not being prepared in terms of grasping the area under study. The pitfalls of leaving the literature review until last have been summarised by Dunne (2010), who referred to a researcher entering into data collection without prior knowledge of the subject as 'simply unrealistic' (p 7). He concluded;

...the call for abstinence from reading in the substantive area prior to data collection is a measure which is not only disproportionate but one which can detract from the overall quality of the research. (Dunne 2010 p 11)

It emerged that many of the education professionals gained a great deal of job satisfaction from their roles. Fulfilling these roles often caused them to experience stress, but it was deemed worthwhile if a positive outcome resulted. It also emerged that there were issues relating to emotional engagement and management pressures. I directed the interviews with Local Mencap staff towards these topics to probe whether similar issues were present there. In conducting the research in this way I was active in the application of grounded theory; the findings from the first data sets influenced the subsequent research. Charmaz (2006) advocates using past interviews to direct future research so that interview topics evolve. Therefore, whilst conducting the second set of interviews, I tried to maintain an awareness of the topics which had arisen from the first set and the literature review, whilst also being flexible and open minded in my approach. For example, if a participant was moving away from the topic I had initiated, I let them continue to a certain degree as what they were saying was of significance to them. In some cases, allowing this to happen resulted in changes to the interview schedule as the participant brought up a new area that I had not anticipated. I kept the reflexive approach at the forefront of my mind at all times, allowing the participant freedom with regards the topics being discussed. With regards the importance of the interviewer/participant relationship, I believe, to the benefit of the research, I succeeded in having positive relations with both the teaching and Local Mencap professionals.

## **2.6 Analysis of Data: Local Mencap**

The analysis of the interviews carried out at Local Mencap illustrated two categories which appeared to be of great importance to the participants (see Appendix Four for an illustration of all the initial codes which emerged):

- Rewards/Emotions
- Personal/Organisational Values

As the topics of the second set of interviews were related to the analysis of the first I expected there to be similarities in terms of the categories which emerged. The categories which were found to be dominant in both the FE organisations and at Local Mencap were:

- Professional Pride
- Stress
- Government Legislation.

As the research developed, the categories became more theoretically led as I was able to compare data.

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1 Introduction

Both teaching and Local Mencap professionals are engaged in 'people professions'; they provide a service which involves constant interaction with those for whom they care. These services both incorporate an authority; they have the ability to impact greatly on the lives of groups that are sometimes labeled 'vulnerable', and make decisions about their lives. As set out in policy, both Local Mencap workers and education professionals have a duty of care for those whom they work for. Teaching staff must cater for the wellbeing of their pupils as well as ensuring control, with the dominant goal being achievement. Whereas the role of the Local Mencap professional is to enable the service users to live full lives, whilst also caring for them (DoH 2000; DoH 2001; DfES 2003; DoH 2003; DoH 2004; GSCC 2004; DoH 2005a; GTC 2009; DoH 2008; DoH 2009).

I will first give a brief introduction of the literature in relation to Education and learning disability support services, then detail the theoretical framework my research is based within. I will follow with a section about the government policies FE and Local Mencap professionals follow, and then discuss professional identity and emotions in relation to the two professions.

For the sake of clarity and ease of reading, and due to the points at which they differ, the two groups of professionals will be discussed separately in the literature review. I will draw the two together in the analysis where their similarities and differences in relation to emotions and professional identity will be detailed. I am particularly interested to discover the points at which the two groups differ as their organisations have very different foundations; the FE organisations are in the public sector, whilst Local Mencap are a third sector, independent charity. Local Mencap have contracts with the local authority to provide services to people with learning disabilities, however, they are not under their control beyond being obliged to follow the regulations all care providers must adhere to (DoH 2001; DoH 2003; GSCC 2004; DoH 2009).

## 3.2 Policy

### 3.2.1 Further Education

Government initiatives direct and restrain all that happens in education settings (Aynsley-Green 2004). *Every Child Matters (ECM)* (DfES 2003), the Government's Green Paper, and the resulting *Children Act* (DfES 2004) illustrate a commitment to children, as well as recognition of, and commitment to, the inclusion of mental health care into the role of teaching professionals. Rothi et al (2007) believe *ECM* (DfES 2003) is making major changes in the professional lives of teachers. It aims to ensure every child has the support they need to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being. The *Children Act 2004* (DfES 2004) calls for all those who cater for the needs of children to work together systematically so that vulnerable children are not missed because of gaps in services. Reid (2005) refers to the challenges that face schools in the wake of *ECM* (DfES 2003) and The *Children Act 2004* (DfES 2004) as 'enormous'. Continuing to say it is:

...likely to take a generation of professional work to achieve...arguably one of the most pressing changes some of us will ever contemplate. (Reid 2005 p18)

Parton (2006) believes the foundations for *ECM* (DfES 2003) were laid throughout the 1990s and were directed towards the reduction of crime and unemployment not child protection, as the legislation gives the government greater ability to intervene in individuals lives and, he claims, make England a 'preventative state' that will intervene in the lives of those who are thought to be threatening to society. He believes the way in which the government is now operating poses 'a major threat to civil liberties and human rights of both parents and children and young people.' (p 990) In relation to teachers then, this may mean that their roles are shifting for reasons other than those which they are being told. It seems Parton (2006) at least, sees them being used as another way to try to keep order in society.

The role of the teaching professional is undergoing change, resulting in additional dimensions to their working practice. Standard nine in the *National service framework for children, young people and maternity services: The mental health and psychological well-being of children and young people* (DoH 2004) explains teachers' responsibility for the care of their pupil's mental health. Classed as 'tier one' mental health workers they are responsible for identifying those suffering mental health difficulties, and seeking the appropriate help for them, such as referrals to health care providers.

Recent FE policy (DCSF 2006; DCSF 2007; DCSF 2008; BIS 2010) illustrates the government's desire to see FE improve in order for the UK to compete in the global skills market and prosper in the future. Techniques akin to New Public Management (NPM) are exemplified whereby a business-like style of public administration, centralised on efficiency and output as opposed to working in the interest of the public services, is adopted (Kolthoff et al 2006). Reforms salient with this style of governance include privatisation; decentralisation; management techniques reminiscent of the private sector, such as competitiveness and subcontracting; performance

measurement; targets and strategic planning (Davies et al 2008). In line with such techniques, potential pupils are referred to as 'customers', and different education establishments, the 'market' (DCSF 2007). Central to the White Paper, *Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances* (DCSF 2007), which is based on an independent report, is the need to reduce bureaucracy at every level with greater autonomy for institutions. It reiterated the need for FE to be customer and employer led. The focus is upon success rates as it calls for a balanced scorecard system to be used in order for assessment to be carried out in a fairer way, and a move towards self regulation of institutions. The Learning and Skills Council responded to this White Paper with the consultation document; *Framework for Excellence: A Comprehensive Performance Assessment Framework for the Further Education System* (LSC 2006), the basis for which is a scorecard tool for assessment. The Trade Union Congress (TUC, no date) recognise the possible benefits of a scorecard system, however, they highlight the negative consequences of further assessment tools, calling for scorecards to replace league tables, not to be an addition to them. They also advise on the negative consequences of an unbalanced scoring system which does not take into account issues relating to underfunding and context. Encouraging competitiveness between institutions is worrying in that it is effectively privatising the sector. This, again, highlights strategies of NPM which are being imposed by the government on the public sector.

In *Raising Expectations, Enabling the System to Deliver* (DCSF/DIUS 2008) the government reasserts their belief that society is dependent on the skills of those who inhabit it. They explain their aim to shift control of FE to local authorities and increase the leaving age to seventeen by 2015 in order to equip young people with the necessary skills to succeed. Recently, *Further Education – New Horizon: Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth* (BIS 2010), explained the most important step for FE at the moment is the transfer of power from government to individuals, employers and training providers, highlighting a NPM style of governance.

My research was predominantly conducted prior to the Coalition Government coming into power. Since they formed in May 2010 they have put forward two important bills which concern FE; the *Academies Bill* (2010), and the *Education Bill* (2011). In relation to FE they reiterate the previous governments desire for greater autonomy for FE by taking control away from the state and giving it to the institutions; greater support for work based training schemes and apprenticeships, in a bid to create a greater skills sector; and pledge to invest in those who need it most in order that pupils from poorer backgrounds are supported. Specifically, 'academies', which are to be independent institutions, free from local authority control, will be encouraged. Further to this point, the Coalition Government plan to ensure all institutions are held accountable for failures; if they are academies I see failures having an even greater negative effect than at present as they will be held solely accountable. This decentralisation and holding individual institutions accountable, as well as the prospect of competition between different 'academies', illustrates the Coalition Government's use of NPM techniques (Kolthoff et al 2006; Lerner 2000).

### 3.2.2 Local Mencap

Social care professionals operate on the interface between care and control; all who work in social care must adhere to government legislation (DoH 2001; GSCC 2004), including those who work for Local Mencap. Although this sector accounts for a large proportion of the workforce in the UK, it is under-researched in terms of employee commitment and the effects of performance measurement (Cunningham 2001; Alatrasta and Arrowsmith 2004; Moxham and Boaden 2007).

Similarly to those in working in FE, Local Mencap employees also experience strict monitoring from the government and are experiencing changes to their roles. There has been a shift in their goals; moving from ones with 'caring' as their focus to ones where 'enabling' people to live more independent lives are central. Whilst at the same time they are still equally as responsible for the protection and care of service users, and accountable for failures within the service. In 2000 *No Secrets (NS)* (DoH 2000) policy guidelines were introduced with the goal of preventing harm and abuse of vulnerable adults, and where such things cannot be prevented, making greater access to justice possible. The government states that this policy will:

...ensure that key local agencies, particularly but not solely health, social services and the police, are able to work together to protect vulnerable adults from abuse...(DoH 2000)

The government bestowed the co-ordinating role of this multi-agency practice upon social services; they are held accountable for failures in its implementation.

In 2008 the government conducted a consultation regarding the implementation of *NS* (DoH 2008). David Congdon, head of campaigns and policy at Royal Mencap was a member of the advisory group for the review. He explained;

To keep vulnerable adults with a learning disability safe from abuse, the systems designed to protect them must be backed by legal powers. Without this much-needed legal framework, we will continue to see more horrific cases of abuse against vulnerable adults with a learning disability...

A review was necessary in light of the Personalisation Agenda within social care, brought about by *Valuing People (VP)* (DoH 2001). The consultation looked at how vulnerable adults can be safeguarded against abuse, whilst taking into consideration the goals of *VP* (DoH 2001) which include increasing service users' independence; access to meaningful community empowerment; and access to criminal justice for all. The review aimed to empower all people to be able to 'identify and manage risk' (p.iii DoH 2008), and feel confident in reporting and standing up to abuse, including trusting the system and feeling they have a responsibility. The review was conducted due to changes in the government's vision regarding how they want society to be, as set out in *VP* (DoH 2001), as well as due to research showing flaws in current implementation (DoH 2008).

*VP* (DoH 2001) and the subsequent *Valuing People Now (VPN)* (DoH 2009), an update whereby the government restates its pledge to people with learning disabilities and sets out a

plan to implement changes, focus on person centred care based on; rights, choice, inclusion and independence. This legislation appears difficult to assimilate alongside *NS* (DoH 2001) in many respects as it is centred on the promotion of independence and choice, where the aim is to empower the service user – something believed to be best achieved by helping them to become more independent. However, as pointed out above, *NS* (DoH 2001) seeks to protect the service user; the promotion of their independence has the potential to be at odds with this.

In relation to social care, the Coalition Government has also made clear the direction it wants to move in. In relation to a concept they term the 'Big Society', this government also support the de-centralisation of control in social care; they believe communities should work together to support each other, and service users should make their own choices and be in control of their own money as far as possible. In relation to this final point, the government explains;

The time is now right to make personal budgets the norm for everyone who receives ongoing care and support – ideally as a direct cash payment, to give maximum flexibility and choice. (p.16 DoH 2010).

Their aim is for everyone eligible for ongoing care to have a personal budget by 2013. They explain their desire for people to have the right to choose from a 'vibrant plural market' with 'patients in the driving seat and professionals with discretion to make the decisions that matter to people and service users.' (p.38 DoH 2010) Again, techniques akin to NPM are evident here with regards de-centralisation and competitiveness.

### 3.3 Theoretical Framework

I stress that I do not seek to align my research findings with any particular theory. The relation of emerging theory to old is essential so that new theory can be sought and determined.

#### 3.3.1 *Erving Goffman*

Symbolic interactionist, Goffman (1969) took the term 'dramaturgy'; a phrase used in relation to the enacting of a story on stage, and applied it to sociology. He looked at the different components of interactions, likening them to the different aspects of a theatre performance. In this way, he referred to actions and activities as performances for society, used in order to convey who we think we are supposed to be, and what our role is in relation to the world around us. In highlighting the complexities of identity and human relationships, Goffman theorised about the impact of the environment and context upon them. However, his reference to human behavior as a performance does not necessarily mean the 'actor' is consciously doing so; their 'act' may be embedded deep within a cultural practice, so that they are not aware they are performing, but are merely behaving in a way that is ingrained within them. With regards to workplace and professional identities, Goffman believed 'social fronts' become institutionalized, and those involved, such as the professionals here, take on board the stereotyped expectations of their role. Goffman states:

When an actor takes on an established social role, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it. Whether his acquisition of the role was primarily motivated by a desire to perform the given task or by a desire to maintain the corresponding front, the actor will find that he must do both. (1969 p 24)

This is relevant here as my research considers how professional identities develop. A Local Mencap worker may have entered the profession when the role was predominantly about caring for those with learning disabilities, however, it is now also very much about taking a step back and enabling the service user to lead as much of an independent life as possible (DoH 2000; DoH 2001; DoH 2001; DoH 2009). If a person's reason for entering the profession was either of the two reasons Goffman refers to; a desire to perform the job itself or to adopt the front that is expected from someone in that position, it may prove difficult when the role, and so too the expectations placed on those in the role, changes. He calls the front a person adopts when their role is one that society has already established, a 'collective representation', whereby the actor must then take on the task and maintain the front. Teaching professionals too have recently had their roles reconfigured; they now have a responsibility to recognise pupils suffering from mental health problems (DfES 2003; DfES 2004; DoH 2004). Goffman refers to fronts as adopted, as opposed to created by the person. They may therefore have chosen a profession which is aligned with the front they would like to perform. Professionals that have aligned the stage they would like to act on with their occupation may then, in line with Goffman, find it difficult to act in accordance with the new aspects of their roles, and so find it difficult to work within their profession.

This need to express who we are and what we stand for is necessary as an end in itself in many respects, as well as so we are able to understand how best to interact with one another; highlighting to our audience what we stand for. Goffman's theory that life is played out on different stages, with success in a role being gauged by how well we are able to move between stages, is very relevant here as I wish to discover how a person reconciles themselves in their professional role.

Dramatic Realization is another of Goffman's key concepts which I anticipate finding in the present piece of research. This is when a person highlights certain actions which might not be known otherwise, in a dramatic way for the benefit of others. This is done because a person knows they are being observed by others and wish their audience to be aware of certain aspects of themselves. Parts of a role may not be visible on the surface, therefore in order for such aspects which they consider important to be recognised they must dramatise them. However, this may diminish the actual action as it then becomes 'expression versus action' (1969 p29), with focus being on the expression whilst the actual practice is neglected by the actor. The concept of Dramatic Realization is pertinent here as the focus by the government on targets and assessment means professionals may become more concerned with appearing to live up to the roles which are expected of them than with actually performing them. They may have to employ it as a survival strategy, as they may not be able to both perform their role and illustrate adequately to others that they are doing so. For example, a teaching professional may strive for achievement, whilst leaving out other important areas such as pastoral support and achievement in other areas which cannot be as easily gauged in terms of achievement, or are not considered as important in government statistics.

Goffman theorises that behaviour looked upon favorably by society will be played upon more by someone when under the observation of others in an attempt to appear competent. He calls this Idealization. Performances are referred to as ceremonies, carried out in order to reaffirm society's norms and what it considers acceptable. Goffman states; 'The world, in truth, is a wedding' (1969 p 31), meaning it is a way to rejuvenate and reiterate the moral values of a society; it is an individual confirming and reiterating the rules which a society follows and accepts. It is the showcasing of certain ways of being, whilst not necessarily adhering to this way 'off stage'. It will be interesting to observe whether my research participants feel they must do this in order to prove that they are competent within their field.

Misrepresentation, another of Goffman's concepts, is misleading the audience by using different signs to represent something that is not really there, but ideally should be. The audience for their part is on the lookout for proof that the performance is genuine. There are two types of performance according to Goffman; that which is sincere, and that which is created through deliberate fabrication. A performance may be seen as sincere by the performer (they have not set out to intentionally deceive anyone), however, may be insincere in that they have merely convinced themselves of their own sincerity. Although this won't matter to the audience if the performance is convincing; they are looking for clues to the performers sincerity at all times. The

crucial question for Goffman is whether the actor, when playing his part, has the right to do so. Does the support worker, for example, have the right to play upon her skills of enabling when being observed? The answer will be found in whether she does in fact enable service users when not under observation, or is merely pretending to in order to appear competent in her work. Goffman (1969 p63) stated; 'All the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify.' We are performing most of the time according to Goffman. Usually not in a deceptive way, but in that we perform roles, act in accordance with societal morals, and perform our parts in line with what is expected of us, and crucially, what we expect of ourselves.

As in actual theatre, there is also a 'backstage' in sociological terms; when a person is backstage they can stop playing their character and instead they become a member of the theatre team. This is indeed just another role or 'front' as Goffman states there is never a true backstage when there are two or more people present. The adoption of different fronts depending on the situation is referred to as 'multiple selves', something Goffman theorises we all take part in.

I will assess my research in relation to theories put forward by Goffman; it will be interesting to discover how far his concepts are apparent in my findings.

### **3.3.2 Emotions**

The study of emotions in the workplace was stirred by Hochschild (1983) when she coined the term 'emotional labour', which refers to the regulation and management of emotions. Her study involved looking at how flight attendants have to manage their own and their passenger's emotions. She defined three different types of emotions involved in emotional labour; surface acting, where you display an emotion you don't really feel; deep acting, where you actually feel the emotion you wish to portray; and suppression of emotions. According to Hochschild (1983), in many occupations, especially ones where a predominant part of the role is service, the emotions of the employee are often suppressed where not deemed appropriate, in order to positively influence the emotions of the customer. She viewed this as a possible stress inducing activity. The flight attendant must dress, act and appear to be happy and helpful at all times. Those emotions displayed which are false are explained as the 'right' emotion in order that the passengers remain satisfied. She refers to this as the 'social engineering' of emotions; you exhibit the emotions that will earn you your wage. In her own words;

The induction or suppression of feeling in order to sustain an outward appearance that produces in others a sense of being cared for in a convivial, safe place. (Hochschild 1983 p7)

Recently, Bolton (2004) has developed Hochschild's concept of emotional labour, suggesting there to be four different types of emotion management in the workplace; pecuniary, prescriptive, presentational and philanthropic. Motivations range from a need to perform a task (pecuniary), to genuine emotional reasons (philanthropic). A professional, Bolton believes, must draw upon each of these at different times depending on what the situation requires. This is

consistent with Goffman's (1969) notion of 'multiple selves', whereby different contexts see different fronts adopted.

Whilst conducting research with gynaecology nurses, Bolton (2004) theorised that alongside the tendency towards surface acting, deep acting and suppression (Hochschild 1983) in the everyday relationships midwives have with pregnant women, 'philanthropic emotion work' is present, which is based on authentic feelings. According to Bolton (2004), such engagement is crucial if the profession is to remain fulfilling and midwives are to stay committed to it. Those that allow themselves to experience genuine emotions were seen to enhance both their work practice and their wellbeing. This is confirmed by Deery and Fisher who state: '...the loss of passion undermines the potential for excellent practice.' (2010 p.25) According to Deery and Kirkham (2006), midwives' ability to engage with women at this authentic level is being undermined by the current maternity service situation which; '...run[s] according to an industrialized conveyor belt...midwives have become interchangeable workers who must prioritize keeping the system running'.

### **3.3.3 Professional Identity**

Leidner (2006) believes a person's work contributes to their sense of self and the sense others have of them, as your place of work is a site where you can develop as a person, form social ties, determine your status in society and shape your consciousness. Changes to the influences upon how professionals approach their work is thought to be of utmost importance. For example, how the media and the government impose new understandings on a profession will affect how the professionals view their roles.

Similarly, Davies (2002) refers to professional identities in health and social care, highlighting how people will often have more than one answer when asked to define themselves, calling identity a 'narrative about the self'. She believes both the sociological stance of looking at roles, and the psychological stance of focussing on the development of identity, should be incorporated when studying professional identity. It is dependent on both individual development and the taking on of available roles. Professions, Davies believes, are characterised by judgement and criticism; she observed the significance of a person's work on their morals, concluding occupations have declined as a basis for a person's identity. This is because many organisations are now defined by organisational and managerialist criteria, taking a person away from the centre (where they would have been in the past) of what they do. This implies the teaching and caring professions that are said to be very prescriptive by some (Kohn and Somczynski 1990; O'Neil 1999; Davies 2002; Hotho 2008 O'Connor 2008) may play less of a part in the construction of a person's identity than if this were not the case. Davies (2002) claims that, at present, the influence of your work upon your identity is less about how the world of work is changing, and more about how society is organised and power exercised. She believes identity is less about your profession than it once would have been, instead being a project that you can work on and manage; an expression of who you want to be. However,

she points out that a profession still constrains and shapes a person on a social and economic level.

Consistent with Davies (2002), Kohn and Somczynski (1990) argue that the importance of work on identity is in relation to the control the subject has over it. This belief is also consistent with other theorists who have concluded that a feeling of agency is paramount to your work playing a positive part in your identity (Hotho 2008; O'Neil 1999); feeling that you are just a number is detrimental. 'Occupational self-direction' was the term used by Kohn and Somczynski (1990 p. 40) for the feeling that you have some control and are allowed to use your professional judgement.

Literature in relation to the third sector supports this (Cunningham 2001; Parkes et al 2007; Nickson et al 2008). This sector is increasingly providing services once catered for by the public sector (Moxham and Boaden 2007; Nickson et al 2008). Contracting out by the state to providers such as Local Mencap has been shown to lead to increased scrutiny, negatively affecting employee-management relations and removing professionals' feelings of agency (Cunningham 2001). Further to this, Nickson et al (2008) highlight the need for alignment of values; in order for potential employees to be attracted to the organisation they must share its core beliefs. Allowing employees to contribute their own knowledge to work can positively affect employee commitment if implemented effectively and genuinely by management (Parkes et al 2007).

Some professions are referred to as 'callings' or 'labours of love', especially when there are cultural supports for such interpretations. If the perceived traits of an occupation is looked upon favourably by the worker, which in turn have been influenced by perceptions created by the government and the media, it can be central to their identity as they would gain a positive sense of self from such an image (Freidson 1990; Menger 1999).

Hotho (2008) looked at professional identity in light of current transitions in professions, with regards the relationship between the identity of a profession and the professional identity of individuals, describing the relationship as 'recursive'. The two cannot be separated because professionals draw upon, use, and re-write scripts as they encounter change within their profession. She also points out the focus on public professions; at times of change they must endure scrutiny they would not have been subject to in the past. Hotho (2008) recommends further research is conducted as her findings were based on minimal data from a pilot study. The present study is an example of such research.

The literature suggests that the contemporary professional would be better served by the re-acquisition of agency, rather than increased regulation and control. Further, the professional needs to feel they have some control over their work, and that they, as a person, are considered within their working environment (Hotho 2008; Kohn and Somczynski 1990; O'Neil 1999). Hotho (2008) asserts public professions are ever on the defensive, which makes them closed to the

prospect of rejuvenation. However, it does not seem surprising that they are on the defensive when the current climate sees them subject to constant scrutiny.

### **3.4 Professional Identity and Emotion: Further Education**

Consistent with O'Neil's (1999) findings in social care, O'Connor (2008) refers to the way teachers now work as prescribed, believing they are often expected to be able to fulfil their roles in a robotic manner, turning feelings on and off. In contrast to this prescriptive approach, both professions incorporate many complexities and relationships are built, and dependent in many ways, on interactions between individuals on a personal level. Both professions are far more intricate than just a role a professional can switch on and off, as genuine emotions are often involved. The prescriptive nature that O'Connor points to seems a stark contrast to much of the emotional reality which has been shown to be faced within these caring professions (Little 1996; Dwyer 2002; Isenbarger and Zembylas 2006,).

Research conducted relating specifically to emotion and professional identity in education indicates that it is difficult to separate the individual from their role in this profession. Much of how they feel about themselves is dependent upon their success, control and agency in the workplace (Isenberger and Zembylas 2006; Naring 2006; Hotho 2008; O'Connor 2008).

#### **3.4.1 Stress**

Surface acting (Hochschild 1983), whereby a person displays appropriate but not felt emotion, has been shown to be related to emotional exhaustion in teachers, and can be therefore regarded as a possible stressor, as well as being linked to depersonalization (Naring 2006). These findings indicate it would be useful to investigate not only what causes stress, but also what influences or situations result in feelings of enthusiasm about work, in order to promote these. In reference to this, the person-centred, caring roles in question may require some 'philanthropic emotional engagement' (Bolton 2004; Deery and Fisher 2010), in order that they be fulfilled best. The stance of looking at a professional's ability to cope, ways to enhance their personal identity, and looking at the positives has further support within the literature where teacher resilience was studied. Findings indicate:

A shift in focus from teacher stress and burnout to resilience provides a promising perspective to understand the ways that teachers manage and sustain their motivation and commitment in times of change. (Gu and Day 2007 p.1302)

According to Gu and Day (2007) resilience is the interaction between how a person feels, the environment, and how well they withstand pressures that contrast or differ from their own thoughts and feelings. Resilience is seen to be a measure of their ability to stay committed and motivated when faced with negative encounters. It was concluded that studying what factors influenced a teacher to stay committed in the face of adversity would prove beneficial.

Research has attempted to find out which beliefs and emotions underpin the role of the teacher, finding it is much more than just a role a person adopts, as it may be for someone working in customer service (Isenbarger and Zembylas 2006). Hochschild (1983) would have referred to teachers' involvement in emotional labour as deep acting; they genuinely feel many of the emotions involved. Goffman (1969) would emphasise that the person may not be aware that

they are acting out a role; cultural expectations about behaviors and emotions saturate many professions and are ingrained within society. A professional then takes these on board. Much of the research in this area indicates genuine emotion of some sort is a necessary component, yet at the same time, the controlling of emotions for the sake of the role and the wellbeing of the professional is also deemed necessary at times. There needs to be a balance (Deery and Fisher 2010).

Emotional labour in teaching can result in both positive and negative emotions for the professional. Caring can be seen as a professional stance as it is thought to aid learning, and a 'good teacher' cares; this illustrates the complexities of emotional labour within teaching. Teachers were found to believe negative emotions were worthwhile if progress was achieved. Apparently, the sacrifice of their own wellbeing was worthwhile if it resulted in them making progress in their work (Isenbarger and Zembylas 2006). This highlights a possible cause for concern if things do not turn out well due to this sacrifice. Similarly, if professionals are not able to follow their work through and see the end result of their efforts they become disempowered as they are not able to become fully involved with the people who they work with (O'Neil, 1999; Hotho 2008; Deery and Fisher, 2010).

In this respect, Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006) saw emotional labour as a complex subject because real satisfaction is gained if there is a positive outcome. It was concluded that emotional labour may be an aspect of caring for students in teaching; the negatives involved in emotional labour may be different in teaching to other professions because of the prospect of the end result being positive and not attainable without such efforts. Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006) found caring can be both an approach and felt emotion. The teachers in their study did not separate the acts of emotional labour and caring; to care was at times to perform emotions that were not felt. Emotional labour was found to be both alienating and liberating; the liberation came when she saw success in her methods. It seems that the positive end exceeded the negatives experienced in the process. It appears emotional labour can be used as a tool to gain positive outcomes for pupils.

There is further support for the use of emotional labour within the teaching and caring professions which highlights the need for research to focus on teacher's emotions and feelings, pointing out the lack of such inquiry within the field (Jeffrey and Woods 1996; Nias 1996). It is concluded that if emotional reactions are looked at in relation to the context in which they occur, changes that will benefit all concerned have the potential to be made. For example, if it is understood how professionals cope with negative emotions, and what experiences boost how they feel about their roles, it may be possible to make such circumstances more likely. For instance, there could be support available for those professions who have to endure a lot of emotional labour with little reward in the form of positive outcomes.

### **3.4.2 Policy**

While caring can be seen as a positive and enabling strategy, crucial in many respects within education, it is not a primary focus within government policy. It has been argued that the experience of education should be just that; an experience, as opposed to a means to an end, and a preparation for the future. It should be beneficial in itself - life now, as well as results later, and pastoral care should be something experienced by all involved in the education system (Maryland 2001). At the same time it should be recognized that the care for mental health within the education system adds to a teacher's already heavy load, and seems to contrast with curriculum goals set for teachers on which they are primarily judged (Gott 2003). As well as this, goals related to the curriculum are measured in terms of cause and effect; such measurements dominate policy agendas; mental health and wellbeing do not hold a status equal to that of achievement goals, nor can they be critiqued in the same way (Rothi et al 2007).

A similar point is made by Currie (2006) who notes that teachers are not therapists and the optimal way they can help students and reconcile their newly defined roles in terms of wellbeing needs to be clearly identified. Schools have a good opportunity to make a positive impact but caution, Currie believes, must be exercised, and those involved must be fully aware of what is expected of them. Confusion in such matters may result in them being unable to fulfil a role, resulting in the feeling of inadequacy and a lack of agency.

O'Connor (2008) confirms the neglect of a teacher's caring role within government policy; this is in contrast to it being a central issue within the profession itself. It is both the reason teachers continue in their profession and why they sometimes find it exhausting. She describes the emotional side of teaching as a counter discourse to the rationalist emphasis on teacher standards that currently prevail. This rationalist way of thinking is seen as prescriptive, whereas teachers' identities are far more complex and dependant in many ways on lived experiences. A teacher's sense of identity was found to largely contribute to their professional work and how they involve caring within it.

In line with my research here, O'Connor states:

This study demonstrates the need for future research to discuss how and why teachers choose to care for their students, and to analyse the effects of this choice on their professional identity. (2008 p.126)

### **3.4.3 Professional Identity**

Beijaard et al. (2004) looked at the influence of both the person and the context with regards teachers' professional identity. They considered how much of an influence a teacher's personal identity and the context, such as educational imperatives, had on their professional identity, as well as how changing educational settings affected them. They reviewed current research relating to teachers' professional identities, concluding that identities are likely to be shaped by a process which is ongoing, whereby they constantly reinterpret situations; it is about who an individual wants to become. Beijaard et al (2004) concluded professional identity is shaped by

individual characteristics and how they interpret and act out the role and behaviour that is assumed of them.

For the differing roles a teacher has it has been suggested that they have sub-identities, but these must be well balanced (Connelly and Clandinin 1999). Experienced teachers may encounter conflict between their differing roles when they experience changes in their working environment. In relation to this, Rothi et al (2007) suggest teachers are finding it difficult to cope with their new responsibilities as 'tier one' mental health professionals, believing improvements need to be made in order for their old and new responsibilities to be fulfilled without negatively affecting their roles, personal wellbeing and sense of accomplishment in other ways. For example, taking their focus away from the subject they teach, resulting in them feeling stressed.

Flores and Day (2006) referred to the shaping of new teachers' identities as a struggle between the context they find themselves in and how they want it to be. For new teachers, pre-teaching beliefs are very important to the professional identity a person then creates for themselves. It is about analysing personal beliefs and practices constantly; finding a way to make them fit with the expectations placed upon a professional's new role and the context they are in. Flores and Day (2006) found the majority of the teachers in their study entered teaching in a rather haphazard way, for reasons other than the desire to teach, such as having a better chance of employment. Regardless of their initial reasons, most of the teachers recognised that their role meant going beyond the pupils learning, including socialisation and development. Looking back at when she was in training one teacher said she had to, on occasion, work against her own beliefs, in line with the perspective of her own teacher, but now she teaches her own way. It seems evident that personal beliefs and opinions are very important within this profession.

The best teachers may also be the most emotionally vulnerable as they are committed to their methods of teaching, and are not willing to change their ways according to policy as they would see this as changing best practice to the detriment of their pupils (Woods 1990). It is not possible for teachers to plan ahead with the certainty they would have once been able to and, as a result, professional identities have to be constantly reassessed as things change. This can be illustrated by looking at the policy changes cited here which make teachers into 'tier one' mental health professionals. This new role is an example of that which Wood (1990) refers. It creates a potentially stressful situation as they come to terms with the roles that are being placed upon them, as well as their sense of professional identity. When the two are at conflict, the opportunity for stress related feelings are at their highest.

Commitment to teaching is based on an individual's own beliefs, sense of self and sense of their role, and how they apply these to the socio-political changes which test their commitment (Day et al 2005a). The advised way to recruit and keep good teachers is to find ways to align their beliefs about good teaching practice with policy so that those beliefs are not seen to be disregarded. Even though slight changes to identity may occur on occasions when their circumstances or roles are altered, it was found that core beliefs remain strong in teachers; it is

important for their beliefs and sense of identity to be seen as relevant in order that they continue to feel committed. Little (1996) also does not see a person's career as set apart from the social and emotional aspects of a person. His goal was to find out what the causes of optimism and pessimism during periods of reform were. When failure was encountered by teachers, emotional energy was not found to be lost, but it was lost when working conditions were being reshaped and negative encounters were had outside of the classroom, such as encounters with colleagues and changes to valued working practices. Multiple pressures and loss of support were also found to be big factors in what Little (1996) termed raising 'emotionality'; an individual's inclination towards being emotional in some way. This indicates the potential risk of change and shows the importance of agreement with practice.

In relation to emotions being of such importance to the professional (Little 1996; Day et al 2005a), Jeffrey and Woods (1996) looked at the affects of an OFSTED inspection. Regardless of the outcome, the process resulted in negative emotions being felt, making them doubt their own competencies as teachers. In effect it was perceived as a personal assault, as their personal identity and professional roles were closely related. The more teachers were able to detach their 'real selves' from their roles, the less personally they took the inspections and vice versa. Jeffrey and Woods (1996) refer to teachers being marginalized between holistic, child-centred beliefs, and the rational and calculative ways of government by which they are judged primarily.

Sachs (2001) also examined teacher's professional identity when experiencing periods of change. She looked at the types of professional identities emerging from government focus on affectivity and accountability, finding there to be two; entrepreneurial, which holds this accountability and efficiency at its core; and activist, which is democratic and negotiable. The latter identity can involve the development of Communities of Practice which include;

...routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice. (Wenger 1998 p.83)

It involves more flexible ways of thinking about teaching practice. These Communities of Practice are not self contained or competitive, the resources and skills of the individual are seen as collective resources for all. Sachs (2001) talks in terms of; 'engagement and imagination...respect, reciprocity and collaboration' and of ways to '...revitalize teachers' sense of themselves professionally and personally' (p158). Such talk seems contradictory of government drives based on targets and achievements. She believes neither entrepreneurial nor activist identity is fixed, identities can be created if they are seen to be of benefit to teaching practice; they can be learned and nurtured.

Research summarised here illustrates a need for education professionals to find a sense of themselves in contemporary society; difficulties seem to be caused primarily by living in a time of uncertainty, rapid change and assessment.

## **3.5 Professional Identity and Emotion: Local Mencap**

### **3.5.1 Agency**

At Local Mencap, a support worker has a duty of care (GSCC 2004), whilst at the same time having the authority and responsibility to change the dynamics of people's lives; working both for the individual and the government. Mandell's (2008) research in social welfare came to the conclusion that the professional is often discarded in social care; what the individual person brings to the situation and how they respond to their working environment is overlooked, with the focus lying on the role they are expected to fulfil. Mandell believes self awareness is crucial, but is not given enough credibility; mainstream social welfare practice splits the social and the individual, with professionals being judged on their adherence to policy, leaving out their own qualities, achievements and what they personally bring to the role.

Mandell (2008) comes to the conclusion that when a role involves such a high degree of caring for individuals, whilst also having an authority over them, it is not possible to separate the personal, social and professional dimensions. It is suggested that the ability to critically reflect on practice will create more of a caring ethos within social work. Hotho (2008) agrees that this is not part of the professional cultural practice institutions currently adhere to; to critically reflect would invite condemnation.

Social care is said to have lost much of its scope for individual judgement and discretion, which have been taken over by managerialist procedures that have eroded professional identity. More input on an individual level, greater autonomy at a local level, and incorporating a professional history within current contexts is thought to be essential for effective service. It is believed that greater emphasis on the individual professional, with more of an appreciation of them as individuals in relation to benefitting the field as a whole, rather than seeing both them and their service users as numbers, is necessary (O'Neil 1999).

In relation to this, it will be important to investigate how those working for Local Mencap feel, as this organisation appears to have much of the autonomy recommended by O'Neil (1999). Unlike those in education, Local Mencap and Royal Mencap regard themselves as the pioneers of change in relation to government policy and learning disability services. They are constantly campaigning for changes to enable those with learning disabilities to be listened to and included by mainstream society. They also differ from the teaching profession as Royal Mencap, to which Local Mencap are affiliated, are used as a consultation service by the government, offering advice with regards what they believe would be best for people with learning disabilities.

O'Neil's (1999) recommendations indicate Local Mencap professionals may have the opportunity to feel positively based on the belief that their organisation has a positive influence and valued presence with regards government decisions about learning disability services.

Enforced procedures are thought to inhibit rather than advance such work (Munro 1999). Howe (1992) asserts that having excessive regulations and performance being scrutinised can result

in negative outcomes, with the practitioner adopting a survivalist, defensive strategy in apprehension of 'failing' in some area. O'Neil (1999) speaks of 'authoritarian prescriptiveness' (p.10), claiming the focus is taken away from the clients and the professionals' caring role in social care, and centred on their ability to succeed or fail, and the consequences this would have for them. The service user is then not seen in the same light; the social worker's vision is altered as they see the person in relation to how their actions would be later judged. They appear to have to use their own judgement much less than they would have done in the past. Social care and teaching are said to be similar in that both are prescriptive professions, shaped by high levels of managerialism; social care professionals are described as 'functionaries, not professionals.'(O'Neill 1999 p.10) O'Neil, like others (Kohn and Somczynski 1990; Hotho 2008), proposed self regulation as the best way forward for social services, believing autonomy to be beneficial for all. The knowledge base within social work has been lost according to O'Neil; old knowledge and practice is not being built upon but is replaced with new. This, she asserts, is not the appropriate way forward - old knowledge should not be discarded. To do this may be seen by long standing professionals as discarding their experience. Stronger professional identity, brought about partly by the acknowledgement of the professions' past, would strengthen the service overall. This would bring with it greater empowerment, with people feeling more confident in their roles, thus fulfilling them better.

In relation to the above points, Local Mencap appears to have some of the autonomy which is recommended; this is something I will investigate in the forthcoming research.

### **3.5.2 Risk and Accountability**

Often, an individual or group of people is sought to place the blame on when things go wrong in social care (Rustin 2004), as evidenced in the investigation into the death of Victoria Climbié (Lord Laming report 2003). In reference to the Laming inquiry, Rustin (2004) points out how it would be useful to discuss the case with the social workers involved, as the blame is placed on the failure of human judgement in an individualised way and therefore they should have the opportunity to defend it. Blaming the individual social worker is an easier way out, Rustin believes. If the cause was acknowledged to be lack of resources, training or heavy caseloads then this would be far more difficult to address and would take the blame away from the individual, and place it on the government.

Research has found professionals fear blame and exclusion from society based on the choices they make whilst at work. In managerial terms, the focus is very much on risk management and targets of some description. This takes the focus away from looking for the reason behind situations and actions, and focuses on the final outcome; a result based approach. The fear of blame can result in certain service users being seen as 'riskier' than others, resulting in their cases being handled differently than if the potential for blame was not so high (Mitchell and Gledinning 2008). Horlick-Jones (2005) also sees this preoccupation with risk as reflective of the government's need for accountability and cost effectiveness. The government has a risk

based approach which the past could not have envisaged; talk of regulations and standards in social care is a norm that did not once exist in the way it now does. We live in a society that seeks to manage, control and monitor its 'risks', with reputation being a major concern. Parton (2009) reports of a shift from a narrative to a database way of thinking; an 'informational' way of operating now overshadows the 'social' way. Auditing and the role of the manager are central to changes in the field of social care as information communication technologies (ICT) have enabled such monitoring to take place and the two have grown alongside one another. It is now easier to calculate failings. ICT Parton believes, is not where the problem stems from but is used as a tool to further enhance the current goals of those in charge of social services. He sees great potential for it to be used in a far more useful way, however, current goals and the focus on numbers and accountability means this is not the case. Risk is a way to hold people accountable, place the blame and be able to move on without really addressing the reasons behind mistakes. This is seen throughout current social work discourse (Horlick-Jones 2005). I want to investigate whether this is also the case at Local Mencap where the same legislation must be followed but the organisation is not run by the government, nor is it a profit making organisation.

With regard the government's need to place the blame, Manthorpe et al (2009) highlight: 'the competing agendas of choice and control and of protection and harm reduction' in relation to *NS* (DoH 2000) and *VP* (DoH 2001). Consumer directed care, meant to empower and give greater control to service users, brings worries for those in the social care profession. In order that such initiatives do not subject the service user to greater risk, Manthorpe et al (2009) believe protection and empowerment are parallel discourses that need to be considered together. They demonstrate how financial safeguards are a pivotal concern for professionals, fearing service users are at risk of being taken advantage of, as well as in danger of not receiving the care they require if their independence and choice were to be increased without due attention to the risks.

The Green Paper; *Independence, Well-being and Choice* (DoH 2005a), opened up the debate about how the fear of risk was to be managed, followed by the White Paper: *Our health, our care, our say* (DoH 2005b), which advocates the taking of 'reasonable' risks when protecting and enabling those in your care. Such wording is subjective, but then it is difficult to find a phrase that isn't potentially dangerous whilst working in the field. The measurements and accountability involved mean even though such an approach is encouraged, it is difficult to see practice changing. Finding the difference between 'reasonable' and 'unreasonable' risk is also likely to prove a near impossible task, with harsh criticism likely if the risk is believed to be misjudged and a service user suffers. The Department of Health has responded to the fear of risk within social care with, *Independence, choice and risk: a guide to best practice in supported decision making* (DoH 2007). Munro (1999) sees the centrality of risk in social care as being to its detriment, with pressure from outside the profession impacting negatively on procedure within it. Concluding it is important that before anything else society addresses the unrealistic expectations it has about such professions.

The outcomes of social care interventions must also take into account the wellbeing of the social workers themselves and how their work is impacted (Pooler 2008). At present, such research appears to be lacking; Pooler et al observed how stress endured by social workers is related to functioning whilst at work, concluding a focus on their wellbeing and professional integrity would be beneficial to those whom they serve in society. Greater support for those in the profession would be beneficial to all concerned; it seems the blame culture and individualisation of social care is opposed to this.

A comparative study of social workers and nurses (Itzhaky et al 2004), regarding empowerment and values, found a nurse's ability to quantify success and gain constant feedback from their colleagues to be beneficial, acting to reassure them of their own competency and that of their profession. The higher sense of self-worth nurses were found to have was attributed to their individual, and their professions, contribution to healthcare being recognised. This is in comparison with the public criticism of social care and the lack of recognition they receive on an individual basis. This is consistent with other research which also draws the conclusion that for professionals to carry out their roles to the best of their abilities they should not be subject to the constant prospect of condemnation (Kohn and Somczynski 1990; Little 1996; Hotho 2008; O'Neil 1999).

The risk involved in social work is positioned within a literature of moral conservatism that is said to have negative effects on social care practice (Stanford 2008). Further to this, the way risk is seen with regards social work can be observed to reflect a neo-liberal (Larner 2000), or NPM (Kolthoff et al 2006) style of governance. The decentralisation of government power through strategies of NPM means local authorities now hold more responsibility than they once would have for social care. However, they also have less control and input in terms of policy and practice; responsibility and accountability have been decentralised but the role of local government has not been strengthened in terms of their agency and authority. This perspective leads to the local authority and individual professionals, as opposed to central government, taking the blame when something goes wrong in a similar way to what would occur in the private sector. Stanford (2008) observed how risk in social care affects professional identities and actions, with practice being defined by fear. However, although risk was found to be central in social work practice, the social workers own ethical and moral standpoints were found to be useful in counteracting the culture of risk. Stanford explains:

...the relationship between the practitioner and client can be recognised as a relationship of compassion and care, even in the presence of fearsome risks. (p.218)

This is encouraging and reiterates previous research findings (Howe 1996; Munro 1999; Davies 2002), illustrating the potential for positive outcomes, and for those working in social care to feel positively about their roles if it were less about risk and the NPM (Kolthoff et al 2006) issues concerning efficiency and accountability.

Hotho (2008) indicates better support whilst at work would be of major benefit; it is beneficial when professionals are not afraid of asking for help or seeking advice. In addition to this, Dwyer

(2007) found the emotional aspects of work are not addressed on the same level as targets at team meetings. Social workers are very aware that their jobs are unlikely to be easy, and they are likely to encounter many difficulties, but the potential for blame and the constant possibility of criticism is the main threat to their wellbeing, as well to how they view their roles and construct their professional identities. If work is valued and appreciated, the stressful and painful aspects of the tasks are better tolerated; aside from enduring difficult situations with their clients, pressure from management such as difficult targets, as well as fear of risk, pose a threat to wellbeing (Dwyer 2007).

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

The analysis has been separated into three sections as a result of the themes which emerged from the data. After conducting and analysing the interviews with education professionals I used the codes, as well as the literature review, to form an interview schedule for the participants from Local Mencap. Below are the codes that emerged from both sets of data initially.

**Table 1: Further Education and Local Mencap Codes**

<b>Further Education Codes</b>	<b>Local Mencap Codes</b>
Professional pride/Identity	Professional pride/Identity
	Personal/ Organizational values
	Feelings about the job, rewards, emotions
Personal Boundaries, Relationships, Emotional engagement	Personal Boundaries, Relationships, Emotional engagement
Staff Stress	Staff Stress
Definitions of good mental health	
Coping Mechanisms	
Government Legislation	Government Legislation
	Paperwork
	Role Change
	Personalisation/Enablement
Stigma	
Gender Differences	
Management Pressures	Management Pressures
	Risk, Accountability
Referral Issues	
	Contrasting Narratives (professional/private, care/enable)
Family	
Class	

I will introduce each section, separately detail my findings in relation to FE and Local Mencap professionals, and then bring the two together, illustrating the implications of the findings.

## 4.2 Organisational Identity

### 4.2.1 Introduction

This section will focus on the belief systems which underpin practice for the professionals, as well as the impact the values of the organisation have upon the professional. The government focus upon outcomes was observed within the two organisations; I wanted to find the extent to which NPM (Kolthoff et al 2006) had infiltrated the services, and the consequences of this. Those subject to NPM will find themselves under greater scrutiny, with their performance measured according to specified outcomes. I will discuss the effect of such strategies on the identity of the organisation and the professionals who work there.

### 4.2.2 Further Education

Quantifiable goals are very much a focus for the professionals in FE. Ray, who works in pastoral care, was very conscious of the pressure from management to achieve these quantifiable goals set by government:

...it is very difficult...if you're...teaching and somebody's on your case...be it your programme manager or your head of school or... Ofsted...it's come on, come on, come on, come on, come on...or it's the school; 'Ooh no...God, we've slipped in the league tables, get it back up there folks'.

He went on to explain;

...if anything's gonna work, if anything's gonna help raise retention, raise attainment...it's not gonna be somebody banging on about bloody targets...

Explaining why he likes his role, making reference to his values being aligned with the educational establishment he works at, senior education professional, Terry, explained;

...it is the most...interesting...job that I have ever had...and...this can sound really pompous if I'm not careful but, it's really important to me...that I...do a job where my values and beliefs...have a good fit with the organisation that I work for...in further education...I think the whole...direction of our work is about changing people's lives for the better...and giving people opportunities that they've not had...so that gives you a really good sense of self-satisfaction...if you can make a contribution to that...I enjoy the work because I think my teams are passionate about what they do and they believe in it, and they do it to the best of their abilities and I'm very, very proud of them...and I think we're, we are making a difference...so...that's tremendous...job satisfaction to have...

This is in accordance with conclusions found previously that feeling positively about your job, and having good relationships within the workplace encourage a positive sense of professional identity (Day et al 2005a; Day et al 2005b; Little 1996).

As the above quote illustrates, Terry is very passionate about fulfilling his role, however, the quote below illustrates his feelings of becoming further removed in terms of the control he exercises, and feeling that parts of his role are under-recognised because of the focus on quantifiable outcomes. He indicates a belief that the removal of a professional's sense of agency negatively affects practice;

...actually if you didn't have inspection and quality measures, if you had good management and committed staff you would still get improvement and quality change...because people are professionally committed...and you don't actually need ...[surveillance]...to improve ...and I think that's the resentment that a lot of ...colleagues have...

He metaphorically summed up his feelings with the following;

...you really don't need to weigh the pig that often, you need to feed it a nutritious and varied diet.

In relation to the removal of agency, which is evidenced in the interviews I conducted with teaching professionals, Davies' (2002) believes that the workplace is no longer an area in which people can define themselves and construct their identity, as organisations now adhere to regulations and rules that in many respects remove the person from the role. Although frustrations were clearly evidenced which seem to support this, the emotional ties when the education professionals were both working with students who were underprivileged, and when they were pioneering for change, were strong, keeping them firmly attached to the role. They still seem to incorporate their professional role as part of their identity, as well as the emotion involved in their work contributing to their sense of professional identity. This is in line with the findings of Sachs (2001) that the government focus on accountability and affectivity creates two professional identities; 'activist', which focuses on these targets; and 'entrepreneurial' which is more holistic and democratic. My findings indicate those working with students who are underachieving or from less privileged backgrounds appear to be entrepreneurial, whilst others seemed to be activist. Sachs (2001) points out how these identities are not fixed, but dependent upon what the situation requires, and this seems evident in my findings.

There is a disdain amongst the education professionals interviewed regarding the pressure placed upon people in society to achieve in a standardized manner. Many of the education professionals (Ray, Terry, Walter, Kimberley, Brenda) felt strongly about this, particularly those professionals who were working with underprivileged, underachieving or troubled members of society. They did not believe that the value we, as a society, place on people based on what they have achieved academically is fair. An example of this feeling came from Walter;

...so what if somebody is not academic, if they are a fantastic person on other levels and...if they are the greatest artist in the world...their English is rubbish and their maths is rubbish, are they then a failure according to the government? Yes, and they've been told this by the school, by everybody, and everybody is saying if you don't get this, this and this, we as a school are failures, you as students are failures...It's horrible.

Walter is frustrated with what he sees as the underlying goal of education, and the belief set forward by the government via targets that a successful citizen, a valued member of society, is someone who is able to achieve academically;

... if you are in the C/B borderline you will have everything on god's earth thrown at you to get you across there, if you're...E to D, [they] don't care at all...you focus on that borderline because that's what counts and that's...definitely not the management at my school, but a lot of management is saying...that's where to go for...with the effect that those people [become] more and more disengaged. The pressures on students to get As and A stars is horrific...you can be the greatest artist in the world, but it doesn't

matter because you can't do English and Maths, therefore you're a failure...the way society values people is so bad...

#### **4.2.3 Local Mencap**

With regards NPM there seemed to be a contrast between what I found at Local Mencap and within FE. Targets and assessments were a daily concern for the educational professionals, whereas Local Mencap professionals worried about the prospect of such strategies being introduced.

Mandell's (2008) belief that professionals are overlooked in social care, with only their adherence to policy and outcomes being focussed on, is not, according to my findings, currently evidenced at Local Mencap. The difference appears to be that Local Mencap is an independently run charity which is not subject to new managerialist approaches which seem to strip organisations of professional attributes and personal qualities, reducing them to quantifiable outcomes that will be measured and deemed a success or failure (Kohn and Somczynski 1990; Howe 1992; O'Neil 1999; Hotho 2008). Local Mencap appears to still have a strong organisational identity and values which may, according to previous research, be lost if NPM techniques were to become part of practice (Larner 2000; Kolthoff et al 2006). Further to the way the organisation is run in comparison to public sector organisations, Ruth, who had previously worked for local authorities in both educational and social care, and now worked at managerial level in Local Mencap, explained; 'I didn't like...the way the council works...I found it very restrictive...' She went on to add that in comparison to this, the chief executive of Local Mencap; '...trusts your judgement and lets you get on with it and for me that's, that's fabulous.'

Feeling she had a voice was important to how Ruth felt about her job; she held strong feelings about her role and seemed to take great pride in carrying it out well. The pleasure Ruth gains from knowing she is a valued part of Local Mencap is consistent with previous research which suggests the importance of work on shaping identity is related to the amount of control the subject has over it; feeling that you are just a number is detrimental to your sense of professional identity (Kohn and Somczynski 1990; O'Neil 1999; Hotho 2008).

With respect to this, Royal Mencap and affiliated organisations' participation in campaigns, and the consultation service they provided to the government, seem to give the workers a real sense of worth. They are able to see the work of the organisation having an effect within the community, whilst also witnessing how their organisation is helping to move learning disability services forward. An example of such is *Changing Places*; a campaign Royal Mencap have been at the forefront of in which appropriate toilet facilities for people with learning disabilities are being called for. In relation to this, Sarah, who works at middle management level, explained;

I think Local Mencap are quite good at getting involved in campaigns...there is a profile out there I think that...sort of stands for; 'we are supporting people with learning difficulties, and we're gonna campaign on some issues for them – if we can'...The

*Changing Places*, yeah, erm I think that was really good cos I spent time actually at the HRI...just talking to people and...that was really interesting...ordinary people saying; 'Oh I had no idea, I didn't even think that people with learning difficulties would have to... be changed on the floor...that's so awful...yes I'll sign your petition.'...it's quite heart warming.

However, there are still issues with government changes that they find intrusive and unnecessary. An example of this is the change to paperwork in relation to NS (DoH 2000). Those working at Local Mencap are very much aware of issues around protecting the service users and avoiding risk; their unhappiness centres on the paperwork which policy relating to risk brings with it. In light of this, Jill, the chief executive at Local Mencap stated;

I'm totally in favour of it [NS]. Unfortunately at the moment it's...taking up...all the social workers time with some quite trivial...alleged abuse. When it isn't abuse really...so they're spending all their time rushing about like headless chickens...and not getting on with the important business. Things like...if you have a group home with...say four or five people living in it you will get the occasional friction. You know, Joe pushes Bob because he is frustrated or fed up with something...we have to report that, even though...it's what happens when you have a group of people living together...But suddenly we have to report that...that has to go to safeguarding, that has to be investigated...and it's become a bit silly really.

There were two issues which frustrated the staff at Local Mencap most; lack of time and the amount of paperwork that in some cases was seen to be infringing on their sense of agency because they were detailing issues which, as Jill says above, are not always thought to be necessary. It became apparent that many of the professionals at Local Mencap have such large amounts of work to do that the adding to this of more paperwork results in a feeling that they do not have the time to effectively carry out their roles in the best way, nor can they make the professional judgements that they feel capable of because of the restrictions it places on them.

Pioneering for change in learning disability services, and for a change in attitudes towards people with learning disabilities, is a theme which ran throughout the interviews at Local Mencap. The fact that Local Mencap is a charity was also very important to those working there; they are in agreement with what the organisation stands for and the values it holds. An example of this feeling comes from Jason, a senior professional who had worked his way up through the company;

...I like the fact that it's a charity, there's no one making any profit anywhere, whereas a lot of the other homes...someone's making money that's why they're doing it...

Further to this, Sarah stated;

You tend not to be hide-bound by a huge bureaucracy as you would be if you say worked...for a...local authority that are very big bureaucracies...I like to be down on the ground. And those...are the rewards. I like to work with people; I like to work with really ordinary people, and I quite like to work with people who are very stigmatised by the rest of society.

There was a strong sense of belonging evident at Local Mencap. Because Local Mencap is a third sector organisation it maintains a certain degree of autonomy, and the professionals working for the organisation do feel that they personally are an integral part of their role, and of the organisation. The affect of this upon their professional identity appears to be substantial.

O'Neil's (1999) belief that prescriptive occupations result in a person's profession playing a lesser part in their identity seems to be evidenced here. Ruth explained her feelings about working for the local authorities prior to Local Mencap;

... [I] found that [the council was] restricting. Here...particularly working with Jill...she suits me perfectly because she's very much of the; 'You've got a good idea? Off you go'...Very much, just let me know what you're up to...she trusts your judgement and lets you get on with it and for me...that's fabulous.

Arguably, feeling that you have some control and self-direction in relation to your work results in a feeling of accomplishment and meaning, which in turn makes you feel that your profession is a part of your identity (Kohn and Somczynski 1990). Those interviewed at Local Mencap did indeed seem to hold their role as part of their identity. Feeling that you have agency within your work, according to O'Neil (1999), results in this outcome. It is a role they have adopted which seems to have become a part of them; they stand proud for the values of the organisation. Their professional identity seems representative of the identity of the organisation.

Rewards come also from working towards changing the perceptions people have of those with learning disabilities. Sarah, a senior professional, explained;

...if you can just get someone to maybe think about that for five minutes and they do and they sign a petition saying yes, I think it's important people with learning difficulties get proper facilities then I think you've made a difference. That's what's important to me.

In relation to Local Mencap's orientation and place within learning disabilities services, Bob, a support worker, spoke of frustrations on the occasions when Local Mencap have needed help from Social Services and they failed to work with the service users in ways that they agreed with;

We've had certain...situations that have required help from...social services...they haven't sort of moved in a very person-centred way, they haven't really looked at the individuals needs...

This quote is evidence of a general feeling at Local Mencap that they are leaders in terms of providing the best standards for those with learning disabilities.

In reference to the residential homes at Local Mencap, showing great pride in her role and the organisation, Ruth explained her desire to deliver a service that is specific to the needs of those whom they serve;

I believe [the] residential homes are smashing, I wouldn't be running them otherwise; I wouldn't be here...are they perfect? No. But are they as near as? Yes I think they are.

Ruth believes for some people residential homes are the best option; the place in which they will thrive most. Local Mencap staff value practice that meets individual needs, not the application of one uniform model. Personalised care, where an individual is treated as just that, an individual person with the right to have a say in their own lives; have control over their resources; and have more control and independence overall, is always at the forefront. This is in line with the Personalisation Agenda, as set out in *VP* (DoH 2001) and *VPN* (DoH 2009), which Local Mencap, Royal Mencap and other learning disability organisations supported the arrival of.

#### **4.2.4 Implications**

It is interesting that Sarah from Local Mencap stated she likes working with people who are stigmatised by the rest of society; this sense of fighting for a cause was also evidenced in a number of the interviews I conducted with education professionals. There seemed to be a stronger sense of commitment and passion involved when teaching professionals were either pressing for change, or working with underprivileged or 'forgotten' members of society.

Both data sets indicate strategies typical of NPM have the potential to negatively affect their professional identity by removing the sense of agency through prescriptive strategies that focus on outcome over process. There is evidence of pleasure amongst Local Mencap professionals with regards having a sense of agency, and a desire for greater agency amongst those working in education.

Unlike education professionals and those working in social care for local authorities, Local Mencap appear to have so far avoided the competitive and commercialising affects of NPM. The lack of commercial aspects evident at Local Mencap, such as a competitive, target driven approach, is something I cannot envisage changing within this organisation based on my findings. This is because of how strongly they are committed to the organisation's values; their stance at the forefront of learning disability services; and their commitment to taking a personalised approach. However, Local Mencap is obliged to follow government policy in relation to initiatives such as Individual Budgets and Independent Living, which are part of the Personalisation Agenda. For example, if the government were to put targets on the number of people that they want to be on Individual Budgets, this could be detrimental to both the service users and employees of the organisation. It would be forcing Local Mencap into the NPM era, subjecting the professionals that work there to scrutiny that is not constructive to the way they view and carry out their complex roles.

## **4.3 Professional Identities in Transition**

### **4.3.1 Introduction**

The roles of professionals working in FE and in social care are changing. Education has seen professionals officially adopting a role in relation to mental health; they are now 'tier one' mental health workers, with the responsibility of identifying children suffering from mental health difficulties (DoH 2004). Those working at Local Mencap, and indeed all those working with people with learning disabilities, have seen *VP* (DoH 2001) and *VPN* (DoH 2009) move the focus of their role from one of predominantly caring, to one of enabling people with learning disabilities. I was interested to explore how a professional working in an environment where their role was in transition would adapt; how the changes within the organisations impact upon the emotions, roles and identities of the professionals. I will discuss the similarities and differences between the affects of the changing roles in FE and at Local Mencap.

Professionals at both Local Mencap and in FE exhibited worries about the ideologies that influence the changes to professional practice set out by government policy. This section provides evidence of teaching professionals' disdain for the constant battle to reach targets, and the belief that assessment is based solely upon the results they produce, not the positive impact that is made in other respects such as the improvements the pupils make, raising their self esteem and confidence, or achievements in less valued academic areas. It will also illustrate Local Mencap professionals' worries about the idealising of a particular lifestyle for service users, resulting in the government appearing to have a 'one size fits all' approach to personalisation. For example, there is a worry that the idealising of living independently will prove detrimental in that it will reduce the choice a service user has.

### **4.3.2 Further Education**

Education professionals have seen changes to their roles in line with government legislation. However, unlike Local Mencap, where the changes appear to be seen as something they have been involved in, the changes that are taking place in education seem to be assessed by the professionals in a different way. Kimberley, a pastoral support worker and tutor, explained;

...it's all orchestrated unfortunately and therefore people that are making the decisions don't really understand what's happening at the grass root. So the FE's changing not because FE wants to change in the way that it is, it has to or it can't get the money...

In relation to the incorporation of mental health responsibilities, Ray, who works in pastoral care and as a tutor, set out the difficulties of aligning the goals of looking after the emotional health of students with the seemingly opposing goals of targets when he questioned;

... how do you bring in a support structure like that when you've got...a completely different set of government pushes on targets of...achievement and all of that...

In response to teachers now being 'tier one' mental health workers, 'Mental Health First Aid Courses' were made available to staff. Rita, a tutor, attended this course and felt more confident in the changes to her role afterwards;

So I feel that there are other people that I can talk to...I don't feel that I'm any sort of expert, far from it, but I do feel that I can recognise things and deal with it initially.

Further to this, Mary, who manages support for students and has worked in education at different levels for over thirty years, explained her feelings about roles also incorporating obligations relating to wellbeing and mental health;

I've seen, as you'd expect, quite a few changes; I think there could be more sort of formalizing of what's acceptable in terms of intervention...How much time and resources can you put in to becoming a social worker or as a policeman...it's very difficult.

Mary believes there is a need for education to address wellbeing, but recognises the pressure this places on the already strained time and resources of teaching professionals;

I think the pressures on young people today are incredible...you're here to teach a course and the time pressure on that is immense...just to get through the syllabuses, it takes every minute of every lesson and obviously there are the pastoral services...[but]...those needs are like a big sponge...you can't put enough in really can you?...I think perhaps it's becoming more high profile now which is right and proper but then it needs to be well directed and well resourced across the board rather than patches of good practice.

There was a general feeling reminiscent of Maryland's (2001) conclusion that education should be an experience that is beneficial aside from the results achieved, and care for students' wellbeing should run alongside academic targets.

Another pressure in FE, like at Local Mencap, comes in the form of paperwork. There is that which they generally accept and agree needs to be done, then there is that which they view as taking up time that could be used more constructively. For example, Carol, a senior professional, explained how *ECM* (DfES 2003) had impacted upon practice;

Not greatly really because we've always been doing it. It's produced a lot of work in that we have to show evidence that we're doing it.

In relation to targets, Ray spoke of the pressures placed upon people to achieve within education in order that they are seen as a valuable member of society;

Got to do a degree...because I say you've gotta do a degree...because you'll be...so much more valued...

He told of the pressure which is placed upon education professionals to facilitate this success for the purpose of government goals;

...but how dreadful is it that...we cannot actually talk to a young person...realistically about choices and options without endlessly referring to them maintaining some sort of...place in some sort of...treadmill...it's a political football...Is the school leaving age being raised because we believe that...it's worthwhile staying in education till you're 18 or is it being raised...cos of recession?...And it breaks my bloody heart because I actually think...of course there's a place for education...in people's lives. You don't want people to...be ignorant, to not be skilled, to not have opportunity to...share and debate...to find out. Of course there is an absolutely bloody major need for that in all our lives. But this thing that we call education...and the damage that it does to people... where do we stop...say hang on a minute, what's this doing...how many staff are going off with stress? How many, how many staff are driven to fiddling the bloody results, the stats and then there's...a big thing in the paper, whoa, the bastard's, you know, mer, mer, mer...

...what really stresses them is the over-the-shoulder pressure, your results...your results, your results...your figures, your stats...if you don't get retention up, Ofsted'll come in. Ofsted'll come in and be all over us...like a rash. So you've gotta do it...Bloody get on with it. It's not as simplistic as that but that's how it's gonna feel...and then you're in there, and then you've got the...two kids at the front having a chat...you've got the boy saying I'm not doing that...you know what I mean...you've got all that stuff...

Ray illustrates his passion with regards helping students to do well and achieve, however, he also shows his belief that many initiatives and pressures within education are not for the benefit of the individual pupils, but in order to meet targets. He advocates that this negatively affects the staff as it is another pressure that they must tolerate.

In relation to this, when I asked education professional, Rita, what she believed most negatively affected the mental wellbeing of staff she told me;

...if the workload's too big it just blows everything...all the bureaucracy and admin we've got to go through, it just gets you down...I can understand why people don't go into teaching because it must de-motivate them.

Education professionals not only saw a large part of their roles being increasingly about paperwork, but felt this was the main aspect upon which they were judged, infringing upon their work with the pupils. Walter explained;

...what causes the most trauma to the teachers...would be the workload that is ever increasing...if you had to do it to ensure that you're classed as a good teacher and therefore sometimes when you would rather spend...some time with a student just trying to help them, sometimes you're stopped from that by the workload.

With reference here to the stress paperwork induces in FE, the findings indicate a belief that time would be better spent actually working with the pupils. They generally felt, like professionals from Local Mencap, that they were being instructed to record something that they had always carried out in practice anyway. Therefore, it is not only that they feel the workload is unnecessarily greater, but also that their sense of agency is being removed as they are being monitored and checked up on.

Unease seems to be evident with regards the understanding and the clarity of the changes to the role of education professionals with regards mental health. Mary explained how she feels about teachers now having a responsibility to care for the mental health of their pupils;

...the boundaries then become very blurred don't they because in a way we're all social workers, psychologists and policemen now... you are responsible in some respects, but then you're not because you're not officially...The goal posts are shifting...

It is not the incorporation of mental health care that seemed to cause her unease, but the clarity with which the new role is understood. This was alongside the restrictions time and resources place upon them, especially since education institutions are judged by the results they produce on paper and not the impact they make upon the mental health of the pupils. This reflects Rothi et al's (2007) findings which highlight the need for improvements to be made so that old and new responsibilities can work together.

With regards to this, Rita found the inspections in her college frustrating, indicating that she felt they remove the agency of the professionals by focussing upon the paperwork the institution produces to show they are achieving, only engaging with the professionals when there is a problem with the paperwork;

...there is a lot of pressure on you because you feel that if your college doesn't do well it's a reflection on you, students won't come and although it's not deliberate it's incredibly pressured...I think that's what gets people down most of all. The Inspectors came in and didn't really look at many classes or talk to many staff, they just looked at everything that we'd put down on paper...I find that really annoying.

It seems that the perception the government has of the organisation affects the professional identity of the staff because they feel they are assessed inappropriately. She went on to explain her annoyance, reflecting views also expressed by Kimberley, Terry and Ray, that they are not judged on what she termed 'value added', where students may improve massively based on previous grades, but the institution will then not be judged upon this, only on the final outcome. Therefore an institution which attracts students who are more academically capable at the offset will be judged as the superior institution regardless of the improvements made.

#### **4.3.3 Local Mencap**

My findings suggest staff at Local Mencap perceive themselves to be somewhat ahead of the times with regards the changes in learning disability services. Interview data illustrates the employees were aware that they were providing person centred care and enabling people long before legislation arrived detailing that this was to be central. As Bob, a support worker, told me; '...I think Local Mencap pretty much has always really been about that [enabling people]'. Unquestionably, there is an understanding at Local Mencap of the need for the measures set out in policy. However, because of the belief that Local Mencap has always held the values that are now regulated by such legislation, the changes to policy appear to have had little impact.

There is a common belief that the paperwork this entails is a burden that already busy professionals do not need. When I asked Ruth about the impact of policy, she said;

...we've always worked to those kind of standards...But, things like *No Secrets* firmed up the...safeguarding rules and...the local authorities [are] in charge of safeguarding...at one time we were able to deal with safeguarding matters in house and I believe we did...deal with them. You know; 'Not having any of that nonsense, not in our service!'...we believe we dealt with it well. Unfortunately not every organisation took that view so the councils have taken even more control over it now, so we've got to report every whisper of a problem...Paperwork. Tons. For a very small issue...that we believe...we could have dealt with better in house.

In reference to the copious amount of paperwork that came about as a result of *NS* (DoH 2000), Jason, a day services manager reiterated this point;

...that's quite stressful, avoiding – trying to avoid – investigations...avoid things happening but avoiding investigations.

If a safeguarding issue occurs he then has to spend the rest of the day filling out forms. This, Jason says, impacts on how he carries out his role regarding the freedom he and his colleagues

allow service users to have. Jason implied that if it were not for such paperwork he would be inclined to allow service users more of the freedom that he feels is appropriate;

...we're covering our backs a lot, we don't wanna be seen to be lacking...we've really gotta let people do what they wanna do a bit more, you know, like if somebody wants to go to the shop and we're like oh no, we'll come with you...but really they'll walk to the shop fine on their own. I mean like Jane who just came in then, she's fine going to the shop on her own but we're 'Oh, we better safeguard to make sure she's alright.'

This seems to demonstrate how accountability can hold back practice. An example of where accountability and enabling can clash. It is interesting that Jason says; 'we don't wanna be seen to be lacking'; Goffman's (1969) concept of 'dramatic realization', whereby a person emphasises certain aspects of their behaviour so that they are visible to those who are observing them, can be seen here. In an effort to illustrate that he is conducting himself appropriately, Jason acknowledges that in some respects the focus on safeguarding means he is unable to enable the service users as much as he would were he not subject to such scrutiny. Consistent with Goffman's 'Dramatic Realization' theory, the necessity to demonstrate adherence to risk related policies may mean that Jason is unable to carry out his role in the more holistic way that draws on his experience in the role. However, finding a balance between allowing the support services freedom within their own organisation, and keeping a check on working practice is understandably a difficult balance for local authorities who have the responsibility of ensuring organisations such as Local Mencap are in line with government procedures.

The present research reiterates Manthorpe et al's (2009) call for protection and empowerment to be looked at together. Support workers' fears' that Individual Budgets may result in vulnerable adults being taken advantage of by those who care for them seems to call for more work to be done in order that the goals of empowerment can run smoothly alongside protection. There are fears that policy may reduce safety; it has the potential to infringe on, and hold back, practice. Jason explained;

... well really loads of people could do more things...than we let them. Like we don't let them just wander off now...it's like, no, no, you're not allowed to leave the building without staff, but it'd be fine if they did, be amazing if they did...

There is a pride amongst Local Mencap staff; Local Mencap triumphed where others failed in relation to safeguarding, yet unfortunately Local Mencap is subject to the same forms of managerial surveillance as other organisations. From *VP* (DoH 2001), 'personalisation' emerged whereby service users are put at the centre of their care, with their needs and wishes being responded to in an individual way as opposed to the standardised way of the past. Again, something Local Mencap believes they were already doing. The delivery of this Personalisation Agenda and the introduction of Individual Budgets have brought about feelings ranging from apprehension to disdain. Professionals Gemma, Bob, Ruth, Jason and William all held concerns regarding the potential for service users to suffer because of Individual Budgets. Bob voiced his fears;

...it worries me...there's some service users...[who]...can't speak, and while they may have an advocate...there's complex decisions that need to be made... money...changing hands. It leaves people open to abuse...

Ruth further explained;

...it looks to be a jolly good way of saving money...to me...I'm a little cynical about personalisation...you market it in a way that implies that...it's wonderful for everyone to have control over their money and theoretically that sounds grand.

Ruth's worry, which was representative of many of those interviewed, concerned the scope for abuse and lower quality of life that Individual Budgets may entail. There is a very strong sense of pro-personalisation, but the standardisation of Individual Budgets would be seen as going against the practice of treating every service user on an individual basis, as required by the Personalisation Agenda and as reflected in Local Mencap's core beliefs. There seems to be the potential for individual needs to be overlooked in favour of a one size fits all idealised practice. This would be going against both Local Mencap's beliefs and the goals of *VP* (DoH 2001) and *VPN* (DoH 2009).

William voiced his view of Individual Budgets;

I'm still not convinced that it's...a really good thing, especially if that particular service user is not...fully capable of making the decision... I know there are people that are quite capable of that. But there are others that may be influenced by say a particular carer or particular parent. Now they have to be fully aware of the situation before they influence.

At Local Mencap there were also concerns that Individual Budgets would bring about a de-professionalisation of learning disability support services, as those with learning disabilities will be able to employ whomever they wish, including someone who holds no qualifications and has not been subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check. As well as there being no obligation to supply references because the employer sets their own standards. Ruth was cynical about Individual Budgets, however, in relation to personalisation generally, and Local Mencap's residential homes, explained;

You know ours are vibrant places; we do believe passionately in...person-centred approaches. We deliver care in a way that suits them.

Ruth did not advocate that all people with learning disabilities are best placed in residential homes, but that there should be the option there for those who want it. What may be an ideal living situation for one person may not be for another and so all options should be available, regarded and presented equally. This seems to be in contrast to the official policy as reflected in *VP* (DoH 2001) and *VPN* (DoH 2009) which, although it clearly states that the individual should make the choices, appears to hold independent living as the ideal blueprint for successful citizenship. Further to this, personalisation is said to be demonstrated when more people are in paid employment; living in their own homes; going to college; having friendships and relationships; using direct payments; and feeling a part of their local community (DoH 2009). Further to this, Jason told me the story of a service user who was put on an Individual Budget, as well as being moved from residential to independent living;

...when you... [leave]...he's just left standing on the doorstep again, waiting for the next [support worker]...there's always staff and people in residential homes, if you're in your own flat there isn't. And then he ended up having kids coming in, stealing some of his money, so he moved back into a group home and he said he's so happy there compared to the independence he was given.

Jill, the chief executive, was very much in favour of personalisation. Her frustration, as shown below, emerges from feeling her hands are tied by the local authorities with regards the organisation being able to implement the said changes;

[The local authorities] have been very, very slow to implement...[personalisation]...and I felt like I was hitting my head against a brick wall trying to get things moving...it's starting to happen now – slowly – but I think we could have done so much sooner if [the local authorities] had been willing to bite the bullet and get on with it...And that's, that's frustrating.

Professionals feel that they are, in some cases, unable to use their professional discretion. This has been brought about by the said changes which have seen local authorities taking over the regulation of safeguarding practice in learning disability services. Ruth explained;

... I think that's a shame that we're not allowed to exercise our own professional judgement.

William also had an opinion about some of the government legislation;

Well the government people do come in. Sometimes they bring silly changes in quite frankly, they're not always what we would call intelligent.

Royal Mencap and Local Mencap, alongside other groups, pioneered for the changes brought about by VP (DoH 2001) and agree with it in many respects. Factions seem to result from how the legislation is interpreted and implemented, and fears that ideals may become standardised practice. Standardisation of practice goes against the basic principles of the legislation.

#### **4.3.4 Implications**

There appeared to be similarities amongst the professionals working at Local Mencap and in education in that agreeing with their work and the organisation was important to their professional identities. The values of the professionals working at Local Mencap and the organisation itself are aligned in most respects, but there are worries about the implementation of government policy and frustrations regarding paperwork. Similarly, the education professionals who are pioneering for change, or working with students from underprivileged backgrounds and striving for success in their profession, were the most passionate about fulfilling their roles in a way in which they agree. Again, frustrations arise in relation to paperwork brought about by changes to their role, and also because targets and goals are seen to be imposed from an unseen above in relation to agendas not aligned with what is always best for the pupils.

In relation to role changes, the evidence from the interviews I conducted appear to reflect the conclusions of Little (1996), who found professionals were more inclined to feel stressed when changes were being made to their working practice that they did not agree with or value. At Local Mencap there is a general understanding and acceptance that the paperwork is

necessary, however, there are strong opinions amongst the staff regarding relatively recent changes as to what needs to be recorded. This is predominantly in relation to safeguarding; it is not that it is seen as an unimportant activity, but because what now needs to be recorded has always been seen as an essential part of practice within the organisation some of the staff feel quite negatively about the fact that they must now stipulate every minor incident in relation to safeguarding. They seem to feel that their practice and judgement is being undermined by policy. Similarly, as the education professionals are given further responsibilities for the pupils in their care, time and resources become stretched, resulting in concerns that their practice in all areas will be negatively affected as they take on responsibilities which, in many cases, are going a step beyond what they believe they have the resources to do.

Local Mencap professionals seem to have more agency than those working in education; they have greater input within the organisation and their role. That is not to say that they would not like to have more, or see ways to improve their working practice. Having a sense of agency is seen here to be beneficial to how a professional feels about their role and their sense of professional identity. This is in line with previous research (Kohn and Somczynski 1990; Howe 1992; O'Neil 1999; Davies 2002; Isenberger and Zembylas 2006; Naring 2006; Hotho 2008; O'Connor 2008)

My findings imply that the gaining of agency by those working in education would contribute to professionals having greater satisfaction in their roles. With reference to the ideology of the current educational climate, professionals show evidence of stress induced by the pressure they are expected to exert in order that their students achieve in the way that is most valued. The participants from education were often committed and passionate about their roles, however, opinions about their role, and the role of education in people's lives, did not match the way they believed the educational establishment as a whole viewed education. This is in contrast to Local Mencap, where the values of the organisation appear to be more closely aligned with the values of the professional.

It seems to be that stress is largely induced by decisions made outside both professionals immediate working environment. Changes and decisions made by the government that the professionals do not agree with seemed to be the major cause of stress for those interviewed.

Goffman (1969) believed that when a professional role is adopted the person must have either a desire to perform the task, or a desire to take on the socially accepted role. Changes to a professional's role, according to his theory, may cause difficulties for the individual as they chose the occupation because they wanted to take on the role. At Local Mencap this was not a problem because of their belief that they were already working towards the goal of enabling their service users to be as independent as possible. In FE, although there were concerns about the change to their roles, the professionals did seem to have taken their new role in relation to mental health on board.

## **4.4 Emotions**

### **4.4.1 Introduction**

In this section I will focus on the emotions experienced by professionals working in FE and at Local Mencap, and the effect these have on how they feel about their roles and how they construct their professional identity.

There was evidence of emotional labour (Hochschild 1983) in both the data collected at Local Mencap and the FE institutions. The emotions experienced by staff in both settings did not seem to involve the inauthentic 'surface acting' Hochschild spoke of when referring to private sector service industries. However, on many occasions participants made reference to having to suppress their emotions and frequently gave the impression of 'deep acting'. There was much evidence of 'philanthropic emotion work' (Bolton 2004; Deery and Fisher 2010), whereby a person allows themselves to experience the role in a completely genuine way; agreeing with the values of the organisation you work for means your emotions can then invigorate you. Deery and Fisher (2010) advocate this has the potential to enhance both personal wellbeing and professional practice; my findings support this.

### **4.4.2 Further Education**

Teaching professionals were conscious of the emotional aspects of their roles. There was a general view from many of the professionals that greater support was needed for them in the workplace in relation to the emotional aspects of the role. Brenda, a welfare advisor and tutor, explained;

... if you're a counsellor then you get professional supervision, but if you're just doing pastoral work in a college setting you don't get that and yet ...you deal with some extremely heavy duty cases...and some people have good support in terms of work colleagues...others don't.

In a similar light to the opinions expressed by those at Local Mencap, those working in education also acknowledge the possibility that they could become overly involved with the people they teach and support, and that there should be structures in place to support the professional in case this happens. Brenda further explained;

...I think people get overly involved with students...and I think...it's about support...and I think counsellors aren't the only people who should, as part of their professional work be entitled to...for want of a better word, professional supervision - not that they're being criticised...but they're able to bring...cases...to...a neutral person...and say...what do you think of this, or this is making me feel like that and how best should I deal with it...

This quote reflects issues relating to both the emotions experienced and the support the professionals are afforded. Her reference to professional supervision reflects Mandell's (2008) belief that critical reflection should be encouraged within institutions as this will result in growth and positive change. However, in relation to this, Hotho (2008) points out how critical reflection is not, and this is confirmed in the interview data, seen positively at present, but is regarded as a gateway to condemnation. This point was stressed by Terry, a tutor and head of student

services. He told me the FE professionals do not have access to the professional supervision where they are able to reflect upon their working practice, as is available to counsellors. In reference to the supervision available to counsellors, he explained;

... it gives the counsellors an opportunity to reflect...to engage with some of the issues that they've been supporting clients with...and to...get feedback from another professional about...what they've done...but also to get, if you like, some counselling themselves about how that process has made them feel... it provides a whole range of different types of support...I suppose in the absence of having that for the people who're dealing with the muck and bullets we...try and do it for each other...

He believed that it would be beneficial to both the professionals and the institution;

...it is possible that it might help us work more effectively...but...it would be expensive to do. And we're trying to maximise our effectiveness with limited resources so...it's hard to justify that sort of...additional cost.

Further to this, Ray, talked about feeling professionals are not able to seek help for fear of appearing incapable;

...you learn to keep your gob shut...you don't say I'm not managing...it's like saying they're...not as good as the next...It's bloody stupid...I mean how utterly silly that you can't say to somebody; 'Christ I'm outta me depth here', you know...once we're in that room, and that door's shut...that's us, that's our world...then we control that, we shape that...

In relation to emotional labour (Hochschild 1983), individuals wish to appear to be in control and capable, however, Ray advocates that this is not appropriate behaviour and professionals should be able to seek help without the fear of condemnation. They should not feel obliged to pretend everything is fine. Ray's opinion is in accordance with 'philanthropic emotion work' (Bolton 2004; Deery and Fisher 2010), whereby a professional works best, and feels most positive about their work when they are able to experience genuine emotion. Seeking help and then feeling more positive about your work would result in this according to theories of 'philanthropic emotion work'.

Like at Local Mencap, having a detachment from those whom you provide a service was seen as beneficial for the student. Terry explained;

...you need an emotional detachment actually...to be able to work effectively...with people who are in crisis...if you're wrapped up in and empathising too much with what's going on you can't be clear and detached and objective...about what's right for that person. So we were finding...that some tutors with the best of intentions were then getting emotionally wrapped up in somebody's situation and...it was damaging to them and... not effective for the young person either...

In addition to this, Anne, a senior education professional told me;

So although we say you should be able to go home at night and switch off I think for some staff it is quite difficult and I'm not sure that it should be their job...we have...angst about students who use us as a safety net and come to the summer holidays they wonder what's going to happen. I mean fundamentally we're in a caring profession aren't we and we're in a college that in fact has care and support as a fundamental part of it and we do see students as individuals and so yes there are going to be times when yes you do take it home despite the fact that you try not to.

There seems to be recognition that becoming emotionally involved in the role is sometimes going to happen, but there should be support and ways to pass on issues that arise with students to places where they should be dealt with in order that this is kept to a minimum. Carol, a senior education professional explained;

There were things that...aren't our business, that I would think are the business of the health authority, but we do feel at times that we are picking up things that should be picked up because they are having to wait 8-12 weeks in a queue and even longer, you've still got to deal with it in that time.

#### **4.4.3 Local Mencap**

Generally, the professionals I interviewed at Local Mencap did not consider stress to be a part of their working lives. This was often stated in relation to more stressful, less rewarding jobs that they have done in the past, such as working in large bureaucratic organisations where targets played a key part in their role. Working at Local Mencap was often said to be much more rewarding and so more enjoyable than their previous jobs. These findings are in line with literature in relation to commitment in the third sector (Alatrasta and Arrowsmith 2004; Parkes et al 2007; Nickson et al 2008). Again, it is evidenced that 'philanthropic emotion work' (Bolton 2004; Deery and Fisher 2010) serves to create an emotionally positive workforce.

The values and beliefs of the organisation are not simply taken on board because they work there; it seems to be that they work there because they hold those values. Ruth felt a sense of belonging when she first came to work there; 'I found I should've come here years ago...I thought...this is the place for me.' In relation to the rewarding aspects of the job, she said;

Yeah lots of rewards. Cos I care about the fact – passionate about the fact – that I want to deliver quality care, not just any old make do and mend sort of care...I love my job...you shouldn't be here if you don't.

Hannah, a support worker at Local Mencap believes the role of a support worker is something you are 'born into', going further to say; 'If you come from a caring side I think you move that way.' She implies that a person has intrinsic motivating factors that move them towards a career that involves caring for others. This is interesting in relation to the theories set out by Deery and Fisher (2010) and Bolton (2004) with regards 'philanthropic emotion work'; she seems to affirm their belief that true fulfilment at work comes from feeling you belong and enjoying the emotions that arise there. This is also consistent with Goffman's (1969) theory that we align our occupation with the role we want to perform.

The level of passion displayed by the participants at Local Mencap demonstrates more than just coming into work for a wage at the end of the month; there is a genuine desire to fulfil their roles to the best of their ability. There was a strong sense of feeling that work was rewarding. The rewards for one support worker, Bob, came from the knowledge that he was helping a vulnerable person to live a more fulfilling life. Bob also told me that the most rewarding time in his job so far was the time he had spent working in a crisis centre with children with learning

disabilities. Although this environment was very challenging, often affecting him emotionally outside of work, he believed he was making a significant difference to the lives of the children there. The benefits outweighed the costs of this work on his emotional wellbeing. This piece of information does not have a quote to evidence it because Bob detailed this after the interview was over, so I wrote it up in my post interview notes. It generally appeared that making someone happy and helping them do what they want, whilst also enjoying what you are doing, is the making of a rewarding job for those I interviewed at Local Mencap.

When asked what he finds rewarding about his role at Local Mencap, Jason stated;

...Ben asking me when we're going camping this year...And Jack's going 'I'm coming again!' yep, brilliant. That was rewarding...

Support workers, Hannah, Christine, William and Becky also provided evidence of this feeling of enjoyment that professionals seem to gain from supporting the service users. Becky explained;

...it's quite fun actually, you don't feel like you're working sometimes...you see their faces when they're laughing and joking so it's...nice.

William, a support worker, told me;

I've been with them just over six years and I've enjoyed every minute of it, this job gives me more satisfaction than anything else that I have been involved in...The satisfaction of knowing that I can work with someone and leave them and they're feeling happier...It's nice to have that feeling that you're being well appreciated and liked...

Although the people I interviewed from Local Mencap take a professional outlook to their roles, seemingly ever aware that they must not become too involved with the service users, it seems that they do allow themselves to become emotionally involved in the roles they carry out. There are two contradicting discourses present; the official discourse, and the personal one. Deery and Fisher (2010) express that when a professional experiences positive emotions, as evidenced here, it has the potential to enhance working practice and personal wellbeing. Although the professionals have an acute awareness of the distance they should maintain between themselves and the service users, there is also recognition that there may, at times, be the potential to become too involved. However, this recognition resulted in the professionals feeling that they had some control over these emotions. Hochschild (1983) would refer to this as 'suppression'. For example, Bob, when asked if his work affects him outside of the working environment said; 'Yeah, but I think you learn to disengage as well...but yeah you do...it's only natural.' However, in relation to Hochschild (1983), her theory that appropriate, but not felt, emotions are exhibited in order to earn a wage is not evidenced at Local Mencap. It seems that emotions run deeper than this for the participants I interviewed.

Being able to disengage from your work is not always successful it seems; chief executive, Jill, referring to support workers said;

...it's quite hard to train that into them... you mustn't be seen to favour somebody against anybody else, you've got to treat them all the same, you've got to keep a certain professional distance whilst still being...friendly.

The official discourse at Local Mencap endorses a professional approach to learning disability services, whilst recognising the potential for them to become emotionally involved with the service users. The official agenda for personalisation, which values the fostering of independence among service users, appears to contribute to the view that emotional involvement is not beneficial.

Ruth explained how support workers are there to facilitate this in a professional manner;

...we've worked hard to get support workers to be valued as care *professionals*, they're not friends – you say this regularly to staff – you're not a surrogate friend, you're a professional support worker. Do you...expect your nurse on a ward to be your friend? No you don't you expect her to deliver professional, quality care.

She further commented that keeping the relationship professional will give the service user greater opportunity to form genuine relationships;

I'm very passionate about that, that you've not got to blur the line because...if you start blurring the line you're then preventing them from potentially forming...possible friendships. You're there to encourage them.

Sarah also illustrated this;

...you have to be constantly sort of pushing back and say; 'you make that phone call because if you make this phone call you'll be able to do it next time'...but that's hard to do, you have to be very focussed and very aware that you're slipping into that; 'oh it's fine, I'll do it for you' or; 'oh don't worry about that I'll do that.'

There is evidence that a professional service is believed to be beneficial for all concerned. As noted earlier, the introduction of Individual Budgets under *Valuing People Now* (DoH 2009) poses a threat to this idea of professionalism as, at present, there is no obligation for a person who is employed to support someone with a learning disability to be trained in any way if they are not working for an organisation. For example, they are not obliged to have a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check conducted. A CRB check is necessary in order to protect the service users; allowing people to work for those with learning disabilities without having a CRB check is putting the service users at risk and, arguably, removing an element of professionalism from the role. Ruth expressed her thoughts on this when she spoke of the prospect of Individual Budgets, which are intended to result in people with learning disabilities having greater control over their money;

There's no obligation under personalisation to train your personal assistant...we are required to make sure all our staff become professionally qualified...all those things will be gone under individualisation...You may well be a dead wrong un, and there's no requirement for you to have a CRB check...

She also went on to explain the potentially negative impact this has for the employee;

... so somebody could work as a personal assistant for an individual with a disability – you work with them for five years – and they can leave there with no qualifications whatever, they've never been on a training course, they've never had to do safeguarding training or anything. And although they've got five years of experience they haven't a qualification. For my money that's a real downside for the member of staff...whereas if they worked for me for five years they would almost certainly have an

NVQ 2, probably an NVQ 3...every two years they've to do first aid, safeguarding, moving and handling, all those things...

At Local Mencap, there is an understanding that as a professional working for the organisation one must attempt to remain, to a greater extent, removed from the emotional aspects of the role when working with the service users. There is a paradox here; Local Mencap staff subscribe to an official discourse of detachment, whilst at the same time displaying high levels of emotional commitment to the service users and the role. Many of the professionals spoke of having good relationships with the service users as almost synonymous with feeling positive about their roles.

William explained;

I'm in the happy position to say...all the service users that I work with like me... I think that's rather nice and I get on tremendously well with their parents and/or carers and I think that's rather nice also.

Further to this, Ruth explained how she teaches her staff to think about the work they are doing;

...think about the most important person in your life, think of the person you love most. Is the work you did yesterday, all the things you did yesterday, would they have been good enough for your nearest and dearest?

This indicates that the official discourse which promotes emotional detachment, which is indeed evidenced, often does not reflect the professional identities that are based on a strong emotional attachment. The professionals I interviewed did appear to be detached from the individual service users, but strongly attached to the service they provide and the methods they use to provide it.

#### **4.4.4 Implications**

Whilst carrying out their role there is evidence of 'suppression' of emotions in both education and at Local Mencap, this is undertaken in both instances so that the student and the service user are afforded the best possible service by the professionals. This desire to facilitate the best possible outcome for the students and service users demonstrates an emotional investment in the role. Although emotions may be controlled in order that they can carry out their role in the best way, this does not remove the emotional stake they have in their role.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this section I will address the research objectives; summarise the findings; draw conclusions based on these findings; make recommendations for future research; and show how my research has contributed to knowledge in this area.

### 5.1 Research Objectives: Summary of Findings and Conclusions

This research was an exploratory study, observing the emotions and professional identities of those who work in FE and at Local Mencap. I wanted to identify the rewards and pressures in order to develop an understanding of how emotions inform professional identities. Although the objectives are clear, the nature of this study meant I sought to follow, as opposed to lead, the research topics as much as possible. I wanted my research to follow the issues raised by the participants, with as little researcher input as practicality would allow.

When I began this piece of research, although I tried to keep my own expectations to a minimum, I still must recognise that I did have expectations about what I would discover. I expected to find the different types of emotions and emotional practice as detailed by Hochschild (1983) present in my findings. However, I have discovered that the professionals seek and experience emotions which are far more genuine and meaningful than those described by Hochschild. The findings, in terms of emotions, are in line with those of Bolton (2004) and Deery and Fisher (2010); feeling satisfied about their job and experiencing genuine emotions in the workplace was seen to benefit the professionals most.

According to the official discourse I found in FE and at Local Mencap, to be professional you need to limit and control your emotions. However, the emotions experienced in the workplace seem to underpin the commitment and passion that is needed to fulfil their roles to the best of their abilities. Particularly high levels of commitment and passion were observed in those professionals who were working with stigmatised or 'forgotten' members of society, such as disadvantaged or lower achieving students and people with learning disabilities. It seems that there needs to be a balance; whilst too much emotional involvement is recognised as being damaging to both the professional and those whom they serve, emotional investment is required to some extent in order for the professional to feel passionate about their role. Commitment to the profession in this sense appears to be healthy as the professional takes away a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction, thus remaining committed to their role.

In relation to this, the participants illustrated evidence in support of the notion that a lack of control and agency in the workplace is detrimental to how a professional feels about their role. Frustrations were evidenced in the FE institutions with regards the feeling that decisions are made from an unseen above, by people who wish only to see results in key areas. They recognise techniques akin to NPM within FE, and believe such techniques bring with them a prescriptive approach which values outcome over process. In contrast to this, the Local Mencap professionals I interviewed appear to have more agency and control in their work. This is

beneficial to the construction of a positive professional identity; they feel they exercise a certain amount of autonomy to shape their role. The knowledge that their organisation holds such an important place in relation to learning disability services also contributes positively to their sense of professional identity. My research indicates that change which is not consistent with the values of the professional and removes the feeling of agency negatively affects the professional identities of the participants.

The findings indicate alignment of professional and organisational values are important for the professionals involved in this study. The participants from Local Mencap agreed with the ethos of the organisation; this contributed positively towards their professional identities. Whereas many of the professionals from FE, particularly those professionals who were working with lower achieving and underprivileged students, were at odds with the education system. This had a negative effect on their professional identities.

## 5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this research point to a number of areas for further research:

- The ideology of the ideal citizen was shown to be a concern amongst the professionals in both settings. In relation to learning disability services, the ideology of independence is evidenced in policy and revealed to be a concern amongst professionals at Local Mencap. Whilst in education, policy indicates that a student is achieving most when he or she is successful in clearly defined areas. Education professionals, especially in institutions with a high numbers of lower achievers, were concerned with this representation and calculation of achievement. This raises concerns about standardisation of practice, whereby if a person cannot achieve the objectives set by the government they are seen as a second class citizen. Such worries were evidenced throughout; education professionals were frustrated that certain forms of achievement remain unacknowledged, whilst Local Mencap professionals were concerned that regarding independence as the blueprint for success would be detrimental to true personalised care. For example, moving people from residential homes into independent living must be done in accordance with what the individual wants and is capable of.

This concern regarding the underlying ideology of government legislation was revealed as a dominant concern amongst the participants. These findings require further investigation and attention; I recommend that further research specifically in relation to this issue is carried out.

- The findings indicate a sense of agency is important for the professionals to feel positively about their roles. Local Mencap appear to have a greater sense of agency than those professionals working in FE. I suggest further research which focuses on the sense of agency felt by professionals who work in FE.
- I recommend research is conducted between other public and third sector organisations in relation to emotions and professional identity in order to make further comparisons.
- The findings indicate change, which is not agreed with or valued, as well as lacking a sense of agency in your role, positively contributed to a feeling of stress and frustration amongst the professionals. Further research should focus upon ways in which professionals manage such stress and ways to alleviate it.

### 5.3 Contribution to Knowledge

There are several areas where this research makes a contribution to knowledge:

- My research looked at recent policy, assessing its impact on a group of professionals and on their approach towards professional practice. It is therefore relevant and timely, as professionals are still in the process of incorporating such policies into their roles.
- I compared public and third sector organisations in terms of their management strategies.
- I contributed to an under-researched area with regards employment in the charity sector.
- Research in relation to emotions and professional identity in these professions has not been conducted in the Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees before.
- I contributed to a publication which has been published by the journal, *Sociology of Health and Illness*; two peer reviewed conference presentations; and I presented my research at the University of Huddersfield 2010 Research Festival:
  - Fisher, P. and Byrne, V. (2011) 'Identity, emotion and the internal goods of practice: a study of learning disability professionals' *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 33: no. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9566.2011.01365.x
  - Fisher, P. and Byrne, V. (2010), 'Emotion, Enabling Practice and the Professional Identity of Mencap Workers' *XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology*, 11-17 July 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden
  - Byrne, V. And Fisher, P. (2010) 'From Care to enablement: Mencap and professional identity' *University of Huddersfield 2010 Research Festival*, 8-18 March 2010, Huddersfield, UK
  - Fisher, P. and Byrne, V. (2009) 'Wellbeing, empowerment and the hidden curriculum of citizenship in English Schools' *3rd International In Sickness and In Health Conference: Government of the Self and the Community*, 15-17 April, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

## 5.4 Reflection

Grounded theory suggests immersing oneself in the research process in order to really 'see' the data (Charmaz 2006). I have done this more than I could have ever anticipated since starting to work for Local Mencap as a support worker. The interactions I had with people who worked there, as well as the information I gained from the interviews, led me to believe I would enjoy working for the organisation. I have found it incredibly interesting and very fulfilling; more so than any job I have had in the past. Working there has given me the opportunity to conduct participant observation; something I could not have foreseen being possible. I have worked for Local Mencap for six months now, which has given me a substantial amount of time to observe practice, as well as to become conscious about my own feelings with regards the role. I have, in effect, become my research. However, I started working for the organisation when all my data had been collected and was ten months into the research process at this point, therefore I do not believe my position has affected the research in any negative way.

The research process was far from linear; I would revert back to earlier sections often. However, at one point I did have to be quite strict with myself as the research was near completion yet I was still constantly reassessing it; this became quite an obsession which took up a considerable amount of time, especially near the end. The primary reason being that this research has been a major part of my life; it is difficult to finalise it because I want it to represent the hard work and dedication which has created it. Also, working at Local Mencap, although it has been very beneficial in many ways, has meant that the majority of the time I am immersed within the subject area, whether this be at work or at home.

The emotions I have witnessed and personally experienced have been varied. The professionals I have observed have confirmed the conclusions I came to in my research; the role, for many, is defined by a great deal of passion and commitment that transcends work/home life boundaries. There is a general desire to see standards improved for the people who use the service; at times I have seen members of staff become very emotional with regards to this. The passion exhibited by the professionals seems to be related to the service; there does not seem to be evidence of attachment to particular service users. There is a constant drive to promote independence and enable the service users as much as possible. This came through in the interviews I conducted, and has been since confirmed by my observations of the majority of people I have come into contact with whilst working there.

I have personally experienced feelings of stress and frustration in relation to my role there. Roles I have had in the past do not compare to the one I have at Local Mencap in relation to emotional investment. If I believed a colleague was not fulfilling their role adequately in previous positions it did not affect me further than feeling a little frustrated or annoyed, however, in this type of work, a person not carrying out their role to the best of their ability has real and immediate consequences for people's lives. I refer to a particular member of staff whom I observed as being neglectful in her duty. This has caused me a considerable amount of distress

because I could witness the effect for the service users. I can understand how feeling like this over a long period can affect a person's life outside the work environment as I have found myself thinking about it outside of work, even though I had taken the appropriate course of action and informed the management about what I have witnessed and how I felt about it.

This observation illustrates the passion involved in the role. Like my observations at the FE colleges who cater for underachieving or disadvantaged students, this passion seems most intense when people are fighting for a cause or do not agree with the treatment people are receiving. On a personal level, not agreeing with the treatment services users were experiencing from the support worker I speak of affected me more than I could have anticipated before going to work there.

The support workers that I have observed generally seem to have very healthy relationships with the service users. They do not seem to become overly involved with specific service users but, if anything, with the role and the service itself. Again, this reflects my findings showing that when people are working with underprivileged or 'forgotten' people they are likely to become more passionately involved. Striving to give service users the independence they deserve seems to be the most contentious issue that I have observed and experienced. For example, when assumptions are made about what a service user would like to do with their time, or they are not given what I view as adequate choices, I have become more vocal in my concerns than is usual for my character generally.

I recently attended a meeting at work where a member of staff had created a presentation about the history of social care in the local area. It demonstrated the terrible conditions people with learning disabilities had to endure in the recent past, pointing out how we should be proud of the progress which has taken place, as well as constantly striving to make things better. The professional who created the presentation is particularly passionate about pushing learning disability services forward but he does represent the ethos of the organisation as a whole.

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# Appendix

## Appendix One

### Consent form

**UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD**  
**Emotional Labour and Professional Identities**

**CONSENT FORM**

**PLEASE CIRCLE AS APPROPRIATE**

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research and consent to taking part in it.

YES/NO

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving a reason and that I may withdraw my data if I wish.

YES/NO

I am happy for my interview to be tape recorded.

YES/NO

I am happy to be quoted (providing my identity is kept confidential).

YES/NO

I understand that the tape will be kept in secure conditions at the University of Huddersfield.

YES/NO

I understand that only the interviewer and members of the research team will have access to the recording.

YES/NO

I understand that my identity will be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research report and that no information that could lead to being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

YES/NO

Name of Participant

Name of Researcher

Signature

Signature

Date

Date

## Appendix Two

**Table 1: Further Education and Local Mencap Codes**

<b>Further Education Codes</b>	<b>Local Mencap Codes</b>
Professional pride/Identity	Professional pride/Identity
	Personal/ Organizational values
	Feelings about the job, rewards, emotions
Personal Boundaries, Relationships, Emotional engagement	Personal Boundaries, Relationships, Emotional engagement
Staff Stress	Staff Stress
Definitions of good mental health	
Coping Mechanisms	
Government Legislation	Government Legislation
	Paperwork
	Role Change
	Personalisation/Enablement
Stigma	
Gender Differences	
Management Pressures	Management Pressures
	Risk, Accountability
Referral Issues	
	Contrasting Narratives (professional/private, care/enable)
Family	
Class	

## Appendix Three

**Table 2: Further Education Codes**

Code	Walter	Kimberley	Brenda	Terry	Sam	Carol	Anne	Ray	Rita	Mary
Professional Pride	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14	3, 4, 5, 11, 13	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 19, 25, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41, 47, 48, 55, 56, 57, 58, 61	8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 25, 30, 32, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 50, 55, 58	13, 46, 48, 51, 55, 57, 58, 59, 63	4, 5, 7, 12, 15	4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15	2, 3, 10, 19, 28, 30, 31, 41, 49, 52, 53, 56, 61, 68, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78	1, 7, 8, 9, 11	1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
Personal Boundaries	7	5, 9, 10, 13	4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 27, 28, 52, 53	10, 11, 27, 28, 36, 41, 44, 46		6, 7	7, 11	74, 78	3, 7, 8, 11, 12	12, 13
Staff Stress	4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14	1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12	1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 28, 29, 33, 36, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60, 61	4, 27, 30, 32, 35, 37, 40, 41, 48, 50, 52, 55	57	3, 6,	4, 6	3, 6, 7, 11, 21, 22, 29, 31, 32, 35, 49, 50, 57, 59, 61, 67, 68, 69, 80	1, 6, 11, 12, 13	9, 11, 12, 14
Definitions of Good m/h	1	6	8, 9, 18, 37, 50, 58	6, 7	16, 18, 19,	1, 2	1	6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20,	3, 4	6, 7, 17, 18

								22, 23, 33, 36, 45, 80		
Coping Mechanisms	2, 6, 9, 11	8, 9	6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 24, 38	27, 46		1	5, 7, 9, 11	12, 15, 24, 44, 80, 81	1, 9, 12	2, 3, 8, 12
Government Legislation	4, 5, 10, 13	2		58	48, 49, 50, 51, 55, 56	13	12, 13	3, 6, 22, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 67, 69, 75	13,14	10
Stigma	3, 6	7	10, 11, 40		27, 28,29, 30, 50, 64, 65	14, 15	14, 15	29, 31, 80	3, 4	10, 13
Gender Differences			11, 23							
Management Pressures	3, 4, 8, 9, 13, 14	1, 3, 4, 7, 12	11, 14, 19, 26, 33, 51, 52, 56, 57	12, 20, 21, 33, 52, 53, 54, 55	57	5, 12	12	10, 19, 21, 22, 24, 40, 57, 65, 69	12, 13	2, 14
Referral Issues	5, 6, 7, 8	7	15, 41, 42	3, 4, 8, 10, 23, 24, 28, 35, 36	8, 14, 15, 34, 35, 43	4, 5, 6, 11	6, 11		5, 10	5, 6, 12, 16
Family	6, 11	4	16, 17, 57	18	20, 21, 42,	2, 10, 16	2	14, 16, 44	4, 6, 7	12, 13, 17

					52, 55					
Class		2, 13	22, 26	18, 19	22			60, 63, 82	4	

## Appendix Four

**Table 3: Local Mencap Codes**

Code	Jill	Genna	Bob	Sarah	Ruth	Jason	Christine	Hannah	Becky	William
Feelings about the job, rewards, emotions			2, 6	2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 12	1, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18	3, 5, 9, 17, 18, 19	2, 7, 9	1, 3	1, 2, 4	1, 2, 9, 10
(A) Personal/organizational values	1		3, 4, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 12	1, 9, 14, 15, 20	5, 11, 14, 18	2, 3,	3, 6		3, 9
(B) Professional Pride/ identity/ professionalism	1, 7, 8		6, 7, 9	9, 10, 11	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20	6, 14, 15	4	1, 6	2	2, 3, 4, 9, 10
(a) Policy	3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11		3, 4, 5, 7		2, 3, 4, 12	5, 14, 15, 16	5	3, 6	2, 6, 7	4, 6, 7
(b) Paperwork	4, 5, 6, 7		4, 6		4	4, 13, 14		4		3, 4, 5, 7
(c) Role Change	5, 8		3		3					4
(d) Personalisation/ Enablement	3		3, 4, 5, 7, 8	5	5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13	1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17	4	3, 4, 7	7	1

Relationships, emotional engagement, boundaries			2	5, 6, 7, 9	6, 7	5, 7, 19	6, 7, 8	2, 3, 5, 6, 7	2, 3	2, 3, 8
Stress, frustrations, worries, changes they would make	3, 5, 6, 7, 10		1, 4	3, 10	4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13	4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 15, 16, 17	2, 3, 7		2, 3	3, 8
Risk, Accountability			4, 8, 9		4, 5, 8	4, 12, 13, 14	5, 6			7
Contrasting Narratives (prof/private, care/enable)						6, 12, 13	1, 3	5		1
Goals, Targets			2	6	13	1, 5, 7, 18	2			

## Appendix Five

### Interview Topics: Further Education

- Reasons for becoming a teacher
- Rewards/challenges
- How are educational imperatives are being reconciled (or not) with mental health and wellbeing?
- Role change?
- Types of mental health problems encountered
- Recent focus on mental health
- What resources are available/ needed to help teachers (e.g. economic, social, spiritual/faith)?
- Developments required for improvement?
- Discipline/achievement versus care
- To what extent should schools be responsible for issues of mental health?
- What if anything would you recommend for future policy directions?

## Appendix Six

### Interview topics: Local Mencap

- Role at Local Mencap
  - Why they chose to enter the profession
  - Rewards they experience in their job
  - Challenges they face
  - The positive and negative emotional aspects of these rewards and challenges
  - Have their roles and the expectations placed on them changed during the course of their careers. If so, in what ways
- 
- How much time is dedicated to paperwork
  - Which aspects of the job cause the most stress
  - Would they change anything about their job if they could
  - Description of a nightmare scenario at work – their greatest fear
- 
- How much scope is there for using own judgement
  - How do they reconcile trying to enable service users to live independent lives, whilst also caring for and protecting them
  - Their opinion on the importance of independence (both of the service user and the support worker)
- 
- Are training and resources adequate
  - Do they work with other health service providers
  - How much support is there from other agencies
  - The importance of the relationship they have with the service users
  - The importance of the relationship they have with colleagues
  - Opinions on the government policy Local Mencap adhere to
- 
- To what extent are support workers authentically engaging in their role and/or whether they are surface acting

## **Appendix Seven**

### **Glossary of Terms**

<b>NS</b>	<i>No Secrets</i> (DoH 2000)
<b>VP</b>	<i>Valuing People</i> (DoH 2001)
<b>VPN</b>	<i>Valuing People Now</i> (DoH 2009)
<b>ECM</b>	<i>Every Child Matters</i> (DfES 2003)
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>NPM</b>	New Public Management
<b>CRB</b>	Criminal Record Bureau

## **Appendix Eight**

### **Proposal**

#### **Emotional labour and professional identities among Mencap workers and teaching professionals**

I have been awarded a fee-waiver to support my Masters by Research (with the intention of continuing for a PhD) whilst also contributing to research outputs for the School of Human and Health Sciences.

Building on previous work that I have undertaken with Dr Pamela Fisher, this research will:

- Investigate the changing roles of teachers with regards to their professional sense of wellbeing and ability to adapt to the new responsibilities placed upon them by recent legislation, which positions them as 'tier one' mental health professionals;
- Identify the rewards and pressures experienced by Mencap workers in their professional lives;
- Identify the emotional pressures/rewards and impact of emotional labour among those working within 'people' professions;
- Develop an understanding of how emotional demands inform and shape professional identities

### **Research Plan**

Data (already collected) in relation to education will be analysed alongside new data relating to the emotional demands place on workers employed by Mencap. The research will investigate the emotional dimensions to their work and how this impacts on the construction of their professional identities and emotional wellbeing.

The research carried out with teachers suggests that emotion in the workplace constitutes a crucial but mainly neglected area within professional life. I will research the differing types of emotional pressures and rewards experienced by teachers and Mencap workers, particular in relation to their disciplinary and caring roles.

### **Policy Background**

The proposed study, in relation to the teaching staff, has been shaped by a number of policies, in particular, the Government's Green Paper: *Every Child Matters (2003)* and *The Children Act (2004)* which - according to the government - demonstrates their commitment to children, and to extending opportunities for the socially marginalized or 'vulnerable'. Integrated services are central to this vision, and the responsibilities of all professionals working with children, involving,

amongst other things, the identification of children suffering from mental health difficulties (Department of Health 2004 in Rothi et al 2007). The Children Act (2004) calls for all those who cater for the needs of children to work together systematically so that vulnerable children are not missed because of gaps in the services that cater for them (Reid 2005).

The proposed study, in relation to Mencap workers, will draw on recent legislation. For example, *The Equalities Bill* (2009) champions the rooting out of discrimination, stating that every citizen must have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. The Bill informs us that a person with a learning disability is twice as likely to be unemployed as a non disabled person. The Bill emphasises the importance of 'strengthening protection from discrimination for disabled people.' Legislation is therefore supportive of the organisational aims and ethos of Mencap.

*The Disability Discrimination Act* (2005) aims to give disabled people, including people with learning difficulties full citizenship rights in areas such as employment, education, and access to facilities and services. While legislation may support the work of Mencap, progress to the full inclusion of people with learning difficulties is often impeded by societal barriers and attitudes. Furthermore, the aspiration of supporting people with learning disabilities towards greater personal empowerment has to be reconciled with the need to also adopt a caring and (sometimes) disciplinary role. In this respect, there are interesting parallels (and differences) with the responsibilities that shape teachers' and lecturers' professional identities.

At the same time, it will also be necessary to focus on the impact of NPM within the public sector, and how this impacts on emotional engagement and professional identity. For example, do those who work for Mencap also have feelings that they are not trusted, as indicated amongst the teachers (based on, arguably, excessive assessment, surveillance and targets). I intend to investigate the affects of NPM on emotional engagement and stress within professional roles.

Policies have resulted in greater workloads, in terms of paperwork and targets for teaching staff, as well as elevating them to 'tier one' mental health professionals, where they experience greater responsibility for the identification of those suffering from mental health problems.

### **Research questions**

- What do those working in education and for Mencap consider to be the issues that support or undermine their own personal wellbeing and sense of professional identity?
- How do they respond to these rewards and pressures?
- To what extent are they able to reconcile their roles that are characterised by the conflicting pressures of 'care', 'empowerment' and 'control'?

- How does emotion articulate with and inform professional identities, including motivation and wellbeing at work.

## **Methodology**

I intend to conduct further interviews with people working for a local Mencap affiliated organisation; a charity who work with people who have learning disabilities. Access to research participants has already been negotiated with relevant senior staff at Mencap.

Purposive sampling will be used, as there is a specific target population. Snowball sampling may also be used as participants will hopefully put me in contact with others willing to participate.

I will conduct approximately ten interviews with people working for Mencap, and analyze these alongside those already conducted for the Innovation Bid. If necessary, I will revisit the teaching staff who took part to ask further questions.

Thematic analysis will be used to analyze the data. This will involve sorting and categorizing the information gathered, and looking at what the words used actually mean to the speaker (Parker 2004).

With regards to ethical considerations, the participants' data will be kept confidential and when cited in the research their anonymity will be maintained. Before the interviews begin informed consent will take place; the participants will receive an information sheet and will have the opportunity to discuss any queries arising from this with me. They will also be asked to sign a consent form to say they are willing to take part and be recorded; this will also inform them that they are free to withdraw their participation/data at any point during and after the interviewing process. They will also be able to contact me after the interviews if they have any questions, as well as told they will be able to see the end product if they so wish.

As well as these procedures being ethically sound, and meaning results have more of a potential to be valid and reliable, they may also put the participant at ease in the knowledge that their responses will remain anonymous, possibly resulting in them speaking more freely.

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