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I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for subsidising the first year of my professional doctorate. I would not have been able undertake this work if you had not given me this support and I am very grateful.

In order to undertake this course it is necessary to have a relevant professional qualification (I am a registered Social Worker) and also have completed a Master's Degree (I have a Masters in Family Therapy and also have a Masters in Applied Social Sciences). The first year of the four year doctorate is the grounding for the research which will be undertaken. The module is entitled **Developing the Research Concept**. This module brings research ideas together in a focused proposal fit for purpose for doctoral study in the professional context. I have been allotted a Doctoral Supervisor and she has guided me through this process. There is a taught element to this module and this comprises both of five taught days and the opportunity to take part in related activities within the school, such as participation in methodological debates, attending seminars, discussion of key journal articles and on-going research modules, this includes being able to take part in taught parts of Masters Degrees within the university. The five taught days which are specific to this Doctorate have included: An Exercise in Deconstruction, Proposal Components, Ethics and Governance, Research Methodologies, Situational & Critical Analysis, Insider and Participatory Research and What is Doctorateness? These have been extremely useful in helping me to frame and focus the proposed research. During this year I have examined previously published pieces of research into this subject and there is a scarcity of research in this area.

This proposed piece of work will explore the experiences of parents of adolescents who are detained within Adolescent Medium Secure Units. The primary role of such a unit is the

treatment of mentally disordered offenders. These are patients who have committed crimes against a person when mentally ill or who become unwell in prison. Such patients can receive a hospital order for treatment in hospital instead of a prison sentence or can be transferred from prison to hospital for treatment . Some of the young people I work with are serving sentences. All of the young people I work with are detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. Parents and Carers of young people detained in this way have very little opportunity to tell their stories. There has been very little research into their experiences and this piece of work will provide an insight into this previously under-researched area.

I am a specialist Social Worker in an adolescent tier four Medium Secure Unit.. I am also the non-relative carer of a young person who is detained in a High Secure Psychiatric Hospital and was previously detained in medium secure services. This locates me uniquely. My experience as carer and Social Worker provided me with a duality of positioning which made me curious about the experiences of parent / carers within the service in which I work. My experience as a carer visiting an adult Medium Secure Unit and a High Secure Hospital, which has includes alienation and dismissal, has made me curious about the unspoken experiences of parents/carers in adolescent forensic service As a Social Worker offering Family Therapy I have been interested in narratives as a source of offering potential for change. I pay attention to the stories that people tell me. I am interested in how members of families relate to each other, and what meanings there are behind these relationships. I have discovered through my experience as a Social Worker and as a Therapist that narratives are more than the telling of stories. As narrative is the way realities are both created and recreated I have been able to work collaboratively with families to develop narratives which are more helpful to them. This understanding and history has led me to the conclusion that narrative methodology is a most appropriate means for the study of the experiences of the

parents / carers I am interested in. Narrative Research could potentially be an avenue for allowing previously silent voices to be heard.

Narrative research involves the exploration of a personal narrative and the locating of an individual within their social, biological, physical and historical context. The purpose being to offer an understanding of how that individual constructs meaning to their lives and identity.

The product of this research will include a self-narrative element using an autoethnographic component which will critique the position of both myself (Social Worker and Carer) within this context. My overarching Aim is to contribute to a body of knowledge which will help to inform my own practice and the practice of others in order to improve the experiences of families whose children are patients within secure psychiatric services. This module, which is undertaken prior to research being carried out has allowed me to consider the best way to approach this. Prior to this I had not been aware of autoethnography but had realised that my being both a carer and a Social Worker had led me to wanting to undertake this research and that this needed to be made transparent during the process. Discovering autoethnography was amazingly exciting for me as this will allow me to do this in a meaningful way. I have enjoyed enormously doing this year of study and have also found it extremely useful. It is an essential constituent of the Professional Doctorate and as I have now successfully completed the marked piece of work, it will allow me to progress onto the second year.

Thank you again for supporting this endeavour which would only have remained a dream otherwise.