

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**What are the support needs of experienced headteachers and what are
the preferred support mechanisms to facilitate headship sustainability?
A study across five local authorities**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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by

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ABBREVIATIONS

AASSH	Anglican Academy and Secondary Schools Heads Association
APN	Academy Principals Network
ASCL	Association of School and College Leaders
ASSSA	Annual Survey of Senior Staff Appointments
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CHGN	Chairs of Headteachers Groups Network
CLEAR	Centre for Leadership Excellence Across the Region
CPD	Continued Professional Development
CPR	Cambridge Primary Review
DoE	Department of Education
FASNA	Freedom and Autonomy for Schools
FSA	Forest Schools Association
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GSA	Girls' School Association
GSHA	Grammar Schools Heads Association
HMC	Headmasters and Headmistresses Conference
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate
HTSXX	Headteacher School Authority X Interviewee X
IAA	Independent Academies Association
IAPS	Independent Association of Prep Schools
ISA	Independent Schools Association
ISC	Independent Schools Council
LLE	Local Leader of Education
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
NCLSCS	National College for Leadership in Schools and Children's Services
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NCTL	National College for Teaching and Leadership
NFER	National Federation for Educational Research
NLE	National Leader of Education

NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education Children's Services and Skills
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literary Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPLC	Principal Professional Learning Communities
PWC	Price Waterhouse Cooper
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QCDA	Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency
SATs	Standard Assessment Tasks
SCALA	School Chaplains and Leaders Association
SCEE	Select Committee on Education and Employment
SIP	School Improvement Partner
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SQH	Scottish Qualification for Headship
SWALSS	South and West Association of Leaders of Special Schools
TES	Times Educational Supplement
TDA	Training and Development Agency
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TSH	The Society of Heads

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

On completion of my undergraduate degree in education, I successfully applied to the University of Hull for a PhD scholarship to undertake research into headship sustainability. Although for me this was a new area of study within education, whilst conducting preliminary reading it became apparent that this was a major issue which warranted further research. My initial reading highlighted the increasing concern both nationally and internationally of the recruitment and retention of headteachers with suggestions that this is now reaching crisis point (Chapman, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Smithers & Robinson, 2007). It has been reported that 'two-thirds of heads are aged 50 or over and more than a third are 55 or over' and predicted that 'a third of all headteachers will have retired by 2014' (NCLSCS (c), 2010:8). In order to maintain a healthy succession of headteachers it has been suggested that the annual requirement of new leaders from within the profession is 15-20% (NCSL, 2006:4). There is, however, anxiety over how these positions will be filled as there seems reluctance amongst teachers to progress into the role of headship and also concern over the quality of candidates who do come forward (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Smithers and Robinson felt that the succession problem was more acute in the maintained sector as schools interviewed had not faced problems when recruiting a new headteacher. However, it has been identified that 44% of headteachers in the independent sector are looking to retire or leave the profession within the next five years (Smithers & Robinson, 2007; Lockhart, 2010:11).

The role, expectations and demands of a headteacher have changed dramatically over the past 50 years. Headteachers have begun to talk openly about the pressures of the role and how existing headteachers feel the role is getting much harder to fulfil (Thomson, 2009). Whereas headteachers were 'a combination of academic 'expert', jack-of-all-trades and entrepreneur' (Bottery, 2006: 175), 'the role of school leaders has become more challenging in recent years, and the complexity and range of

tasks they are required to undertake has increased significantly' (PWC, 2007:1). Headteachers are now expected to 'lead on the rethinking of goals, priorities, finances, staffing, curriculum, pedagogies, learning resources, assessment methods, technology and use of time and space... in an outcome-based and accountability driven era' (Levine, 2005:12). This has led to a shift of focus from headship to leadership and has resulted in confusion over the role of the modern headteacher. The identity of headship has been confused as new models of leadership have been introduced, along with increased responsibility and accountability (Crawford, 2009; Hargreaves, 2009). International comparisons of pupil achievement have also added pressure on headteachers to deliver results and raise standards. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tables for 2009 showed that the UK had slipped from its previous positions and was ranked 20th for reading, 22nd for mathematics and 11th for science against the 65 countries who took part (OECD, 2010). These results caused concern and the government became more focused on raising standards in order to compete on an international platform. However, the 2012 PISA results showed that the UK had not improved their position and were found to have dropped their ranking to 26th for mathematics, 23rd for reading and 18th for science (OECD, 2013). Headteachers are seen as the 'the key decision-maker, facilitator, problem-solver, the agent of change at the school site' (Su, Gamage & Mininberg, 2003:42), and are claimed to be more influential on pupil achievement than 'school structures or leadership models' (PWC, 2007:1).

In recognition of a potential crisis of headship recruitment and retention, in 2000 the labour government established The National College of School Leadership (NCSL) to raise standards by developing strong leadership throughout all schools (Collarbone, 2003; Swaffield, 2008). The college became known as The National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (NCLSCS). However, in 2013, the National College was merged with the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and is now known as the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL).

The NCTL introduced the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) which was a mandatory requirement for all new headteachers in England to hold before being appointed into a headship position (Chapman, 2005; Ball, 2008). The introduction of the NPQH has been seen as innovative by some, but others question its validity and suggest that it could be a barrier rather than a route into headship (Howson & Sprigade, 2011; Fullan, 2005). A variety of courses and qualifications at different levels have also been developed in order to encourage and improve leadership skills across the school spectrum. An initiative which has gained momentum over the past decade is the use of experienced headteachers from successful schools being utilised in failing or challenging schools to help turn them around. These headteachers are known as Local or National Leaders of Education (LLE or NLE) and the government announced in the schools white paper 2010, *The Importance of Teaching*, that it aims to double the number of Local and National Education Leaders by 2015 (DfE, 2010). Local authorities and key partners work with the NCTL and there are now numerous courses available focusing on developing leadership skills. However, it is unclear how headteachers access personal support and sustainable networks. Headteachers found one of the most influential aspects of being involved with local and national leader programmes was the ability to access networks of other leaders from different schools in different contexts. This gave them the opportunity to discuss leadership issues which affected them all instead of being concerned with specific details (Ofsted (b), 2010). Networking across regions and types of school would enable headteachers to discuss issues of leadership, question proposals and share best practice. Being able to meet and network with colleagues is often quoted as being the most beneficial part of attending training programmes and conferences (Earley & Evans, 2003; Woods, Woods & Cowie, 2009). The opportunities experienced headteachers have to network with colleagues from different regions and across school contexts is an area which will be researched by this thesis.

The white paper also signified a dramatic change in how schools operate and their relationship with both government and local authorities. The intention is to allow schools to have more freedom, especially from local government controls, as they are encouraged to apply for academy status. The introduction of free schools, schools which can be established by a variety of groups, will further see the control of local authorities diminish. The role of School Improvement Partners (SIPs), who at present are a key link between schools and their local authority, will be abolished. As reforms are brought in, it is unclear, as yet, what the role of the local authority will be going forward. The government 'anticipate and will welcome a more diverse approach to the provision of school improvement services' but as to what these will be and their effectiveness remains to be seen (DfE, 2010:65; Earley et al, 2012). At present there are maintained and independent schools, academies and special schools. The introduction of free schools and the extension of the academy school programme could result in more schools out of local authority control than within it. With the fragmentation of school structures and a cut in budgets, there is a real danger that school support and especially headteacher support could be compromised.

Succession planning is now seen as being an essential element to bringing stability to school leadership and is actively being encouraged by the government through The NCTL (Chapman, 2005; Earley, Weindling, Bubb & Glenn, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Historically, and today, most headteachers are recruited from within the teaching profession, usually either being deputy headteachers or heads of department. Headteachers are seen as the 'gatekeeper' to a teacher's career and could be the key to developing staff into leaders (Ball & Goodson, 1985:20). There is now an expectation that headteachers will talent spot future leaders from within their own school (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Hartle & Thomas, 2003; NCSL, 2006; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). However, there needs to be clear understanding of what is required by both the headteacher and their staff. Some studies found that teacher perceptions of the role of headship correlate with those of the headteacher whilst others found that 'some discordance appears to exist

between features of leadership talent thought important by headteachers and the features some middle leaders perceive they need to demonstrate' (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006:283; MacBeath et al, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). It would appear that how headteachers convey their experience of headship impacts greatly on those who are thinking of applying for headship. Very few headteachers stay in position until they are sixty-five and the number of headteachers leaving the profession either through early retirement or to pursue alternative careers is standing at 40% nationally (Earley et al, 2009:304). One area which may affect headteachers deciding to stay or leave the profession is the amount of personal support they receive. In his paper of 2006, Stroud concluded that there was a 'dearth' in the research on the professional development of existing headteachers, and this still appears to be the same today (Stroud, 2006:101). Questions need to be asked not only about the support available for all experienced headteachers, but what support is effective and what support experienced headteachers would value in order to make a real difference to their headship.

Area of study

This thesis will research what experienced headteachers in position actually require to motivate, stimulate and support them throughout their headship. Identifying and providing the right form of support could contribute to headship sustainability with increased retention of educational leaders across the region, and effective succession planning. It seems that the balance of professional development has been lost and is now more concerned with improving professional practice through the provision of courses rather than supporting the needs of the individual. There is also a danger that as budgets are cut and local authorities redefine their relationship with schools, individual support mechanisms for headteachers could diminish in favour of generic training and qualifications.

This thesis will research headteachers from different school sectors and from different local authorities as research rarely seems to be carried out across a spectrum of school contexts. By including all school types within a geographical area, it presents an opportunity to compare the support mechanisms which are both available and utilised; and also to see if any support mechanisms emerge which may contribute towards headship sustainability.

The chosen geographical area for this study is Yorkshire and Humberside, with five local authorities from within the region being selected to carry out the research. Conducting the research in the Yorkshire and Humber region it gives an opportunity to compare and contrast headship support across a diverse area both in terms of what is provided and what experienced headteachers would like to be able to access and what forms of support they value. It was also felt that the Yorkshire and Humber region are facing similar challenges to those experienced nationally and internationally with the recruitment and retention of headteachers, and any findings from this study would contribute to the general discussion of headship sustainability.

The overarching research questions for this PhD are:-

What are the support needs of experienced headteachers and what are the preferred support mechanisms to facilitate headship sustainability?

To answer these questions, the following sub-research questions will be asked:-

- 1 What is headship sustainability and what is its current condition?
- 2 What are the implications of the current policy context on headteachers and their support needs?
- 3 What have been the support mechanisms to date?
- 4 What are the support needs of experienced headteachers?
- 5 What are the preferred support mechanisms?

These questions are considered throughout the thesis as shown in the following table.

Chapters in the thesis where the research questions are considered		
SRQ number	Research Question	Chapters in which research questions are considered
1	What is headship sustainability and what is its current condition?	1, 2, 5, 8, 9
2	What are the implications of the current policy context on headteachers and their support needs?	2, 5, 6, 8, 9
3	What have been the support mechanisms to date?	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9
4	What are the support needs of experienced headteachers?	1, 5, 7, 8, 9
5	What are the preferred support mechanisms?	5, 7, 8, 9

Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1: Professional development, support mechanisms and headteacher sustainability.

The chapter begins with a discussion around sustainability, what it is, how it relates to headship and the impact support could have on headteacher sustainability. This is followed with a discussion of career stages and consideration given as to why some headteachers are disenchanted with the role and take early retirement or leave prematurely, whilst others remain enthusiastic throughout their career. Suggestion is made that the stages of headship should be seen as flexible and a new model is put forward. The professional developmental opportunities available to headteachers are then considered followed by a discussion around sustaining and retaining headteachers and the support needed to achieve this. An argument is made for researching the individual support needs of a headteacher and the benefits of extending their career. The chapter concludes that by researching the preferred support mechanisms of headteachers, the relevant support needs could be identified and made available. These support mechanisms could help to sustain headteachers in the very complex and demanding role of headship and thus avoid premature departure or early retirement.

Chapter 2: The implications of current policy context on headteacher sustainability and support needs. This chapter considers the recruitment and retention of headteachers, followed by a discussion of the pressures on headship derived through education policy both nationally and internationally and how this impacts on headship. Thought is given to the importance of school leadership and to the foundation of the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) and to the establishment of a National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH). An argument is formed for researching the individual support needs of headteachers and how this can impact on headship sustainability.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological choices associated with this study, the approach taken and the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the methods employed. Justification is given for the research being carried out using a mixed method approach and for adopting a pragmatic paradigm. Reliability, validity, trustworthiness and generalisability are considered and how they impact on the research. The approach taken to the survey and interviews are then discussed giving details of their format and design.

Chapter 4: Research Methods. The ethical consideration and implications of the research are discussed in chapter 4, together with the steps taken to ensure compliance within the study. Demographic information about the locality chosen for this study compares the region with national statistics and gives justification for carrying out the research in this region and the local authorities chosen. The methods used and choices made for the survey are discussed, giving details of the pilot study, the sample and the actual survey. This is followed by an account of the pilot interviews, how the interview sample was selected and an account of how the actual interviews were carried out.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Questionnaire Data. Chapter 5 is an analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaires. Each question is analysed and from the findings themes emerge which are taken forward to interview and discussion.

Chapter 6 & 7: Analysis of Interview Data. In order to bring clarity to the thesis, the data from the interviews was analysed and the findings presented in two chapters. Chapter 6 looks at internal and external influences and policy context which may impact on the role of a headteacher such as the journey into headship, the local authority and accountability. Chapter 7 then looks at the support headteachers have received and the impact this has had on their headship. Consideration is also given to the satisfaction of headship and whether the interviewees would choose this career path again.

Chapter 8: Discussion. The findings from the questionnaire and interview analysis are discussed in chapter 8 and related to the literature review. An argument is made that extending the career of a headteacher can have a positive impact on headship and should be encouraged. It is advocated that personalised support which a headteacher can access on a flexible basis should not only be easily available but should also be encouraged. Networking and mentoring were identified as being able to have a positive impact on headship sustainability.

Chapter 9: Thesis conclusions. Chapter 9 presents the conclusions of this study. Each sub-research question together with the main research question is answered enabling recommendations to be made in the following chapter.

Chapter 10: Recommendations, Limitations and Areas of Further Study. This final chapter of the thesis begins with recommendations of support mechanisms which could contribute to headship sustainability. The

limitations of the study are also considered and areas for further study are suggested.

Summary of Introduction

The introduction has given the focus of the research and presented the research questions. The research topic was identified as being the support needs of experienced headteachers and the preferred support mechanisms to facilitate headship sustainability. The structure of the thesis was presented at the end of the chapter by giving a brief outline of each chapter. The following chapter considers headship sustainability, the professional development of headteachers and the support and mechanisms needed for headship sustainability.

CHAPTER 1: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORT MECHANISMS AND HEADTEACHER SUSTAINABILITY

Introduction and chapter outline

This chapter begins with consideration of sustainability and how it relates to schools and headship. This is followed by a discussion of the role of a headteacher and considers the stages a headteacher may experience during their career. Evidence is reviewed which suggests that headteachers follow a pattern during their career, one which is often reported as ending in disenchantment with the role causing them to leave headship prematurely (Brighouse & Woods, 1999; Pascal & Ribbins, 1998). However, consideration is also given to the viewpoint that some headteachers happily extend their career and are able to sustain themselves throughout, maintaining energy and enthusiasm for the role (Flintham, 2003; Oplataka, Bargal & Inbar, 2001; Reames, Kochan & Zhu, 2013). It is argued that having access to relevant support could help to sustain headteachers in position and extend their career. Sustaining and retaining headteachers in position could positively contribute to bringing sustainability to headship. The chapter concludes with consideration of what is currently being done to retain headteachers in England with suggestions given as to what could be done to enhance the provision.

Sustainability and Sustainable Leadership

The word sustainability stems from the word sustain. A simple search of the Oxford Dictionary gives several meanings of the word sustain, together with various synonyms:-

- To provide enough of what somebody/something needs in order to live or exist
- To make something continue for some time without becoming less
- To experience something bad
- To provide guidance to support an opinion, a theory
- To support a weight without breaking or falling
- To decide that a claim, etc. is valid

Synonym's: Maintain
Suffer
Uphold
Bear
Support (Oxford, 2011)

The term sustainability derives from a 1987 report by The World Commission on Environment and Development. The report called *Our Common Future* considered ways in which the global environment and development needs of all nations could be progressed in a way which would not harm and would benefit future generations (United Nations, 1987). A major theme to emerge from the report was sustainable development and was seen as being a vital element needed to tackle environmental, social and economic issues. Since the publication of the report, sustainability has become a prominent consideration in many fields, and has recently become a popular discourse in education. Sustainability is also concerned with the local environment and over the past decade there has been a greater emphasis on using local products to help the local economy, reduce the carbon footprint and bring sustainability to the local area. Bringing this concept into the education arena, Southworth introduces 'the idea of using local knowledge to improve local provision... [which] would be considerably strengthened by local data on staff being used to create local solutions and priorities' (Southworth, 2007:190). Sustainability is often cited as being the key to bringing about school reform, stability to the profession, increasing standards and improving attainment for all pupils (Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

A relatively new discourse to emerge is that of sustainable leadership, but what is this and how does it relate to education system? In his definition, Brent Davies firmly links sustainable leadership with school improvement:

Sustainable leadership is made up of the key factors that underpin the longer term development of the school. It builds a leadership culture based on moral purpose which provides success that is accessible to all (Davies, 2007:2).

Davies argues that sustainable leadership is about the leadership of the school as a whole. It brings a new way of looking at school improvement and is about employing the best methods to evolve the school, to meet the challenges which need to be faced, but with the caveat of considering how the improvements will benefit the whole school community and how it will last into the future. Davies believes that the key to sustainable leadership is creating 'a balance between short term and long term objectives' (2007:14). Hargreaves and Fink (2006:17) define sustainable leadership as:-

Sustainable educational leadership and improvement preserves and develops deep learning from all that spreads and lasts, in ways that do not harm and indeed create positive benefit for others around us, now and in the future

This definition is similar to that of Davies, but in considering how to implement sustainable leadership Hargreaves and Fink have developed a series of strategies which they called the Seven Principles of Sustainability (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

1. Depth – learning and integrity (pg 23)
2. Length – endurance and succession (pg 55)
3. Breadth – distribution, not delegation (pg 95)
4. Justice – others and ourselves (pg 141)
5. Diversity – complexity and cohesion (pg 159)
6. Resourcefulness – restraint and renewal (pg 191)
7. Conservation – history and legacy (pg 225).

They advocate that by employing these principles it could bring a sustainability and stability to the education sector by moving it away from the 'micromanagement of standardization [and] the crisis management of repetitive change syndrome' (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006:20).

Over the past few decades, consecutive governments have introduced educational reform resulting in many initiatives not being able to be sustained

by the very nature of change (Hentschke, 2007). It has also been argued that sustainability cannot thrive in an environment which is constantly changing, referring not only to the changes imposed on schools, but also to personnel turnover and lack of continued leadership (Hentschke, 2007). Sustainable leadership is not just about leading the school, but is also about sustaining the individual so that they 'do not burn out' (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006:20). They argue that by employing a more distributed leadership method it would end the current expectation that headteachers have to be lone heroic leaders and could sustain both themselves and their school with the right strategies in place. Hargreaves and Fink also pose a critical question when asking 'how can we achieve sustainable improvement if we cannot sustain the leaders of improvement?' (Hargreaves & Fink, 2007:51). Sustainability is often about energy and how it can become sustainable for the modern generation. A relatively new notion to join the leadership debate is that of Leadership Energy (Fullan & Sharratt, 2007). Energy has been linked to sustainable leadership and it has been argued that 'improvement needs energy' and without sustaining the headteachers and recognising ways to provide them with the energy they need, successful sustainable school improvement will be harder to achieve (Hargreaves & Fink, 2007:60). It is suggested that there are three components to energizing leadership: 'Energy Restraint, Energy Renewal and Energy Release', and these link to the perceived highs and lows of headship. Energy restraint occurs with boundaries and limitations being put in place such as curriculum constraints, accountability, targets, and constant change. By releasing headteachers from bureaucratic restraints and giving them freedoms, energy renewal can be achieved when headteachers experience 'trust, confidence and happiness' (Hargreaves & Fink, 2007: 53, 57, 60). Another attribute of sustainable leadership is resilience. Day and Schmidt (2007) argue that resilience is a common characteristic of successful headteachers, and it is needed to sustain a headteacher through both professional and personal challenges and to maintain and deliver their vision for school improvement. Sustainability and sustainable leadership are concepts which are being established in the educational field as they give hope of stability and

improvement in an ever changing and demanding arena. Sustainable leadership concerns both the sustainability of an institution and that of an individual. It embraces an individual's 'knowledge, experience and career' and values them as 'renewable and recombining resources' (Hargreaves, 2007:226). There is a 'developing global consensus that the quality of headship is a key factor in determining school effectiveness and pupil achievement' (Ribbins & Zhang, 2005:83). It has also been suggested that the sustainability of school systems and the improved standards of schools is 'inextricably linked' with the retention of headteachers (Thomson, 2009:150), and it would seem that without headship sustainability, the sustainability of school improvement will be much harder to achieve (Fullan & Starratt, 2007). A benefit of being in post for an extended period of time is that confidence grows and headteachers can have more belief in their abilities, can be more 'tolerant, patient, and considerate, as well as more open to other points of view and attitudes' (Oplatka, 2007:363). They can also feel more confident to delegate work in order to take on other opportunities outside of school. Experienced headteachers are a 'scarce resource and hard to replace' so finding ways of retaining them in position must be of interest to the education profession (Ribbins & Zhang, 2005:71). Flinham (2003:2) refers to an

Internal reservoir of hope [being], the calm centre at the heart of the individual leader, "the still point of the turning world" that sustains personal self-belief in the face of external pressure and critical incidents.

and advocates that the internal reservoir of hope

Has to be replenished by a variety of personal sustainability strategies or there will be individual burn out or drop out, when things fall apart and the centre cannot hold

Much has been written about the complexities of the role and how they have increased over the years leaving previous headteachers with little to recognise in the modern role of headship. Research has focused on getting people into headship, looking at the stages of headship and why some

headteachers take early retirement or leave to pursue other interests. There is, however, little published research on the sustainability of headship, especially relating to how support mechanisms could impact on the sustainability of the role by helping to sustain headteachers and extend their career. Research does indicate that without the correct support mechanisms in place 'there is a real danger that these experienced headteachers will become disenchanted, and their performance will decline (Stroud, 2006:89). There is also suggestion that a lack of support can cause significant stress for school leaders (Tucker, 2010; Reames, Kochan & Zhu, 2013). This thesis will focus on the sustainability of the individual experienced headteacher as there is evidence to show that having experienced leaders in position is essential for good leadership and a strong education system (Thompson, 2009; Ribbins & Zhang, 2005). Researching the support mechanisms available or preferred by experienced headteachers and considering how these various forms of support impact on the role of headteacher could bring a greater understanding of the sustainability of headship.

Stages of Headship

Researchers have been collecting data from teachers and headteachers for many years, and a claim which has emerged is that all teachers and headteachers pass through stages during their career. As headteachers progress through their career they experience different pressures at different times. Examining the stages of headship models which have been put forward will enable a greater understanding of the emotions and challenges a headteacher may experience, from which strategies could be formulated to sustain them in post. Considering these stages and their relationship to sustainability may give a greater understanding of how sustainable headship may be achieved.

The idea of career stages has been called career development theory and although introduced by Ginzberg and his colleagues in the 1950's, it was Donald Super who further developed the idea. Super (1957) introduced the idea of having a career rather than a job and that the individual was able to choose the direction of that career. The notion was developed that a career was something that lasted over the working life of an individual and would evolve over time, with changes occurring both in position and employer. The concept was introduced of there being developmental stages a person goes through during their life, including their career, and crucially that individuals have different roles to play in these stages. Super connected life stages to career stages and suggested five life roles through which an individual will pass during their career: Growth, Exploratory, Establishment, Maintenance and Decline, as detailed below. It is from these stages that several models of stages of headship have been developed, as shown in table 1:1 below (Super, 1957:71; Patton & McMahon, 2006).

Table 1:1 Life Stages – Career Stages

Stages	Time Scale (indication only - people can flow forward and backwards through these stages)	Characteristics
Growth	0-13 years	Becoming aware of themselves. Imitating, imagination. Role models – role play acting out teachers, firemen, mother and father etc.
Exploratory	14-23 years	Adolescence, beginning to think about career choice, moving towards crystallization of choice. Fantasy, tentative, realistic
Establishment	24-44	Mobility, trial, stability, advancement
Maintenance	45-54	Established, less creative, stability in field, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, plateau
Decline/ disengagement	55+	Modification of job – less responsibility, part time working Two substages – decline leading to retirement; retirement itself

Super, 1957:71; Patton & McMahon, 2006
(Super, 1957: 130,147,151,157,187,287)

Gronn proposed a career model of leadership which had four stages based on the whole life rather than just the working life: Formation, Accession, Incumbency and Divestiture (Gronn, 1999:33). Formation was the period from birth to adolescence when ideas are forming and personalities and preferences are developing. Accession is how an individual prepares themselves for leadership, can demonstrate to others they have gained experience and are ready to take on a leadership role. Incumbency is when an individual is in a leadership position and is working for promotion by networking and demonstrating their abilities, or remaining stagnant as they are unable to proceed to a higher level. The final stage is Divestiture when leaders 'divest themselves of leadership by releasing their psychological grip' (Gronn, 1999:39). Looking at the whole life of a person rather than just their career brings a different dimension to career stages. The career stage models on headship tend to refer to the time a person is a headteacher.

Day & Bakioglu (1996:207) preferred to refer to phases rather than stages as 'phases are recurrent in that individuals can pass through the various phases in and between each of many different content domains' whereas they thought stages implied that an individual had to pass through each one in order. From questionnaires and interviews with the longest serving headteachers, they determined four distinct phases of headship: 'initiation, development, autonomy and disenchantment' and seven categories within each phase: 'confidence, effectiveness, ambition, enthusiasm, management, reaction to external demands, development of professional expertise' (Day & Bakioglu, 1996:207-208). The way in which a headteacher entered the phases and managed the categories would determine how well the headteacher navigated through the phases.

Reeves, Mahony & Moos (1997) defined three stages of headship, The Early, The Middle and the Mature Phase. More detail was given to each stage together with suggested timescales of when a headteacher would experience each phase. The Early Phase lasted from before appointment to the end of the first year, and typically headteachers would move from

'excitement, delight, euphoria, pride and optimism' to 'frantic, frenetic, high anxiety, high stress and high activity' within the first six months. Often headteachers would end this initial stage feeling 'very alone, stressed and maybe experiencing depression' (Reeves et al, 1997:45). During this first year, the majority of headteachers interviewed were trying to establish themselves and their authority, gaining an understanding of the school, its staff and structures, and were beginning to formulate their own ideas and proposals. The middle phase was divided into three stages and lasted from one to five years in position. After the initial year in post, headteachers entered the 'taking action' stage and became a 'little less anxious' and 'began to regain self-confidence' (Reeves et al, 1997:46). This stage tended to last for a year and was followed by the 'getting above floor level' stage where a feeling of 'optimism, some satisfaction and becoming the real me' came into play as the 'vision clarifies, aims seem possible' and there is a 'breakthrough of some of my ideas' (Reeves et al, 1997:46). The third part of the middle phase comes after two to five years in post and is called 'the crunch'. It is when a headteacher has gained the confidence to put real change into action. The headteacher feels they have won the support of the school and are ready to 'set long term goals, increase delegation and are ready to gamble' (Reeves et al, 1997:46).

The final phase Reeves et al have referred to as the 'mature phase'. It is divided into two main sections. The first is called 'at the summit' and can occur between four and ten years in post. This is when headteachers are at the top of their career in a school. They have 'confidence and feel supported' as most of the resistance to change has disappeared and the headteacher has the school as they want it (Reeves et al, 1997:47). This can be the period of most confidence and enjoyment, but is also the time when headteachers may begin to look for new opportunities. The last period is called 'time for a change'. It is when headteachers feel they have done their job and seek new challenges, or may have lost enthusiasm for the role due to the daily pressures and ever changing governmental demands and accountability. These thoughts and feelings can come into play anytime

from five years in post, but are more common nearer to the ten year mark. A school needs to have a headteacher who is in place for a long period of time to bring a sense of stability to the school. Through direction and leadership, effective succession planning can be brought about which could lead to sustainability of leadership throughout the profession. Fullan suggests that 'it takes about 10 years of cumulative development to become a highly effective school leader' (2005: 34). It would appear, however, that before this time, headteachers can become disenchanted with their position and seek new challenges.

It became more acceptable to put time scales alongside each stage, such as this one put forward by Weindling, 2000:14).

- Stage 0 Preparation prior to Headship
- Stage 1 Entry and Encounter (first months)
- Stage 2 Taking Hold (approx. 3 to 12 months)
- Stage 3 Reshaping (Second Year)
- Stage 4 Refinement (Approx. Years 2 to 4)
- Stage 5 Consolidation (Approx. Years 5 to 7)
- Stage 6 Plateau (Approx. Years 8 and onwards)

It is interesting to note that all the models seem to end with headteachers plateauing and becoming disenchanted with the position as did Day and Bakioglu (1996:207) when they suggested that headteachers experience four phases of development which they termed as 'initiation, development, autonomy and disenchantment'. Brighouse and Woods (1999) defined three stages of leadership, again ending in disillusion: initiation, development, decline and withdrawal. There is a natural career span in which headteachers will begin to reach retirement age and will have to think about leaving the profession. However, although many of the career stage models end in disillusion which could pave the way for premature departure, Pascal and Ribbins (1998) found evidence in their study to suggest that headteachers could take a different path and remain positive throughout their career and enjoy the role right up until retirement. Based on their evidence,

they put forward a new model showing two distinctive paths the career of a head teacher could take as shown in table1:2 below (Pascal & Ribbins, 1998:11):-

Table 1:2 Negative and Positive Career Progression Routes	
Route 1 - Negative and destructive career progression	Route 2 – Positive and creative career progression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accession
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incumbency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiation - Development - Autonomy - Advancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disenchantment - Moving On: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Divestiture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incumbency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiation - Development - Autonomy - Advancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enchantment - Moving On: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reinvention
(Pascal & Ribbins, 1998:11)	

Through their research they became aware that even if the careers of headteachers began and progressed in a similar way, as their careers advanced they could take different paths with some ending in disenchantment while others would remain enchanted (Pascal & Ribbins, 1998). The idea of leaving either enchanted or disenchanted was further progressed by Flintham (2003:3). After interviewing headteachers who had left the profession, he categorised them into three groups: Strider Heads who had left their position through choice after a successful headship and had definite plans for their future career; Stroller Heads who had chosen to leave the profession, but in recognition that they could not sustain their position as their energy and enthusiasm for the job had started to wane, and had concerns for their 'work-life balance' (pg. 3); and Stumbler Heads who had left due to stress, ill health or an inability to cope with the demands of the position (Flintham, 2003:3).

Most literature seems to focus on negative outcomes, i.e. burn-out, stress and there is very little devoted to positive aspects and to the concept of self-renewal (Oplataka et al 2001:80). However, the career of a headteacher

does not need to end in disenchantment and premature departure and with the correct support could result in them extending their career (Reames, Kochan & Zhu, 2013). If headteachers can bring about self-renewal and find themselves with renewed enthusiasm for their job, it can only be of benefit to the whole school community. Oplataka et al (2001) recognised that headteachers can have a mid to late career crisis and argued that by putting measures in place, a crisis could be alleviated through self-renewal. They suggested four stages which a person passed through, and argued that with the relevant support, a mid-career crisis could be avoided as motivated for their job could be maintained.

- Pre-crisis
- Burnout in mid-career
- Sabbatical for reflection and inner discovery
- Reframing towards transformation of attitudes and beliefs

Stages of Self-renewal taken from Oplataka et al (2001:82-85)

After taking a sabbatical, teachers and headteachers could return to work re-energised and re-enthused as they had been able to bring about self-renewal through 'Reflection, reframing and innovation'(2001:82). The headteachers also reported having a new found confidence, both in themselves and of their ability for leading the school. This permeated into the school and gave a positive energy to the whole community of pupils, staff and parents.

Headteachers are individuals and it can depend on their personality, their personal circumstances and the context of the school as to when and if they pass through all of the different stages which have been suggested. It can be that the same person will act and/or react differently to the same criteria in a different context (Reeves et al, 1997). When considering headteachers in their second or third headship it is possible that they may pass through stages in a different time scale to before, or even miss out a stage altogether. 'For some, this process may be linear, but for others there will be plateaus, regressions, dead-ends, spurts, discontinuities' (Huberman, 1989:34). It is also important to bear in mind that 'career development is a

process and not a series of events' (Huberman, 1989:34), and not all headteachers will recognise the actions and contents of the stages' presented (Reeves et al, 1997:44). It has been suggested that by being aware that there are suggested stages of career development, headteachers can use the frameworks as preparation for what may lay ahead (Weindling, 2000). However, it could be that having career stages to refer to which mainly refer to negative outcomes could bring expectation to headteachers with disenchantment and premature departure being seen as inevitable.

Stages of Headship and Sustainability

Drawing on research into career stages, it could be that a model of headship stages is as follows, showing how headteachers can undergo both positive and negative experiences during each stage.

Fig 1:a Stages of Headship

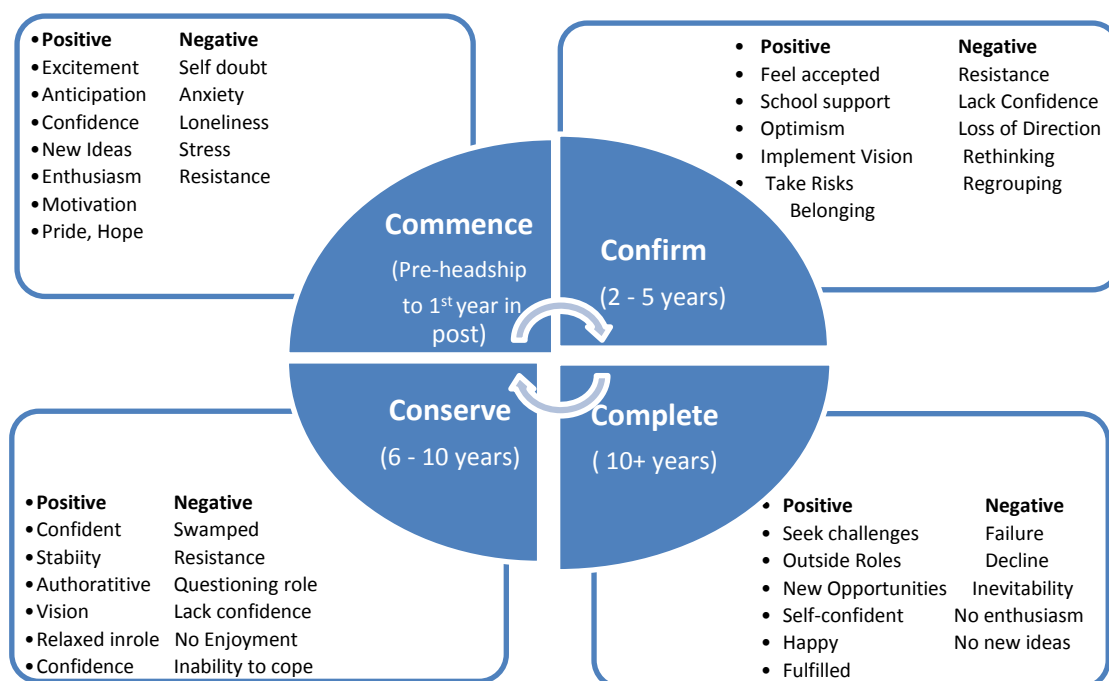
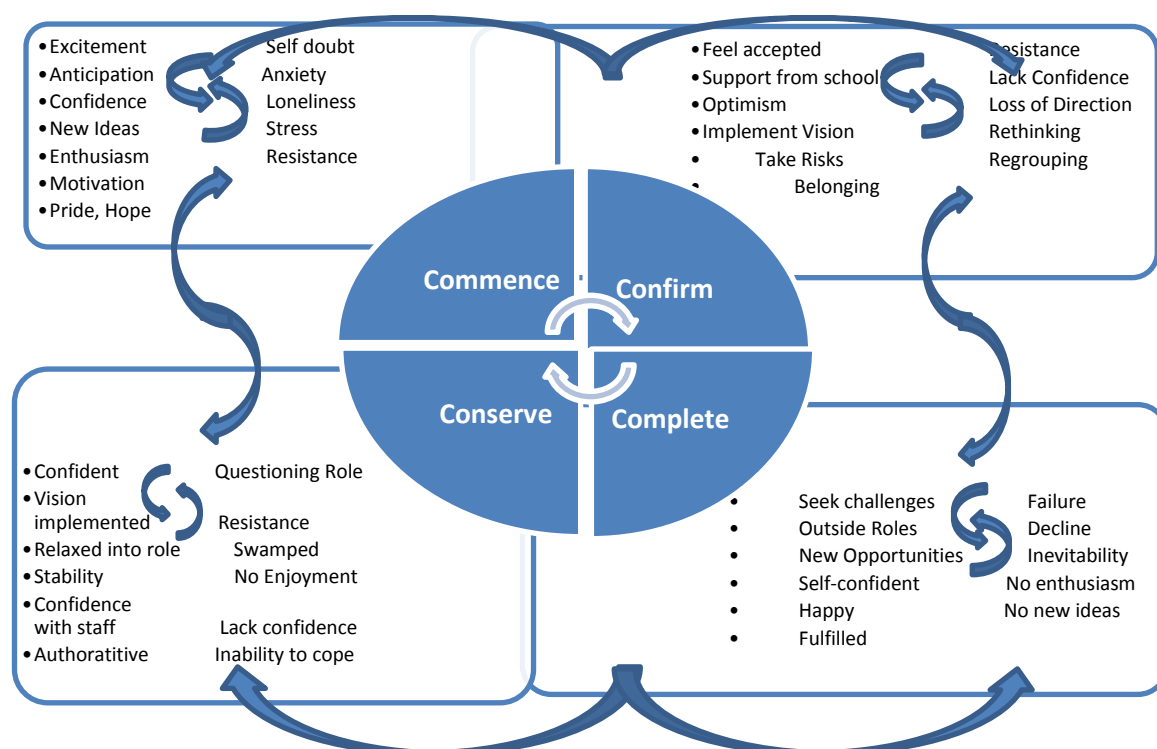


Figure 1:a above follows a traditional model giving time scales of when incumbents could expect to enter a different stage, what they may feel during that stage, and how they can experience both positive and negative feelings within each stage. However, it is important to remember that the career stages of every headteacher are unique to the individual. Central to the sustainability of headship is that headteachers can experience a very fluid career development path at which they can access the stages vertically, horizontally or in a circular direction. How the various stages are experienced varies tremendously as internal and external factors along with the local context and personal circumstances influence the career path of a headteacher, and these are not time dependent. A more developed model of headship career stages would need to take into account what headteachers may experience and give names to these stages, but take away an indicated time scale to allow for fluidity between the stages. This new model is represented by Figure 1:b below.

Figure 1:b **Fluidity of Headship Career Stages**



This model demonstrates how headteachers can move not only within each stage, but also between stages in different directions. This could be used not only to recognise major stages throughout their career, but also to identify different aspects of their career from developing a new initiative to implementing a major reform. From the discussion on sustainability a notion emerged that leadership has to change, grow and progress in order to be sustainable. Although some researchers advocate that 'sustainability is not the same as maintainability' (Davies, 2007:23), it is about upholding the position of headship, supporting colleagues in leadership and succession and enabling headteachers to evolve within their headship in order to face the modern challenges of school leadership. Recognising and identifying various stages an experienced headteacher may experience and having access to preferred support mechanisms to help them cope with the complexities of the role may help to bring sustainability to headship.

The definition of 'sustain' on page 12 indicated that experiencing something bad and suffering but finding ways to overcome these challenges, evolving and coming out stronger contributes to sustainability. There is no doubt that the modern role of a headteacher is challenging and demanding and it appears that where headteachers do not cope and ultimately leave the profession is when they suffer in their role but fail to evolve within it. However, it is also the case that many headteachers thrive in their role and do not seek early retirement as they still feel they could make a difference; enjoy the role; have support of their family, community and colleagues and were are unsure of what they would do if they did retire Reames, Kochan & Zhu (2013:13) For Fullan (2005:25) sustainability is not linear but cyclical as he suggests it is natural for an individual to have 'periodic plateaus' throughout their career. It is how an individual copes with these plateaus and the ways they can renew their energy and their headship that could be the difference between extending their career or prematurely leaving the profession. If a headteacher had access to relevant support throughout their career it could enable them to cope and survive as they experience different

stages or phases. This would not only sustain the headteacher longer in their position, but could also bring sustainability to the role of headship.

Professional Development and Headteacher Retention

Having acknowledged the importance of sustaining headteachers in position, and showing how they will have different needs at different stages of their careers, it is now necessary to review what is being done to achieve this.

This will become increasingly important as headteachers are being appointed at a younger age and will therefore have to sustain their careers for a longer period of time. After reviewing the various stages of headship, it is apparent that headteachers require different strategies at different times in order to enable them to not only continue but to evolve in their headship.

The availability of stimulation, development and challenge offered for existing headteachers at the moment is mainly through training and academic qualifications or through the local and national leaders programme. What appears to be lacking is the recognition that throughout their career the needs of a headteacher will change, and all headteachers will not require the same strategy at the same time. Having opportunities for personal development is especially critical for retaining headteachers and 'renewing a compelling sense of purpose is central to sustainable leadership' (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006:2).

Table 1:3 overleaf shows the Continued Professional Development (CPD) opportunities available at November 2013 for aspiring, new and experienced headteachers from the National College of Teaching and Leadership and from local authorities.

Table 1:3 CPD opportunities from the National College for Teaching and Leadership and local authorities for new and existing headteachers as at November 2013

Opportunities	Provider	Pre-headship	Newly appointed head	Head GS 3-5 years	Head CS 3-5 years	Head OS 3-5 years	Head GS 6-10 years	Head CS 6-10 years	Head OS 6-10 years	Head GS 11+ years	Head CS 11+ years	Head OS 11+ years
One to one mentoring	NCTL/ LA	Yes – NPQH – 0-7 hours	Yes – head start – 20-30 hours	No	Yes – From LLE or NLE	No	No	Yes – From LLE or NLE	No	No	Yes – From LLE or NLE	no
Online mentoring	NCTL/ LA	Yes – NPQH	Yes – head start	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	no
Job shadowing/ placements	NCTL/ LA	Yes – NPQH	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	no
Networking with colleagues	NCTL/ LA	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes
Networking with others doing similar course/ programme	NCTL/ LA	Yes – NPQH	Yes	If on a course	No	Yes – LLE or NLE	If on a course	No	Yes – LLE or NLE	If on a course	No	Yes – LLE or NLE
Placements	NCTL/ LA	Yes – NPQH	No	No	Yes	Yes as a LLE or NLE	No	Yes	Yes as a LLE or NLE	No	Yes	Yes as a LLE or NLE
Become a LLE	NCTL/ LA	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Become a NLE	NCTL/ LA	No	No	No	No	Yes if LLE	No	No	Yes if LLE	No	No	Yes if LLE
Fellowship	NCTL/ LA	No	No	No	No	Yes if NLE	No	No	Yes if NLE	No	No	Yes if NLE
Primary Executive Headteacher provision	NCTL/ LA	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	yes

Key to Table 1:3

CS = Challenging Circumstances

GS = Good School

OS = Outstanding School

NCTL = National College Teaching & Leadership

LA = Local Education Authority

P/ship = partnership

LLE = Local Leader of Education

NLE = National Leader of Education

NPQH = National Professional Qualification for Headship

* Primary and secondary heads forum – national programme run locally. Provision may differ.

National College of Teaching and Leadership website - <https://www.nationalcollege.org.uk>

In light of the major research questions of this thesis, it is interesting to note that there appears to be a lack of structured support for headteachers who have been in position for over two years. Aspiring and new headteachers are assigned mentors, have access to new headteacher networks and receive support from the local authority and from the National College of Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). It seems assumed that after this time headteachers will have made their own support network and identified their preferred support mechanisms. However, in preliminary research conversations conducted prior to the actual empirical work of this thesis as discussed in chapter three, page 2, it was felt there was a lack of useful support. Bright & Ware (2003) found that headteachers were requesting and expecting the local authorities to provide support, and today the majority of the training, support, mentoring and guidance given is delivered by official bodies. Where this has historically been provided by the local authority, as more schools move out of local authority control by converting to academy status, teaching schools are established and free schools are founded, schools will increasingly 'buy in' their support and training from various sources. Although this presents opportunities for schools to obtain support from a diverse range of new sources, it also brings uncertainty as schools move away from established providers (Earley et al, 2012). How this provision will be delivered and how it will be communicated to the schools has yet to be seen.

The majority of leadership training and professional development opportunities are designed by the NCTL, adopted and delivered by the local authority, an approved private partner or more recently by teaching schools. During the initial conversations with headteachers, they all referred to research provided by the NCTL as justification of why they were working in a certain way. This should raise questions of balance, especially as focus groups 'strongly felt that NCSL [now NCTL] should not try to be the sole provider of professional development' (Stroud, 2006:94). There is concern that 'leadership development... should not be merely left to central government or external agencies' and there should be more opportunities for

headteachers to question what is being presented to them (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010:157).

Support through organisations

Headteachers do receive support which they value through professional associations and unions such as the National Association of Headteachers and the National Primary Headteachers Association. The independent sector has similar associations such as The Society of Heads of Independent Schools and the Independent Association of Prep Schools. These associations have websites, distribute publications, answer queries and invite members to an annual conference where headteachers can hear speakers and network with colleagues (Swaffield, 2008). As the education sector fragments and different types of school emerge, there has been a rise in the number of organisations available to schools. Table 1:4 below shows some of the associations and organisations open to headteachers at this time.

Table 1:4 Associations available to headteachers	
Associations and Organisations Available to Headteachers October 2013	
ASCL	Association of School and College Leaders
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
NPH	National Primary Headteachers
FASNA	Freedom and Autonomy for Schools – National Association
IAA	Independent Academies Association
NCTL	National College for Teaching and Learning
GSHA	Grammar Schools Heads Association
AASSH	Anglican Academy and Secondary Schools Heads Association
CHGN	Chairs of Headteachers Groups Network (run by NCTL)
APN	Academy Principals Network (run by SSAT)
SCALA	School Chaplains and Leaders Association
GSA	Girls' Schools Association
FSA	Forest Schools Association
SWALSS	South and West Association of Leaders in Special Schools
IAPS	Independent Association of Prep Schools
ISA	Independent Schools Association
ISC	Independent Schools Council
HMC	Headmasters and Headmistresses Conference
TSH	The Society of Heads

As can be seen in table 1.4, there are numerous associations available which headteachers can join. However, some of these are exclusive to certain sectors of education, such as academies or independent schools. As the education sector diversifies and continues to fragment, more associations may appear which will have exclusivity towards particular types of school. This could limit the opportunities headteachers will have to network and meet colleagues from a wide range of school contexts. It is also uncertain how this diversification will impact on the support strategies offered to all schools, and who will provide support for headteachers' sustainability. As with all associations some will be more effective than others, and differences at a local level may either encourage or discourage a headteacher from participating in events and initiatives.

The rise in academy schools as well as the introduction of free schools alongside special and independent schools, could result in the fragmentation of the education sector. How this will impact on the support strategies offered to all schools, and who will provide support for headteacher sustainability is as yet unclear. Teaching schools are being established but as they are in their infancy it is unclear as to what, if any, headteacher support they will offer.

Sustaining and Retaining Headteachers

It would appear that the current provision for motivating and sustaining experienced headteachers is limited. Only selected headteachers who meet strict criteria are invited to join the Local and National Leaders of Education programme and, as already discussed, not all headteachers will accept this invitation. The NCTL has recognised the need to 'further develop their [new and existing headteachers] professional qualities, skills and expertise' (NCLSCS (a), 2010) and a series of developmental programmes and opportunities have been put together in acknowledgement of this need. These range from courses on various aspects of running a school, to an

experienced headteacher becoming a Local or National Leader of Education. In order to retain headteachers, it is essential they have personal development throughout all stages of their careers, something which will become critical as younger, inexperienced people are recruited into headship and will have a longer period of time to remain a headteacher (Gronn, 2003). CPD should be designed to 'support individual needs and improve(s) professional practice' (TDA, 2008). Questions need to be asked about the developmental opportunities which are on offer to headteachers and comparison made to what opportunities headteachers would actually value. The emphasis at the moment is on training and attending courses, whereas it has been argued that leadership skills are not taught but are gained through personal experience in different contexts and with informal interaction with others, both inside and outside of the school (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). There is also a balance to be met between 'learning what the system requires of individual leaders and what practising professionals require of themselves and their colleagues' (Dempster, 2001:22). A headteacher has a different focus and requires different support and challenges throughout their career. As can be seen in Table 1:3; headteachers who have been in position for over two years are offered the same developmental opportunities, regardless of the length of time in office. In order to give effective support which can lead to greater headteacher retention, it is essential to offer appropriate support at the relevant time.

One form of support which has received attention over the past decade is that of mentoring and it has been suggested that mentoring can improve management continuity, improve employee retention and help school leaders cope with the stresses and pressures of the role (Carden, 1990; Reames, Kochan & Zhu, 2013). Hansford and Ehrich (2006) reviewed 40 research papers on the subject and found that overall positive benefits reported far outweighed negative responses. They concluded that mentoring is a valid form of support for headteachers. However, there is very much an 'ad hoc' approach to mentoring, how it is administered and how accessible it is. Mentoring has been shown to both inspire and help people, and could be 'the

single most important factor in both retention and recruitment' (MacBeath et al, 2009, 5:49; Robinson, 2009). However, the research tends to look at the effectiveness of mentoring for aspiring or new headteachers, and more recently the relationships between mentor and mentee (Swaffield, 2008). Headteachers surveyed found it more helpful than other forms of support as it provides practical help in solving problems (Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington & Weindling, 1995; Swaffield, 2008). The NPQH includes an element of mentoring in its programme, however this is only for up to a maximum of 7 hours, and the QCA has produced a national framework for mentoring which schools can adopt, but there is no obligation to do so. The role of mentoring for headteachers seems to be dependent upon provision from the local authority, and the programmes seem to vary from full on-going mentoring to paid, one-off courses. Mentoring needs to have time for people to build trusting relationships, where they can feel safe to talk openly and have time for self-reflection (Handsford & Ehrich, 2006). The trend at the moment is for schools to work as clusters and for mentors to be geographically close to each other. This can raise other issues of trust as headteachers may not feel able to be as open and frank with a colleague in the same neighbourhood as they would from another district. People need time for trust to build, both in the process and the people concerned (Bottery, 2004). Mentoring is very much focused on new headteachers and there seems to be very little provision for headteachers who have been in post for a few years. Flintham observed that 'reservoirs run dry' and headteachers need more stimulation, which could be where mentoring would be beneficial. Headteachers also need time for reflection, challenge and honest confrontation in a safe and engaging environment. An initiative in New Zealand saw the creation of Principal Professional Learning Communities (PPLC) where through facilitation, groups of headteachers came together to explore current issues and became 'critical friends' to each other who 'offered both support and critique in open and honest interactions' (Piggot-Irvine, 2004:25). The PPLC was established in 1999 and it uses a mixture of mentoring, peer group work and reflection to sustain and support headteachers in their position. It is a structured approach where groups of

four or five headteachers meet regularly to discuss issues, challenge ideas and thinking, offer support and 'share reflections and a contingent dialogue associated with pre-read, relevant, thematically grouped, articles' (Piggot-Irvine, 2004:25).

Schools are increasingly being encouraged to collaborate with other schools in their area and form learning networks. However, research into learning networks has found participants are sceptical of their purpose and 'feel they have been introduced to serve national agendas' (O'Brien et al, 2008:235). The Cambridge Primary Review (CPR) set up a national network with one of its aims to look at school leadership and CPD. However, the review found that many people were reluctant to join or attend events due to 'the fear that they could not do so without 'permission' from national agencies and local authorities' (CPR, n.d). Questions relating to the use, effectiveness and access to a variety of networks will be included in this study. This should give clarity to the types of networks available and which are considered to be the most valuable to experienced headteachers. Barriers to networks, either actual or perceived, will also be considered as they may contribute to a headteacher not joining a particular network.

Headteachers of all schools can participate in school improvement networks and primary and secondary head forums. In addition, there is also an abundance of training courses provided by the local authorities, private companies and more recently teaching schools available to headteachers which they can elect to undertake. However, very few of these seem to be specifically aimed at the personal needs of experienced headteachers. As training schools are created, it is envisaged that training networks will be established which could incorporate up to thirty schools. How these networks will manifest themselves and what support the headteachers of the schools involved will receive is as yet unknown. Networking across regions and types of school would enable headteachers to discuss issues of leadership, question proposals and share best practice. Having opportunities to network is often quoted as being the most beneficial part of

attending training programmes (Earley & Evans, 2003; Woods, Woods & Cowie, 2009). The networking opportunities delivered by training schools would hopefully be across both junior and senior schools as well as the independent and state sectors. However, there are only 500 training schools envisaged nationally, 100 in the first instance, and the schools selected will have to be inspected as outstanding in the state sector or excellent in the independent sector (Lightfoot, 2011). This would again create an elite tier of schools and a closed network to others as there is also the potential that the same headteachers who are local and national leaders will be headteachers of the training schools. It will be important to research this further when the training schools have been established. Although there are resources and networking opportunities available for existing headteachers, how these are utilised and how effective they are at providing support for existing headteachers are areas which will be covered by this research. Networking and mentoring could help to retain and sustain headteachers during their career. This research aims to establish the effectiveness of these support mechanisms, and others which may emerge during the research, and the impact they have on headship sustainability.

There are various forms of official and unofficial support which may help to sustain headteachers throughout their career, and as Flintham suggested, investment in this support 'would be a sound investment of time, money and professional expertise' (Flintham, 2004:18). However, it is not clear what support is available and accessible to headteachers, or what support would be of value to the role of headship. This study aims to determine the preferred support mechanisms of experienced headteachers across five local authorities and how these forms of support may help to facilitate sustainability to the role of headship.

Conclusion

The NCTL has put in place various schemes and opportunities to enable teachers to gain leadership experience with the aim of encouraging some of them into headship. Local authorities and private partners also offer leadership training at various stages in order to equip teachers with the necessary skills to become a headteacher. Whilst it is unknown at this time how successful these schemes are, it must be acknowledged that there are numerous opportunities available and the recruitment of headteachers is a main focus for the NCTL. What does seem to be lacking at present is either formal or informal personal support for existing headteachers. At present the support offered seems to be weighted towards what a headteacher needs to run their school or to help with staff needs, whereas this should be balanced with the support a headteacher actually requires for personal sustenance. There seems to be an assumption that once a headteacher has been in post for two or more years they will have established their own support networks and mechanisms. Some may have done, but others may still want and expect support from other areas. At the present time, the sustainability and the retention of headteachers does not receive the same focus as the recruitment of headteachers. The role of a headteacher has become very complex and demanding, and as headteachers are recruited into post at a younger age, they will have to be sustained in post over a longer period of time. There is a culture for headteachers to consider moving schools in order to stimulate themselves and the school. However, it could be that retaining headteachers in position could be more beneficial to the success of schools. It is necessary, therefore, to gain an understanding of what support mechanisms headteachers themselves would prefer in order to help them cope during the various stages of their career and to help bring about sustainability of the role. By researching the preferred support mechanisms of headteachers across five local authorities, it will enable comparisons and recommendations to be made between what is currently on offer and what is desired by the sample.

Summary of chapter 1

This chapter has given consideration to sustainability and headship. Although the role of headship is now very complex, the literature suggests that with relevant support mechanisms enabling reflection and self-renewal, experienced headteachers may be able to be sustained in their role and thereby extend their careers; a possibility which is worth further investigation. The following chapter considers the implications of current policy context on headteacher sustainability and their support needs in order to gain an understanding of the impact these have on the role of headship. The chapter begins by considering the current state of headship and the problems of recruitment and retention of headteachers. Consideration is then given to how national and international education policy has impacted on the role of headship and what mechanisms have been put in place to support headteachers. The fragmentation of the education system is discussed and concerns raised as to who will support headteachers in the future, and what form that support will take.

CHAPTER 2: THE IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT POLICY CONTEXT ON HEADSHIP SUSTAINABILITY AND SUPPORT NEEDS

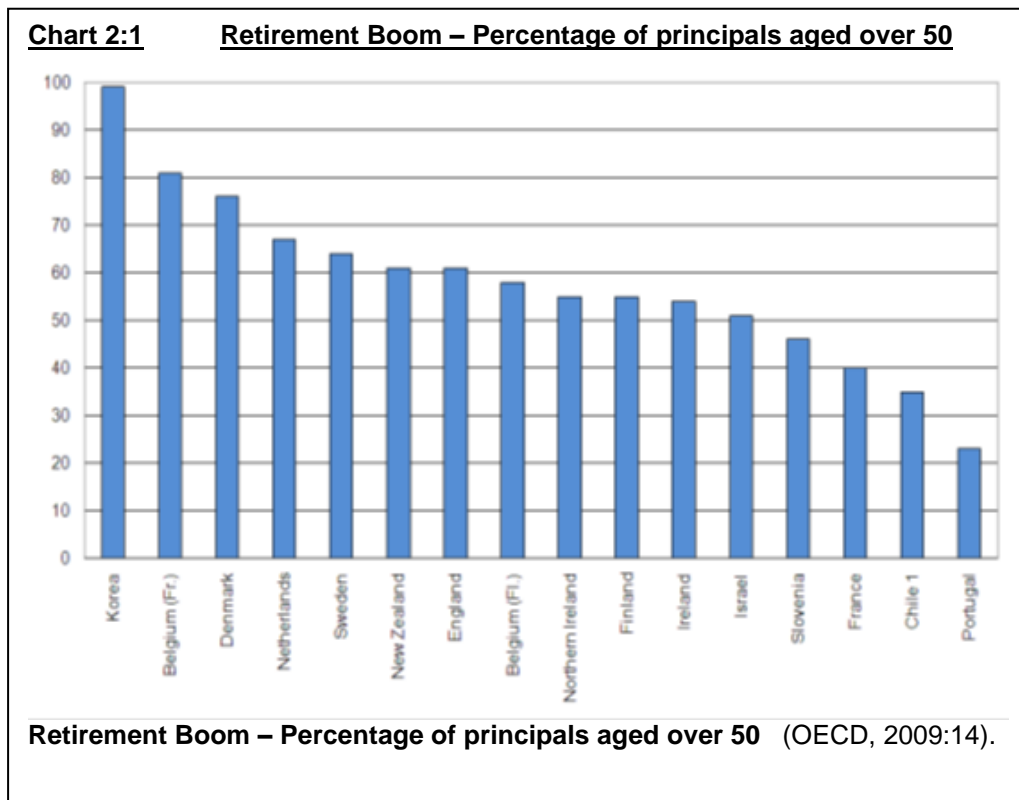
Introduction and chapter outline

The previous chapter discussed the issues around the sustainability of headship and highlighted the difficulties with the recruitment and retention of headteachers. A case has been built for this study and how researching the preferred support mechanisms of existing headteachers could positively impact on headship sustainability in the region. By encouraging the retention rate of headteachers through valuable and meaningful support, headteachers are likely to be in a much more positive position to contribute to the recruitment of new headteachers and bring a renewed sustainability to the profession. However, the impact policy can have on a headteacher also needs to be considered. It may be that other measures together with valuable and meaningful support need to be offered and implemented, such as policy change, in order to give help headteachers manage and survive the current policy context.

This chapter will examine the reported headteacher recruitment and retention crisis from a local, national and international perspective, and how this impacts on headship sustainability. Consideration is given as to how policy and policy context have been developed, such as accountability, inspection and global competition, and the impact these policies are having on headteachers. Questions have been raised over the term 'crisis' in this context and suggestions that the leadership shortage is a problem and certainly 'a big challenge' but not a crisis as the word crisis should be reserved for critical or catastrophic events such as earthquakes or flooding (Fink, 2010:1). In agreement with Fink, the word challenge will be used instead of crisis.

Headteacher Recruitment and Retention

Whilst there has been increasing concern over the perceived shortage of headteachers and it is often reported as being a global problem, there appears to be a difference between Western and Asia-Pacific countries. It would appear that the majority of Asia-Pacific countries have a healthy supply of headteachers. Policies are put in place to talent spot leadership potential and to develop those teachers with leadership abilities resulting in effective headteacher succession (MacBeath, 2006; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). However, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, America and more recently Sweden and France are increasingly concerned with the lack of headteacher candidates and face similar problems to the United Kingdom (UK) (Chapman, 2005; MacBeath, 2006; Brooking, 2008; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). The OECD recognised that ‘the ageing of current principals and the widespread shortage of qualified candidates to replace them after retirement make it imperative to take action’ (Pont, Nusche & Moorman 2008:3). The following chart 2:1 illustrates the impending ‘retirement boom’ across OECD countries.



Although the current headship challenge has been compounded by the number of headteachers retiring in the next few years, there is also concern over the high turnover of headteachers who leave their positions for a variety of reasons, either due to the demands of the job, to move into other areas of education or to leave the sector altogether (Chapman, 2005). Whatever the reason, the turnover of headteachers is of concern as it brings instability to individual schools and to the profession as a whole. Whilst it is acknowledged that some headteachers may not be suited to the role and it would benefit all if they left their position, retaining headteachers in position could be a key strategy for the sustainability of schools and for giving confidence not only to the profession, but also to others who may be contemplating headship (Leithwood et al, 2006; Swaffield, 2008; Thomson, 2009).

Links have also been made between the length of time a headteacher is in post and the effectiveness of the school. The longer a headteacher is in position it is argued that the greater their confidence in their own abilities to lead the school and push boundaries to bring about sustainable change (Oplataka, 2007; (Ofsted, 2003). Ribbins & Zhang believed that there were 'two key factors shaping the effectiveness of headteachers: length of overall service in headship and length of service in a particular school' (2005:83). There is evidence to show that schools with headteachers who have been in post for longer than six years are higher performing schools than those whose headteachers have been in position for less than six years (Select Committee, 2004). However, it has also been suggested that headteachers in post for more than eleven years can have a negative effect on a school (Mortimore, et al., 1989; Woods, 2002). The retirement boom may bring about opportunities to 'develop a new generation of school leaders suited to meet the current and future need of education systems' (Ischinger, 2008), and there is evidence that some candidates are willing to take on the role of headship earlier in their careers than previously expected (Chapman, 2005). However, it may well be that these younger headteachers need support over a longer number of years, and obtaining the right kind of

support throughout their career may help to retain them in position longer. The focus of this study is on experienced headteachers, their access to appropriate support mechanisms and how these could extend their career in headship. However, it is important to consider the difficulties in recruiting headteachers in order to understand the complex role of the modern day headteacher and the impact this has on headship sustainability.

In a report on recruitment and retention of headteachers in Scotland, only 8% of the teachers surveyed had any ambition of becoming a headteacher due to the 'overwhelming workload; level of responsibility, loss of pupil contact' (NCSL, 2006:4; MacBeath et al, 2009). Headteachers can often feel lonely and isolated and struggle with the demands of the job and maintaining a healthy work life balance (Swaffield, 2008). The complexity of the role has led to increased levels of emotional stress and questions have been raised as to the feasibility of headteachers sustaining their role over many years (Crawford, 2009). The number of headteacher advertisements which have to be repeated due to either lack of applicants or lack of suitable candidates is another indicator of the headteacher challenge. The 2011 26th Annual Survey of Senior Staff Appointments (ASSSA) across England and Wales reported that over 40% of primary, 28% of senior and 41% of special school headteacher positions had to be re-advertised during 2009/10, and record numbers of positions remained unfilled (Howson & Sprigade, 2011). Some areas, such as Wales, the South West of England and some inner London boroughs saw a slight improvement over the position in 2009. However, in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, 36% of all headteacher positions had to be re-advertised. If this is compared to the figure in 1998 which was 16%, it means that the region has seen an increase of 125% in the re-advertisement of headteacher vacancies over the past 11 years.

Thomson (2009) suggests the supply problem to be one of context and location as opposed to a universal shortage. This is the opinion also expressed by The Wallace Foundation who found no shortage of headteachers per se, but that it was positions in certain schools and in

certain contexts that were harder to fill (Roza, Celio, Harvey & Wishon, 2003). In part response to this situation, over the past ten years there has been rise in 'super heads'. These are headteachers of successful schools who have been brought in to turn around failing schools and have been heralded as heroes. It is no surprise, therefore, that schools now want to recruit their own 'super heads', and current advertisements for headteachers are looking for dynamic and inspirational people with vision, and flair. The following are examples of adverts for headteachers both in primary and secondary schools published in November 2013. These examples are not a comparison to past adverts, but show a perspective on current headship recruitment. The bold and underlining have been added to the advertisements to highlight the language used.

We are looking for an individual with **a proven track record** of **delivering educational excellence**, who can demonstrate **inspirational leadership** and has the desire to create an outstanding prep school that will have a **lasting impact** on the school's diverse community.

(TES (a), 2013)

We are looking for an **inspirational** and **dynamic** Headteacher who will lead our vibrant and friendly School to **further successes**. Our new Headteacher will be **excited** by the unique opportunity this offers, i.e. not only to **bring vision, passion and talent**, thereby ensuring the School continues to provide the best possible education and opportunities for learning for its pupils, but also to **create** a new senior leadership team following the departure of both Deputy Headteachers.

You must already be an **outstanding** practitioner across the Primary phase to enable you to demonstrate the skills required.

(TES (b), 2013)

The governors wish to appoint a **dynamic, innovative and inspiring** Headteacher for our **outstanding** school. The successful candidate will welcome the potential challenges of an expanding school, have **excellent leadership skills** and be a practising and committed Catholic.

(TES (c), 2013)

The governors are seeking a **visionary leader**, clear thinker and great communicator who has a proven record of delivering **outstanding** teaching and learning, through **effective** leadership and delegation. Our new Headteacher **will ensure** all our students **achieve** their full potential and become emotionally intelligent citizens. To be successful, you will **have passion, energy and commitment** to ensure... continues its great tradition of learning, aspiration and challenge

(TES (d), 2013)

Recruiting a 'super head' has been likened to the 'Dumbledore' headteacher; someone who will 'magic' the school to success (Thomson, 2009:46). It may be that the advertisements themselves are a barrier to people applying for the position as they do not feel they have the necessary attributes required. There is also the question of how headteachers can be visionary and dynamic when 'what they do is prescribed and delimited, and where there can be harsh consequences for going against policy, or simply failing to live up to it' (Thompson, 2009:59). It could be, however, that the expectations of the recruiters are unrealistic as they are looking for a 'super head' and will therefore be disappointed with the 'quality' of the majority of applicants.

The pressures on headship derived through education policy

In response to globalisation, economic pressures and technological advances, governments around the world have increasingly been looking to education to improve their international standing and prospects. Over the past two decades, education has undergone radical reform, resulting in a culture seemingly driven by efficiency and accountability (Egan, Stout & Takaya, 2007). This has been driven by some governments such as Australia, Denmark, New Zealand and Britain adopting a 'New Public Management' (NPM) reform structure which has had a dramatic influence on education policy not only in these but also in many other countries (Dempster, 2001:4; Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008; Moos, 2011).

At the same time as adopting national reform, countries have increasingly become aware of international educational performance, and there has been a growing interest in the comparison of educational standards to other nations. As Phillips & Schweisfurth (2006:1) state 'the study of education in increasingly globalized contexts inevitably draws us towards comparison'. Direct comparison between countries was made possible with the publishing

of international league tables such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). However, with comparison comes exposure and that brings added pressure on gaining good results. The league tables allow governments to compare their school standards against others and can monitor how they were doing on an international scale. This has led to governments increasingly writing educational policy with international comparisons in mind. As society becomes more globalised, governments can feel a greater need for comparison in order to benchmark how they are doing. This can give satisfaction and credibility to policy if high league places are obtained or improvements on previous positions are gained. It can also be justification for changing educational policy if a country begins to drop down the tables (Levin, 2003). There is a danger, however, that if a country begins to drop down the tables, governments will introduce knee-jerk policy to try and rectify the positioning. Whether countries feel the need to show the world how good their education system is, or feel pressure to join in with others, the net result is that more and more countries are participating in comparison assessments. In 2000, when the PISA assessments were introduced, 43 countries participated. By 2012 this figure had risen to 65 (OECD, 2004; OECD, 2013). Table 2:1 below shows the countries which took part in the original PISA assessments of 2000 and compares this to the ones which took part in the 2012 assessments.

Table 2:1 Comparing country/economic participants in PISA from 2000 to 2012

2000	2012	2000	2012
Albania	Albania	**	Lithuania
Argentina	Argentina	Luxembourg	Luxembourg
Australia	Australia	Macedonia	**
Austria	Austria	**	Macao-China
Belgium	Belgium	**	Malaysia
Brazil	Brazil	**	Malta
Bulgaria	Bulgaria	**	Mauritius
Canada	Canada	Mexico	Mexico
Chile	Chile	**	Montenegro
**	Colombia	The Netherlands	The Netherlands
**	Costa Rica	New Zealand	New Zealand
**	Croatia	Norway	Norway
**	Cyprus	Peru	Peru
Czech Republic	Czech Republic	Poland	Poland
Denmark	Denmark	Portugal	Portugal
**	Estonia	**	Qatar
Finland	Finland	Romania	Romania
France	France	Russian Federation	Russian Federation
Germany	Germany	**	Serbia
Greece	Greece	**	Shanghai - China
Hong Kong	Hong Kong - China	**	Singapore
Hungary	Hungary	**	Slovak Republic
Iceland	Iceland	**	Slovenia
Indonesia	Indonesia	Spain	Spain
Ireland	Ireland	Sweden	Sweden
Israel	Israel	Switzerland	Switzerland
Italy	Italy	**	Chinese Taipei
Japan	Japan	Thailand	Thailand
**	Jordan	**	Tunisia
**	Kazakhstan	**	Turkey
Korea	Korea	**	UEA (except Dubai)
Latvia	Latvia	**	Vietnam
Liechtenstein	Liechtenstein		

Table 2:1 assembled from data obtained on OECD website (OECD, 2004; 2013)

The need for governments to measure outcomes, compare performance locally, nationally and internationally and increasingly begin to hold schools to account has brought school leadership, especially headship, into focus. School leadership is now a central consideration for educational policy in

many countries, as the benefits of good leadership in bringing efficiencies and improved student performance are increasingly seen as an important element of raising standards (Day et. al, 2010). Although governments around the world have taken different approaches to policy decision making, Levin (2001:15) suggests that ‘three kinds of proposals are a key part of many reform packages:

- 1 decentralisation of operating authority to schools and the creation of school or parent councils to share in that authority
- 2 increased achievement testing with publication of results and its corollary, more centralised curriculum
- 3 various forms of choice or other market-like mechanisms

By considering educational policy through these three statements, it will enable critical analysis of how policy reform has impacted on the sustainability of headteachers.

1 Decentralisation of operating authority to schools and the creation of school or parent councils to share in that authority

The highest-performing education systems are those where government knows when to step back. We want a school system in which teachers have more power and in which they are more accountable to parents – not politicians.

(Gove, 2011)

Governments who have adopted and encouraged NPM have done so in the belief that ‘autonomy and accountability can respond more efficiently to local needs’ (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008:23). There is evidence that a more decentralised model of governance is being adopted by most OECD countries (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008:24); however the level of centralisation a government retains or relinquishes impacts on the expectations and demands of headship. Schools are increasingly being given responsibility for budget, finance, procurement, staff, leadership and teaching but at the same time are experiencing increased accountability

control over attainment levels and performance (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008).

Over the past decade, Singapore has undergone radical educational reform as it has realised that its greatest commodity is human capital (Mok, 2003). In an effort to raise standards and increase its standing in the competitive international market, the government, which used to totally control education and its implementation, has begun to give more autonomy to its schools and is allowing headteachers to take control of the learning in their schools (Dimmock & Goh, 2011). In an attempt to increase standards in the UK, the Government has introduced educational reform with its White Paper of 2010, which has taken elements from Singapore (Gove, 2011). However, although Singapore performs at the top of the international league tables, and politicians such as Michael Gove claim that this is a direct result of reform and use this as a justification for policy change in England, it should be noted that Singapore only joined PISA in 2009 and therefore caution should be applied before making any comparisons. The present coalition government have given more power directly to schools and have decreased the power of the local authority. This has resulted in a fragmentation of the current education system and its channels of support. With the implementation of the White Paper, existing maintained schools have greater control over their budgets; they are free to buy in goods, support and services from where they choose, rather than from the local authority. The Academy School programme has been expanded and accelerated, and Free Schools, a new initiative, have been introduced. These are schools which can be set up by a group of parents, teachers, a charity or a specialist group, and are based on the Swedish system which the present coalition government believes will achieve higher results than those from state schools in a comparable area (Gove, 2011). As at 20th November 2013, 3445 schools had converted to academy status, as shown in table 2:2 below.

Table 2:2 Number of schools changing to academy status as at 20th November 2013	
Time Period	Number of academy schools
September 2002 – August 2010	201
September 2010 – November 2013	3244
Total	3445
Table 2:2 DfE, 2013	

At the same time, 174 free schools had been opened since the initiative was introduced in 2011.

Table 2:3 Number of free schools as at 20th November 2013	
Time Period	Number of free schools
2011-2012	81
January – November 2013	93
Total	174
Table 2:3 DfE, 2013	

Local authorities have been responsible for giving support to schools; however, it is now the intention of the government that schools themselves will form networks to offer support and advice in the future. Another innovation is the formation of teaching schools which will deliver not only courses traditionally delivered by the local authorities, but will also train teachers (DfE, 2010). Although some teachers do receive their qualification ‘on the job’, the majority of teachers attend university or a higher educational institution. The formation of teaching schools and networks is a new initiative and the first cohort of schools has just been recruited so it is not possible to comment on their effect at this time. However, as more schools convert to academy status and free schools are founded, the fragmentation of the schools system will continue and established forms of support may begin to disappear. As local authorities reduce their role and focus is given to recruiting new headteachers, there is a danger that support for existing headteachers will not be adequately provided.

A key element of delivering the reform package is the recruitment and involvement of existing headteachers from successful schools to be Local (LLE) and National (NLE) Leaders of Education. These are existing heads of schools judged by Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education) as good or outstanding, and they are recruited to help other schools who may be struggling to raise standards. At present, the emphasis on developing good school leadership across all schools is focused on utilizing LLE's and NLE's, and it is the government's intention to double the number of local and national leaders by 2015 (DfE, 2010). However, questions need to be raised about the scheme and the demands of the headteachers involved. It has become clear that in order for headteachers to be able to dedicate time to other schools, they have to rely heavily on their senior leadership team to manage and lead their own school in their absence (Gronn, 2010; Ofsted (c), 2010). The 2009/10 Ofsted Annual Report found that '55% of the 220 schools previously judged outstanding... were no longer outstanding in their inspection this year' (Ofsted (a), 2010:2). This could be due to the time headteachers spent away from school, however it must be noted that during this period Ofsted introduced a new framework for inspections and the criteria for being an outstanding school changed. It could be, therefore, that schools which were judged as outstanding under the old criteria may not have met the new criteria. In order to draw any firm conclusions, further research would need to be carried out on the relationship between a headteacher, their responsibilities outside of their school and the maintained performance of their school.

Headteachers invited onto these programmes have to be from good or outstanding schools, and not all headteachers who meet the criteria will accept an invitation to participate. Questions need to be raised, therefore, of how headteachers who do not participate in outside initiatives receive support, motivation and stimulation together with headteachers who are deemed inadequate for the role. Schools from socially deprived areas can struggle to get a good or outstanding Ofsted rating, but the headteachers of these schools can still be excellent leaders with much to offer others. What

is the motivation, job satisfaction for these headteachers, and how do they access networks which could be very beneficial to them? If they are not able to have the same opportunities as others, this could be very demotivating and could see them opting to leave the profession. There is also a need to determine the needs of the headteachers who do take on outside opportunities, and to see how they evaluate the support they receive.

The idea of being a 'super head' has emerged over the past few years, these being headteachers who not only run their own successful school but who can also turn failing schools around. As already discussed, the number of local and national leaders is to be expanded under new educational reforms (DfE, 2010). Headteachers recruited into these positions thrive on this type of leadership which has been likened to a 'drug' as they pursue more challenges and recognition through helping other schools to succeed (Robinson, 2011: 71). Being recruited to help others can be seen as a challenge and a rewarding career extension and it can help existing headteachers maintain their motivation and job satisfaction. Taking on external positions can help to motivate and challenge headteachers who have been in position a few years and who may otherwise become inward looking, complacent and less effective (Stroud, 2006; Woods, 2002). These positions are seen as very attractive to ambitious headteachers, not only for their status but also for their monetary rewards. Education is rapidly changing and headteachers need to be able to accept change and respond to new initiatives and challenges. Sustainable leaders 'embrace the inevitability of continually changing dynamics in everyday life ... [and] create opportunities for people to come together and generate their own answers' (Ferdig, 2007). Although it has been found that LLE and NLE interventions have helped schools in the short term, the long term success also needs to be considered. Developing a system which encourages headteachers to leave their own schools in order to help others does not appear to bring stability as those headteachers crave more challenges and opportunities. Collins and Porras identified successful sustainable companies as those who 'do not depend on a single visionary leader [but] grow their own leadership

instead of importing stars' (Collins & Porras, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006:5).

In her recent thesis Robinson (2011) found that some successful headteachers actively seek additional challenges to running their own school and relish the opportunity of becoming executive headteachers of schools in challenging circumstances. These headteachers thrive on the challenge of turning around struggling schools, and continually need to prove themselves by moving from one failing school to another, a behaviour Robinson likened to a 'leadership drug' (Robinson, 2011). This type of leadership does not necessarily bring about stability or sustainability as headteachers can become dissatisfied with managing just their own schools and increasingly need to have external challenges as the addiction to the leadership drug intensifies (Robinson, 2011). However, other successful headteachers declined offers of jobs outside their school either because they have no desire to take on other roles or feel their focus should be in their own school. Being in school ensures they are fully in control, they are aware of what is happening and that it is running smoothly, something they did not feel was possible if they spent extended time elsewhere. Some of these headteachers doubted their ability to be effective in another school as having success in one school does not automatically mean they will be successful in another (Woods, 2002). Stroud (2006) found that headteachers who had been selected for other leadership roles, still felt neglected and thought there was a need for other forms of support. There is also a real danger that executive headteachers can 'burn out' as they find they strive to sustain the amount of energy required to deliver the results expected of them (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006:2).

Putting resources into training and supporting 'super heads' at the expense of other existing headteachers who may not want or need the support of a 'super head' may not bring sustainability to the role. How do the headteachers receiving the support from a 'super head' feel? Do they value the support or feel it is unnecessary and an intrusion? If any of the

headteachers are a 'super head' how to they manage their time and what effect has their role had on both their school and the school they are helping? These questions can be asked as part of this study to gain an understanding of the effects of the proposed reforms and to compare this to the preferred support of experienced headteachers.

2 Increased achievement testing with publication of results and its corollary, more centralised curriculum

We know that autonomy works best when it's paired with sharp,
smart accountability (Gove, 2011)

Accountability has become a major component of our education system, and is often quoted as being one of the elements which causes headteachers a lot of stress (Levine, 2005; Crawford, 2009; Hargreaves, 2009). The National Curriculum was introduced as part of the 1988 Education Reform Act in an attempt to give all children an equal education. Together with a national curriculum came standards and accountability (Machin & Vignoles, 2006). Two significant and still controversial reforms to be introduced in the UK were Standard Attainment Tasks (SATs), together with the publication of school league tables. SATs were introduced in an attempt to bring a national standard which could be measured and enable comparisons to be made between schools in a belief that this would drive up standards. The results would enable individual schools to be targeted to improve results, and critically, the progress schools made towards meeting improvements could be measured and monitored (Claxton, 2008; QCDA, 2009). The publication of the results in league tables brought accountability to schools who had to justify their results not only to the government and local authorities, but also to parents and the local communities (Fink, 2010). However, the publication of the results has also led to controversy surrounding the purpose of SAT's (Black, 1998; Broadfoot, 1979). When SATs were first introduced in 1991, the tests were designed to be 'rigorous national tests of seven, eleven and fourteen year olds' judged on teacher observation and assessment (Abbot &

Ryan, 2000:195). However, after a review by Lord Dearing in 1994, the tests became more formal as they were carried out by means of paper and pencil and were set and marked by an external body. This was seen as a critical shift in the balance of power between school and the Government as they set the agenda for the tests in order to ensure that all students were being measured against the same criteria (Ball, 2008).

Schools began to be targeted with improvements, achieving better results and working towards minimum nationally expected targets (Claxton, 2008). Results were also published, supposedly to encourage schools to do their best, but resulted in introducing competition and market forces into education, with consequences for failing schools (Fink, 2010). This changed the face of education and a new ethos of 'choice, competition and control' emerged (Abbott & Ryan, 2000:195). New terminology was also applied to education such as attainment, measures, benchmarking, targets, performance indicators, standards, league tables and this changed the perception of schools, what they were for, and their responsibilities (Abbott & Ryan, 2000:32; Case, Case & Catling, 2000:606-607). The pressures began to mount on schools as Ofsted was given increased powers and became central to education policy. Schools judged as failing could see their budgets cut, staff could have their pay thresholds reviewed; and Ofsted has the power to put schools into special measures, remove the headteacher or, in extreme cases, sanction the closure of the school (James, 2000). This has put enormous pressure on schools and also changed the role of headship with having increased responsibilities and accountability. The debate about SATs and their effectiveness continues. In 2010 some schools and unions campaigned to boycott the tests as they argued that the results are reported in such a way which can misrepresent a school in the league tables, giving parents and others a false, and sometimes unfair, impression of their school (Harrison, 2010). Despite the controversy, SATs brought greater accountability to the education system, and according to Michael Gove, accountability will remain a central part of educational policy (Gove, 2011).

One of the main arguments against SATs is that it narrows the curriculum and prevents real learning in the classroom (Hayes, 2006; Cambridge Primary Review, 2009). Whereas when SATs were first introduced they were based upon teacher assessment, now they are very prescriptive and carry consequences for the school and headteacher for failure. This has resulted in ‘teaching to the test’ where many schools give priority to all children passing the tests, focusing on SATs papers for the majority of time, grooming children on how to pass the test and focusing on a narrow part of the curriculum rather than giving children a broad learning experience (Smith, 2004; West, 2010).

The growing pressure on the government to improve national educational standards has been compounded over the last decade as Britain slips down the international league tables. The 2012 PISA assessments found that Britain was losing ground to other countries across the three subjects tested as shown below in table 2:4.

Table 2:4 Britain’s ranking in the PISA tables 2009 and 2012		
	2012	2009
Mathematics	26 th	22 nd
Reading	23 rd	20 th
Science	18 th	11 th
(OECD 2010; OECD 2013)		

This has led to increased criticism and scrutiny of our education system. The PISA tables were dominated by Asian countries, which had not only improved their performance, but were also accelerating their lead over other countries (Coughlan, 2013). However, this success has come at a cost as many children spend long hours in the classroom, at the detriment to their happiness. South Korea has seen tremendous economic growth over the past 60 years, but they also have the worst suicide rate of industrialised OECD countries (Chakrabarti, 2013). The stress caused by the emphasis on achievement has been recognised by the South Korean Education

Minister, Nam Soo Suh, who acknowledges 'Korea has achieved miraculous growth within a short period of time... We still have a long way to go but we are doing some soul-searching in our society, and our goals now are about how to make our people happier' (Chakrabarti, 2013). Although the United Kingdom had seen a decline in their academic results, it was reported that 84% of students were satisfied with school, 79% felt that they belonged at school and 83% of students were happy at school (Bradshaw, 2013). In response to the 2012 PISA results, Michael Gove declared that although he believed in giving greater autonomy to headteachers, that autonomy would come with accountability as 'those systems which have autonomy without accountability often underperform' (Gove, 2013). Sir Michael Barber stated, 'the arrival of new Pisa results every three years focuses minds in education ministries around the world like nothing else' (Barber, 2013). Although PISA tables give a global view of educational attainment at a given point in time, it is essential that the desire to improve educational standing is balanced with the general wellbeing of students.

3 Various forms of choice or other market-like mechanisms

The introduction of a national curriculum, standardised tests and league tables brought about a greater marketisation of education, and parents were able to choose their preferred school for their children. This resulted in schools who had previously worked alongside each other now finding themselves in competition (Machin & Vignoles, 2006). Parents could use the published league tables to inform their decision and so schools came under greater pressure to perform and reach national targets. Schools were also given more control over their budgets and as these were linked to pupil numbers, it became imperative for schools to attract as many pupils as possible. Increasingly, headteachers began to challenge their schools representation and position in the tables (Levin, 2003; Machin & Vignoles, 2006). Although the teaching profession has doubted the publication of league tables, the current coalition government is committed to their use and believes they can bring about school improvement.

Comparisons between different schools and local authority areas will drive higher performance and better value for money (DfE, 2010:12).

As education policy has evolved, schools have increasingly become subject to scrutiny resulting in changes to the role of headship. A headteacher used to be concerned with the teaching and learning in the school, whereas over the past 25 years they have also become responsible for budgetary controls, pupil outcomes set against national expectations, recruitment, inspections and parental satisfaction. Their role is now likened to that of a chief executive. The pressures and demands on modern day headteachers are often cited as reasons why people are reluctant to take on a headship or those in position are opting to leave early or are considering other careers, and are part of the reason why the current headteacher shortage exists (Levine, 2005; Thomson, 2009).

Problems with recruiting and retaining headteachers

One of the main problems when recruiting headteachers is engaging with the teaching community and inspiring members to become a headteacher. Deputy headteachers and senior leaders are deterred from applying for headship for numerous reasons. Some perceive the role of a modern headteacher to be demanding, with excessive workload and increased levels of responsibility, and in addition depending on the size of school there could be little financial benefit. Also, many perceive an increased risk in taking on a headship as accountability and inspections can prematurely end a career if the results are not of a standard expected (Lacey & Gronn, 2005; Moorhead, 2012; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). The application process has also been quoted as being too demanding and the length of time taken to become a headteacher can also be off-putting. Although there is no fixed timescale to becoming a headteacher, Bright & Ware (2003) found on average a headteacher had been a teacher for twelve years and a deputy for five years before becoming a headteacher. New routes into headship have emerged

whereby teachers and non-teachers can be fast-tracked to become headteachers, but there is evidence of resistance from within the profession for fast tracking candidates from outside teaching into headship. Smithers and Robinson found there was a virtual unanimous rejection to the idea of recruiting headteachers from other professions (2007:57), and Fink commented that 'it is a mistake to assume that competence in one field is always transferable' (Fink, 2010:6). Not surprisingly, teachers consider teaching experience an essential element necessary to be an effective headteacher. It could be that headship would prove more challenging to candidates without educational experience (Smithers & Robinson, 2007; Fink, 2010). There is a growing need to identify potential leaders and increase the talents of people from within the profession (SCEE, 1998; Hartle & Thomas, 2003; NCLSCS (a), 2010), and talent spotting from within schools and encouraging staff to taking on extra responsibilities and leadership roles with a view to becoming a headteacher is now being encouraged (NCSL, 2006). Historically, there have been 'greenhouse schools' where the headteacher would develop and prepare their deputies for headship, and would take pride in seeing several of their deputies becoming headteachers during their tenure. Although many headteachers have taken this approach, as Southworth comments 'because this approach is an act of individual commitment, as against a system-wide norm, it was not managed across large numbers of schools' (Southworth, 2007:181). It is also dependent on a good working relationship between the headteacher and their staff for the headteacher to encourage participation in any appropriate training which is available. In a report for the OECD, it was suggested that in order for school leadership to become sustainable it was imperative that training and leadership development for middle managers was an integral part of their job and 'should become automatic, and part of a whole career framework for leadership development' (Mulford, 2003: 47). Headteachers are seen as the 'gatekeeper' to a teacher's career and could be the key to developing staff into leaders (Ball & Goodson, 1985: 20; Zhang & Brundrett, 2010). However there needs to be clear communication about the role of a headteacher in order to attract others to the position. Some studies found

that teacher perceptions of the role of headship correlate with those of the headteacher whilst others found that 'some discordance appears to exist between features of leadership talent thought important by head teachers and the features some middle leaders perceive they need to demonstrate' (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006:283; MacBeath et al, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). The relationship between a headteacher and a teacher could be the most influential motive as to why a teacher aspires to becoming a headteacher themselves. Conversely, the experience of working with a headteacher could be the main reason why talented and able teachers do not aspire to become a headteacher. Fink found that headteachers 'believed that as incumbent leaders they had a major role to play in the identification and recruitment of new people' but they also 'expressed concern that perhaps they had oversold the trials of leadership and failed to communicate the joys of the job' (Fink, 2010:101). How headteachers conduct themselves and communicate with their staff is crucial in developing an environment of encouragement and opportunities. It could be that with the appropriate support a headteacher may be more able to recognise talent from within their staff and help to develop them into leaders.

Leadership

Effective leadership is seen as critical for school success and has become the focal point of school reform. This has resulted in an abundance of leadership models and theories emerging into the educational arena: Distributed (Thomson, 2009); Strategic (Davies & Davies, 2009); Transformational (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2009); Invitational (Novak, 2009); Ethical (Starrat, 2009); Instructional or learning-centred (Southworth, 2009); Constructivist (Lambert, 2009); Poetical and Political (Deal, 2009); Entrepreneurial (Hentschke, 2009) and Sustainable leadership (Hargreaves, 2009). Debates exist over the type of leader a headteacher should be and the constant tension between the need for managerial duties and the desire for inspirational leadership. Brighouse suggests that 'Managers derive their

role from their position, whereas leaders must earn and win influence from those around them'. He defines managers as being transactional leaders as they mainly 'plan, set budgets, organise staff, problem solve and produce degrees of predictability', whereas leaders are described as being transformational as they 'establish direction, align people, motivate and inspire and produce and sustain change' (Brighouse, 2011:5). Leithwood et al (2006:11) suggested that management brings about stability, whereas leadership delivers improvement. The traditional model of school leadership is of a headteacher supported by a deputy and a senior leadership team, and over 90 per cent of schools still follow this model (Earley et al, 2012:7). However new models have begun to emerge such as managed, multi-agency, federated and system leadership (Earley et al, 2012; PWC, 2007). Whatever the model of leadership employed, the importance of good leadership and its effect on education has been recognised and 'there is no question that leadership is a crucial variable in determining whether students and schools succeed' (Fink, 2010:3). Leadership has become a fundamental part of government policy, not just in England, but also around the world.

The New Labour Government launched the National College of School Leadership (now the NCTL) in 2000 to drive standards up in schools and bring about education transformation in the belief that strong leadership would improve school standards. In order to achieve this, frameworks, standards and competencies such as the National Standards for Headteachers were introduced, the purpose of which was to have a recognised national minimum standard of skills which all headteachers should possess (NCLSCS (f), 2010). If headteachers have these abilities, the theory is that they would make good headteachers and so improve school standards through strong and competent leadership. Other countries have also introduced leadership programmes, some of which are listed below in table 2:5.

Table 2:5 Leadership Programmes available in a selection of other countries

Country	Scheme
Australia Capital Territory	Leadership and Management Framework
South Australia	Professional Development Pathways Framework
Tasmania	Principal Competency Profile
Victoria	The Principal and School Development Programme
Queensland	Standards Framework for Leaders
New South Wales	School Leadership Strategy
New Zealand	Professional Standards for Principals Framework
USA	The Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008
Denmark	Diploma and Master programmes in public management and leadership
Hong Kong	Framework for leadership preparation and development
Singapore	National Programme for School Principals

(Dempster, 2001:17-18; Bush, 2011:117; Bogotch, 2011:125; Kwan, 2011:165; Moos, 2011:155)

Since its inception, the NCTL has created and developed a programme of progression for leadership across the school spectrum, with the aim of equipping middle and senior leaders with the skills and inspiration to becoming headteachers. Table 2:6 below shows the opportunities available from the NCTL for middle and senior leaders, headteachers, governors and business managers in November 2013.

Table 2:6 Leadership Opportunities from the NCTL – November 2013

Category	Provision in 2013
Headteachers and Academy leaders	Fellowship programme Head start Local Leaders of Education National Leaders of Education and National Support Schools Programme National teaching schools Primary Executive Headteacher provision
Middle Leaders and Aspiring Headteachers <i>For teachers beginning to take on leadership and management responsibilities, through to senior leaders and those seeking their first headship</i>	Now part of Leadership Curriculum Future Leaders Ofsted Shadowing programme Teaching Leaders Black and Minority Ethnic Headteachers and Deputy Headteacher Internship programme
School Business Managers <i>For school business managers at all levels</i>	Certificate of School Business Management Diploma of School Business Management Advanced Diploma of School Business Management School Business Director Programme Certificate of School Business Management modular study CIPFA Accredited Certificate in Financial Reporting for Academies
Chair of Governors	Chairs of Governors' Leadership Development Programme National Leaders of governance Training workshops

(Compiled from data on the NCTL website – NCTL, 2013)

Within each of these courses, there are increasingly opportunities for middle and senior leaders to gain not only practical experience, but also to have mentoring and individualist support. The focus of the courses is to fill in the skills gaps of the candidates and to prepare them for the next stage of their career. However, when considering the provision for existing headteachers, these opportunities are only available to outstanding headteachers and the focus is on helping others to raise standards. Whilst there is personal development, there is little personal support offered within these

programmes, and there is also a lack of continuity as most are for a set length of time.

In order to address the needs of school leadership and in an attempt to bring a national standard to the position, the NCTL introduced the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). As part of the NPQH, through the NCTL candidates can access 'on-line communities, engage in peer learning, access coaching for improvement, attend seminars and master classes, learn about the latest leadership research and national education policies and access additional local leadership development activities' (NCLSCS, nd:4). Prior to taking the NPQH there are various courses available through the NCTL, all aimed at increasing the leadership skills of individuals. Many of these provide practical opportunities to enable candidates to experience different types of leadership situations. When the qualification was first introduced it was a requirement for all new headteachers in the maintained sector in England, Wales and Scotland to hold the qualification (Chapman, 2005; Ball, 2008; NCLSCS (d), 2010). Scotland has adapted the qualification and named it Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH). Although the Scottish government encourages all headteachers to take the qualification, there is no mandatory requirement for them to do so. A review of the NPQH in Wales found that the qualification was mainly being used as a professional development tool for middle and senior managers who mostly had no intention of becoming a headteacher. It was felt that the qualification had been 'devalued... in terms of headship' and as a result of the review, the NPQH has been withdrawn in Wales and will only be reinstated after a full re-evaluation (Estyn, 2010: 5). The NPQH has recently been overhauled in England with more emphasis being placed on personal development and more opportunities 'to make it more customised to the identified needs of each individual' (Crawford & Earley, 2011:105). As well as providing a national standard for headteachers, the NPQH was also designed to give confidence to middle and senior leaders and to inspire them to apply for headship. There are signs that people who have taken the courses have found them beneficial and feel that as a result

they were better prepared for headship (Cowie and Crawford, 2009). However, in 2008, only one third of the cohort of 3000 who took the qualification went on to apply for a headship, suggesting correlation with the findings in Wales. Fink suggests that there is not a problem with the number of qualified candidates, but that 'the real dilemma seems to be the unwillingness of deputy heads, middle leaders, and teacher leaders to aspire to and seek headships' (Fink, 2010:30). The rules changed and now only those who intended to become a headteacher within eighteen months of taking the qualification are eligible to participate, although there is still no guarantee that graduates will seek a headship position (Crawford, 2009). An evaluation of the qualification resulted in a call for more research being done into the effectiveness of the NPQH getting headteachers into position (Howson & Sprigade, 2011). In a change of policy, from 2012 the NPQH ceased to be a mandatory requirement for headteachers in England (Coughlan, 2011). Despite doubts being raised about the effectiveness of some of the qualifications, it must be acknowledged that there are numerous opportunities available for middle and senior leaders and that these may lead more candidates into headship.

The desire to have a national qualification has resulted in the status and qualities of headship receiving national attention. The NPQH has recently been overhauled in England with more emphasis on personal development and more opportunities 'to make it more customised to the identified needs of each individual' (Crawford & Earley, 2011:105). As well as providing a national standard for headteachers, the NPQH was also designed to give confidence to middle and senior leaders and to inspire them to apply for headship. It would appear that the NCTL is directing its courses at getting people into leadership with the ultimate goal of them aspiring to become headteachers. What seems to be missing is any programme specifically aimed at sustaining headteachers in position and extending their career. 'Head for the Future', previously known as the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads (LPSH), was a leadership programme designed by the National College for existing headteachers which focused on the

headteachers own school and their learning and development. Over the course of the programme, headteachers would be able to develop a vision for their school, gain access to recent research and thinking on leadership, and also be able to network with colleagues. Although it is claimed to have been a great success, this programme has now been withdrawn and at present there are no plans for a replacement (NCLSCS (c), 2010).

Conclusion

Advocates of sustainable leadership believe it is through experienced headteachers and their ability to develop leadership amongst their talent pool that sustainability of headship can be achieved and the looming challenge in school leadership can be averted. Zhang & Brundrett (2010: 154) believe that 'head teachers are a key catalyst for organisational learning', and other research suggests that experienced headteachers are fundamental to identifying and nurturing leadership from within their own talent pools (Hartle & Thomas, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Fullan advocates that it is by developing leadership from within the profession that school reform and success will become sustainable for future generations and the headteacher is the central figure to bring this about (Fullan, 2005). Fink argues that it is not sufficient to only develop talent, but that 'sustained school improvement over long periods and across multiple leaders depends on carefully planned continuity' (Fink, 2010: 92). Through the introduction of qualifications and tailored support for new and aspiring headteachers, it is hoped that they will be in a better position to cope with the demands of the position. However, despite these efforts, there is still reluctance amongst teachers to become headteachers. Concerns must be raised at the present policy which remains focused on recruiting headteachers which seems to be at the expense of retaining experienced headteachers, as there seems to be no specific programmes of personal support available at the present time. This brings the sustainability of headteachers into question. The fragmentation of

the education system will likely only exacerbate the situation, and it is possible that the support needs of existing headteachers will be severely compromised. The OECD recommended 'developing the knowledge and skills of school leaders' (OECD, 2009:17) and should 'treat leadership development as a continuum' (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008:11). It is only by identifying and delivering relevant support to existing headteachers that they will be able to cope with the demands of an ever complex role and be instrumental in bringing forward the new headteachers of the future.

Summary of chapter 2

Having considered the current policy context on headship sustainability, and concluding that the support needs of experienced headteachers were not being fully addressed, the next chapter will give a detailed account of the methodology used to undertake the research to answer the central question of the thesis, namely 'What are the support needs of experienced headteachers and what are the preferred support mechanisms to facilitate headship sustainability?'. Justification will be given for the methods selected together with a discussion around the methodological choices made. A detailed account will also be given of how the research was designed and the approach taken.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction and chapter outline

The previous chapter considered the implications of current policy context on headship sustainability. Evidence reviewed suggested that the recruitment and retention of headteachers was becoming a pressing issue not just in the United Kingdom but also in other countries both in Europe and further afield. There was a perception that the job was more stressful and demanding than in previous times and this was having a negative effect on attracting potential headteachers into the position. It was also suggested that headteachers in position were finding the role very stressful for a number of reasons, resulting in loss of motivation and ultimately prompting them to taking early retirement or seeking alternative career paths rather than remaining in post. The discussion on recruitment and retention revealed that the current focus is on the recruitment, training and support for new and aspiring headteachers with apparently little support being offered to existing headteachers. The evidence reviewed suggested that the right form of support may sustain experienced headteachers and encourage them to stay in position and extend their career.

This chapter is concerned with the methodological choices taken to undertake this study, addressing how and where the research was carried out and giving justification for the methods used. Firstly there is a discussion of the approach taken to the research and the methodological choices taken, giving consideration to the ontological and epistemological assumptions of those methods. It is suggested that rigorous research cannot be conducted without understanding the philosophical foundations of the methods utilised, as these assumptions and choices will frame the research process (Brannen, 2005; Klenke, 2008; Coe, 2012). Justification is given as to why a mixed methods approach was taken using both qualitative and quantitative methods, and why a pragmatic approach was taken with a phenomenological stance being adopted for the interviews. The concepts of

reliability, validity and trustworthiness are discussed, followed by a discussion of the approach taken to both the survey and the interviews, giving details of the research design and format of each method.

Prior to formulating the research design, the focus of the study had to be determined. A literature review was carried out in order to gain an understanding of the issues surrounding headship sustainability, alongside which, research conversations were undertaken with several members of CLEAR (Centre for Leadership Excellence Across the Region), whose members are drawn from a cross-section of education provision in the region to be studied. In all, twelve research conversations were undertaken and although these were not transcribed, detailed notes were taken. Together, the literature review and the research conversations determined the area of focus for this study and produced research questions which, when answered, will contribute further to the understanding of headship sustainability.

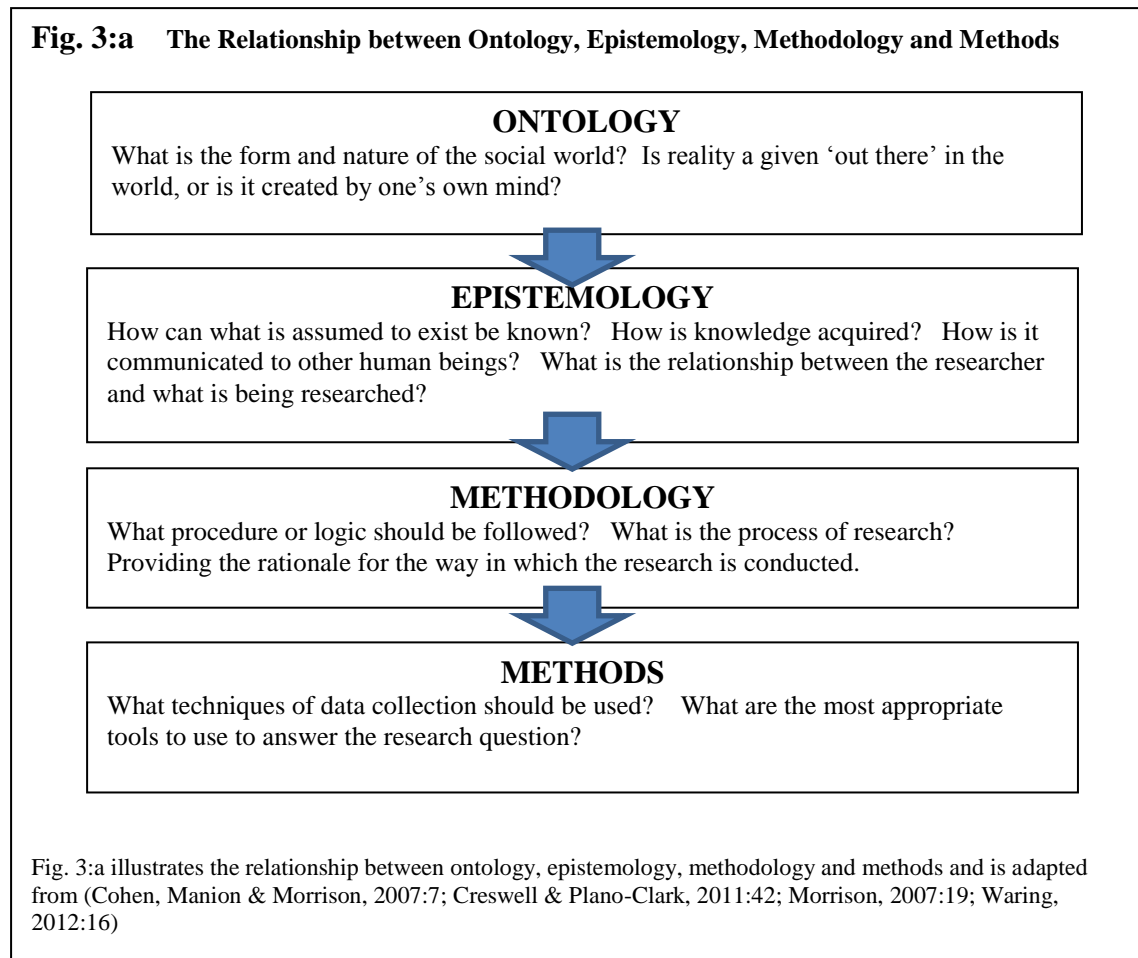
What are the support needs of experienced headteachers and what are the preferred mechanisms to facilitate headship sustainability?

To answer the research questions, consideration needs to be given to ontological and epistemological assumptions of the researcher in order to ensure that appropriate research methods are utilised. Ontology questions the nature of reality whereas epistemology looks at 'how knowledge is acquired' (Morrison, 2007:19) and the 'relationship between the researcher and what is being researched' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011:42). The view a researcher takes on these elements will form the basis of the philosophical foundations adopted for the study.

Methodological Choices

While some see ontology and epistemology as separate entities, it has been suggested that ontology leads to epistemology which in turn leads to

methodological considerations from which suitable data collection instruments can be selected as illustrated in fig. 3:a below.



By considering the relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods and adopting the view that one leads to the other, it brings an understanding of the world into the research 'and moves us beyond regarding research methods as simply a technical exercise' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:5). These views have been found in paradigms which give 'distinct sets of assumptions and their impact on researchers' worldview' (Klenke, 2008:19).

Until fairly recently, social science research mainly followed in the steps of scientific inquiry where researchers adopted a positivist or empiricist viewpoint, otherwise known as a quantitative approach to research (Bryman,

1984; Creswell, 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Using the structure of rigorous scientific experimentation, research was carried out through applying logic, common objectives, prediction and making assumptions using numerical quantitative data analysis to show statistical significances. The findings are measurable, the research can be replicated and the knowledge gained is 'largely independent of the content and context of the investigation' as the researcher maintains a distance from the subject studied (Bryman, 1984; O'Leary, 2004; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:57). Researchers engaging in positivist methods consider the reality of social phenomena as independent of the social actors they are studying, (Bryman, 2008). It is these traditional positivist methodologies which have historically been used to conduct research into leadership, to help give an understanding of leadership issues and to provide solutions which can be 'scientifically tested, verified and replicated' (Klenke, 2008:3). Headship is a form of leadership and it could be appropriate to use methods which adopt positivist assumptions, especially when gaining knowledge from a large sample. However, there are limitations with using positivist methods attracting criticism of the 'epistemological and ontological foundations' of quantitative research together with the research designs and strategies associated with this method (Bryman, 2008:159). There has also been debate around the association of the word scientific with quantitative methods as some would argue that all research is scientific (Gorard & Taylor, 2004). The individual in quantitative research is treated as an object and when the data from all the objects is collated, measurements can be made and generalisations for the whole population can be made (Morrison, 2007). However, the data produced does not allow the researcher to understand the 'meanings leaders and followers ascribe to significant events in their lives and the success or failure of their organisations' (Klenke, 2008:4).

Frustration with the limitations and strict scientific boundaries of positivism led to a greater use of qualitative methods in the mid-20th century as increased importance was given to meanings, interpretations and context and less reliance on observed phenomena. Using interpretive paradigms

would bring a greater depth of understanding of the individual or setting (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Qualitative research is often termed as naturalistic or ethnographic, and is used by researchers who want to explore how individuals or groups interpret social phenomena by becoming involved in the research (Bryman, 1984; Creswell, 2009). Interviewing is one of the main methods of data collection used in qualitative research. It allows the interviewee to describe their experiences from their own point of view and for the researcher to not only engage with the participant, but also to familiarise themselves with the context and geography of their location. When used in leadership research the methods can provide 'thick description of the phenomena [which] helps us to capture multiple voices and perspectives' (Klenke, 2008:12), and the knowledge produced is 'contextual, linguistic, narrative and pragmatic' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:17-18). An interview is more than a general conversation between two people as the researcher is a skilled scientific practitioner who holds the power of the conversation by setting the agenda, asking the questions and ending the interview. A semi-structured interview allows for more flexibility as the interviewer can follow up on answers and allow the interviewee to expand on themes, potentially bringing new knowledge and issues into the research (Babbie, 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

A key difference between quantitative and qualitative methods is that the former sees the social as an object whereas the latter sees the social from the actor's point of view (Bryman, 1984). When used in leadership studies, qualitative methods allow for more in-depth research to be undertaken and to bring understanding to the 'why' rather than the 'how' or 'what' questions used in quantitative methods (Klenke, 2008:5). It is through wanting to understand the individual at a deeper level and how different forms of support have impacted on their headship that it was thought qualitative research would also be an appropriate method to use in this study. Utilising a qualitative method of data collection enables a more personal approach to be used through which the researcher can collect 'direct quotations capturing

people's personal perspectives and experiences' (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012:428) which is what this study requires.

The belief that quantitative research is based on scientific beliefs and is mainly associated with numbers and measurable facts would indicate that qualitative research is not concerned with these things. However, when coding interviews, patterns are looked for which can be measured against the research questions. Similarly, narrative research can be collated in surveys by means of open questions allowing recipients to expand on themes and divulge extra information. It can be seen, therefore, how the rules of qualitative and quantitative research become blurred and both methods can use numbers, measurement, narrative and opinion. Over recent time research design in the social sciences has evolved and the development of mixed methods research has emerged as 'a credible alternative to unitary research approaches' (Bryman, 2006; Youngs & Piggot-Irvine, 2012:184). It is often argued employing a mixed methods approach can be very powerful and can bring 'a more coherent, rational and rigorous whole' to the study (Gorard & Taylor, 2004:4).

Traditionally, researchers have had to choose either qualitative or quantitative research methods (Coe, 2012). However, a pragmatic approach rejects the claim that qualitative and quantitative research is incompatible and encourages a mixed methods approach to research (Klenke, 2008). It 'seeks a middle ground between philosophical dogmatism and scepticism, rejects traditional dualisms (e.g., rationalism vs. empiricism, facts vs. values) and generally prefers more moderate and common-sense versions of philosophical dualisms based on how well they work in solving problems' (Robson, 2011:28). Seeking knowledge from an individual perspective and also from a wider body of people has led to a mixed methods approach being adopted. It is through wanting to consider both the individual and the wider audience that assisted the framing of this research. A pragmatic approach has been adopted for this study as it views knowledge as 'being both constructed and based on the reality of the world

we experience and live in' (Robson, 2011: 28), is considered to be an important element in the study of leadership, and also encourages the use of a mixed methods approach (Klenke, 2008; Robson, 2011). A phenomenological stance has been adopted as the interest of the interview is to gain an understanding of how the interviewees perceive support and how they feel support impacts on headship from their own perspective (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The focus of this study is on experienced headteachers and how through access to appropriate support mechanisms, the individual may not only be retained but also sustained in headship. Support can come in many forms and can also mean different things to different people, for instance, attending a training course could be seen as receiving support for one headteacher, whereas another may see this as a practical thing to do but not necessarily class it as support. In another situation, a headteacher may see networking as support, but this may not be recognised as support by others. It could also be the case that some headteachers may actively seek out several forms of support whereas others will wait to see what is offered. Support could be 'giving approval, encouragement, assistance or practical help' (Swaffield, 2009:3) or social support which can be 'emotional, informational, tangible and instrumental' (Haber, Jussim, Kennedy, Freyberg & Baum, 2008:1463). There is, therefore, a need to not only understand what support means for the individuals asked, but also to contextualise the support received, how it is accessed, how that could be available to others and how that support could sustain headteachers.

Research Approach

A mixed methods approach to the data collection was adopted. Questionnaires are used for the data collection from a large cohort, and interviews are utilised where more in-depth personal engagement is

required. It was decided to adopt a sequential design by firstly gathering statistical information through a survey followed on by one-to-one interviews with selected experienced headteachers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Biesta, 2012). It could have been that the interviews were conducted first followed by the survey, and thought was given to proceeding in this order. However, by selecting the first option of survey followed by interview it gave the study an overview of headship and support in the region, and enabled issues raised in the questionnaire to be followed up and expanded on in more depth in interviews, giving authority to the combined findings.

Firstly, headteachers in five local authority areas were surveyed in order to gain an overview of headship and support in the region, and also to be able to compare and contrast findings amongst the areas. Secondly, interviews were carried out with headteachers about their experiences of headship and the support they have received as this gave 'thick' narrative which provided depth to the research. The combination of surveys and interviews offered greater insight into how support is perceived and utilised across the region studied. Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods into a mixed method approach brings with it the challenge of not only incorporating the findings from both methods in a coherent and even way, but of also trying to give parity to both methods used (Bryman, 2006). However, the use of both methods together with the literature enables triangulation to be carried out which will not only give greater authority to any findings, but is also a useful way to integrate the use of different research strategies (Bryman, 2008; Gorard & Taylor, 2004). In order to give clarity to the reasons behind the design and execution of both the surveys and the interviews, each method will be discussed separately in the order they were implemented.

Reliability, Validity and Trustworthiness

To bring credibility to any findings, it is essential to consider the reliability, validity and trustworthiness throughout the research design process,

especially if the 'results and interpretations are to be accepted by policy-makers, practitioners and other researchers' (Babbie, 2008; Bush, 2007: 91). Reliability 'is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions', and is considered a prerequisite to achieve validity (Bell, 2005: 117; Bush, 2007; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). It is often associated with positivist approaches as some advocate that it requires a very structured approach to the research design in order to enable results to be replicated each time it is used (Robson, 2011). With careful consideration in quantitative research, the data collection can be controlled either through experiments, questionnaires or structured interviews. However, it has been argued that the basic issues of reliability are also relevant to qualitative research but need to be adapted due to the nature of the data collection methods and the flexibility of the research design (Bush, 2007; Robson, 2011). If further research is to be carried out, the processes undertaken during this enquiry would need to be 'consistent and trustworthy' to enable other researchers to be able to replicate the study (Connolly, 2007:5). Careful consideration was given to the layout, structure and questions asked in the questionnaire; the data collected was tested through piloting before running the actual survey and these measures add to the reliability of the study. To create the dataset, each question on the questionnaire was input into SPSS which generated 51 variables. To test the effectiveness of the dataset, the questionnaires from the pilot study were coded and input into a sample dataset. Testing the dataset would ensure that a reliable dataset could be produced, giving more strength to any findings.

Validity is used to judge whether the research 'accurately describes the phenomenon that it is intended to describe' (Bush, 2007: 97). Like reliability, validity has been associated with quantitative research methods being 'faithful to positivist principles such as controllability, replicability, predictability, context-freedom' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:134). However, these measures are not suitable for qualitative research and over recent times it has been suggested validity could be sought 'through the

honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 133). Often referred to as 'trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility' (Creswell, 2009: 191), it is used 'for assessing the quality of qualitative research', and is often seen as a strength of qualitative research (Bryman, 2008:700). Measures taken to increase validity in qualitative research are triangulation, participant validation, the 'use of rich, thick description, to clarify any bias the researcher brings to the study, and to present negative or discrepant information' (Creswell, 2009:191-192). It can be hard to replicate studies where people are involved, especially when carrying out interviews as it is inevitable that the researcher not only brings with them their own position but their knowledge and sensitivity to the subject can affect how statements and interviews are analysed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:58). Using a semi-structured approach also gives less rigidity to the process, again making it harder to replicate the findings. There is debate around the ability to replicate results when using qualitative methods. However, by ensuring that the boundaries of the interview schedule are sufficient to give flexibility but also direction it will enable other researchers to cover the same ground (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The analysis of the findings could also be incorporated into future research thereby testing the results and if positive could corroborate with and give strength to this study.

Following the survey, semi-structured interviews were carried out, and the steps taken to bring trustworthiness and credibility to the study, such as the interview schedule and ensuring that the participants received a copy of their transcript are discussed fully in the interview design section of this chapter (Bryman, 2008). Interviewing the headteachers would allow thick narrative and exploration of the topics to be undertaken. By using both of these methods it would not only bring richness to the study, but would also bring strength to any findings through the use of triangulation (Bryman, 2008). Although attempts have been made to maximise the reliability and validity of this study, it is recognised that quantitative research has an inbuilt measure

of standard error and it is not possible for any study using any method to be totally reliable or valid (Bryman, 2008). However, by employing a mixed-methods approach it allows for triangulation of the data which can be a powerful way to reduce bias and give confidence that any findings are complementary and not derived from just one method of data collection (Bryman, 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Gorard & Taylor, 2004).

Approach to the Survey

Traditionally, questionnaires have been produced on paper and distributed either manually or via the postal service. Increasingly over recent years, researchers have been turning to the internet to design and email electronic questionnaires. Both of these are valid methods of distribution, however, both have their benefits and restrictions. The following table 3:1 considers the advantages and limitations of using both methods, not only in relation to the audience of headteachers but also in relation to my skills as a researcher/administrator.

Table 3:1 The Advantages and Disadvantages of electronic and paper surveys		
	Paper Surveys	Electronic Surveys
Advantages	<p>Experience of how to mail merge and send out personalised letters</p> <p>Experience of designing and producing a questionnaire</p> <p>Experience of running a paper survey</p> <p>The questionnaire can be addressed to the headteacher with a personalised letter</p> <p>Manually inputting data gives a better understanding of what is going on – can build up a picture from the responses as you are coding and inputting the data before analysing through software</p> <p>After receiving the questionnaire, the headteacher can complete it at their convenience.</p>	<p>Quick and cost effective</p> <p>Electronic providers such as Survey Monkey have readymade formats to choose from</p> <p>Can easily track who has responded</p> <p>Quickly email again to follow up those still to complete the questionnaire</p> <p>Analysis is less time consuming as all the data is automatically collated by the provider</p> <p>Tools offered by the provider enable analysis to be relatively straight forward</p>

	Once built the database can be used again for other mailings/contact with the headteachers or their schools	
Disadvantages	<p>Time consuming</p> <p>Have to build comprehensive database comprising of school name, address, and with the name of the headteacher.</p> <p>Expensive – paper, envelopes, ink and postage</p> <p>Have to manually code and input data</p> <p>Potentially lots of paper to manage/store</p>	<p>Hard to manipulate data base to email out</p> <p>Hard to personalise the email as the majority of public databases do not provide the direct email for the headteacher</p> <p>If not personalised, email may go to the admin department and not to the headteacher</p> <p>New skill to learn</p> <p>Online providers do not like sending bulk surveys</p> <p>The recipient has to be ready to complete it when they receive it, otherwise there is a danger that it will be lost in mail box under other emails</p> <p>Reluctance of headteachers to complete an on-line survey from receiving a 'cold' email</p>
Table 3:1 illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of performing paper and electronic surveys		

After considering all the points listed above and discussing the different approaches with people who had used both methods, it was decided to use paper questionnaires which would be accompanied with a personal letter to each individual headteacher together with a prepaid envelope for easy return of the completed questionnaire. Although there seemed to be benefits to using an online survey, not least the ease of execution and the cost effectiveness of the method, it was not deemed to be the best method to use. Headteachers are notoriously busy people and may be more likely to engage with the survey if they feel they have a personal involvement with the research, there is a benefit for them to participate, it is easy to complete and return with minimal effort on their part and can be done at a time of their convenience (Babbie, 2008). By utilising these techniques, it was hoped that there would be a positive response rate as it was perceived there was more chance of the questionnaire actually being delivered to, and being completed by the headteacher

Questionnaire Design

When designing the questionnaire, care was taken with the wording of each question so that it could not be misinterpreted by the respondent and to ensure that they would not be influenced by bias. Clarification was given where necessary to ensure that all the answers given were comparable (Bell, 2005; Fink, 2003). Consideration was given not only to the wording of the questions, but also to the order in which the questions were asked. This was to engage the respondent and give them confidence in the questionnaire (Babbie, 2008; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The questions selected for the survey were chosen as not only did they represent the wider issues of headship support and sustainability, but they were also relevant for the audience selected and had sufficient complexity to explore the chosen topic. They would also generate data which would contribute to the discussion of headship sustainability (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

The questionnaire was constructed in two sections. The first part of the questionnaire was designed with nominal measures as these are deemed suitable to extract demographic information about the respondent, their headship and the context of their school (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). The questions established the gender and age range of the respondent, how long they had been a headteacher and which headship they were currently undertaking. These were followed with questions about the type and status of the school, in which authority the school was located, the number of children in the school and how many of them were eligible for free school meals. Some of the questions asked for an actual number to give ratio data, however the majority of questions were multiple choice as not only are they useful for the respondent as they have a clear choice to make, but the data produced 'can be quickly coded and quickly aggregated to give frequencies of response' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:323; Plowright 2011).

The second part of the questionnaire asked for opinion and ranking using a combination of nominal and ordinal questions (Babbie, 2008). The questions asked respondents to agree or disagree with statements about

their current role of being a headteacher, if it was the job they thought it was going to be, how long they thought they would remain in their current role and what the major influence(s) would be if planning on leaving the role. These questions would give a feel for how headteachers responding perceived the role of headship, and whether they thought about leaving. By using rating or Likert scale questions it enables the researcher to gain another depth of understanding whilst still being able to produce numerical data for analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Consideration was given to both the meaning and the balance of the scale used by ensuring that the responses were relevant and intervals used were equal (Fink, 2003). There were then two open questions where respondents were invited to write about what they would do after leaving the current role, and if they had decided to stay, why. These would potentially give a greater understanding of the reasons why headteachers were either leaving or staying in their role, and also provide themes which could be developed further in interview. Question 20 looked at various forms of support and asked for the respondent to rank them in effectiveness. Although there had been concerns raised when consulting at the design stage about the complex nature of this question, it was felt this was a crucial question because it would not only show which forms of support were considered effective, it would also show how many people had either accessed or not accessed certain methods of support. This block of questions was followed by an open question where input was sought on what support the respondent would like to have access to. Again, topics raised here could be investigated further in interview. The final question of the questionnaire asked whether or not the respondent would choose to be headteacher again if starting out on their career now. This was an interesting question to ask as it would be curious to see if headteachers who seem to be under so much pressure and may be contemplating leaving would in fact choose the role again if they knew what they knew now.

When designing the questionnaire, opinion was sought from my supervisor, other colleagues in the department, current and ex headteachers and a

representative from one of the local authorities. This was done through informal interviews and a pre-pilot of the questionnaire. Literature on headteacher role satisfaction, support and sustainability was also consulted and together these methods influenced the design of the questionnaire and the questions asked. The following table 3:2 references the source for each question asked, giving confidence not only to the questionnaire and its design, but also to any findings.

Table 3:2 Questions on the Pilot Questionnaire and the Authority for Each Question Asked		
No.	Question	Reference
1	Are you male or female?	Brooking, 2008 Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007
2	What is your age range? 25-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, 61+	Brooking, 2008 NATH, 2010
3	How long have you been a headteacher? 0-3 years, 4-8 years, 9-12 years, 13-17 years, 18+ years, other	Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007
4	Which headship are you undertaking at present? 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , Other	Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007
5	Which of the following statements best describes your school? Maintained/state primary, Maintained/state secondary, Independent primary, Independent secondary, Special school, Free school, Academy primary, Academy secondary, Other	Consulting Local Authority Databases
6	Which of the following statements best describes the size of your present school? Very small (30-100 pupils), Small (101-250 pupils), Medium (251-750 pupils), Large (751-1000 pupils) Very Large(1001+ pupils)	Barty, Thomson, Blackmore & Sachs, 2005
7	Which of the following statements best describes the socio-economic status of your school? (please rate 1 being extreme deprivation and 10 being affluent)	MacBeath, Gronn, Opfer, Lowden, Forde & Cowie, 2009
8	What percentage of children who attend your present school are eligible for free school meals? 0, 1-10%, 11-20%, 21-30%, 31-40%, 41-50%, 51+%	Smithers & Robinson, 2007
9	Please indicate how satisfied you are in your current role of being a headteacher – 1 being not at all satisfied and 10 being you really enjoy the role)	Bright & Ware, 2003 Flintham, 2003
10	How much is this the job what you thought it was going to be – 1 being it is not the job you thought and 10 being it is the job you thought	Daresh & Male, 2000 Bright & Ware, 2003
11	Do you ever consider how long you will remain in the position of headteacher? Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, Always	Chapman, 2005 NCSL, 2008
12	If you are considering leaving the role of headteacher, please indicate why (please specify)	Flintham, 2003 Ingate, 2010
13	If you are thinking of leaving your current role, please indicate what you might do next Retirement, Redundancy, Another Headship, Consultant in Education, An educational related job, a job out of the education field, something else (please	Flintham, 2003

	specify)	
14	If you have considered leaving the role of headteacher but have decided to say, please specify the main reasons behind this decision	Chapman, 2005 Ingate, 2010
15	When thinking of your career, do you ever consider it as passing through different phases? Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, Always	Reeves, Mahony & Moos, 1997; Brighouse, 2007; Day & Bakioglu, 1996; Flintham, 2004; Earley & Weindling, 2007
16	Below are emotions which have been suggested that a headteacher may experience. Please tick the ones which you feel are the most dominant emotions associated with being a headteacher Excitement, Loneliness, Delight, Swamped, Anxiety, Motivated, Self-Doubt, Proudness, Enthusiasm, Stability, Resistance, Happiness, Failure, Fulfilled, Decline, Confident, Other	Day & Bakioglu, 1996 Reeves, Mahony & Moos, 1997 Flintham, 2003 Ribbins & Zhang, 2005 Nir, 2009 Piggot-Irvine, 2004
16a	How would you best describe how you feel in your headship at the present time? Please specify using either the words above or using your own words	Day & Bakioglu, 1996 Flintham, 2003 Ribbins & Zhang, 2005
17	Do you feel that you receive adequate personal support to help sustain you in the role of headteacher Yes, No, Don't Know	Draper & McMichael, 2000 Earley & Evans, 2003 Swaffield, 2008
18	Below are forms of support which may be available to a headteacher. Please indicate any which you have experienced whilst being a headteacher NPQH, Masters or other qualification, Training courses, Coaching, Mentoring, Networks, Union, Headteachers Associations, Local Authority, National College, Senior Leadership Team, Governing Body, Being a Local or National Leader, Receiving help from a Local or National Leader, Other	Barty, Thomson, Blackmore & Sachs, 2005 Bell, Cordingley & Michell, 2006 Bolam, McMahon, Pocklington & Weindling, 1995 Crawford & Earley, 2004 Draper & McMichael, 2000 Earley & Evans, 2003 Estyn, 2010 Hansford & Ehrich, 2006 Moore & Kelly, 2009 Woods, Woods & Cowie, 2009 Dempster, 2001 Piggot-Irvine, 2004
19	Looking at the list again, please indicate (1 being not effective and 10 being very effective) how effective you felt your particular experiences were in helping you in your role as a headteacher NPQH, Masters or other qualification, Training courses, Coaching, Mentoring, Networks, Union, Headteachers Associations, Local Authority, National College, Senior Leadership Team, Governing Body, Being a Local or National Leader, Receiving help from a Local or National Leader, Other	Draper & McMichael, 2000 Earley & Evans, 2003 Estyn, 2010 Hansford & Ehrich, 2006 Moore & Kelly, 2009 Woods, Woods & Cowie, 2009 Dempster, 2001 Piggot-Irvine, 2004
20	What, if any, support would you like to receive which you think would help keep you in your current position?	Draper & McMichael, 2000 Woods, Woods & Cowie, 2009 Swaffield, 2008
Table 3:2 illustrates the questions asked on the pilot questionnaire together with the reference for each question		

Questionnaire Format

Having decided to conduct a paper based survey, the questionnaires were produced on a computer and particular thought was given to the layout to

ensure that they were user-friendly, easy to navigate and could be completed in a short space of time, thereby encouraging the recipients to participate in the research (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012; O'Leary, 2004). Each question had clear boundaries as it was presented in an individual box. The questions were numbered, written in bold with a highlighted background. Brackets and italics were also used where necessary to give extra clarity and instruction on how to answer the questions (Robert-Holmes, 2005; Bell, 2005). When not answering open questions, the respondents were asked to circle their answers as it was found through the pre-pilot stage that this would aid the data input as ticking answers sometimes led to uncertainty which in turn meant slower input of the data. Attention was given to the wording of the questions in order to avoid leading or double questions, making assumptions or being offensive. Care was also taken that the questions were relevant to the respondents and written so that there was no ambiguity and they would understand what was being asked of them (Bell, 2005; Fink, 2003). Open questions were included in the questionnaire so that respondents could add comments, but these were kept to a minimum and the space allocated was kept to no more than two lines. By taking these measures, it was envisaged that the respondents were more likely to answer all the questions, would engage with the questionnaire and feel they were making a valuable contribution to the research (Bryman, 2008; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Consideration was given to the relevance of each question and to ensure categories were discreet where applicable. These procedures should enable the survey to be replicated and would add to the validity and reliability of the study (Bell, 2005; Bryman, 2008). In order to maximise the response rate by making the questionnaire as user-friendly as possible, careful consideration was given to the number of questions, the total length of the questionnaire and the time it would take to complete the survey (Fink, 2003). At the end of the questionnaire, information was given about the intention to carry out one-to-one interviews at a later stage. The respondents were invited to indicate if they would like to participate in these by completing their name, the name of their school, contact telephone number and contact email. By doing this the respondents would be

volunteering to participate further in the research and consenting to be contacted again (Babbie, 2008). The data from the questionnaires would be analysed using IBM SPSS statistical software, version 19. SPSS is a recognised software programme used in academic quantitative research, and although there are other programmes to use, SPSS is generally considered to be the market leader (Bryman, 2008).

Approach to the Interviews

Interviewing the headteachers allowed exploration of their lived experiences of support and how they felt this has affected their headship. By conducting life world interviews with a semi-structured format it enables an in-depth understanding of the experiences, beliefs and position of the participants to be obtained. It enables the interviewee to feel as though they are having a conversation but it carries the rigour and technique of a professional interview and it allows the interviewer to be responsive and ask follow-up questions (Bryman, 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Having an overall framework of questions ensures that certain data, such as gender, length of experience, school context is collected and that the theme of the research forms the basis of the interview. However, by utilising a semi-structured interview format, it allows for flexibility by enabling the interviewee to expand on and introduce new ideas and information which they feel relevant to the research (Babbie, 2008; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). This will allow tangents to be pursued by the interviewer whilst maintaining control over topics and questions to be covered, and could also help to reduce bias as the interviewee has the opportunity to talk around pre-determined questions (Briggs & Coleman, 2007; O'Leary, 2004). This could bring greater depth to the data collected as it will allow the interviewee to expand on the support they have received and how this has contributed to their sustainability in role. It is possible that the research may follow a different direction as a result of the interviews and information being given which had previously not been considered. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews not only allows for

this but also encourages new information to be extracted (Bryman, 2008). It can also be a very powerful tool and act as a catalyst for change. Through reflection of their answers the interviewee could begin to see connections and relationships that they had not seen before, thereby being a learning process for the interviewee as well as the interviewer (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:31).

Unstructured or informal interviews are considered to be effective when used at the beginning of a research project before any hypothesis has been formed (Ribbins, 2007). Informal discussions were utilised during the first year of this study in order to complement the literature review and to give confirmation that the research topic was of value. It was felt that structured interviews would be too restrictive as they tend to be formal and follow a strict interview schedule. Questions, which are often closed, are asked in the same order to each interviewee from which they often have pre-determined answers from which to choose, thus limiting the opportunity for other themes to develop (Bryman, 2008; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). It was also felt that following a structured interview would be too similar to the format of the survey which had previously been carried out. Gaining an in-depth understanding of how support has influenced headteachers and how it relates to sustainability is a key element of this research and therefore it is essential that flexibility in the interviews is both permitted and encouraged. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility, but also give a framework from which to gather the data.

Interview design and format

After analysis of the questionnaire data, seven topics emerged which were worthy of further investigation as they would facilitate in-depth conversations and were relevant to the research questions. These were Journey in to headship; Perceptions of the role; Context of the school; Support; Major changes; Next steps; Succession planning. A framework was devised

where themes were allocated to each topic to bring depth to each subject and could be used as a prompt during the interviews. Each interview would start by asking about the journey taken into headship. This was chosen as the starting question as it was a familiar subject based on their lived experience, uncontroversial, and would hopefully put the interviewee at ease. The themes within the topic were there as a guide to ensure that the data received was relevant and if the interviewee went off on a tangent, there was a guide to use to bring them back on track. Even though a schedule had been designed, other than the first question there was total flexibility on the order the other questions were asked. It was hoped that by adopting this method the interview would flow and appear to the interviewee as more of a conversation than an interrogation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Table 3:3 below shows the interview schedule, with the topics and themes.

Table 3:3 Interview Schedule	
Topics to cover	Themes within each topic
Journey into headship	Ambition How did it happen Planned Influences
Perceptions of the Role	Reality of role v perceptions Surprises
Context of the school	Pupil demographics Location
Support	Where do you get your support from? Official/unofficial sources – which provide the most benefit? Why? How were connections made? Networks – formal v informal Barriers to joining networks? Thoughts on any official networks they are part of Reality of being part of a schools network Pressures to join official networks
Major changes to the school under their headship (could include change of status of school)	Where did you draw support from during changes? Was the support official or unofficial? Did networks play a part in finding support? Was support given or found accidentally? Was the support useful/valid? Is there any on-going support? Are there any new freedoms as a result of the change of status?
Next	How long are you planning on staying in your current position? Where to next? Why? If you are thinking of leaving – what would make you stay? What would make a difference? What would that support be?
Succession	What are your perceptions on headteacher recruitment? If a problem is perceived – what is the cause of that

	problem? What could be done to improve headteacher recruitment? Do you have a role to play in headteacher recruitment? Stages of headship – emotions? Is headship sustainable in its current form? If not, why not? What would make headship sustainable?
Table 3:3 shows the topics to be covered in the interview together with themes to be explored within each topic	

It was intended that all the interviews would be recorded, transcribed and then analysed as this would give the most accurate account of the interview. Making notes during the interview or writing up memories after the event are not considered as reliable as recorded data (Ribbins, 2007). Consideration was given to the level of transcription as ‘some subjects may experience a shock as a consequence of reading their own interviews [as] oral language transcribed verbatim may appear as incoherent and confused speech, even as indicating a lower level of intellectual functioning’ (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:187). As it was intended to send a copy of the transcription back to the participant, a conscious decision was made to ‘render them in a more fluent written style’ by eliminating ums and arhs, but also ensuring throughout that no change was made to the words or the meaning of what was said (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 187). This would be done by fully transcribing the interview and then listening back whilst reading the transcript. By doing it in this way, slight adjustments to the flow of the text could be made whilst ensuring that the meaning did not alter. A covering letter would be sent with the transcript stating that if the headteacher was not happy with any aspects of the transcription they could request that it be eliminated from the written work. By taking this approach it brings more credibility to the research as the participants will have validated the interpretation of events and confirm that the transcription was an accurate account of what they had said (Bryman, 2008). The interviews would be recorded and fully transcribed, and the transcriptions analysed with the aid of a programme called Atlas.ti, which is computer-aided qualitative data analysis software, otherwise known as CAQDAS (Friese, 2012). Atlas.ti is an industry recognised software programme and is appropriate to use in this

study (Bryman, 2008). Alongside using Atlas.ti, the data would also be manually analysed. This will ensure that the data is not decontextualized and the nuances of the interview can be preserved (Bryman, 2008).

Summary of chapter 3

This chapter has discussed the methodological choices made to undertake this study, has given justification as to why a pragmatic and mixed methods approach was taken to undertake the research, and why these were appropriate choices to take in order to answer the research question. The reliability, validity and trustworthiness of the study have also been discussed together with a detailed description of the research design and format for both the survey and the interviews undertaken. The next chapter will detail how the research was carried out.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction and chapter outline

The previous chapter discussed the methodological choices taken to undertake this study, the ontological and epistemological assumptions of those methods giving justification for the use of a mixed methods approach, and how those methods were applied to the development and design of the research. This chapter deals with the operationalisation of the research. It begins with a discussion of the ethical considerations and implications associated with this study, leading on to a detailed account of how the research was carried out from initial conception through to the actual data collection. Consideration is also given to how the findings will be processed, accounted, analysed and reported. The two chapters together give a comprehensive account of the reasons behind the research design, the sample studied, the approach taken and the impact these decisions have had on the study.

Ethical Considerations and Implications

Throughout this study, ethical issues and responsibilities were considered and implemented where necessary. The ethical guidelines as set by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) were accessed and adopted (BERA, 2011). My position in the research is that I have undertaken a degree in Education and am now undertaking this PhD on headship sustainability. I am not a headteacher and although I have volunteered in schools on several levels, I have not trained to be a teacher or ever taught in a classroom. Although some may have considered it preferable to have experience of headship in order to interview headteachers, I very much feel that not coming from a school background allowed me to be open with the interviewees and not enable a pre-determined position to influence the research (BERA, 2011). The ethical

requirements of the university were also considered and authorisation to conduct the research was sought and approved from the Faculty of Education before commencing with the data collection.

To ensure that the reader felt safe and confident to answer the questionnaire, a letter attached to the questionnaire confirmed that no reference would be made either to them or their school in my written work, thus giving anonymity to every respondent. To ensure anonymity, the respondents could not be identified as no reference was attached to the questionnaires (O'Leary, 2004). The letter also gave information about me, the nature of the research, my contact details and those of the Faculty Ethics Committee secretary. Clarity was given that questions need not be answered and that the respondent was under no obligation to participate in the research and return the questionnaire (BERA, 2011; Babbie, 2008; Bryman, 2008; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). When designing the questionnaire, care was taken not to ask questions which may distress, embarrass or antagonise the respondent (Bryman, 2008; Fink, 2003). The respondents gave their informed consent by returning the completed questionnaire and therefore no further permission was requested (Bell, 2005).

The headteachers selected for interview were emailed to inform them that I would contact them to make an appointment for the interview. This would refresh the headteacher with my research and also gave the opportunity for them to withdraw from the research. Before conducting the interview, a form was presented to the participant informing them of the nature of the research and how the data generated from the interview would be used. An ethics form was produced based on the Faculty template specifying the name of the headteacher and their school. The form stated that the reader understood the aims of the research and how the information they had given would be used. It also confirmed that the participant volunteered to take part in the research and had the option to withdraw at any time. Confirmation was

given that the data would be used for research purposes and that aggregated results may be published in academic and scientific journals. Contact details of the researcher and the departmental ethics committee secretary were also printed on the form. Two copies were made of each form, one for the researcher which would be signed by the headteacher then filed with the relevant questionnaire and interview transcription, and one for the interviewee to retain. By signing the form, the participants were acknowledging that they understood the research process and were giving their informed consent to voluntarily take part in the research. Assurance was also given that the participant could withdraw from the research at any time and that a reason for withdrawal would not be sought (BERA, 2011). A full transcript of the interview was sent to the participant for their information and verification. Again at this time, the accompanying letter assured them of their privacy, reminded them that they could request any part of the transcript not to be used in the findings and that they could withdraw from the research altogether if they so desired.

The Nature of the Locality

The 26th Annual Howson Report found that nationally 40% of primary and a third of secondary headship positions were not filled and had to be re-advertised (Howson & Sprigade, 2011). The report also showed an increase in the number of positions that had to be re-advertised in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The Yorkshire and Humber area covers 15,400 square kilometres and is the fifth largest region in England. It has a long eastern coastline, large rural areas, urban areas and also densely populated areas such as Hull (Kay, 2009). Some of the reasons Howson gave for having to re-advertise were a combination of 'coastal locations... challenging circumstances, below average pay and a supply of suitable candidates' (Howson, 2010:24). The region had a total population of 5.3 million at the 2011 census, being an increase of 6% from the last census of 2001 (ONS (a), 2012). Full time employees in the region in 2011 earned a median gross weekly salary of £466 which was lower than the UK median of

£501 per week (ONS (a), 2012). Within the region, Hull had the highest rate of unemployment in England for the period April 2012-March 2013, with 15.2% (ONS, 2013:8). In 1998/99, Howson reported that in the Yorkshire and Humber region, 16% of headteacher positions had to be re-advertised. By 2008/09 the number of headships re-advertised had increased to 34% and this position has continued to deteriorate with the 2011 survey showing that the region had 'recorded their worst levels seen since before the turn of the century' (Howson, 2010; Howson & Sprigade, 2011:15). The statistics show that the Yorkshire and Humber region as a whole is facing challenging circumstances, has coastal towns and its employees earn below the national average; factors which Howson identified as being contributors to them having to re-advertise headteacher positions. By selecting five local authorities from within the Yorkshire and Humber region it will give geographical focus to the study and will allow a wide variety of locations and school contexts to be taken into consideration. It also gives the opportunity to conduct a mixed methods research project over a diverse but defined area. For practical reasons neighbouring authorities were selected.

The local authorities chosen were Hull, East Riding, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and York. The following table 4:1 shows the population of the five local authorities associated with this study and how these have changed between 2001 and 2011.

Table 4:1 <u>Local Authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber selected for this study – ranked by population size in 2011 Census</u>			
Yorkshire and the Humber	2011 population	2001 population	Change 2001-2011 (per cent)
East Riding of Yorkshire	334,200	314,900	6.1
Kingston upon Hull	256,400	249,900	2.6
York	198,000	181,300	9.2
North Lincolnshire	167,400	153,000	9.4
North East Lincolnshire	159,600	158,000	1
Table 4:1 (ONS (b) 2012)			

As can be seen, the East Riding of Yorkshire has the largest population whilst North East Lincolnshire has the lowest. York and North Lincolnshire both had over 9% increase in their population over the past ten years with North East Lincolnshire showing little change.

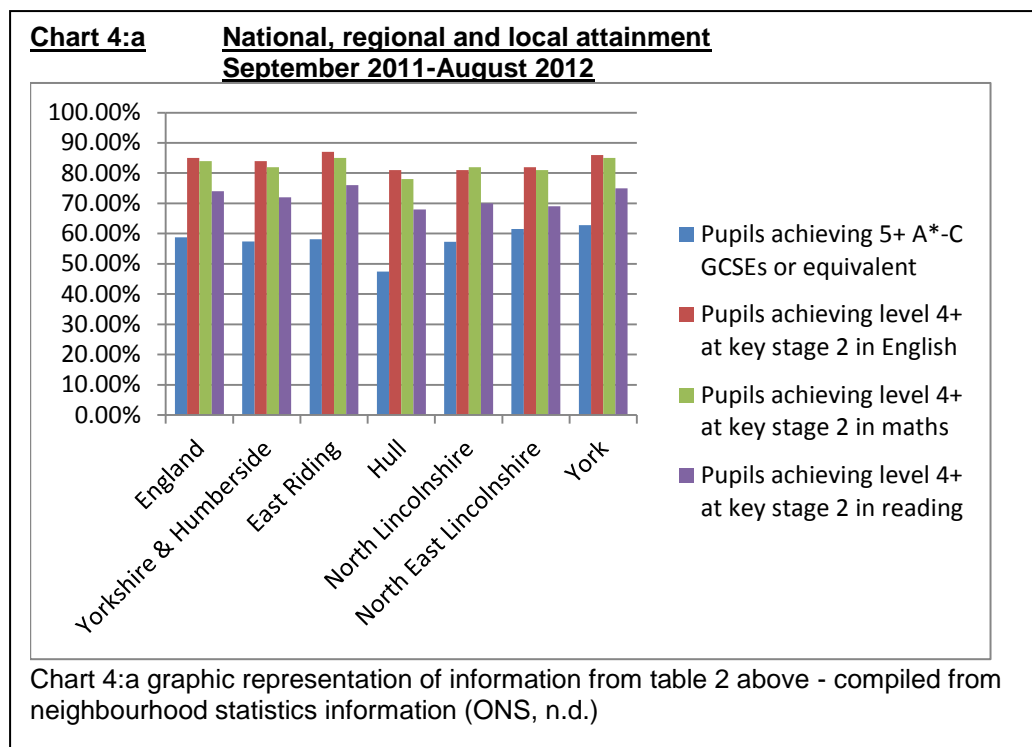
In 2012, as a region, Yorkshire and Humber were above the national average for The Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) scores, but were below average on pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE's, and pupils achieving level 4+ at key stage 2 in English, maths and reading. To gain a local perspective, table 4:2 also shows how the five local authorities selected for this study scored against national and regional averages, and a pictorial representation of the data is provided in chart 4a.

Table 4:2 Comparing academic achievement between England, Yorkshire and Humber and the five local authorities of this study. September 2011 - August 2012

Results for Sept 2011- Aug 2012	England	Yorkshire & Humber	East Riding	Hull	North Lincs	North East Lincs	York
Average QCA point score per person	721.3	735.9	734.7	723.9	748.8	737.8	789.6
Pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs or equivalent	58.8%	57.4%	58.1%	47.5%	57.3%	61.5%	62.8%
Pupils achieving level 4+ at key stage 2 in English	85%	84%	87%	81%	81%	82%	86%
Pupils achieving level 4+ at key stage 2 in maths	84%	82%	85%	78%	82%	81%	85%
Pupils achieving level 4+ at key stage 2 in reading	74%	72%	76%	68%	70%	69%	75%

Table 4:2 compiled from neighbourhood statistics information (ONS, n.d.)

York is the highest performing authority and achieved well above national and regional averages in all areas. Hull has the lowest results, managing to come above national average only on QCA points per person. For all the other categories, it scored below both national and regional averages.



Of the other three authorities, the East Riding scored above the regional and national averages in all areas except the regional average for QCA, whilst North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire scored above average on the QCA scores, but below on the key stage two results. On the GCSE performance, North East Lincolnshire scored above both the regional and national averages, whilst North Lincolnshire was below the national average and only just missed the regional average by just 0.1%.

However, according to the Ofsted Annual Report of 2011/12, primary aged children attending school in the five local authorities chosen as part of this study have a reduced chance of attending a good or outstanding school, as shown below in table 4:3.

Table 4:3 Table taken from Ofsted (2012) showing the percentage of pupils attending a good or outstanding primary school in the five local authorities of this study		
	Local Authority	Percentage of pupils attending a good or outstanding primary school
Local authority areas where pupils are likely to attend a good or outstanding primary school	n/a	78-72%
Local authority areas where pupils have a fair chance of attending a good or outstanding primary school	n/a	72-97%
Local authority areas where pupils are less likely to attend a good or outstanding primary school	Hull York North Lincs	66% 64% 64%
Local authority areas where pupils are least likely to attend a good or outstanding primary school	North East Lincs East Riding	56% 55%
(Ofsted, 2012:32-33)		

This shows that within the five local authorities, children from the East Riding and North East Lincolnshire are more likely to attend a school which is less than good. However, by the end of October 2013, although the East Riding and North East Lincolnshire still have the most schools deemed below good, children from Hull have an increased risk of attending a school which either requires improvement or is judged inadequate as shown in table 4:4 below.

Table 4:4 Most recent overall effectiveness judgement for schools inspected at 31st October 2013 by phase of education, local authority and region					
		Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
East Riding		11%	55%	34%	0
Hull		13%	57%	24%	6%
North East Lincs		11%	55%	32%	2%
North Lincs		9%	69%	18%	4%
York		23%	55%	17%	5%
Table 4:4 Data taken from Ofsted 2013					

It is acknowledged that research has been done nationally and internationally. However, the above data gives justification for research to be carried out in Yorkshire and the Humber area. The area has seen a

significant increase in the number of headteacher positions which have had to be re-advertised, and the region as a whole gained below national average results at both GCSE and key stage 2. The study will cover an extensive geographical area and will give the opportunity to carry out research across a diverse and challenging region.

Survey Research Methods

Pilot Study

In order to test the quality and relevance of the questions asked and to ensure that the data gathered could be coded and produce meaningful results, a pilot study was carried out prior to the actual survey being done (Bell, 2005; Bryman, 2008; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Robert-Holmes, 2005). In total six pilot questionnaires were distributed. The recipients were asked to complete the questionnaire and give feedback on the layout, ease of use, relevance of the questions and also to suggest any improvements. The feedback was positive in that the 'questions were clear and well written' [and that] 'the survey would not take too long to complete'. There were also suggestions made to enhance the questionnaire, such as adding a N/A option on question 20 which would enable analysis of how many heads had or had not experienced a listed type of support. By adding the option it would also give clarity on how to answer the question, otherwise there would be a danger that if they had not experienced the support they would leave the question unanswered (Bell, 2005; Fink, 2003). It was suggested that a question was added about the respondent's route into headship as it might give additional contextual information which could be related to their on-going support needs. However, although this was thought to be an excellent suggestion, it was felt that this was better suited to being asked in an interview where the respondent could describe not only their route into headship but could also expand on why certain career choices were made and how support received influenced those decisions. This

would give depth to the question which would not be possible to elicit in a questionnaire. Question 9 asks about the size of the school. The pilot had put in a range of pupil numbers and had asked the respondent to circle the group into which their pupil numbers fell. The categories were Very Small (30-100 pupils), Small (101-250 pupils), Medium (251-750), Large (751-1000), and Very Large (1000+). However, two issues were raised with this question. The first concerned how the groups had been allocated and it was suggested that the ranges were too large. The second concerned the usefulness of the data produced. It was proposed that the respondent be asked to state the actual number of pupils in their school as this would give ratio data (Plowright, 2011). The format of the question was changed, asking the respondent to write in the number of children on the school roll. As discussed in chapter two, it has been reported that headteachers may pass through different stages of their headship and experience a variety of emotions during those phases and these could impact on the sustainability of headship. Questions 15, 16 and 16a were designed to extract information on these topics. However, these questions caused great confusion in the pilot and all the participants were unsure of how to answer these questions. On reflection, these questions are too complex for a questionnaire and are much more suited to an interview where the questions cannot only be explained to the respondent, but also the interviewee can give a full and in-depth answer. The questions were taken out of the survey but the themes were included in the interview. The following table 4:5 shows all the amendments made to the questionnaire following the pilot survey:

Table 4:5 Comparing the original questions asked in the pilot to those asked in the actual questionnaire, giving justification for any changes made		
Original questions	Amendments	Actual questions
Are you male or female?	No Change	Are you male or female?
What is your age range? 25-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, 61+	Slight adjustment on age ranges to start at 30	What is your age range? 30-35, 36-40, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, 61-65, 66+
How long have you been a headteacher? 0-3 years, 4-8 years, 9-12 years, 13-17 years, 18+ years, other	Changed to actual number for ratio data	How long have you been a headteacher? Please state
Which headship are you undertaking at present? 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , Other	No Change	Which headship are you undertaking at present? 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , Other
Which of the following statements best describes your school? Maintained/state primary, Maintained/state secondary, Independent primary, Independent secondary, Special school, Free school, Academy primary, Academy secondary, Other	Question split into two questions	Which of the following statements best describes your present school? Infant, Junior, Primary, Secondary, Middle
		Which of the following statements best describes the status of your school? Faith, Independent, Special, Free, Academy, Community, Foundation, Voluntary Aided, Grammar, Voluntary Controlled, Other?
	New question to enrich demographic data	Which of the following statements best describes the pupil intake of your school? All girls, All Boys, Co-ed?
	New question to enrich demographic data	In which local authority is your school located? Hull, East Riding, NE Lincs, N Lincs, York, North Yorkshire
Which of the following statements best describes the size of your present school? Very small (30-100 pupils), Small (101-250 pupils), Medium (251-750 pupils), Large (751-1000 pupils) Very Large(1001+ pupils)	Changed to actual number for ratio data	How many pupils are on the roll at your current school?
Which of the following statements best describes the socio-economic status of your school? (please rate 1 being extreme deprivation and 1- being affluent)	All schools have a deprivation indicator which would give an accurate rating	What is the governmental deprivation indicator of your current school?

What percentage of children who attend your present school are eligible for free school meals? 0, 1-10%, 11-20%, 21-30%, 31-40%, 41-50%, 51+%	Changed to actual number for ratio data	Please estimate the number of children in your school who are eligible for free school meals
Please indicate how satisfied you are in your current role of being a headteacher – 1 being not at all satisfied and 10 being really enjoy the role)	Changed to statement item	"I am very satisfied with my current role of being a headteacher" Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
How much is this the job what you thought it was going to be – 1 being it is not the job you thought and 10 being it is the job you thought	Changed to statement item	"The role of headteacher is the job I thought it was going to be" Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
Do you ever consider how long you will remain in the position of headteacher? Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, Always	Changed to statement item	"I think about how long I will remain in the role of headteacher" Always, Often, Sometimes, Seldom, Never
	New Question	How long are you planning to stay in the position of headteacher? 0-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-9 years, 10+ years, Don't know
If you are considering leaving the role of headteacher, please indicate why (please specify)	Changed to give main categories from literature	If you are planning on leaving your current role, what is the major influence on this decision? Retirement, Redundancy, Disenchantment with the position, Desire to try something new, I am not thinking of leaving, Something else – please specify
If you are thinking of leaving your current role, please indicate what you might do next. Retirement, Redundancy, Another Headship, Consultant in Education, An educational related job, a job out of the education field, something else (please specify)	Take out categories to avoid restrictions	If you are planning on leaving your current role, what do you intend to do next? Please state
If you have considered leaving the role of headteacher but have decided to stay, please specify the main reasons behind this decision	No changes	If you have considered leaving the role of headteacher but have decided to stay, please specify the main reasons behind this decision
When thinking of your career, do you ever consider it as passing through different phases? Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, Always	Question deleted from survey – respondents found it confusing and data generated of no value to thesis	

Below are emotions which have been suggested that a headteacher may experience. Please tick the one which you feel are the most dominant emotions associated with being a headteacher Excitement, Loneliness, Delight, Swamped, Anxiety, Motivated, Self-Doubt, Proudness, Enthusiasm, Stability, Resistance, Happiness, Failure, Fulfilled, Decline, Confident, Other	Question deleted from survey – respondents found it confusing and data generated of no value to thesis	
How would you best describe how you feel in your headship at the present time? Please specify using either the words above or using your own words	Question deleted from survey – respondents found it confusing and data generated of no value to thesis	
Do you feel that you receive adequate personal support to help sustain you in the role of headteacher Yes, No, Don't Know	Question deleted from survey – more appropriate to ask during interview	
	New question generated as headteachers are being encouraged to lead outside of their school	Please indicate if you have any of these responsibilities alongside your headship Local leader of Education, National leader of education, Mentor to other headteachers, Coach to other headteachers, Other
Below are forms of support which may be available to a headteacher. Please indicate any which you have experienced whilst being a headteacher NPQH, Masters or other qualification, Training courses, Coaching, Mentoring, Networks, Union, Headteachers Associations, Local Authority, National College, Senior Leadership Team, Governing Body, Being a Local or National Leader, Receiving help from a Local or National Leader, Other	These questions were collated into one question	Below are forms of support which may be available to a headteacher. Please indicate how effective you have found any of these at helping you in your role as a headteacher - 1 being very effective and 6 being not effective at all. NPQH, Masters or other higher qualification, Training courses, Coaching/mentoring, Informal peer support, formal networks, Informal networks, Union, Headteachers Association, Local Authority, National College, Senior leadership team, Governing body, Being a local/national leader, Help from a local/national leader, Any others not listed (please specify)

Looking at the list again, please indicate (1 being not effective and 10 being very effective) how effective you felt your particular experiences were in helping you in your role as a headteacher NPQH, Masters or other qualification, Training courses, Coaching, Mentoring, Networks, Union, Headteachers Associations, Local Authority, National College, Senior Leadership Team, Governing Body, Being a Local or National Leader, Receiving help from a Local or National Leader, Other		
What, if any, support would you like to receive which you think would help keep you in your current position?	Adjusted wording	What support would you like to access which may benefit you in the role of headteacher?
	New question	If starting your career again, would you still choose to be a headteacher? Yes, No, Maybe, Don't know
Table 4:5 showing the questions asked in the pilot questionnaire, the questions asked in the actual questionnaire and the reasons for the amendments made		

Before proceeding with the actual survey, the pilot data was coded and inputted into SPSS, a recognised statistical software programme. This enabled the codes allocated to be tested along with the ease of inputting the data, and to see if there would be any problems with the analysis of the actual data (Bell, 2005). After discussing the feedback with the participants, making some alterations, testing the data inputting and analysis, it was felt that the actual questionnaire could proceed with confidence.

Sample for survey

The target population for this survey would have been all the headteachers in England. However, as this was not possible due to time and resource constraints, the accessible population selected was headteachers from five neighbouring local authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber region. Although

it is common for researchers to select a sample from a population usually due to the expense and time it would take to identify and contact everyone in the population, in this study it was feasible to sample the whole population selected (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). This meant that purposive sampling would be employed as not only were the respondents selected due to their demographic location, but also because of their profession (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). It was felt important to survey as many headteachers from as many school contexts as possible as this would give the best indication of support in the region, how it impacts on headship, and if the context or location of the school had any influence on that perceived impact. It is recognised that bias can be introduced to a survey at any point, but in making the sample the same as the population it was hoped that any elements of bias associated with the sample could be reduced (Connolly, 2007). The sample for this study consisted of 457 headteachers who were distributed amongst the five regions detailed in table 4:6 below.

Table 4:6 <u>Distribution of Questionnaires</u>				
Local Authority	Primary (including infants and junior)	Secondary (including special and behavioural schools)	Independent	Total Surveys Distributed
East Riding	123	21	7	151
Hull	71	20	4	95
North East Lincs	48	10	0	58
North Lincs	68	13	0	81
York	53	10	9	72
Totals	363	74	20	457
Table 4:6 illustrates the distribution of the questionnaires by type of school and by local authority				

Actual Survey

Having run the pilot and received confirmation from both my supervisor and the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee that the research could proceed, the actual survey was carried out (Bell, 2005). Having decided on the

method of distribution, a database was then created using Microsoft Access. The database was divided into categories of primary, secondary, independent and other for ease of management. To gather the necessary data, the website for each local authority was consulted and the information relating to schools in their area was printed off. Where necessary the school's own website was checked for the name of the headteacher. This was then entered into the database which ensured that the information for each school was up to date and complete. Although this was an extremely time consuming task, it was worth doing as there was then confidence that the information was correct and up to date. It also gave the best possibility of reaching the headteachers and gaining a positive response rate.

A personalised letter was attached to the front of each questionnaire, addressed directly to the headteacher. The purpose of the letter was to introduce myself to the headteacher, to present an outline of the study and how their involvement would add value to the research. The recipient was also invited to participate in a one to one interview to discuss the issues raised further. Assurances were given that all information provided by the respondent would be held only by the researcher and that it would be treated in the strictest of confidence with no reference being made to either the individual or the school in the written work. The letter also gave clear instructions on how to return the completed questionnaire, and for ease of return a self-addressed stamped envelope was enclosed (Babbie, 2008; Robert-Holmes, 2005). Although it would have been preferential to have personal contact with the every recipient as this might improve the response rate, this was not possible with a sample of 457 (Bell, 2005). It was, therefore, essential that the accompanying letter was as informative and inviting as possible. Great consideration was given to the wording of the letter to ensure that it would engage with the readers as much as possible so that they would continue reading and complete the questionnaire. The first paragraph is the most crucial to engage with and connect to the reader. By stating that their contribution would be valued, it would involve the

headteacher and they would feel that they were having an active part in the research and that their individual opinion mattered. To give confidence to the recipient and also to follow research guidelines, it stated that all the data referred to in the thesis would be anonymous as no individual or school would be recognisable in the published work (Bryman, 2008). It was also made clear in the letter that a summary of the research would be available to the reader on request as it is thought to be a fundamental part of research that 'participants have a right to know some of the outcomes of a study' (Busher & James, 2007:117).

The questionnaires were posted out by Royal Mail and white envelopes were used to give a professional impression. Each envelope was addressed to the named headteacher and was also stamped with a red confidential stamp. It was thought that by using these methods it would give the best chance of the questionnaire being delivered unopened to the headteacher and in so doing improve the odds for completion and return of the questionnaire. Careful consideration was given to each stage of producing the questionnaire and covering letter, the envelopes used and the route of delivery. First impressions count, and when receiving the documents it was important they gave a professional feel as this would give authority and credibility not only to the questionnaire but also to the research. It was hoped that by taking these measures it would generate the best chance of receiving a positive response to the research (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

The questionnaires were finalised following the pilot study and were printed at home. Attached to each questionnaire was a letter addressed to the headteacher at each school. This was done via a mail merge from the database which had been created in Microsoft Access. From the same database, labels were produced and affixed onto the envelopes. Along with the questionnaire a return stamped self-addressed envelope was also enclosed. Consideration was given as to when to post the questionnaires, avoiding busy school periods such as Christmas, holidays and exam times,

and also thinking about the day of the week the headteacher would receive the questionnaire (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The questionnaires were all posted out at the same time to try and reduce bias, although it is recognised that personal and school factors which may influence the completion of the questionnaire could not be controlled. Once the questionnaires had been posted, the response rate was monitored and detailed in table 4:7 below.

<u>Table 4:7</u> <u>Questionnaire sample and response rate</u>		
Number of Questionnaires Sent	Number of Questionnaires returned	Response rate
457	178	39%
Table 4:7 shows the sample and response rate of the questionnaires distributed		

This can be further broken down to see the response rate per local authority.

<u>Table 4:8</u> <u>Questionnaire sample and response rates</u>			
Local Authority Area	Number of questionnaires sent	Number of responses	Response rate
Hull	95	33	35%
East Riding	151	73	48%
North East Lincs	58	21	36%
North Lincs	81	32	40%
York	72	19	26%
Totals	457	178	39%
Table 4:8 shows the sample distributed and the response rate per local authority			

Interview Research Methods

Pilot Interviews

Pilot interviews were carried out to practice interview techniques before conducting the actual interviews as interviewing can be seen as a craft which improves with practice (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The pilots would also give an opportunity to trial the questions and assess their relevance to the study, and also to allow the recording equipment to be tested. Two pilot interviews were carried out which were recorded and although they were not fully transcribed, notes were taken of the main themes which emerged. Rather than producing a detailed interview schedule for the pilot interviews with formal questions, bullet points were listed under each heading to use as prompts to ask appropriate questions. This method worked especially well in the pilot interviews and so was adopted in the actual interviews. A digital recorder was used to tape the interviews and was relatively easy to operate. Following the pilot interviews, the actual interviews were carried out.

Sample for interviews

Of the 178 respondents, 55 headteachers indicated that they would like to be interviewed as part of the research. Qualitative research is often about the quality of the research and not the quantity of participants. It would be unfeasible to interview 55 headteachers in the context of this study. However, interviewing three headteachers from each of the five regions of the study would generate fifteen one-to-one interviews in total, which was felt to be a reasonable number of interviews to carry out. The number is sufficient to give a representation of views from across the region and will allow for comparisons to be made between local authorities and types of school. Having decided on the number of interviews to carry out, the sample of headteachers to interview then had to be selected. There were several criteria which could have been used when selecting the sample, such

as age, gender, length of time being a headteacher, type of school, satisfaction with the role, and each one would have its benefits and limitations. The education sector is becoming more fragmented, and it is important that the support mechanisms of all schools and headteachers in the area are considered if an accurate understanding of the current role of headship is to be gained, and how this research can contribute to the sustainability of the role. The intention was, therefore, to interview headteachers from as many different types of school as possible. On analysing the questionnaires for interview, it became apparent that there was a lot of diversity within the region and that the majority of school type was represented. By also taking into consideration the gender and length of time a headteacher had been in post together with the type of school, it should ensure that the research reflects a fair representation of the region. Satisfaction with headship and the desire to stay in the role of headteacher or move on to other things were also considered. The interest of the study is in the support experienced headteachers receive and how this can affect the sustainability of the role, it was, therefore, decided to interview respondents who have been a headteacher for three years or more.

Of the 55 headteachers who expressed an interest in being interviewed, 12 had been a headteacher for less than three years and so therefore were not considered for interview. It was interesting to note, however, that of these 12, 3 were unsure if they would choose headship again and 3 others were disenchanted with the position. Of the remaining 43 who were eligible for interview, 6 indicated that they may choose headship again and 3 did not know, leaving the majority of 34 saying they would choose headship again if starting their career again. 3 eligible headteachers indicated that they were disenchanted with the position, and 6 did not think that headship was the role they thought it would be.

The criteria used for selecting the headteachers to interview was Local Authority, School Type, School Size, Gender of Head, Age of Head, Time as a Head, Would choose to be a headteacher again, Desire to leave position

and reasons why. By taking into account all of these criteria, it would ensure that a balance of both views and demographics were represented. Using this process, the following headteachers were selected for interview as shown in table 4:9 below.

Table 4:9 Showing Headteachers selected for Interview								
Sch Code	School Type	School Size	Gender of head	Age of Head	Time as a head	Wants to leave	Reasons	Be Head again?
A1	Academy co-ed secondary	1248 pupils 405 fsm	Female	41-45	7 years 2 nd headship Mentor	No	Very satisfied with role	Yes
A2	Community co-ed primary	220 pupils 90 fsm	Male	41-45	6 years 1 st headship	No	Very satisfied with role	Yes
A3	BSED sp school co-ed secondary	58 pupils 40 fsm	Female	41-45	4 years 1 st headship	No	Disenchanted with support but satisfied with role	Don't know
B1	Voluntary cont. co-ed primary	48 pupils 2 fsm	Male	36-40	4 years 1 st headship	Yes within 3-5 yrs	Disenchanted with role	Yes
B2	Community secondary – all girls	1248 pupils u/n fsm	Female	41-45	7 years 2 nd headship	No	Very satisfied with role	Yes
B3	Independent secondary	826 pupils 0 fsm	Male	41-45	4 years 1 st headship	No	Very satisfied with role	Yes
C1	Academy co-ed secondary	900 pupils 288 fsm	Female	56-60	12 years	0-2 yrs retire	Satisfied with role	May be
C2	Voluntary cont. co-ed primary	275 pupils 5 fsm	Male	61-65	24 years 2 nd headship	No	Very satisfied with role (did not interview)	Yes
C3	Community co-ed primary	576 pupils 270 fsm	Female	51-55	13 years Various headships	No	Came back into headship (did not interview)	Yes
D1	Community co-ed primary	340 pupils 98 fsm	Female	51-55	19 years 3 rd headship Mentor	Not really	Never considered leaving	Yes
D2	2 schools both vol cont. co-ed primary faith schools	157 pupils 25 fsm and 29 pupils 1 fsm	Female	46-50	7 years 1 st & 2 nd headship Mentor	No	Satisfied with role	Don't know
D3	Academy co-ed secondary	410 pupils 53 fsm	Male	51-55	8 years 1 st headship LLE	No	Satisfied with role though not job thought it would be	May be
E1	Faith co-ed senior	906 pupils 45 fsm	Male	51-55	10 years 1 st headship NLE, Mentor	No	Very satisfied with role	Yes
E2	Independent co-ed primary	150 pupils 0 fsm	Female	46-50	20 years 4 th headship	Yes	To do something else	Yes
E3	Community co-ed primary	350 pupils 12 fsm	Female	56-60	16 years 2 nd headship LLE	Yes	Retirement –try something new	Yes
fsm = free school meals								
Table 4:9 shows with character information about each headteacher selected for interview together with contextual information about their current school								

Other reasons were also taken into consideration when choosing the interviewees.

School A1 This headteacher is a mentor to other headteachers and would choose the role of headship again. This is a large, newly built school, so it would be interesting to understand the forms of support received, and how this affected the transition into the new school.

School A2 This headteacher has indicated that he is very satisfied with the position of headteacher and the role of headship is what he thought it would be. He states that he has no intention of leaving but if he did it would be to try something new. Interviewing this head may give some indication to the forms of support which have helped him to enjoy the role of headship.

School A3 This is a co-ed secondary special school for children with BSED (Behavioural, Social and Emotional Difficulties). The headteacher has indicated that although she is very satisfied with her role and the support of her school, this being for the children, the staff, parents and carers, she is very dissatisfied with the support received from the local authority. She does not know if she would take on the role of headteacher again. It is important to understand the support special schools receive, and how it compares to that of mainstream schools.

School B1 From his responses on the questionnaire, this headteacher seems very unsatisfied with his current role. He has indicated that he is disenchanted with the position and has ambition to do something else. It is also noteworthy that he would still choose to become a headteacher again. It would be good to hear his views on what could be altered to help him sustain his career and maybe stay for longer than the 3-5 years he has indicated.

School B2 This headteacher indicates that she is very satisfied with her role, is not thinking of leaving and plans to stay as a head for 10+ years.

Interviewing the head from a maintained all girls' school will give a direct comparison to the views of the headteacher from an independent school in the same area.

School B3 This headteacher indicates that he is very satisfied with his current role, it is the job he thought it was going to be and although he sometimes thinks about how long he will remain as a headteacher he is not thinking of leaving for at least 10+ years. He has indicated that leaving will be because of a desire to try something new, but contradicts this by saying that it will probably be to undertake a second headship.

School C1 This headteacher has been at the same school for 12 years. As it is now an academy, it means that she must have seen the school through its transition. Gaining an understanding of the support she received during the transition to becoming an academy will provide data to compare with other schools which are not academies. The head is also unsure of any support requirements which may be of benefit to her and she is also unsure as to whether or not she would choose to be a headteacher again.

School C2 Although this headteacher is approaching retirement age, he is not thinking of leaving, at least not for 6-9 years. He has indicated that he is very satisfied with the job and would choose to be a headteacher if starting his career again. This appears to be a very positive individual who loves his job but must also have experienced lots of changes to the role of headship over his 24 years of being a headteacher. It will be interesting to learn how he perceives headship now as compared to when he started, and to understand what forms of support have been the most helpful over the years.

Despite numerous attempts to contact this headteacher, an interview could not be arranged.

School C3 This headteacher has undertaken 2 substantive headships and 5 interim headships in challenging schools for a LA. It would appear that she has come back to being a headteacher after doing advisor roles from a

LA. She is satisfied with the role of headteacher and is not thinking of leaving, although would consider an interesting opportunity. This headteacher would be interesting to interview as she has lots of experience of being a head in different schools and has now chosen to come back and be a headteacher of a particular school. Gaining an understanding for her return to headship when other heads are considering leaving would be valuable for this study. ***Again, this headteacher was not interviewed although several attempts were made to arrange the interview.***

School D1 This headteacher is fairly satisfied with her current role and although she may leave in 3-5 years, she is not really considering leaving. She would like to network with other headteachers who face similar difficulties. It would be good to understand what these difficulties are and how she overcomes these at present. This school has been chosen because the head has shown signs of leaving, but there may be opportunities available which may encourage her to stay in position longer.

School D2 Although the role of headship is not what this headteacher thought it was going to be, she is satisfied with the role and although she often considers how long she will stay as a headteacher, she is not thinking of leaving. One reason why she is staying long-term (10+ years) is due to financial commitments. Being the head of two schools adds an interesting dynamic, and it may be that there are specific support mechanisms which are needed to cope with this arrangement. It would definitely be valuable to gain a more in-depth view of this.

School D3 This headteacher has indicated that he is satisfied with his current role, but it is not the job he thought it was going to be. He intends to remain in his current position for the next 6-9 years, and has just been designated to be a Local Leader of Education (LLE). He has frustrations with Ofsted and HMCI, would welcome local and regional networks with other headteachers and more support from the NCTL. This is a fairly small academy compared to the others whose heads are to be interviewed. By

interviewing headteachers from academies in different areas and of different sizes, it will enable comparisons to be made of the support which is not only offered but is welcomed and valued.

School E1 When this headteacher does leave, it will be to try something new, maybe executive headship. He is a National Leader of Education (NLE), a mentor to other headteachers, and would again choose to be a headteacher. This head fits the criteria of what the government thinks a headteacher should be. It will be interesting to learn how he views current government policy and to understand how he thinks he fits into the headship model.

School E2 This headteacher is thinking of leaving headship within the next 0-2 years and it seems that one underlying reason could be tensions between the junior and senior school management and support. This is an interesting dynamic. She also seems to have had little experience of support from other areas, and it will be interesting to learn why.

School E3 This headteacher has been selected for interview because it is a medium-large primary school and although she is satisfied with her role of headteacher, it is not the job she thought it was going to be. Having been a headteacher for 16 years, she will have experienced lots of forms of support. Understanding what types of support were the most useful will be valuable for this study.

In order to give continuity to the above references, in the analysis the schools will be coded SA1 being school A1 and the headteachers from those schools will be referred to as HTSA1, being headteacher from school A1.

Actual Interviews

The headteachers selected for interview were contacted to arrange appointments. In the first instance an email was sent saying that they had been selected for interview and I would be contacting them shortly to arrange a convenient time to visit them at their school. This would refresh the headteacher with the nature of the research and also prepare them to expect a telephone call. Even though these measures had been taken, it still took several calls to speak to some of the headteachers and arrange the interviews. It did prove impossible to arrange interviews at two of the schools selected. Numerous phone calls, emails and letters were sent to the headteachers of the two schools but to no avail. Unfortunately due to the criteria of headteachers having been in position for three years or more, there were no other alternative headteachers to contact within the specific local authority area. As this study is looking at the support of headteachers across five different local authorities and having secured sufficient interviews in the other areas, it was decided not to make up the interviews with headteachers from other areas as this would not add to the study. Therefore only thirteen of the intended fifteen interviews were actually carried out.

Arriving early for each appointment enabled the school to be observed and the culture and feel of the school community could begin to be understood. On leaving each appointment, time was spent making notes about the headteacher and any comments they may have said which were not recorded. This would help contextualise and reflect on the data when analysing the interview at a later date as a transcript alone can lose the dynamics of a situation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). A one hour appointment had been requested, and the headteachers interviewed were very generous with their time, allowing at least the hour asked for. Some of the headteachers wanted to know about the research before the interview started, whereas others waited until the end to enquire. Before starting each interview, an overview of the questions to be asked was given to the headteacher and it was made clear that they did not have to answer a

question if they did not want to. Each interview started in the same way asking about the journey into headship after which they all went in different directions, but all of the themes and topics were covered. There were differences in the amount of input and questioning which had to be done during each interview. After being asked the first question and given the overview, one headteacher talked non-stop for fifteen minutes, whereas others needed more prompting and input. At the end of the interview, the headteachers were thanked for their time. Several gave a tour of their school which gave me more insight into the environment. During these tours the headteachers would continue with the themes discussed. This data was not recorded but notes were made about it as soon as was possible.

Although Atlas.ti was used as one method to analyse the interview transcripts, manual analysis was also undertaken. This was to ensure that care was taken not to colonize the data and to ensure that the 'meaning and intention' of the interviewee was correctly reported and analysed (Bryman, 2008:134). After transcribing the interviews, the recordings were listened to again whilst reading the transcripts. This enabled the intonations and nuances to be appreciated as there is a danger that once the interview has been transcribed meanings can be flattened and true significance lost (Bryman, 2008). Copies of the fully transcribed interviews were sent to each headteacher in order for them to validate the transcript. A letter was attached asking the headteacher to inform me if they were not happy with any elements of the interview and if there were any parts of it that they did not want me to refer to in my written work. By doing this it gave the participants time for reflection on the interview and of what they said. It also provided descriptive validation from the participant of my version of the interview which would increase the credibility of the research and its findings. A summary of the research was also offered to each interviewee as not only is it thought necessary that participants should know the findings of a study, but it allows for the participant to validate the interpretation of the data (Busher & James, 2007; Bryman, 2008). Interviewing headteachers from

different types of schools with different ages, different lengths of headship and different perceptions/experiences of the position enabled comparison and contrasts to be made of the support headteachers received or would like to receive across a wide geographical area. The analysis of the data will also contribute to the knowledge of sustainability of headship in this region.

Summary of chapter 4

This chapter has given a detailed account of how the surveys and the interviews were carried out, how the samples were selected, and how the final research instruments utilized were constructed. The methods used have been discussed in detail, not only specifying how the research was conducted, but also giving justification for the methods used and for any changes made during the research process. The next chapter will discuss the findings from both the questionnaires.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Introduction and chapter outline

The previous chapter considered the ethical considerations and implications of the research and gave a comprehensive account of how the survey was managed from pilot, to sample selection through to conducting the actual survey. This was followed by a similarly detailed discussion of the interview process, beginning with the pilot interviews, the rationale behind the sample selection, and how the actual interviews were carried out. This chapter will give an analysis of the questionnaire data with the following chapters, six and seven, discussing the findings from the interview data.

A total of 457 questionnaires were sent out to headteachers in East Riding, Hull, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and York. Of these, 178 were returned, representing a response rate of 39%. The table below, 5:1, shows the number of questionnaires sent out to each local authority, together with how many per authority were returned.

Table 5:1 Q8 showing the questionnaire distribution and response rate per local authority

		Sent	%of population	Returned	Response Rate
Local Authority	Hull	95	21%	33	35%
	East Riding	151	33%	73	48%
	North East Lincolnshire	58	13%	21	38%
	North Lincolnshire	81	17%	32	40%
	York	72	16%	19	27%
	Total	457	100%	178	39%

Table 5:1 illustrates the number of questionnaires originally sent out. A questionnaire was sent out to every headteacher in each local authority group above, and the percentage of the total population sent to each authority is listed. The number of replies for each local authority is listed together with a response rate represented as a percentage.

From this it can be determined that the sample for this study is $n=178$. Having established the sample for this study, the data from the returned questionnaires can now be analysed.

Schools

Having confirmed the number of schools which form the sample, analysis was required to understand not only the type of school but also the status of the school by region. This enables comparisons to be made not only by region, but also by type and status of the schools, giving a much more in-depth view of the region surveyed. As can be seen from the following table 5:2, the majority of schools who replied were primary schools, representing 71.3% of the total sample. If the infant and junior schools were included in the primary figure, this would represent 82.6% of the schools in the sample being concerned with the education of children below the age of eleven.

Table 5:2 Q 5 The types of school in the regions

Type of School				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Infant	14	7.9	7.9	7.9
Junior	6	3.4	3.4	11.2
Primary	127	71.3	71.3	82.6
Secondary	24	13.5	13.5	96.1
Special	4	2.2	2.2	98.3
All through - 3-18	3	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	178	100.0	100.0	

Table 5:2 illustrates the number of schools per type who replied to the survey

$n = 178$

In order to gain an understanding of how these schools are distributed amongst the region, the following table 5:3 shows the breakdown of types of schools in each local authority.

Table 5:3 Q 5 The types of school per local authority

		Local Authority					Total
		Hull City Council	East Riding	North East Lincs	North Lincs	York City Council	
Types of School	Infant	0	6	2	4	2	14
	Junior	0	1	0	4	1	6
	Primary	25	56	16	19	11	127
	Secondary	7	5	3	5	4	24
	Special	1	3	0	0	0	4
	All through - 3-18	0	2	0	0	1	3
Total		33	73	21	32	19	178

Table 5:3 illustrates the number of schools per type per local authority who replied to the survey. $n = 178$

Table 5:3 confirms that within each local authority, the majority of respondents are headteachers of primary schools. Hull and York had the most responses from secondary schools, representing 21% of their total return. 15% of respondents from North Lincolnshire were secondary school headteachers, and 14% from the North East Lincolnshire cohort. East Riding had the highest return rate overall, again with more respondents from primary than secondary schools. However as shown in table 5:4 below, when the responses are compared to the original distribution of questionnaires, North Lincolnshire and York show a higher percentage of secondary schools having responded compared with primary schools.

Table 5:4 A breakdown of the primary and secondary school response rates by authority

Local Authority	Primary Sent	Primary Returned	Primary Response Rate by %	Secondary Sent	Secondary Returned	Secondary Response rate by %
East Riding	123	63	51%	21	5	23%
Hull	71	25	35%	20	7	35%
NE Lincs	48	18	37%	10	3	30%
N Lincs	68	28	41%	13	5	68%
York	53	14	26%	10	4	40%

Table 5:4 illustrates by count the number of questionnaires distributed and returned by primary and secondary schools in each by local authority and by percentage the response rate for each category of school per authority

Respondents were asked to indicate which category their school was in. The following table 5:5 gives a breakdown of the status of schools within each local authority.

Table 5:5 Q7 The status of schools per local authority

		Local Authority					Total
		Hull Council	East Riding	North East Lincs	North Lincs	York City Council	
School status	Faith	3	7	1	4	3	18
	Independent	0	5	0	0	4	9
	Special	0	3	0	1	0	4
	Academy	1	2	5	3	0	11
	Community	26	38	13	20	10	107
	Foundation	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Voluntary Aided	1	1	0	0	1	3
	Voluntary Controlled	1	16	1	4	1	23
	Other	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total		33	73	21	32	19	178

Table 5:5 illustrates the different status of schools across the region, and how many of each type of school responded per local authority.
n = 178

From this it can be seen that schools with a status of community, faith and voluntary controlled responded from all five of the local authorities surveyed. Academies were represented in four of the five local authorities, two authorities had independent schools and two had special schools in the sample. Foundation schools were only found in one local authority.

Headteachers

To gain an understanding of the headteachers in the sample, questions were asked about age, gender, length of headship and which headship was currently being undertaken. As shown in chart 5:a below, most of the headteachers who replied were aged over 40, with the largest category being the 51-55 age bracket, followed by the 56-60 age group.

Chart 5:a Q2 showing age ranges of respondent headteachers

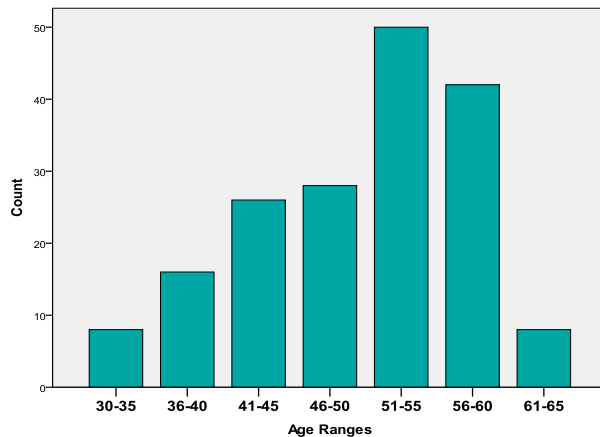


Chart 5:a illustrates the age groups of the headteachers in the sample $n = 178$

There are eight headteachers in the 30-35 age group and sixteen in the 36-40 age group which together represent 28% of the cohort. So although 100 headteachers of the sample are aged over 50 and this would suggest an ageing headteacher population, it must be noted that 78 of respondents are under the age of 50 years old. This can be translated as 56% of respondents being over the age of 50 whilst 44% are under the age of 50 years of age.

Of the headteachers who responded, 116 (65.17%) were female and 62 (34.83%) were male. This is illustrated by percentage on the following pie chart, chart 5:b, below.

Chart 5:b Q1 showing the distribution of headteachers by gender

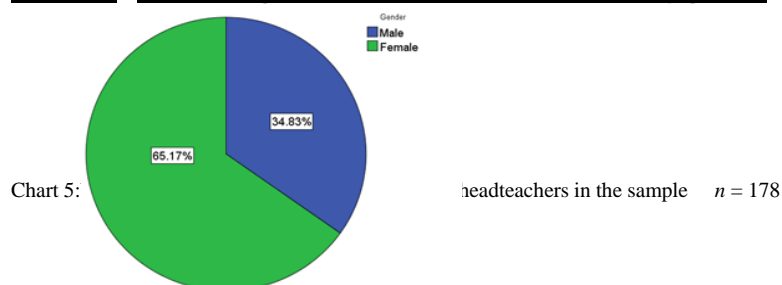


Chart 5:

headteachers in the sample $n = 178$

When the gender of the headteachers was compared to the types of school, the majority of infant, junior and primary schools have a female headteacher, whereas the majority of headteachers in the secondary schools are male as can be seen in chart 5:c below. Although the chart indicates that the special schools which responded mostly have a female headteacher and the all-through 3-18 schools mostly had a male headteacher, it must be taken into account that only four special schools and three all-through schools took part in the research and therefore more research would need to be done on these types of schools in order to establish any pattern on the gender and headship.

Chart 5:c The gender of headteachers by type of school

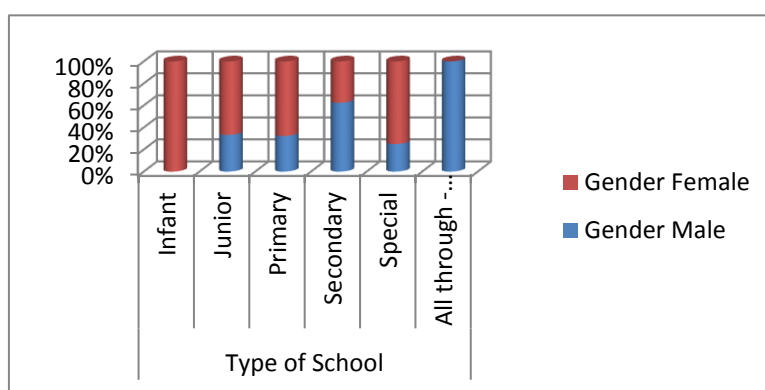


Chart 6:3 illustrates by percentage the gender of the headteachers by type of school

n = 178

The majority of respondents, 62.3%, were in their first headship, and 31.4% were in their second. The remaining 6.3% were in their third or more headship as can be seen below in chart 5:d.

Chart 5:d Q4 Which headship are you currently undertaking?

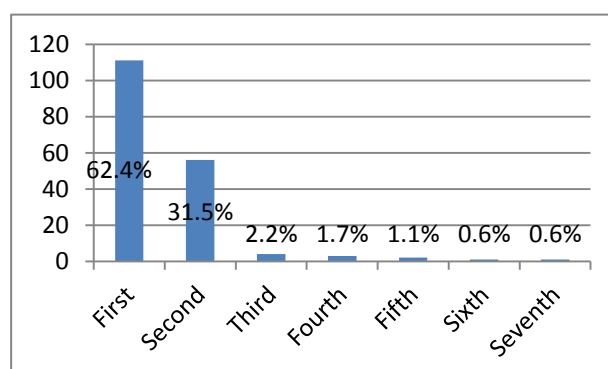


Chart 5:d illustrates by count and percentage which headship is being undertaken by the respondents

n = 178

The length of time a respondent had been a headteacher ranged from 0 years (i.e., being in their first year of headship) to 27 years. The mean length of time being a headteacher was 7.84 years. The following table 6:6 shows the length of time a respondent has been a headteacher compared to which headship is currently being undertaken.

Table 5:6 Q3 & 4 Which headship is currently being undertaken and how long have you been a headteacher?

	Headship being undertaken							Total
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	
Length of time in headship								
0-3 years	42	5	0	0	0	0	0	47
4-7 years	38	14	1	0	0	0	0	53
8-11 years	15	16	1	1	0	0	0	33
12-15 years	10	10	1	0	2	0	0	23
16-20 years	5	7	1	1	0	0	1	15
21-25 years	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	5
26+ years	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Totals	111	56	4	3	2	1	1	178

Table 5:6 illustrates by count which headship is being undertaken by the respondents and the total length of time they have been a headteacher *n* = 178

Headship

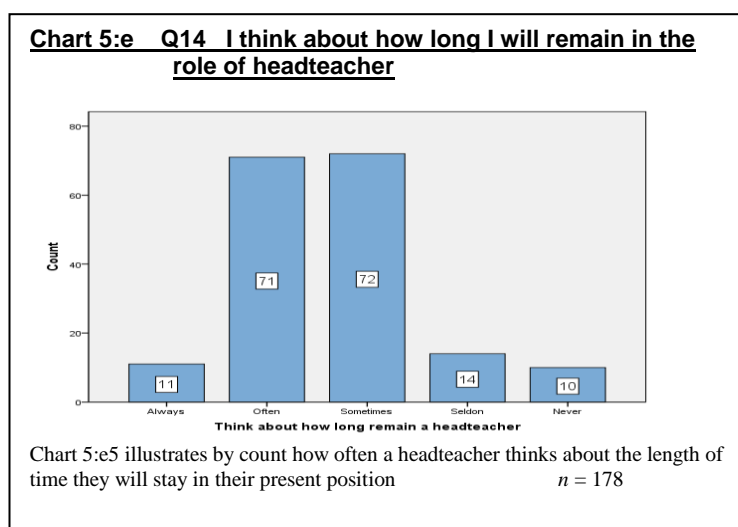
Questions were then asked about the role of headteacher and perceptions of the job. The answers given, as shown in table 5:7 below, indicate that 77.5% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their role of headteacher and 67.5% went into headship with a realistic view of what the job was going to be.

Table 5:7 Q12 & 13 The role and perceptions of headship

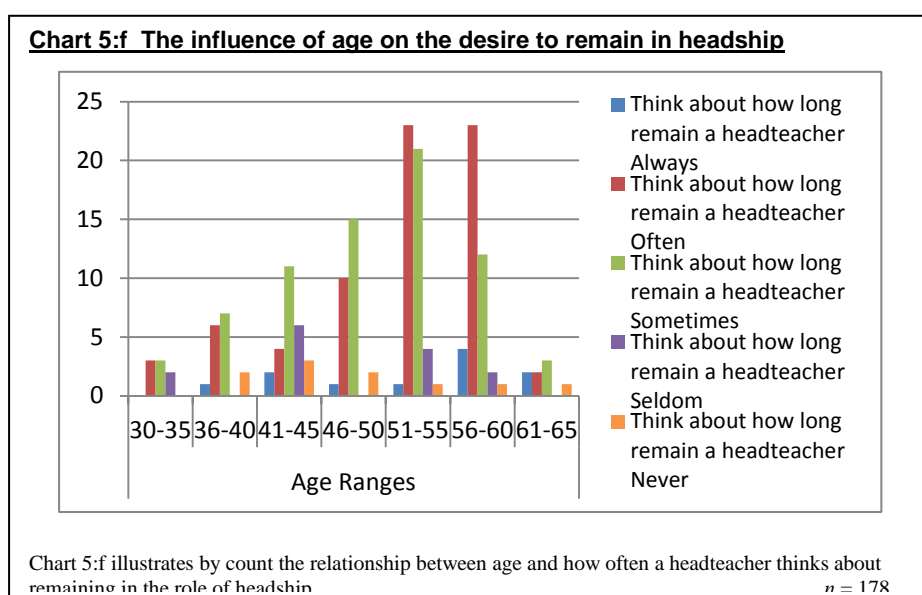
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Answer given	Totals
I am very satisfied with my current role of being a headteacher	27.5%	50%	13.5%	6.75%	0	2.25%	100%
The role of headteacher is the job I thought it was going to be	19%	48.5%	11.5%	17.5%	3%	0.5%	100%

Table 5:7 illustrates by percentage the impressions of headteachers on the role and their perceptions of headship *n* = 178

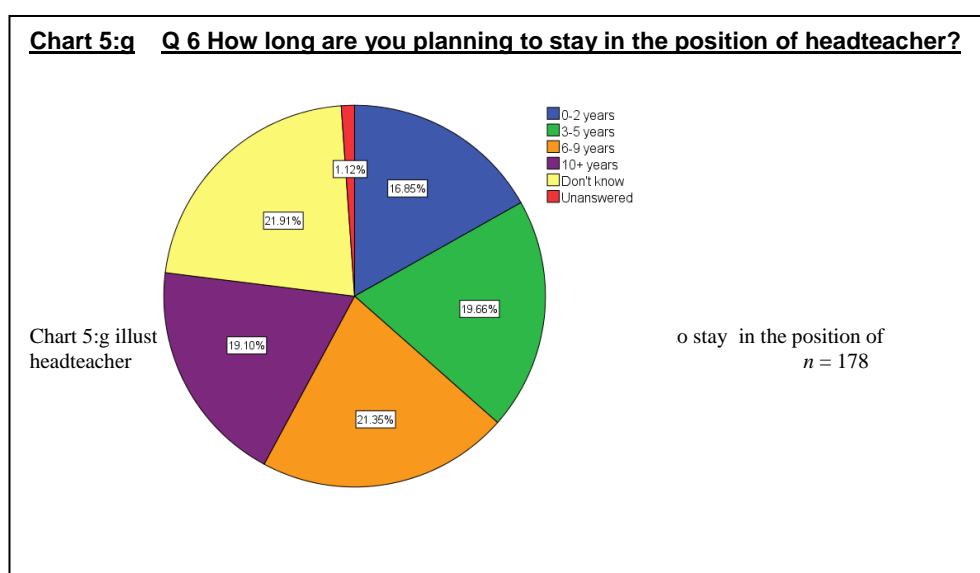
When asked if they ever think of leaving headship, most respondents did spend some time thinking of how long they would stay in position, with only ten headteachers saying that they never thought about it.



As can be seen from chart 5:e above, eleven headteachers indicated that they were always thinking of leaving. The majority either often or sometimes thought of leaving headship, leaving fourteen who seldom thought of leaving their current position. A cross-tabulation was carried out to see if there was a relationship between the age of the headteacher and how often they think about staying in position. The results are shown in chart 5:f below.



Although it could not be said for any age category that leaving headship is a constant thought, it would appear that all ages think about their current role and how long they will stay in post. Unsurprisingly, the data suggests that with age, the frequency in which headteachers think about leaving their current role increases. 54% of respondents in the 56-60 age group and 46% in the 51-55 age group indicated that they often thought about leaving their role, whereas in the 46-50 and 41-45 age groups, more headteachers indicated that they sometimes rather than often thought of leaving. For the older age groups, considering their position could be due to thoughts of retirement. However, concerns are raised about the stability of headship when the middle age groups indicate that 26% often and 48% sometimes think about remaining in their current position. This concern is carried through when looking at the younger headteachers as the majority of this group are again either often or sometimes considering their position. However, when asked how long they are actually planning to stay in the position of headteacher, the results are fairly evenly distributed as shown on chart 5:g below.



The pie chart shows by percentage how long the respondents are planning to stay in the position of headteacher, and the results would suggest that there is not going to be a mass exodus of headteachers as a third plan to

stay for between zero and five years, and just over a third plan to stay in position between six and over ten years. This does, however, leave just under a third not knowing how long they plan to stay in the role of headship, which could give cause for concern. However, an alternative perspective emerges when looking at how age affects the length of time the headteachers are planning on staying in position, as illustrated in table 5:8 below.

Table 5:8 How long are you planning to stay in the position of headteacher?

		Age Ranges							Total
		30-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61-65	
How long are you planning to stay in the position of headteacher?	0-2 years	0	1	0	1	1	22	5	30
	3-5 years	0	2	0	1	15	15	2	35
	6-9 years	0	1	1	12	21	2	1	38
	10+ years	2	8	14	6	4	0	0	34
	Don't know	6	4	11	8	8	2	0	39
	99	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Total		8	16	26	28	50	42	8	178

Table 5:8 illustrates by age range cross tabulation how long the respondents plan to stay in the role of headteacher

n=178

As could be expected, the majority of those aged 56 and over are planning on staying in position for between 0 to 5 years, with only three respondents intending to stay for over six years, two undecided and one not having answered. It has been widely reported that headteachers are taking early retirement, but the above data would suggest that the majority in the early retirement age bracket of 46-55 are planning to stay in headship for at least six to nine years, with a further ten intending to stay for over ten years, representing 55% of the cohort. However, eighteen heads were looking to leave within five years and sixteen were undecided. Of the eight youngest headteachers who responded to the questionnaire, only two plan to stay in headship for over ten years with the other six not knowing how long they will stay in the role. The next youngest age group of 36-40 year olds, which are still considered young for headteachers, are also undecided about their future. Half of the respondents in this group indicated that they would stay in headship for over ten years. However, a quarter did not know how long they would stay in the role, one was planning to leave within two years, two

would stay a little longer and one planned to leave after six to nine years. This could be of concern as it may indicate that young headteachers are unsure of the role and further research around the vulnerability of young headteachers and their sustainability in headship could be of benefit to the profession. In the 41-45 age group, the majority intended to stay for over ten years, but again a high proportion, 42%, did not know how long they would stay in the role. Based on these results it would appear that there is a threat to the sustainability of headship as, regardless of age, a quarter of all the respondents did not know how long they intended to stay in their current role. These findings give further justification to this study as it could be that the support headteachers receive may impact on their decision to remain in position.

Question 16 asked about the motivations of the headteachers who were thinking of leaving their current role and their answers are shown below in table 5:9.

Table 5:9 Q 16 If you are planning on leaving your current role, what is the major influence on this decision?

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Retirement	70	39.3	39.3	39.3
Disenchantment with position	16	9.0	9.0	48.3
Desire to try something new	15	8.4	8.4	56.7
I am not thinking of leaving	46	25.8	25.8	82.6
Something else	16	9.0	9.0	91.6
Not applicable	2	1.1	1.1	92.7
Missing Data	13	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total	178	100.0	100.0	

Table 5:9 illustrates by both frequency and per cent the main reason why respondents were thinking about leaving their current role
n=178

Fifteen respondents did not answer this question, but of those who did 39.3% were leaving due to retirement, 8.4% wanted to try something new and 25% were not thinking of leaving. 9% indicated that they were disenchanting with the role.

When asked in question seventeen what they planned to do after headship, 50% did not answer the question. Of the people who did answer, 7% wanted to retire with 1.7% considering early retirement. 16.3% of the respondents intended to stay in the educational sector in some capacity and only one person indicated that they would like to go into research. The rest envisioned a variety of pursuits ranging from starting their own business, doing charity work, cooking, reading, travelling and generally enjoying life. The full results can be seen in table 5:10 below.

Table 5:10 Q17 If you are planning on leaving your current role, what do you intend to do next?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Retire	14	7.9	7.9	7.9
Early retirement	3	1.7	1.7	9.6
Travel, garden, cook, enjoy life more	17	9.6	9.6	19.1
Educational Consultant	11	6.2	6.2	25.3
Headteacher of a bigger school	8	4.5	4.5	29.8
Charity work	3	1.7	1.7	31.5
OFSTED/inspector	8	4.5	4.5	36.0
Start own business	2	1.1	1.1	37.1
Don't know	14	7.9	7.9	44.9
Become a vicar	1	.6	.6	45.5
Teaching/tutoring	2	1.1	1.1	46.6
Admin/other job	5	2.8	2.8	49.4
Research	1	.6	.6	50.0
Missing Data	89	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	178	100.0	100.0	

Table 5:10 illustrates what the respondents intended to do on leaving their current position $n = 178$

Question eighteen asked the respondents who had thought of leaving but had decided to stay in their role, to specify the major reasons behind this decision. Of the 178 in the sample, only 49 respondents answered this question. Ten said they were staying in the role because they loved working with children and wanted to make a difference. Five felt loyalty to staff and wanted to support the school. Five saw a lack of opportunity beyond headship and did not feel qualified to undertake another role. Even though there were frustrations with the role, nine headteachers indicated that they

liked or loved the job and didn't want to do anything else. Four were going to stay until they were 'totally fed up with the job' and only one stated that they were too close to retirement to get another job. Fifteen respondents indicated that the main reason they were staying in their position was due to financial commitments.

Question nineteen asked the headteachers if they had any responsibilities outside of their headship. Seventy five respondents answered this question, representing 42% of the cohort. From this it is not known if the other 58% of headteachers did not answer this question because they do not have any other responsibilities outside of school or because they just chose not to answer the question. Having an option for the respondents to indicate that they do not have any outside responsibilities would have given some clarity and on reflection should have been included on the questionnaire. From those who did answer, 57% indicated that they had one official responsibility other than headship whilst the remaining 43% undertook two or more other roles.

Table 5:11 Q19 Headteacher responsibilities outside of school

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Local Leader of Ed	12	6.7	6.7	6.7
National Leader Ed	0	0	0	6.7
Mentor	16	9.0	9.0	15.7
Coach	3	1.7	1.7	17.4
Other	12	6.7	6.7	24.2
two roles	17	9.6	9.6	33.7
three roles	11	6.2	6.2	39.9
four roles	4	2.2	2.2	42.1
No answer	103	57.9	57.9	100.0
Total	178	100.0	100.0	

Table 5:11 shows by count and percentage the responsibilities headteachers have outside school

The effectiveness of support

Question 20 was a complex question, listing various forms of support. It asked the respondents to rate how effective they had found each category they had experienced. Alongside each question there was an option to

indicate they had not experienced a certain type of support. The results of this question can be seen below in Chart 5:h.

Chart 5:h Q20 How effective have any of these forms of support been to you?

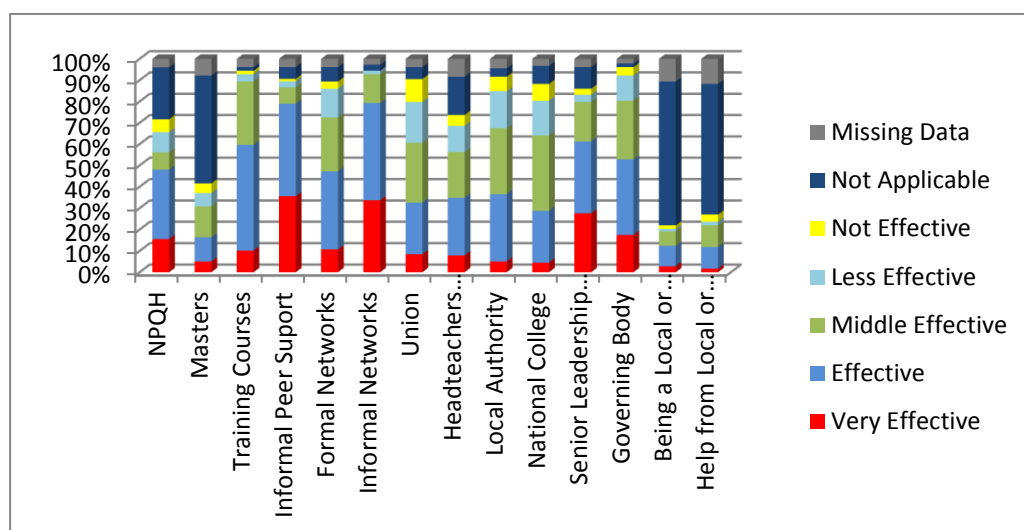


Chart 5:h shows by percentage how the respondents rated the effectiveness of various forms of support
n = 178

These results indicate that the most effective forms of support are informal peer support and informal networks, and when combined with the effective option this accounted for over 80% of the cohort. It is interesting to note that informal networks were perceived to be much more effective than formal networks which only 50% found to be very effective or effective. The respondents indicated that the next most effective form of support was their senior leadership team followed by the governing body of the school. All headteachers have a senior leadership team, however 14% of respondents did not consider their senior leadership team in terms of support. This contrasts with only 4% either not answering or indicating that the question was not applicable when considering their governing body. Only 10% found training courses to be very effective, with 50% finding them to be effective. Not all headteachers had had experience of the NPQH, but of those who had the majority felt that it had been effective or very effective. Over half of respondents had not experienced taking a masters qualification. Of the seventy four respondents who had, 39% found the support given by the

qualification to be effective or very effective, 35% indicated that it had been moderately effective, and 26% felt that it had not been effective at all. External organisations such as unions, professional associations, local authorities and the national college all received very similar results with around 30% of respondents finding them to offer very effective or effective forms of support. The range of headteachers who found them to be middle effective or average was 25-35%. This leaves a fairly high percentage of headteachers who are not finding these organisations to be effective in the support they offer. The following chart shows a break down per authority of how the headteachers perceived the effectiveness of the support received from their local authority.

Chart 5:i The effectiveness of the local authority by each local authority

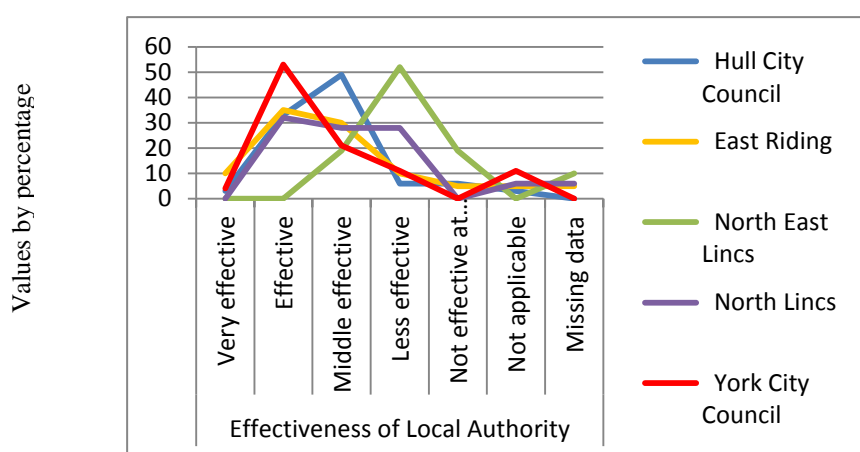


Chart 5:i illustrates by percentage how effective headteachers in each local authority found the support they received from their local authority. *n* = 178

The authority which appears to be the most effective is York City Council as the majority indicated that the authority was either very effective or effective. East Riding had a spread of results with most falling into effective or middle effective, whilst North Lincolnshire saw a greater spread which also took into account less effective. Hull had a steady rise which peaks in middle effective, and the authority which appears to be the least effective based on these results is North East Lincolnshire. These are interesting results as

the organisations in question primarily exist to offer support to schools and headteachers and these findings would suggest that they are failing in that provision. However, it must be noted that during the time this research was being carried out, there was a shift in the role the local authority played in education which dramatically changed in line with government policy. It could be that if funding was being withdrawn the local authority was unable to provide the support required, or it could be that the support provided was inadequate. The role of local authorities providing support will be followed up in interviews in order to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of the support they provide and if this is something which has changed over recent months. Again this gives justification to this study questioning the forms of support headteachers not only receive but those they would like to access. Determining the support headteachers would find useful and feeding this back to organisations in a position to provide this support could aid the sustainability of headship.

The vast majority of respondents indicated that they had no experience of local and national leaders of education, either in receiving support from them or from being one themselves. Of those who had received support from a local or national leader, 43% found that support to be either effective or very effective. 56% of those who were either local or national leaders of education found the support they received through their role to be effective or very effective.

Question 21 was an open question inviting respondents to specify the kinds of support they would like to be able to access which they thought may benefit them in the role of headteacher. Three main topics arose from the answers given. The first was a need to have more support with paperwork, human resources, building management and maintenance: 'a magic wand to deal with all the paperwork!'; 'having model documents and procedures which would save everyone else re-inventing the wheel'; 'support with building management and consideration'; 'a full time business manager'. The headteachers who indicated that they had a business manager to take

care of these issues appeared to feel more supported than those who had to undertake these tasks themselves. 'I feel well supported in my context by my school business manager and governors and senior staff'. Recently, the support offered by the local authority in these areas has been reduced and this also impacted on the desire by some for a business manager: 'this takes up a tremendous amount of time and the LA [local authority] dept. currently only offers advice (which isn't always accurate!)'. The second theme to arise was that of finance. Some headteachers felt that with a greater budget they would feel more supported, either to reduce their teaching commitment to concentrate more on headship, or to use towards training: 'some finance to allow me to attend relevant training without needing to use school budget'; 'no teaching commitment'; 'extra funding'; 'I'm the headteacher of a small school and teach 50% of the time. I would like support with my teaching commitment'. Some of the headteachers wanted focused support 'very specific support and/or a sounding-board'; 'a personal coach'; 'peer support is the most valuable – it can be a lonely job'. However, the third and possibly the strongest theme to emerge was that of networking and the desire to meet colleagues from across different regions and areas: 'networking with colleagues is the key'; 'networks of headteachers having similar difficulties'; 'national meetings for headteachers'; 'working with heads in other authorities'; 'local, regional networks for other headteachers'; 'working with other heads from other authorities'.

The outcomes of experience on headship

The final question asked the respondents if they were starting their career again, would they still choose to be a headteacher? The results can be seen in chart 5:j below.

Chart 5:j Q22 Would you choose headship again as a career?

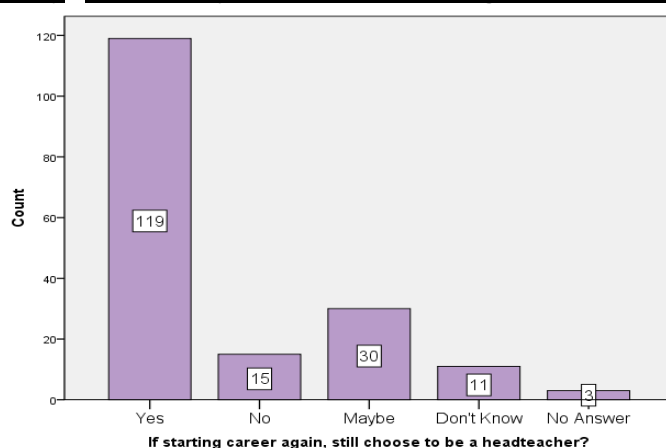


Chart 5:j illustrates by count the number of headteachers who would choose headship again as a career $n = 178$

As can be seen, the majority, 119 (66.9%), said that they would choose to be a headteacher again. Fifteen said that they would not choose it again as a career; thirty thought they may choose headship again and eleven people did not know if given the choice again they would choose to be a headteacher. Three people of the sample did not respond to this question.

It is also interesting to note as shown in chart 5:k below that length of time as being a head did not make a significant difference to the desire to choose headship again as a career.

Chart 5:k If starting your career again, would you still choose to be a headteacher?

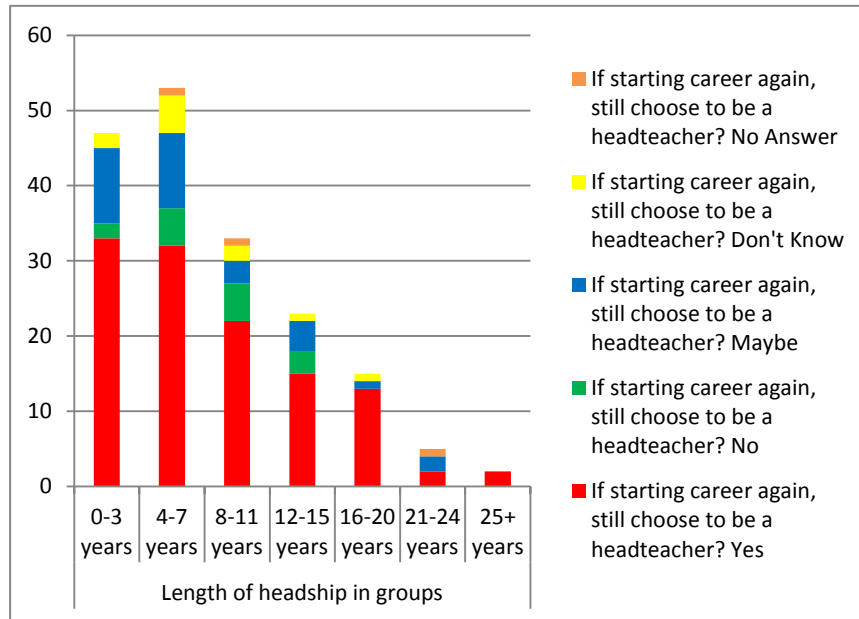


Chart 5:k illustrates by count if the respondents would still choose to be a headteacher if beginning their careers again. The respondents have been grouped into the length of time they have been a headteacher $n = 178$

100% of headteachers who had been a headteacher for over 25 years indicated that they would choose headship again. However, it should be noted that this only accounted for 2 respondents in the whole sample. This was followed by 87% of the 16-20 years group, 70% for the 0-3 year group and between 60%, 65% and 67% for the 4-7, 12-15 and 8-11 year groups respectively who would all choose headship again if starting their careers again. Of the respondents who had been a headteacher for between 21 and 24 years, 40% said that they would choose headship again, another 40% were undecided and thought they may choose headship again, leaving 20% who did not know what they would do if starting their career again. Only fifteen respondents, representing 8% of the cohort indicated that they would not choose headship again. These results are optimistic and give hope to the role of headship. It would appear that despite all the anguish and rapid change seen in school leadership over recent times, the pressures headteachers are under for accountability, school improvement and attainment, the majority of this cohort of headteachers would choose headship again. Carrying out interviews with selected experienced

headteachers to discuss the findings of the questionnaires will enable further understanding of the relationship between support received and the impact it has on headship sustainability.

Summary of chapter 5

This chapter has given a detailed analysis of the questionnaires by taking each question in turn and interpreting the data received. The data has produced several themes which warrant further investigation during the interviews as they could affect the sustainability of headship. How to motivate young headteachers through headship was one theme to emerge as 44% of the sample were under the age of 50 and 28% under the age of 40. Some of the headteachers in these age groups indicated that they did not intend to stay in headship for the longer term. The support these headteachers receive could impact on their desire to stay in headship and could therefore affect the sustainability of the role. An interesting result was that 77% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their position and 67% felt they knew what to expect in the role of headteacher. These were unexpected results, especially as press around headship would suggest a dissatisfaction and frustration with headship. The role of the local authority has changed over recent times and this may have affected how headteachers now perceive the effectiveness of the authority. Bringing this item into the interviews will enable an understanding to be gained of how the headteachers consider the provision of support they receive from the local authority at the present time and whether or not this has changed during their headship. When asked to list forms of support they would like to access, three main themes of business managers, finance and networking emerged and these will all be included in the interview schedule. These themes together with the data analysed in this chapter will be considered in greater depth in the discussion section of this thesis, taking into account data received through interviews together with the literature read. The following chapter will analyse the data obtained during one-to-one interviews held with thirteen headteachers across five different local authorities.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

Section 1

Introduction of chapter and outline

Chapter five was concerned with the analysis of data received from the questionnaires. Several themes emerged which were identified as being relevant to this study. In order to gain an understanding of their bearing on headship sustainability, these topics were included in the interview schedule where they could be explored in further depth during one-to-one interviews with headteachers across the region. For clarity and ease of reference, the interview analysis is divided into two chapters. This chapter looks at the journey into headship for the interviewees, and examines the main motivations, influences and experiences which led them to become headteachers. The school context was discussed in order to give an understanding not only of the schools but also of some of the challenges the interviewees had faced. The relationship with the local authority was explored in light of the recent changes made to the role of authorities in education. Accountability and the effect this has on headship is also discussed. To give clarity to how the quotations from the interviewees relate to the research questions, each section will indicate which sub-research question it relates to by SRQ1, SRQ2 etc. The following chapter focuses on the support needs of the headteachers. The references for the quotations used in this and the following chapter correspond with table five in chapter four. For example a headteacher (HT) from school(S) B2 would be referenced as HTSB2.

Journey into headship

The first theme of the interviews was the journey into headship. Consideration was given to the ambition the interviewees had of becoming a headteacher, the influences and experiences which drew them towards headship and the perceptions and reality of the role once they became a

headteacher. SRQ1. The first question asked the interviewees if they had had any ambitions of becoming a headteacher. Of the thirteen participants, only two knew they wanted to be a headteacher at the beginning of their career.

I always wanted to be a headteacher... I wanted to have a headship job because I thought it was nice to be able to make the decisions, rather than someone telling me what to do
(HTSE2)

In actual fact when I started my PGCE I made a conscious decision that I wanted to be in primary but I wanted it to be a long-term career into headship and beyond... I knew straightaway that I wanted to be a headteacher and I was quite open about that
(HTSB1)

The other eleven interviewees indicated that they had had no ambition of becoming a headteacher when entering the teaching profession. In some cases it seemed to be a revelation that they had secured a teaching job at all and certainly headship had not been on the agenda.

That's an interesting question because I think about that quite a lot really. When you start off in the profession, you don't even know whether you're going to get a job, never mind become a headteacher
(HTSE1)

It hasn't been a burning desire, but sometimes I think it works out quite nicely like that because then you think you sort of just move into it
(HTSA2)

I'm not one of those people who thought at the age of 30 I'm going to be a head... I'm not one of those people who was driven to be a head
(HTSC1)

No, I never wanted to be a headteacher but I was quite adamant that I wanted to be a teacher and teach
(HTSE3)

I never planned to do it
(HTSD2)

No, it wasn't an ambition from day one to be a headteacher or anything like that
(HTSD3)

When I left university I was not going to have a career in education (HTSB3)

I always knew I wanted to be in senior leadership, I didn't know I necessarily wanted this job (HTSB2)

However, during their journey into headship factors changed, suggestions were made and opportunities arose resulting in headship becoming a realistic option. SRQ3

I stayed there [at my first school] for 9 years and it is actually the experiences and support of that school which actually ignited a thought that actually, yes, headship was a path that I could work towards (HTSB3)

I guess the key things for me are the people that I've worked with who have spotted potential in me and given me the opportunities actually to develop (HTSC1)

Deputy Headship

In a lot of cases it was being a deputy headteacher that led to the realisation that the interviewee either wanted to be, or felt that they could become, a headteacher. SRQ1

And then I saw the deputy headship here advertised and I didn't actually have any aspirations ... and I thought, bloody hell its less than I'm doing now for a B. (HTSD2)

It was always going to be, I think, the route for me once I'd got to deputy headship level (HTSC1)

On reflection, one interviewee discussed the relevance of being a deputy headteacher and questioned whether it was the best route into headship, and another told of what being a deputy did not prepare you for.

Deputy headships were rare then and are even rarer now and I felt that it was a step I needed to take, in retrospect I'm not sure that it was (HTSB1)

Being a deputy head is definitely an important part of the journey towards headship, but it does not prepare you for the demands, the reality of headship. So often what deputy headship doesn't prepare you for is that you are managing often the multiple disappointments of others in you (HTSB3)

As the interviewees progressed with their deputy headship, many began to question their position and began to contemplate headship as they felt it would give them more power, influence and status and an opportunity to run a school their way.

I knew from very early on that I wanted to be a deputy headteacher. I didn't necessarily think I would become a headteacher but at that point that was the kind of job that I aspired to... you actually realise that while you have an awful lot of influence as a deputy, you'll have more as a head (HTSB2)

Of course when I was a deputy I didn't want to be a head because I saw what a hard job it was and then after a while I realised that it's like, deputies, you've got a foot in both camps, you're neither one thing or the other... I recognised that the head had a huge say in how the school's run and I knew which school I liked to be in best. And then it sort of grew on me, this idea that perhaps I should try and share some of my ideas and try and improve education for other people (HTSE3)

Influence of other Headteachers

A common theme with all the interviewees was the relationship they had with the headteachers they worked for prior to securing their own headship, and how their support and suggestions influenced them to become a headteacher themselves. In many cases it gave them the impetus to apply for their first headship. SRQ1

Without [the headteacher's] support and leadership I would not have become a head within 4 years of getting the deputy post, and it is through that post that I then began to apply for headships (HTSB3)

She just said 'Well you are a head in waiting' that was her phrase (HTSD3)

And then he kept saying to me, I think you should look for a headship because at this time I'm now, my late 30's, didn't think I'd get a headship, even at that point in time. Within a year I'd got an interview and the very first job that came forward was at my school and I got the job... I got it and I was quite shocked really (HTSE1)

I had a fantastic headteacher, really inspirational headteacher, really good mentor (HTSB1)

Actually my head recommended that I should become a head, so again I disputed the fact and then, yeah, I became a head fairly quickly... I think the heads really have so much impact; it's the heads choosing people or recognising that you've got strengths and actually encouraging you in that role and I've got a lot to thank them for really and I have done the same thing for our staff (HTSE3)

During their journey into headship, the interviewees had worked for several headteachers. One interviewee expressed how the negative experiences had contributed to his leadership style as much as the positive ones.

I still hero worship my first headteacher... he obviously has done some fantastic work, but the guy I had in between, whilst he was a really nice person and I like him and I think pastorally you couldn't ask for a better headteacher, the way that he managed staff was terrible and therefore you weren't allowed to generate anything that wasn't within his mould. I found that really tricky because we just weren't the same and that, I found, has helped me just as much as the first one (HTSB1)

NPQH and The National College for Teaching and Leadership

As well as gaining leadership experience by being a deputy headteacher and being inspired by their headteacher, another factor which seemed to give confidence to the interviewees in applying for their own headship was taking and completing the NPQH qualification. The majority of the interviewees had completed the NPQH and in most cases there had been positive experiences. Some questioned the relevance of the material of the NPQH, but all had made valuable contacts as it had given them the opportunity to meet colleagues at a similar stage in their career which they had found to be useful. One headteacher was disappointed that the NPQH was no longer compulsory as they felt it was a distinctive element of headship. SRQ3

I'm really disappointed with the NPQH. Although it was a fairly easy and straightforward qualification to get, you know, not many people fail it and it is all about networking, it is nice to have that qualification. But as heads you sort of, you need it really... It is nice to think if you are head you do need to have a little bit extra just to do that. I think people should still do it
(HTSA2)

Some had found the qualification easy and questioned its relevance for the preparation of headship. SRQ2

Passing your NPQH, OK I guess that's only identifying a willingness really and there was some rigour to it but to be honest I think I could have done it seven years ago when I first started really... The actual mechanics of the tasks and the materials just didn't prepare you for headship, they just don't. I wonder whether you really can do the job until you're doing the job. I personally don't think you can but maybe I didn't have the best preparation for that
(HTSB1)

Others felt that doing the NPQH had given some preparation for headship but agreed that nothing really prepares you for actually doing the job.

I think it's really difficult, until you're doing it you can't know what it's really about. Yeah, the NPQH prepares you. I did a real old version of it, I can't remember, 2004 or 5 or something. NPQH gives you an insight into the financial bits and the leadership and management competencies and all of that kind of stuff but I think the day-to-day doing the job, you know, NPQH can talk about 'vision' and 'preferred futures for your school' and all the rest of it and that helps but actually the day-to-day is the key (HTSB2)

For some it had been a necessity rather than part of a planned career progression.

I came here on a temporary contract because I hadn't done my NPQH. I did the NPQH in ten months and they gave me a permanent contract, and when I said I was going on a temporary contract, they couldn't give me a permanent one because I didn't have NPQH, I had never thought of doing an NPQH. I hadn't even thought of doing the NPQH or any career progression or anything like that (HTSA3)

The headteacher of an independent school had chosen to take the qualification even though it was not a requirement in the independent sector.

It is not a requirement in the independent sector to have the NPQH but I chose to do it because I believed in the principle... What was a benefit of doing the NPQH, I thought their application process was really good, having a framework of what should, what are the expectations of headship, I like the idea of national minimum standards of headship for a framework, and that really encouraged good reflection. Some of the face to face training days were good, but they were dependent on the quality of the trainer so some were very poor... I was the only independent school senior leader on the course and meeting other senior leaders from maintained schools was really beneficial... So overall can an NPQH train you for what turns up, no of course not, no training can, but was it beneficial - yes (HTSB3)

The NPQH has been seen by some as a potential barrier to headship, one of the reasons why it is now not a compulsory attainment for current headteachers. However, it could also be said that gaining the qualification was a crucial stepping-stone into headship as for many interviewed it gave them the confidence and stimulus to progress their career.

I ended up doing the NPQH and then thought, 'well actually I've got this now, I ought to be applying for headship'
(HTSC1)

I took a long time in doing it, about 2 years, but it was great, and so I was sort of encouraged by accessing the various programmes and got a quiet confidence in doing them, also it spurred me on to do the next thing
(HTSD3)

Alongside the discussion around the NPQH, the interviewees generally talked favourably about the National College, both with engagement with them and their courses.

I always try to engage with the National College. I rate the national college, and I rate what they have done and their courses
(HTSD3)

Although for some time was quoted as being a reason for the lack of engagement with the college.

NCSL, I should do so much more with NCSL, I know I should, haven't got the time, haven't got the time
(HTSD2)

A major theme to emerge from the discussions around the NPQH and the National College was that of networking and the opportunities which arose for the interviewees to interact with colleagues from other schools and areas. Several quoted that networking was one of the main benefits of attending a course or conference. This is a theme which will be explored in more depth in the next chapter.

Context of the school

The context of the school was taken into consideration to see if this affected the headship of the interviewee and how any support received impacted on their role. Of the headteachers interviewed, eight were from primary schools and seven were from senior schools. The primary schools varied from small village schools, community schools, and an independent school through to inner city multi faith schools. Of the senior schools, one was an all girls' state school, one was independent, three were academies, and one was a

special behavioural school with the rest being community co-educational schools. There were some very challenging circumstances for some as newly appointed headteachers to cope with and address, ranging from the actual school buildings to the extreme behaviour of not only the children but also of the staff and the wider school community. SRQ1

The site, I mean it was an old building, there was graffiti on the walls, there was litter everywhere, there was no semblance of uniform, a lot of children weren't in lessons, they were wandering corridors, there didn't look to be much learning going on in classrooms. So it was a huge challenge on all fronts really (HTSC1)

The school was facing quite challenging circumstances, the results were not good, we were below the national goal standard of 30% 5 A star to C. The school was in pretty shabby condition, behaviour was an issue, so it was a nice opportunity to make my mark on the school... Drugs, knives etc. were a real issue at that school because there were sort of local issues between gangs within the town and a very insular community (HTSA1)

I had never in my life seen the like of the behaviour that was here... it was such hard work. I had to exclude people, I had to exclude people at lunch time. I had parents coming in. I am saying 'It won't happen. You can do as you please, that is not how it's going to be like'. One kid 'Do you know my dad?' I said 'No'. 'My dad is Mad Jack. He hits people with baseball bats'. I said 'Do you know his number? because I could do with speaking with him.' He was in prison of course. It was like sending a message out there that we aren't putting up with this kind of rubbish. I just didn't think we were getting anywhere. Honestly, honestly it was awful (HTSD1)

Children were being physically intervened all the time, windows were being broken, kids were smoking in the school, kids were vandalising the community, and basically the kids ran the school and the staff fire fought. There was no leadership at all. When I first came to be introduced to the staff, the school was in darkness, the windows had all been broken and one of the kids had hotwired the fire alarm. Two of the staff were rocking and the interim acting assistant head said it will be alright, we'll get through it... Behaviour can be extremely violent, they hit us they kick us they are vandals, many have criminal backgrounds... They are coming from incredibly, incredibly difficult backgrounds. They are the bottom 2% of the bottom 2% and unfortunately they look beautiful so they don't look like they have got special needs. These are what I call the dangerous boys. So that's the world in which we live – it's hard, and 99% of people do not apply for this work

(HTSA3)

The behaviour of the children was a challenge for several of the interviewees across the different regions, and in some circumstances also that of the staff and parents. The headteachers had to show resilience to overcome these challenges and to make the necessary changes for improvement. They had to project a confidence and self-belief they often did not feel to the school community as a whole in order to convey that their goals were achievable.

We just smile all the time and be enthusiastic even when you are not really feeling it because if you don't that sets the tone of the school. Everybody takes the tone from the head

(HTSD1)

I am told that I am kind of unflappable, you know? I come across as being like that and laid back even. It's very much a case of the duck on the water, paddling like hell underneath and it's quite serene on top. Yeah, it is stressful

(HTSD3)

Academy Schools

Four of the headteachers participating in the interviews were headteachers of schools which had all elected to become academies rather than being made to convert. Two schools were part of academy chains and two were independent academies. Other headteachers talked about converting to academy status but as yet had not taken the decision to change. The reasons for becoming an academy varied for each school, as did those who had chosen not to convert to academy status. However, money was quoted as being a main motivation to convert as was having freedoms outside of local authority and governmental control. SRQ2

People become academies for three reasons. One, they hate the local authority and they've been at war with them for a number of years and that's a lot of schools. Secondly, they think they can make a fortune out of it because they get the money that the local authority would have held back which is usually 10% of their budget for central services. They get given that to play with as well and that can be the difference between life and death for some schools, so they want that. And the third is, it gives you a lot of freedoms and so that word freedom, to me, kind of, my eyes light up with that.

(HTSE1)

The decision to convert was entirely pragmatic, I don't particularly believe in academies or anything but it was just being pragmatic about where we were at... You know, the conversion, it is just about getting some money. I don't care about being an academy at all... It's exciting in terms of further development in the school. You know that opened up lots of possibilities. Again it was financially beneficial as well

(HTSD3)

The participation of the local authority in the conversion of schools to academy status did vary between schools and authorities. Some were actively involved in suggesting schools convert and supporting them throughout, whilst it would appear that other authorities did not want to engage in the process, a stance which one headteacher found disappointing.

I sit on the schools forum and the local authority don't take a view about schools stepping out of the local authority control and I think they should. (HTSB1)

The local authority rang me up and said was I interested in considering academy status and so I did quite a lot of research around that and said to the governors, 'look, this could be the thing we're looking for because it will make us stand out'... it was my view that actually in order to compete with other schools locally, we needed something that was going to set us apart from the rest, basically (HTSC1)

I personally felt a bit disappointed with that in terms of we had heard that other authorities have been more proactive. Because ours hasn't been proactive, and I can understand the reasons, I'm not getting on to them or anything, but it has left us to sort of muddle through and try and find our own way with academies and trusts sort of thing. It is a bit of, we haven't become an academy trust yet, but it is a bit of a minefield (HTSA2)

The idea of relinquishing support from the local authority did make some headteachers question the position of their school and it did influence their decision making when thinking about converting to academy status.

I think it's very scary being an academy because you don't have any local authority support, so if something goes wrong, you're out there – because things do go wrong, you know things that nobody really finds out about because it's all kept very quiet (HTSE3)

The headteacher of an independent school supported the academy movement as he believed it gave headteachers more autonomy, something he enjoyed in the independent sector and felt was an important element of effective leadership.

I think heads in the independent sector have a benefit over the maintained sector heads, in that there have been many good initiatives from the previous Labour government within the maintained sector but they do not have a choice to implement them in a school setting, and if you don't have choice then you may not necessarily have choice over resources. If we chose to do something we must have the resource otherwise we wouldn't have chosen to do it. And that is the benefit of that autonomy and I can see why nationally I do actually support the move by Gove to establish academies... Leadership is only effective when it has autonomy and responsibility combined, so therefore the move of the academy giving greater responsibility, accountability and autonomy to the head I completely support that (HTSB3)

Headteachers who had converted to academy status welcomed the freedoms and benefits which they did not have before. However, one headteacher revealed that although they had taken advantage of their new independence and it brought a great excitement to what they could do as a school, they were also nervous of how far they could go.

If you imagine you're a horse and you've been locked in a stable for about ten years, someone opens the door, you're so scared to go outside. You go to the door, you come back, but you're not expecting to go out, so there's no door but you're actually, the only thing that's keeping you in there is your own fears really... So we could actually do more with it, lots more, it's only what our fears are now, our fears are out limits in what we could do (HTSE1)

Some of the interviewees became animated when describing the flexibility they now enjoyed and how they were free to enrich the educational provision of the school whilst others expressed doubt as they felt that accountability restricted autonomy.

So in a sense you're told 'you can do what you like' but actually 'you're going to be measured on these things'. So in a sense the measures dictate what you're going to do anyway. So no, I don't really feel that we've got autonomy (HTSB2)

However, for others there was doubt about becoming an academy with questions being raised over the impact academy schools would have on the locality.

How are academy chains, once they take ownership of schools locally, how is that going to impact on the rest of us? I don't know. I am uncertain about all of that. I don't necessarily think all of that is a good thing. I think some academy chains are just building up power bases. I don't know how good they are going to be for these schools. I know of schools that have been taken up with that kind of a change and are still failing and a chain can't sort them out, and I don't think that's positive
(HTSD3)

Some saw the conversion of academies as political ambition.

Michael Gove is pushing his own personal policies, which obviously I'm very cynical about... they obviously want more academies and the only way to get academies is by getting school in special measures/inadequate, which, again, is all highly immoral, to my mind, and I think it's doing a huge amount of damage to heads really
(HTSE3)

For one headteacher it was a waiting game to see what the benefits would be of becoming an academy.

If I thought it was a good deal and my kids got better I would be one [an academy]. I haven't got a problem. But I just don't know how we can be... I don't know how they can make us better at the moment. That is the thing about it. I am not paying 5 per cent of my budget to a chain for people if I am not convinced that they have the capacity to make us better than we are
(HTSD1)

Preparation for Headship

Having discussed their route into headship and gained an understanding of the context of the schools, consideration was given to how prepared the interviewees felt they were for headship and what had been the most beneficial forms of support in that preparation. There were contrasting views with some headteachers feeling very equipped for headship while others initially felt unprepared for the role. SRQ1

I knew exactly what I was getting myself in for when I came here... I think all the time as I did those different roles I did get an insight in what heads do. I had a good working relationship with the head... a great headteacher. He supported me through NPQH and I got access to what he did, what his job is (HTSD3)

Having done five years and particularly because it's in the same school, then I think I had a really clear understanding of what the job was going to be ... I think it's really difficult, until you're doing it you can't know what it's really about (HTSB2)

Some of the headteachers talked about the shock of their first few days in headship, especially as they began to realise that there was no plan to follow and it was now down to them to make it work as the rest of the school community were looking at them for direction and inspiration.

But I do remember quite distinctly the very first day that I was there. Of course there was no induction, there was no NPQH, there was no nothing. You had been for the interview and that is what you had been to. You have no paperwork, no nothing. I remember being on this corridor at the front and the door closing and it going really quiet. I had the thought that the youngest child in the reception class knew more about how this school worked, how it functioned, who did what than I did. It did scare me, but I thought 'Yeah' (HTSD1)

The actual mechanics of the task and the materials just didn't prepare you for headship, they just don't. I wonder whether you really can do the job until you're doing the job. I personally don't think you can but maybe I didn't have the best preparation for that (HTSB1)

I knew pretty much what to expect on that regard, even though that doesn't prepare you for the first day shock... But nothing prepares you for day one. There is no course that can prepare you for day one, because you think you know what you're going to do. Day one you get in your office, which was in the old school and you sit behind the desk and there's a little note from the old headteacher saying, I really hope, you know, thinking of you or whatever and you look around and you think, what do I do now? Because there isn't a plan, there isn't a programme... you have to make it up. You have to decide what you're going to do (HTSE1)

One headteacher expressed her sadness that not only was the job totally different to what she had expected, but that the role had 'very little to do with the teaching of children' (HTSD2). Having been a headteacher and then moved on to another headship, it would have been expected that the individual would have felt more prepared for the next role. However, it was interesting to learn that experienced headteachers sometimes did not feel prepared when taking on a second or third headship due to the circumstances they found themselves in. SRQ1

The school was in an area which was socially deprived if you like, and some very difficult circumstances that these children were living in and so their needs were different to the previous school where I was head, and I felt very unequipped to take on a larger school, even though I had been a head for nearly 9 years, 10 years, I still did not feel equipped enough to really take on the role because it was something completely different (HTSE2)

There was consensus amongst the interviewees that they had not been prepared for the leap between deputy and headship with regard to their authority and how much people would look to them for guidance. They knew that the school community would look to them for leadership, but they had not been prepared for the extent of that authority.

The other thing that shocks you is the people knocking on your door and they want your opinion on something and your opinion is almost like a small deity. What the head says, goes... Their lives revolve around you quickly giving them a response so they can go and then do their job, and they knock on your door to ask you and nothing prepares you for that (HTSE1)

I think some of the odd things about being a head is when you say something you want something to happen and then five minutes later it's happened. That's the difference between being a head and a deputy, I'll tell you, and you don't realise. I mean I didn't realise that kind of effect that you might have. So if I go into the office and I say 'I want this', it just happens (HTSB2)

One of the interviewees expressed his satisfaction with the position of headteacher but had been disappointed to learn how the role of headship was perceived by authority.

One thing that really annoyed me was the previous census where headteachers were rated below the professional class. The solicitors and doctors were considered more important than headteachers
(HTSB1)

Sharing responsibilities

The subject of money and finance repeatedly arose during the interviews. One headteacher told how the school had become an academy purely for financial reasons. Another spoke of how the cut in budgets limited what she could do to improve the facilities of the school. There was a suggestion by another headteacher that someone from outside the school could be appointed to 'fight their corner to get the money rather than the heads having to fight their corner to get the money' (HTSE2). The approach taken by the interviewees to the business side of running their school differed tremendously. Some had appointed a business manager to take care of the structural, maintenance and financial side of the school whilst others talked about wanting to be able to do that but didn't feel that they had the resources to recruit someone to take on the role. There was an acknowledgement amongst the cohort that the responsibilities of a headteacher had changed and all the interviewees wanted to lead the school rather than run the school.

SRQ2

I'm a specialist in learning and developing learning environments... I don't want to spend all my day on ill health management programmes, you know, I want to be able to be a headteacher and I don't want to have to spend my time having to put an asbestos register together for facilities. I'm a school leader, I want to talk about learning and I don't want to spend all my time looking into VAT law. But, I need to have someone that can do that... Now I've got an army of people. It's so different now than it was at that time and there's so much more expertise and support you can get to help you do your job
(HTSE1)

I don't know things like manhole covers that's why I've got a business manager and caretaker (HTSD2)

Headteachers shouldn't have to be worrying about the state of the building and there should be a health and safety officer who comes round... There should be some support for them to do that... It shouldn't be everything that a head has to do because you end up compromising yourself and you can't do and you get pressurised and you leave... and that is such a shame for the profession because there is a lot of good people who I know who have left (HTSE2)

I'd really like to be able to do is just focus on what's best for the children. So not where my asbestos is or what my child protection policy is, although I think it's important, these things are important, but looking after my roof or what my PPA provision is or I don't know, whatever, but really focus on what's good for children and make their education provision the best it can be (HTSB1)

Local Authority

The role of the local authority and its relationship with schools has radically changed over recent years. There has also been a change in the status of schools with many now becoming academies which are outside of local authority control. Some local authorities have continued with their education departments and support roles as before, whilst others have restructured and repositioned themselves, resulting in a change of the support they can offer to schools. For some schools this was an unwelcomed change as they relied heavily on the local authority. SRQ2

They come into school less and less. But we used to have these six come in, and that has just disappeared as well. So that, it has really taken, pulled the carpet from beneath our feet in terms of the local authority (HTSA2)

Some of the interviewees told of how there was confusion over the role of the local authority and what they were providing.

You used to have a link advisor from the authority, but they have gone, then you had your SIP... Then they took away the SIP process and so I paid mine to come and continue to be my SIP. Now the local authority have brought her back in and so if she is the one they allocate me, great, if she isn't then I shall buy her back in (HTSB1)

The change had also resulted in more administration for the school leaving headteachers less time for leading the school.

It would mean less administration for me. I mean I've got to ring a few schools this afternoon to see if I can sell some extra, my SEN cluster work is tied in so that her contract is full for next year. I've been in touch with York St John about their training placement. Today I've got to organise two more training sessions and liaise with that a bit. If the local authority did it, I'd be able to do more things which I think are more school-based but in the absence of that somebody's got to do it and if nobody does it then it doesn't happen. So you either like it or lump it (HTSB1)

A number of the interviewees had already lost faith with the local authority before the changes were introduced and only engaged with the authority through necessity.

Teaching Schools

Teaching schools and teaching alliances are a new initiative, part of the recent educational reforms, and are in their infancy. One interviewee was the headteacher of a teaching school and was also the head of a teaching alliance. SRQ2

Because I'm the head of the teaching school and therefore we're at the heart of the work... We're getting ready for the first cohort of teacher training, we're currently bidding with a teaching agency for the first group. Remember, we are at the heart of a group of sixty schools, but we are the lead school in that sixty (HTSE1)

He expressed enthusiasm for the teaching school movement and was keen to use the expertise within his school to help and train others.

So, school to school work is becoming much more important. And yeah, I think, because we've got fantastic experts here and we know how to teach, so we are the people to be at the sharp end of teacher training, we should be... So you have to prove that you've got an outstanding teacher before you and take on someone into your school. But they will be shaped and hopefully given that start maybe some of us weren't given when we got in (HTSE1)

Another interviewee was part of a teaching school and was a strategic partner within the alliance. Although it was acknowledged that it was early days, they could see potential in the new regime, they expressed concern over the independence of the scheme.

It's been set-up as a nice idea and it feels a bit sort of the government have got their finger on it, NCSL have got their finger on it and NCSL, obviously to keep themselves going, are producing government policy, aren't they? (HTSE3)

However, another headteacher welcomed the support they had received since becoming a strategic partner in a teaching school alliance, and the opportunities it had opened up for meeting other headteachers.

We've recently become involved in the teaching schools alliance. They've got the teaching school status but we're one of the strategic partners and therefore I've been meeting with the headteacher of the primary school there... Last year I went out and visited five of the other secondary schools that I'd never been to and spent half a day talking with the head, touring the school, pinching ideas. So yeah, I feel that I get quite a lot of support really (HTSB2)

One headteacher had been approached to become a teaching school, but after consultation with the governors had decided against it due to capacity issues.

While the authority wanted us to be become a teaching school because we are outstanding, we looked at it, the governors looked at it and we thought there are not enough of us to do what we need to do well and have people coming in and taking staff out of class to teach other people – there aren't enough of us.
(HTSD2)

The school had also declined to become a part of any other teaching school alliances.

No, no, we keep our heads down. To me half of it is just doing everything on the cheap you know, let's do away with the university courses and let's put it out to schools and it's ridiculous. It just seems more and more like cost cutting to me, and everything going to schools, it's just ridiculous
(HTSD2)

Another headteacher was also concerned with capacity and how schools were going to be able to deliver the training.

It is very early days to be honest. I haven't got a clue what the local training school is doing... But it is really early days. I know from the head there that they are kind of swamped with trying to get things started... They haven't got the capacity to deliver those programs, and they know that, so they are trying to think through now how they are going to achieve that
(HTSD3)

Whilst some headteachers had actively become involved in the teaching school initiative and others had expressed concern over how they would operate, inevitably some preferred to wait and see how they developed before participating (HTSA1).

Accountability

The theme of accountability and the pressures arising from Ofsted inspections were cited throughout the interviews. Many felt that over the

years the role of headteacher has changed and there was now increased accountability and expectation. SRQ2

It's a heavily responsible job but so it should be and the accountability is absolutely huge. You're accountable to your staff, you're accountable to the parents, the children, you're accountable to the government, you're accountable locally, in the local community, so there's a lot of pressure in terms of accountability (HTSB2)

In my time, expectancy upon us is going even greater, public accountability, in terms of our resources, even greater. (HTSE1)

The interviewees felt that the responsibilities and expectations associated with the role of headship had intensified. They expressed concern at how their own fortunes can ebb and flow which in turn can cause increased pressure.

I think in terms of this place, we walk a tightrope every day. It doesn't take much to go from hero to zero and back again really... our daily business, spinning plates, loads of plates, that keeps up going (HTSD3)

One thing I've learnt is that you can't think things aren't going wrong and it's absolutely fine. Just take your eye off the ball and you're tackled and the opposition is going to get you. Things spiral out of control quite quickly and you just wonder how that happened (HTSB1)

There was a feeling, I mean, five or six years ago, that I was responsible for everything in society... any problems society was having was my problem and there is an element of truth in that. But you know, ultimately we're an institution of learning and we've got to remember that... I cannot answer every problem, you know, and as long as I am aware of that, then I think that, I think I can keep safe, yeah? (HTSE1)

Many of the interviewees were not against inspection but talked about the fairness of the process and raised questions over how judgements were made and the impact those judgements had on the school community.

I mean what frustrates heads about Ofsted is that a group of people come together and they've never met one another, they've never worked together before and then they come in, they do two days of what-have-you and then they make the judgements and it's simply a judgement, there is no development from that you know, if there was a development wing too, that might be more palatable in a sense, yeah
(HTSB2)

I would welcome an inspection if it was really positive and they gave you positive feedback and positive things to do. I don't need to be beaten up. I know what is wrong. I knew we had a problem in maths, I didn't need to be beaten up over two days and have the next twelve months being horrific for everybody because you are seen as being a failing school and you are not. You know, we don't need that... it's all sort of Damocles hanging over you most of the time, that's the negative side. The head of one of the local schools has gone into special measures. I think she had been through four inspections. She has been deemed an outstanding leader in the first, second and third and then all of a sudden she is inadequate. Well, that is just not true, that is being stuffed by Ofsted, the framework, because she is not inadequate... people are working their socks off and they are getting hammered
(HTSD3)

I have got a friend who is a head, she has just retired, she was head of an outstanding school. She sent me her worst behaviour kid because it was just totally unmanageable there. They are outstanding and we are not? He is still here. He has turned around, but we are not outstanding, she is. What's that? How can that be?
(HTSD1)

Another headteacher questioned the effect Ofsted had on education and raising standards and felt there was distrust between schools and the inspectorate.

You are answerable to Ofsted where you weren't 20 years ago when I started teaching – I've been teaching for 25 years and Ofsted really didn't rear its ugly head until the 90's. Very very different, very different and not different in a good way necessarily. I don't know that there was anything really bad with what schools were doing 25 years ago for them to have risen to this level of distrust about what is going on in schools so you have to go in the day before to inspect the day after. Why is that? The amount of pressure on people – it's because they don't trust what's going on in schools (HTSD2)

These judgements and a new fear of losing their position seem to have impacted on headteacher sustainability as it would appear that the increase in accountability and the threat of losing their job has had a negative influence on headteachers moving schools.

Get rid of this ridiculous, harsh punitive approach which is just putting people off of being heads. Putting heads off moving to other schools and you know, creating stress levels that are just unreasonable really. That's the part of my job that is negative. The positive side is making a difference to this lot (HTSD3)

Although questions were raised about the accountability system and the current speed of changes in the education system, most of the interviewees saw the challenges as invigorating.

You know, it is really good, the challenge. That's great because otherwise it could become very stale and set in your ways (HTSD3)

Next year there are so many different opportunities, with the Teaching School Alliance and yeah, I'm buzzing for the new things that are coming on, rather than thinking 'I need a change' (HTSB2)

What seems to be effective in facing these challenges and having positive results is the level and type of support headteachers receive. Local and National Leaders of Education are a relatively new concept where leading headteachers are trained to support struggling schools. Some of the headteachers that were interviewed had been appointed as local or national leaders of education. The training for some had been 'fantastic' but they

were frustrated that as yet they had not been assigned to any schools (HTSE3). One told of how he had been assigned to help three or four schools and how the position can be both rewarding and frustrating. Sometimes he is only welcomed by the school to raise them from special measures to satisfactory because that is as far as they want to improve, something which he found hard to understand.

'I'd never be happy with satisfactory, I'd be depressed with satisfactory, do you know what I mean? I'd prefer to take, to work up with a school for five years and to get it from special measures to how could I get it to outstanding, that's what I always want to do. But some people don't want to go on that journey and to be on that journey, you probably need to be in there full time... Where you're not received very well, where there's hostility, you can't do very much because it's only by mutual agreement that you can do anything. So, it's been an interesting journey, sometimes I've been very disappointed, other times I've been really excited about what we've been able to achieve in a short period of time (HTSE1)

Another interviewee told of how helping others brought a balance to the role.

I do and I think that's where I get my balance, I think that's where I get my balance in the fact that I like that... I think I enjoy not telling people how it is but being a help, take it or leave it (HTSA3)

However, it can be hard for the headteachers who have to receive help, especially if their circumstances have changed as a direct result of modifications to the inspection framework. One headteacher explained how the criteria changes in the inspections had affected the outcomes of her school and this had impacted on her position as headteacher. The school had won a Third Millennium award and an Excellence award and the headteacher herself had been nominated and won the national Leadership Trust Award for School. Even though the school and the headteacher had received national recognition for the work they did, because of the change in the Ofsted criteria with a focus on attainment, the school was now in danger of being forced to become an academy. Another interviewee told of how

she had received national recognition for her role as a headteacher but the impact of accountability through Ofsted brought great instability to her role.

Our last Ofsted was good with outstanding features. If they came tomorrow I think we would just be straight into – because everything is now on the attainment... As I say I go from that to now I am – you couldn't – there is no way on the criteria we have got there that I could be classed because I am not leading this school to those levels of attainment. So now I need help. That is very hard for somebody like my nature. I haven't said that – I don't – you know, I resist whatever I don't want to, but in the end that is where we have come to, that is where we have come to... I am happy to listen to what they have got to say. Anybody tells me how to do anything and insists that that is how to do it like an academy chain might do, I am out the door
(HTSD1)

Although the interviewees felt they were under pressure to gain an outstanding judgement, the burden of responsibility for retaining the category can be detrimental to the headteacher.

The children were happy, I was happy, the parents were happy, and suddenly somebody said yes you have got A's but you have also got this D, and that was the change of mind set. It was almost like a road to Damascus thing, point something out to me and it changed my perception of teaching from then on actually. I did, and I felt quite fearful of the next one [inspection]. I did go through another one and that was fine, but I ended up feeling very absorbed and stressed with it and I thought yes you have done really well, we had improved and I ended up going to Prince Charles's home for being a beacon type school thing, but it didn't change my fear. I then began to realise that I am in this kind of system whereby I'm in a fiery hoop and I have to jump through it and all that lovely music and all that happiness with the parents and the children was I felt slipping away from me and I thought I've got to get out of this because I can't do a third inspection because you can't get any higher than going to see Prince Charlie and it is only going to go back down and how am I going to feel, so I left
(HTSE2)

One headteacher who had left the state sector to take up a headship at an independent school explained how her views on inspection have now changed.

We do have inspections at school at a robust level, but somehow they are different because they are always with headteachers who are in the profession, so I am an ISI inspector and I go to other schools, and I welcome them in. My only fear now is that because it is an independent school, if there is any ticking off or there are any weaknesses, the parents will have something to say about it, so my fears are no longer Ofsted, being an independent school, but what will the parents think (HTSES)

The result of an inspection can result in negativity towards a school, especially if they have dropped down a category. For many of the headteachers interviewed, they felt that it was their responsibility to dilute any criticism received about the school in order to project a positive atmosphere. They believed that the character and ethos of the school was driven by them and it was their role to present a confident, happy face to the staff and wider school community.

Because then you've got to go back into school the next day and be positive for everybody else's sake because the organisation doesn't drive if they've got a misery guts at the top. So you just have to get on with it really (HTSB1)

Morale has got to be high because the children don't want to come from miserable homes where people call them names and do all sorts of things, to come into an atmosphere that is not positive do they? They won't do any good. But it is hard to maintain it... we just pretend... Everybody takes the tone from the head. It always has to. It always has to. If you go into a school that is miserable, you will find a miserable head. If you go into a school that everybody is nit-picking and running around and saying things about health and safety and all the rest of it, that will be the head. Always, always (HTSD1)

It could be that new pressures through greater accountability have brought instability to headship with some of the interviewees feeling that the profession was always being judged and criticised.

They need things to stop coming at them so that they can do something well and feel that they have done something right
(HTSD2)

This fear that they are putting into the teachers, I think that is not good at all. We have never been there before. We have been able to fend it off to some extent, but that won't be had now. I think it is totally unhealthy. It is not unhealthy to strive, it is not unhealthy to go to the nth degree to get the - that's okay. But for your whole life, your career, the school's reputation, absolutely everything to rest on that it's ludicrous, absolutely ludicrous
(HTSD1)

Some of the interviewees sensed a change in the stability of headship and now feared it was easier for headteachers to lose their position. Concern was also expressed around headteachers taking on a challenging school and how this can be a risk to their career, a line of thought which has received national attention recently (Edge, 2013).

You would think very, very hard about going to a school that has any potential for getting into trouble with Ofsted. Because you could move from a school where you are successful and you could go to one which is perhaps challenging and within six months you could have an inspection, be deemed inadequate, an academy chain come in and you are out of work. Now why would you do that? Why would you do that? Why would you risk everything? So I think it will lead to less movement, particularly of headteachers to new schools
(HTSD3)

Not all the headteachers interviewed saw Ofsted as a negative and there was acknowledgement that inspections were needed. One headteacher recognised that the 'goal posts have definitely shifted so it makes it harder' but admitted that he thrives on the challenge.

I think I work better with stress. If I hadn't got challenges and targets, which you constantly have, I just think other people would just sit back a bit. I am not sure, but I prefer to have another challenge on the horizon to be juggling with. I am not saying it doesn't get to me. Don't believe, I am not just like a stress junkie or anything like that
(HTSA2)

Alongside the challenges of increased accountability, there have been numerous changes made to the education system since the coalition government came into power in 2010. All of the headteachers interviewed have found the speed of these changes challenging. Some of the interviewees thought that the pace was too fast and not fully thought through whereas others were stimulated by those challenges.

So it's never dull, it's very, very exciting and it keeps on taking me by surprise and the only thing I'm worried about is retiring
(HTSE1)

Headteacher Recruitment

The discussion around the issues of headteacher recruitment produced a range of responses. The latest figures show that there are still problems with recruiting headteachers with more posts in primary schools having to be re-advertised than ever before (Exley, 2013). One headteacher thought that nationally there may be a problem, especially in rural primary schools, but that there didn't seem to be a problem with recruiting headteachers locally.

SRQ1

There is nationally I think. I mean, the most difficult school in the area had 54 applicants. You know, one that I would have thought twice about wanting to go for had 54. So I mean, it's not, it depends on the area of the country I think. But I mean there's less than, although there's scare stories in the press, there's remarkably few schools without a headteacher. Not the case in the primary sector, particularly in small rural primaries, but certainly secondary. I still think you can probably fill any position in this area ten times over if you were to look for it
(HTSE1)

In a different area, one headteacher explained how the number of applications for a job declines as the level of responsibility increases.

For a general sort of one which is like an admin person, we had about 160 applicants including all sorts... and then it goes down to teaching assistants which is a bit more specialised and we had about 80 or 90 and then we go down to teachers. We had about 40. And then in you go to down to heads you are going to looking at half a dozen. You would be really lucky to get half a dozen or deputy sort of thing. It comes right down
(HTSA2)

There did seem to be an impression that deputy headteachers were reluctant to apply for headship as one interviewee explained.

I don't think it's as attractive as it used to be [headship] and I think they see a lot of stressed headteachers and I think they think 'Oh, it's not for me'. I'm hearing a lot of anecdotal evidence about deputy heads who are happy to stay with the position they're in and I think that's a shame (HTSB1)

There had been a positive effect of academy conversion for one school as it had brought people into the area in order to work for a particular academy chain.

I think the recruitment issue was helped by becoming an academy and by becoming part of a global organisation – because we've actually had people apply for jobs from out of area who have applied because of the chain. Now that was always an issue for us, getting people to come here. So there's certainly been a difference (HTSC1)

The headteacher of an independent school felt that there were barriers to headship within the sector.

If you look at a photograph of HMC heads they are white Anglo Saxons, they are male and predominantly have a Cambridge or Oxford degree, and yes I fall into all those categories... my only claim to credit is that at least I went to a comprehensive school... therefore yes I can see there being barriers for women, yes I can see there being barriers for people who are not British (HTSB3)

When asked about the challenges of recruiting new headteachers, one headteacher questioned the resilience of younger headteachers.

Also, there are younger people which you want. Some of them are – you wonder about the resilience that's all, because you can be a long time in headship can't you? I mean I think I have been now 18 years in headship. It's will they survive and will they learn and all the rest of it... There is almost a brittleness to some of these younger women who are career headteachers that you think, 'Oh god, I wouldn't want to work for her' (HTSD1)

Summary of chapter 6

This chapter has presented the first part of the findings from the interviews. It has given an overview of the route into headship taken by the interviewees together with some of the challenges both positive and negative that they have had to negotiate throughout their career. There has also been discussion around external forces such as the local authority and accountability and how these have impacted on the interviewees and their headship. The chapter ended with a discussion on the challenges being faced in the recruitment of new headteachers. The following chapter will focus on the support headteachers have received or would like to receive and how this has impacted on their headship. Consideration is also given to the satisfaction of headship, discussing how the length of headship and career opportunities outside of headship can impact on headship sustainability.

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

Section 2

Introduction and chapter outline

The previous chapter discussed the journey into headship of the participants of this research and explored their main challenges, opportunities and frustrations of the position. This chapter will begin with focus on the support the headteachers have either received or would like to access.

Consideration is also given to the satisfaction of headship, the length of headship and life after headship as these factors together with preferred support mechanisms could affect the sustainability of headship.

Forms of Support

The forms of support the headteachers quoted varied immensely, however three main areas emerged from the data. Support from 1) within the school itself from the staff, senior leadership team and governing body; 2) external official sources such as academy chains, the local authority, consultants and professional bodies; 3) other headteachers. In order to be able to understand the effectiveness of these various forms of support, each one will be looked at individually. Networking was mentioned throughout the research as being a valuable form of support. These networks were diverse and were evident in all three areas identified above. The topic of networking is also discussed in depth in this chapter, and consideration is given as to how the support derived through networks can aid headship sustainability.

Support from within the school

All the interviewees praised the senior leadership team which was currently in place in their school. These were all teams which they had put together and had worked with over the years. Many commented on the team that

they inherited and how it had been a crucial element to their successful leadership that they could build their own team. Some commented on the resistance they had encountered from the leadership team they inherited and how it was only when key people left that they had the opportunity to recruit new members who were more receptive to their vision. For others they had made difficult decisions in order to provide those opportunities rather than waiting for them to leave. This had proved challenging to some and had taken time to complete. There was however consensus that their senior leadership team was a crucial source of support, especially on a day-to-day basis.

The senior leadership team at the school are great and provide a lot of daily support (HTSA1)

My own team, my deputy is always my first support 'What do you think about this?' The team in the school is the support really (HTSD1)

Your senior leadership team within your school is absolutely vital on a day-to-day basis... So I think I'm really lucky because I've got a team that either I appointed or I had a significant input into, when I was a deputy, into their appointment and it's a really good team, yeah (HTSB2)

People say it is a lonely job, us being heads. Well sometimes it is, but you have really good sort of colleagues. And my deputy who I have got at the moment, she is actually fantastic so that helps you know? So it is good, Yeah (HTSA2)

So very quickly I was able to establish my own senior leadership team, which was very useful because then you're appointing them because you want that type of person in your team (HTSC1)

Having a strong senior leadership team had allowed interviewees to take on other responsibilities outside of the school (HTSA1, HTSB2, HTSE1, HTSB3). However, one interviewee felt that relying on others without proper controls being in place had been detrimental to his school. With hindsight he would have given more focus to his school rather than taking opportunities which had led him away from the school.

So I think you do need to be really closely in control of what's going on in school but maybe this time next year I'll feel more confident about taking more time out of school. I think I've been too keen to do that in the past and do other things. I think things have gone not as well as I'd have liked as a consequence, so if I'd stayed in control of everyone... but you also have to be careful about giving other people the chance to do things
(HTSB1)

One member of the senior leadership team which provided much support for several of the interviewees was their business manager. As discussed in the previous chapter, several of the interviewees had employed a business manager to assist in the financial and physical aspects of running the school. All of the headteachers interviewed had entered headship to enhance and improve the education of children. The headteachers who employed business support staff felt well supported as having other members of staff to deal with the day-to-day management of the school allowed them to concentrate on the leadership of the school, something which most felt was a core responsibility of their role.

You're not as much on your own as you were at one time, so now I've got a finance director, I've got a HR manager, I've got a facilities manager, because over the years I've had to put those things into place because they're not fundamental to education. I'm a specialist in learning and developing learning environments, therefore I cannot spend all my time on employment law. Therefore it makes sense for me to have a HR expert who can help me with that and take people through a competency or managing ill health. I don't want to spend all my day on ill health management programmes, you know, I want to be able to be a headteacher and I don't want to have to spend my time having to put an asbestos register together for the facilities. I'm a school leader, I want to talk about learning and I don't want to spend all my time looking in VAT law. But I need to have someone that can do that, now that's different from when I arrived. Because at one time I had one bursar and that was all I had, no HR, two office staff and now I've got an army of people. It's so different now than it was and there's so much

more expertise and support you can get to help you do your job... It frees you up to think creative thoughts and to do the education part and to concentrate on the classroom and what the kids are learning and innovating the curriculum, getting the best structure and that's what I enjoy doing (HTSE1)

The headteacher of an independent school had a bursar who took responsibility for the financial and maintenance aspects of the school.

When it comes to money, I just have a meeting with the Bursar every couple of terms and we set it up, and you know, I just have to state my case and I usually get the money. So I feel very well supported by the system that I'm in (HTSE2)

One headteacher had found that a benefit of becoming an academy had meant that he could employ a business manager.

I have been able to do things like employing a business manager, who has been absolutely brilliant (HTSD3)

Where headteachers had not got the kind of internal support they needed, it was felt that there were consequences to their headship.

But, it shouldn't be everything that a head has to do because you end up compromising yourself and you can't do and you get pressurised and you leave, and you would rather be a class teacher or do something completely different, and that is such a shame for the profession because there is a lot of good people who I know who have left. All the headteachers I was talking about earlier who I used to network with, they have all left as heads for stress, for too much pressure, for feeling that they were not worthy because the appraisal system hasn't been good enough and that sense of well I'll have to do something else because I'm not good enough to do this anymore. And it is so sad because they are very very good and I'm the only one left out of the five of us (HTSE2)

It would appear, therefore, that having an internal business manager and support staff are essential for a headteacher to feel supported and enabled them to conduct their headship in a more positive way. The governing body

of the schools were also cited as being a good form of support. It was identified by several of the participants that a critical relationship is the one between a headteacher and their chair of governors and one which is vital for the headteacher to feel supported.

I gain significant support and strength through the chair of governors. That is something you do not fully appreciate before you become a head, is how important the governors are – that is something I did not know until I became a head. I know that I'm lucky... I feel the support of other governors but the chair is the relationship that matters (HTSB3)

My chair of governors is fab and so I would go to her with certain things, and I must say my governing body and I know it's not the same in every school and of course I've got two governing bodies, they are incredibly supportive of me in terms of my stress levels (HTSD2)

Although the relationship with the chair of governors was seen as key, it was also expressed that the diversity of experience of the people sitting on the governing body contributed to the level of support the headteacher received from the governors as a whole.

I've got a really good chair of governors, really supportive and quite a number of governors who've been on the governing body for a long time and are experienced in certain areas. I've got somebody who was a trained Ofsted inspector recently on my team. My chair of governors is a barrister, so if I ever need legal advice then I'm confident that I can get that from him. I've got somebody who's a professional in health and safety and I know my business manager finds his support absolutely invaluable. I've got a teacher from another school in the authority so she knows the ins and outs of the curriculum (HTSB2)

However, not all the interviewees experienced a good relationship with their governing body when starting their current role, something which appeared to be detrimental to their headship.

When I moved here I had no governor support, no LEA support and I was left to flounder. It had a huge impact on me... I had to shout from the rooftops really to get people to understand that it's alright me being the head of the school but I need some support to know and understand where the school is going strategically because it is an independent school. There was a governing body but I was not allowed to participate in the governing meetings at all, under any circumstances. They were only for the senior school, and that was not because they were being horrible, it was because it was not in their psyche to include the junior school because they had only just purchased it (HTSE2)

External Support

The role of the local authority and the support they offer to schools has changed over recent years. The relationship the headteachers have with their authority was discussed during the interviews. Some headteachers had good relationships with the local authority.

A lot of schools don't like the local authority. Here we've got a fantastic local authority and we get on with them really well (HTSE1)

Whilst others felt there was an on-going lack of support, even before the recent governmental changes were introduced.

We had a torrid time trying to get support from the local authority which was hopeless (HTSD3)

Most of my time is taken up with challenging the authority, and despite my three Ofsted's which have all flagged up that the authority is appalling, and despite that, we're doing a good job... So we are not sitting here saying well it's the authorities fault, actually I'm doing OK, and it's the authority who ties my hands behind my back (HTSA3)

Some of the headteachers were critical of the support they had received from the local authority at the time of taking up their headship.

It was only because I knew people in the local authority that I knew who to ring if I had a problem, and other people I could ring to get advice from. If I had been a new head and new to the area, I would have been in big trouble (HTSD3)

So it only came on later, after we'd got through amalgamation and everything, they said, 'What would you have done differently?' I said, 'Well, I'd give the school support, heads need support for amalgamating schools but we're all on our own, all with these huge problems', you know, large schools that don't want to be together, yeah (HTSE3)

The relationship between the interviewees and local authority could be positive. One headteacher who had become the headteacher of a school which was joining an academy chain and also moving to a new building found the support she received to be very good.

The local authority were part of my appointment and I think they saw this as a real chance to actually start to move forward with the school and being new to headship, they were good, they were supportive... so the local authority at that time, in particular the education director, were very supportive (HTSC1)

However, for others it would appear that the key to the engagement with the local authority very much depended on the relationship between the headteacher and the person assigned to the school from the authority. The perceived value of support did vary between local authorities. One interviewee thought it was 'a mixed bag' and was 'all about personalities'.

I mean there are some people that you get on really well with and you respect and there are some people that just think 'how the hell did they get this job?' (HTSB1)

The theme of personality was also shared by another headteacher who felt she could not confide in her local authority advisor.

So some of it was highly confidential, you can't talk to anybody about what's going on in your school and you certainly wouldn't talk to your advisor because, I mean, they are clueless
(HTSE3)

It was also interesting to note that when relationships worked they could also be continued outside of the official role of the local authority.

One senior advisor in the local authority who is a brilliant guy. You know, almost a... he's our critical friend and still is. He has just retired but I am going to keep him on in that critical friendship kind of role. He was fantastic throughout
(HTSD3)

Other external sources of support

The interviewees described several forms of external support which they found valuable with some being from formal sources and others being more informal. The headteacher of a large secondary academy school (HTSA1) indicated that their main source of support came from professional partners such as accountants and solicitors as well as from their academy chain. Some of the interviewees employed consultants when they wanted to address a particular issue.

I've always been good at using consultants – so like, for instance, when I was recognising that this was not working, 'I need to talk to somebody' – again, it wasn't the authority because that was a waste of time – but I asked this consultant to come in and talk me through some ideas that she had and working in that way... I think you just need another voice sometimes just coming in and it isn't the authority, it's you, you've got to go and hunt it out
(HTSE3)

Another form of official support discussed was that of a mentor, something which is routinely arranged for every new headteacher. Some of the headteachers interviewed had never had a mentor (HTSA2, HTSA3, HTSD1); others told how they had been allocated a mentor but had never

met with them (HTSA1). The theme of relationships was raised again as for the other interviewees the success of the mentoring very much depended on the relationship between the two parties.

You're given a mentor and I was very fortunate that a colleague that I'd been a deputy with, he was the deputy, I was the deputy, he'd become a head two years before me and he was just great (HTSE1)

He had supported me to get a deputy headship and bluntly he's excellent. He is one of the leading heads in the UK and I respect him and to have him as a mentor is great... He is independent of the school and I can talk to him about issues which I may not wish to discuss with either my senior leadership team or chair of governors initially. It gives me an external sounding board and that has without doubt been beneficial (HTSB3)

For others, the mentoring relationship did not work.

I did have a mentor head right at the very beginning, he was an interesting chap, he was very good, obviously completely capable headteacher and gave me some useful advice, but on his terms. He didn't try terribly hard to know the school and it was quite obvious that the stage of his career he was at, he was ready to go and did leave within nine months of me starting, so I didn't really have a mentor supporter... In fact he rang me up and said, 'I'm your mentor, this is my telephone number if you need it but don't ring too often'... I remember asking him a question once and he just looked at me as if to say, 'That's a bloody stupid question'. At the time I didn't know it was a stupid question and I felt a bit bad about asking a question that he'd obviously thought I should have known the answer to (HTSB1)

One headteacher had taken a successful mentoring relationship further and had requested that his mentor also became his appraiser.

I had to have the agreement of the chair of governors for that because it is not my choice who is my appraiser – for obvious reasons [laughter] so they met and it was agreed that he could be my appraiser and that has been very powerful (HTSB3)

For others a more informal approach was taken when engaging with others to provide support.

I've got some good friends who I turn to a lot, who actually are very interested in it because their own professional life has got some part in it and so they've got a two-way reason for listening. But, I mean, when you tell them some of the stories about what you're doing, you just wouldn't believe it, people wouldn't believe what you're actually doing and my own personal friends have helped me a lot with that (HTSE1)

Another interviewee told of how informal conversations with an ex-chief executive provided invaluable support. It was a combination of being impartial and also having experience of running an organisation which seemed to make the relationship both successful and beneficial.

The former chief executive of a national organisation lives in the village next door and I go and have a coffee and just talk and I'll just pop round every couple of months and we'll talk and he'll say, oh don't be stupid or you know. But he's been there, he's led a big organisation, so he kind of listens to me and sympathises (HTSE1)

For the majority of interviewees a valuable form of support whether taking an informal or formal approach was the opportunity to discuss and reflect on issues with an external person. For one headteacher, time was a barrier to engaging in reflection, especially during the school day (HTSC1). For others, they looked to themselves first before engaging with others.

I am not a person who needs loads of people. I am not close to any other headteacher, although I know them all. ... we have a good cluster, and yes, I do ask them some questions but I have to say to you that when I have got an issue... I don't think 'Right well who do I know?', I think 'What do I think? What do I know?' first (HTSD1)

Several of the interviewees commented that they had found participating in this research to be enjoyable, useful, thought provoking and a powerful experience and had given them time for reflection (HTSC3, HTSB1, HTSD3,

HTSE2, HTSB3). All of the interviewees cited other headteachers as being one of their most valuable forms of support, with some believing that only other headteachers can fully understand the role of headship.

I didn't think this was true in the beginning but I do know that the only person who knows what a headteachers job is like is another headteacher (HTSB1)

For many of the headteachers their professional relationship with another headteacher had evolved into friendship enabling them to access support on an informal basis.

If it's overwhelming stuff then I have a friend who's a head and we kind of share in that together, but it tends to be very informally done (HTSD2)

I have lots of headteacher friends that, we just share, I share openly and honestly with them. I think some people just keep everything in and then it becomes dangerous, for their health or to their general wellbeing (HTSE1)

One interviewee was aware of the mental dangers associated with headship and disclosed that he 'saw a clinical psychologist for professional supervision once a fortnight' (HTSB3).

We are all very comfortable if we have a broken arm – people are OK with physical health issues, people maintaining mental health we are not comfortable with, and I think you have to challenge prejudice, and I do that proactively in that I see a clinical psychologist once a fortnight and I see that as part of a package of support (HTSB3)

Being able to share ideas and be honest about any issues they were experiencing was extremely important, and one headteacher talked of the strength he found in others and how this gave him a 'personal resilience'.

It's more and more about relationships, isn't it, personalities clicking together and what works, what doesn't work and having a network of friends or now a network of heads you can call on if you want a bit of support for things (HTSE3)

Networks

A recurring theme throughout the interviews was that of networks, both formal and informal. The vast majority of the headteachers interviewed conveyed that networks had been a major support throughout their headship as the connections they had made had proved to be invaluable. The extent to which these networks spread did vary between the interviewees with some taking every opportunity to actively extend their networks within which they could discuss issues with others both in and outside of the school environment, whilst others were content to rely on just a few key people and did not appear to have the time or the inclination to network further.

And then I set up this network... so for two or three years we had this network going and we had schools coming in to put other plans together and that kept me going for a bit longer (HTSE3)

Meeting people from similar circumstances was really useful... so those networks have been really valuable over time (HTSD3)

Networking opportunities often came as a result of attending official functions such as conferences, meetings and courses. By attending these events it enabled the interviewees to begin making their own support structures.

The local authority. They offer courses on things like that, headteacher overview, so I do tend to go to all of those because there are heads there, bit of networking, what are you doing about it?, what are you doing about it? And I do tend to go to those. (HTSD2)

I did NPQH and then after that the National College ran a course called New Visions... and they are good, but I think in terms of content, the main benefit comes from networking (HTSA2)

I did new visions which was a programme for new headteachers and was fantastic. It gave the opportunity to network with people from all over the place, but also those in the same position as you as a new head (HTSD3)

Often it was the informal times during official engagements which led to the most productive networking opportunities.

We spend quite a bit of time talking through issues that there are, not just in the formal agendered meetings but over lunch and over break, coffee and stuff like that, just sharing ideas but also sharing problems and, yeah, getting solutions really (HTSB2)

And you just, you're in a hotel in London, you're having a coffee, you're talking and then you want to find out what they're doing, you visit their school and then you're sitting down and sharing and you bounce ideas backward and forwards. And you think there's people that's more crazy than me or have got an even crazier lifestyle than me and you just start to converse and they give you ideas (HTSE1)

At the down times during the official proceedings, the interviewees were then able to connect with individuals and like-minded people and begin to form their own networks.

There are certain people you click with and you just don't know why. But you think, I'm not the only crazy person that does crazy things and you have, there's sort of a fellowship there, you don't know how to explain it (HTSE1)

Then you meet the ones who think like you, have the same philosophy as you and you find allegiances there (HTSA3)

For some, however, they did not take advantage of networking opportunities as they had their own closed network in place.

I met people you know socially to chat to, but not really to network alongside. I think it was because I had already created my own networking system myself, and there were about five of us altogether who would telephone on a regular basis, meet up if there were any new initiatives, to try and figure it out altogether, so probably I didn't take advantage of those meeting as other people might have done because I already had a system (HTSE2)

For others there needed to be a perceived value in the network in order for them to engage and participate fully.

No, I haven't got time. I haven't got time. By the time I've done my job here and my job there and caught up with everything I have to on a night the last thing I want to do is network... There is a heads' consortium locally and again it's very much at the, almost at the strategic level in that its information giving, information sharing and again you can send me it in an email, I don't need to be there (HTSD2)

I could have left at lunchtime yesterday and it wouldn't have made a massive difference (HTSB1)

Being able to access courses which were not only local or regional but national in their intake was identified as an important element of support and development, something one headteacher felt 'helps you every step of the way really and you just keep constantly taking things to the next level' (HTSC1). Another headteacher explained that although the local network was very strong, there were few opportunities to meet headteachers from other areas and regions which can make it a bit isolated and insular in terms

of new ideas (HTSA2). For the headteachers who accessed networks which reached out across regions, they felt that this was extremely beneficial. One headteacher valued a meeting which he had been invited to attend which consisted of 'dynamic' headteachers from across different authorities who did things differently and were prepared to share and work together (HTSB1).

I generally don't like headteachers because I think a lot of them are – well I don't understand why they do the job they do but when I go to that group I really, really respect everybody in that room and I feel a little bit humble and I don't very often feel like that. I have a bit of a problem with vanity but I genuinely think they are doing a better job than I am and that humbles me. I really listen to the things that they say and it's their practise that's inspirational and makes me want to come back and work harder. That's what gets me, that bit there and their ability to share ideas ... I have to run to keep up with them when most of the time I find you can amble with the rest of them

(HTSB1)

Schools which had become academies also found that they were exposed to new networking opportunities, often being able to engage with headteachers from other regions.

Our network was then huge because it was national, so not only did we have things like the national associations, we had this national body, with some really high profile people from London.

(HTSC1)

The head of another academy told how she had turned away from the local headteachers as she found them too insular. She felt a need to keep up-to-date with educational developments resulting in her preferring to engage with the academy headteachers as she perceived them to be more forward thinking (HTSA1). However, this had impacted on existing networks.

One school has gone with an academy chain so suddenly they are accountable to some school in Leeds which is 50 miles away, and that has altered their relationship with the rest of the group because they have a different support network

(HTSD3)

As well as finding networking with people from other geographical areas beneficial, some of the interviewees found it to be extremely useful where networks included people from outside the educational arena.

The local authority had a course called 'Common Purpose', which was actually a much broader thing and it was predominantly business people, just myself as an educationalist on that, a very expensive course, run over two years and they said to me, 'look, if you want to do this, we'll sponsor you'. That was a really good thing for me because being new to the area I actually got abreast of the area and the community really quickly, made a lot of contacts, so built up local networks as well, which was very powerful (HTSC1)

There was, however, support and appreciation by some for their local networks although one headteacher acknowledged that this may not be the case in other areas.

The networking and the support is fantastic. You can phone anyone up and anyone is willing to help or assist or people do the same to me now, and it's really good. It is really strong... Of course it helps geographically we are quite close. If I can't phone someone, I can walk over the road and that is really important. I don't know if that exists so much in other areas, but of course we are all based in similar school as well, so we have all got the same sort of issues so everyone is in the same boat, as it were (HTSA2)

A limited number of the interviewees actively engaged in the business community on a formal basis. The headteacher of an independent school was conscious that as well as being a school he was also running a business. He had actively sought out and joined a business orientated network in order to gain a different perspective on school issues. Something he had found invaluable (HTSB3).

I have joined a business group which is in effect a group and it works really well. There are about fifteen of us and what is really good is that they by chance happen to be parents of children at independent schools which means they buy independent education. They are all CEO's of small to medium sized family businesses. It's really good because once a month I am taken out of a school context and I have been able to take issues which face the school to them and we have discussed them under Chatham House rules and the critical questioning they give me is great (HTSB3)

Several of the interviewees spoke of their own social networks which provided a key support structure for them.

Luckily four or five of us [headteachers] will meet up and have several drinks and put the world to rights and that helps us, but... if you weren't the sort of person that socialised I think it could be really hard. There's recognition that it's a very lonely role with huge expectations and very little rewards (HTSB1)

Having opportunities to network and experience things outside of the school were felt to be beneficial and supportive. Some of the networks were by invitation only which their participants enjoyed but from which others felt excluded.

It's invitation only but there are a few people that want to be on it but they're not the right people, which is interesting... you know that there are people that would drag you down with their misery and wanting to focus on the day-to-day (HTSB1)

For others the barriers to joining networks were to do with time restrictions and the benefits had to be balanced with running the school.

Sometimes it is very difficult when you are bogged down by the day to day and then all of the backlog, just sticking your head about and thinking I do actually need to go and do that, that would give me a bit of inspiration a bit of, yes. That is where you get your support from (HTSD2)

Not other than time. That's the key because you can get embroiled in all of that and forget actually you've got a day job, or there's a tension sometimes between how much of your time and energy you can put into them and it's finding that balance really, yes (HTSC1)

Networks can be a valuable source of support. However, there seem to be certain factors needed to make the participation in networks successful. Relevance, accessibility, quality and time are all factors which have affected participation in networks by headteachers interviewed. These will be taken forward to the discussion chapter for further consideration.

Support for Others

Succession planning and talent spotting were seen as essential and vital elements of a headteachers role by all the interviewees. When discussing their route into headship the interviewees talked of how their own headteacher had been one of the main influences in their taking the decision to go into headship. The support and encouragement they had received seemed in most cases to be the crucial element in them having the confidence to fulfil their journey into headship. To gain an understanding of how the interviewees encouraged their staff into leadership and headship, discussion around the subject was introduced into the interviews.

There seemed to be a consensus amongst the interviewees that giving leadership opportunities was essential in developing their staff. Headteachers who had built up networks were able to secure placements for

their staff at other schools (HTSB3). Being able to talent spot and 'grow their own leaders' from within was considered to be 'powerful' for both the individual as they would already have an understanding of the ethos of the school and for the school because they would know the individual (HTSA1).

So right from the outset, CPD, recognising potential, giving people opportunities and then empowering them has been critical to our development really. I think we have a duty to make sure that people here have the arsenal to be able to compete with people nationally, but is about, for us as an organisation, growing our own leaders (HTSC1)

If you don't do CPD, if you don't feed your own mind you are not going to feed anyone else's. Everybody does CPD and everybody is a leader... CPD is very important to me and for my staff. If they won't engage in CPD then we are never going to get anywhere (HTSD1)

There were differences in the approach the headteachers took. For some headteachers they looked for the initiative to seek leadership opportunities to come from the staff in the first place.

We do talent spotting in the sense of I've got my eye on two middle leaders currently who I think have the potential within the next few years, and other people will come and say, 'I'm interested'. We offer out lots of opportunities for things and people will come and say 'I'm really interested in that' and then you kind of spot them, future assistant headteachers or what have you (HTSB2)

Others felt that it was their job to spot the potential in others. One interviewee gave some indication as to the characteristics which he felt indicated a future headteacher.

So my job is to talent spot and get the next lot of people coming through and I think I'm pretty good at seeing who is going to, I don't know whether it's like intuitive or whatever but I can see people who are going to be the next generation of leaders. They ask awkward questions in staff meetings, without being cynical, but they are, they do crazy quirky things that show me that they've got ideas and they're hard working as well, I mean, they're not lazy people. I can spot in my staff four people that will become headteachers (HTSE1)

Some schools found that staff were happy to take leadership opportunities but were more reluctant to leave the school and move on to other opportunities. There seemed to be a tension between retaining staff and bringing new people into a school. One headteacher described how the school could become a 'retirement home' as it was such a good place to work and while there was a necessity to keep 'a core of faithful people' he also recognised a need to 'bring in new people' and 'to kick some of them out to go and make their own mistakes somewhere else' (HTSE1). Another explained how they tried to 'encourage people to move on' but found that 'nobody really responds' (HTSE2). It was noted by one headteacher that there had been a shift towards retaining good staff for as long as possible and creating opportunities within the school to achieve this.

You know I have noticed a big difference in the last few years in outlook from headteachers. It is now much more about you get a good one, you do everything you can to keep them. You make it so great in your school that they don't want to leave. That is a different view. So, you know, I fight to keep people now. There comes a point where you know that their mind is made up and that's it and you wish them well (HTSD3)

The majority of interviewees, however, felt that it was their role to encourage staff to develop, take on leadership responsibilities and ultimately move on to another environment in order to bring innovation to a school.

If I'm going to stay put then somebody needs to be moving on, otherwise it all gets a bit stale, doesn't it? And I just think, you know, I was helped by being a deputy and had people encouraging me to move on, so I should do the same

(HTSE3)

It was also seen as 'a mark of my success as well I think, when they do get jobs elsewhere and are able to get those kind of promotions' (HTSB2). One headteacher took the discussion a stage further and reflected on the impact a new headteacher has on a school.

I think for a school like this having first headships I think there are benefits in that you get people who are keen to do a difficult job because we are keen to get it right. The downside for a school is that the head will make mistakes and I certainly have reflected on that there are things now that knowing what I know now as a head I would have done very differently from the start. There is always that balance to be achieved between the schools and they shouldn't be training grounds for heads necessarily

(HTSB3)

He thought that a new headteacher inevitably brought disruption to a school and also felt that most headteachers followed a certain pattern.

They come into a school, change some systems, uniform, prospectus, structures, feel that they have achieved all they can in that school and then move on to another school to start again. The school they have left then starts again with a new head and begins another seven years of change

(HTSB3)

One headteacher who had taken on another headship was surprised at the impact on the school community of her decision to leave.

But then of course everyone was just totally devastated. That is the problem with heads. They think you belong to them and they think you will stay forever. I could not believe it, you know, people weeping and, truly it is not a job

(HTSD1)

Next Steps

There have been discussions around the optimum length of time a headteacher should be in position and the effectiveness they have on the school (Ribbins & Zhang, 2005; Select Committee, 2004; Mortimore et al., 1989). One interviewee felt that his previous headteacher had been in position too long and that this had had a negative impact on the school.

I have seen the negative impact of J staying for too long at that school. He was there for 20 years. J remained a very good head, and I benefitted from that. I'm not always sure the school and the staff did (HTSB3)

However, another headteacher felt that it was with time that confidence grew allowing him to make changes and challenge ideas.

But you only do it after you've got a bit of confidence, when you're established you do that but you certainly wouldn't do it as a new head (HTSE3)

It is also argued that by extending the length of headship in a school it could help to bring greater stability to schools, especially with the rapid changes being made to the education system (Earley & Weindling, 2007). Much academic research has been written around the career stages a headteacher may experience during their headship, the shock of being a new headteacher and when they felt confident in the position (Super, 1957; Patton & McMahon, 2006; Day & Bakioglu, 1996; Reeves, Mahoney & Moos, 1997; Pascal & Ribbins, 1998; Brighouse & Woods, 1999; Weindling, 2000). One interviewee told how it had taken him five years to feel established in the role.

I remember a man who does a lot of work with the London Challenge, coming to speak in my first term. We invited him to speak and he said, you know nothing about headship in the first five years, which was very encouraging. It takes you five years to learn the job, because there's so many different scenarios that hit you, that you can't prepare for, other than just going through them. (HTSE1)

The difficult job is maintaining progress and impetus and sustaining that over a period of time (HTSC1)

For headteachers, the research suggests that headteachers follow a pattern – they come into a school, change some systems, uniform, prospectus, structures; feel that they have achieved all they can in that school, and then move onto another school to start again. The school they have left then starts again with a new head and begins another seven years of change. So is it in the interest of the headteacher or the school for heads to move on? Is it necessary for heads to move schools? (HTSB3)

Some expressed a need to see the job through no matter how long that took and for others there was a suspicion around headteachers who moved into another headship too soon.

I'm always suspicious of people who do a job for a couple of years and move on... There's no point in going and taking on a headship and in two years, saying, 'right, I've had enough, I'm moving on', because you're never going to make a difference because the only way you can make a difference is really by cultural change and not quick fixes (HTSC1)

So here, I thought I'd do five years and I've done eleven but the job has changed four times (HTSE1)

Some of the interviewees expressed a desire to move onto another headship and to have 'the challenge and change of leading a bigger school' (HTSD3). The headteacher of an academy had taken the decision to be the head of their current school for at least another two years as she had set a target of becoming an outstanding school and wanted to see this through (HTSA1). Another wanted to see the transfer to new premises before making any decisions.

I have an exit strategy, I have always believed that... but it suits me here, I like it here, I like the kids, I know there are better authorities, I could probably earn more money, I don't know, I really don't... So I don't know whether or not I'll stop. I am planning to be into the new school and we'll see what we make of it (HTSA3)

For the headteachers who had been involved with major changes to their school, this seemed to have satisfied their desire to move elsewhere.

There's never been a time when I've regretted coming and there's never been a time when I've thought, 'actually, I need to move on', but I think that's been down to the fact that the school has undergone a real metamorphosis.. If we hadn't have got the academy status and the new build then probably I may have moved on and I'd be on the second headship now but it's almost like a new school (HTSC1)

So the job has been taking a school and winning the hearts and minds of the staff that were not good or capable, overpaid, set in their ways and dragging them up into the current framework. Employ those staff to distil, dilute their bad practice, challenge capability, so a long route and we're into our fifth year next year, and we are going to design and build a school (HTSA3)

There's not many people that have the privilege of working on a design and actually seeing that through and moving into a building that they've had a huge input into and probably that would have been the point when I went, if I was going to, but then when you've put all that time and energy into it, you now, my thoughts were then, 'well actually, why would I want to leave now? I need to reap the benefit of it really' (HTSE1)

Some of the interviewees expressed a desire to go into academia after headship to research in the field of education. Others were unsure of what they wanted to do but felt a time pressure to move on.

I think I want a different challenge from say just, I don't mean just, I don't mean to just another school in the area because they are so similar. And in the next region they tend to be on the majority smaller schools. But also it sort of fits in with your life as well. I wouldn't want to move far (HTSA2)

I've already started looking somewhere else but I'm selective about what I choose. I'm not desperate to get any old job. I've reached the top of my pay scale here and so any improvements that I make won't be rewarded financially but obviously you get different types of rewards for doing the job well. I'm actively looking for something different... I know I've got to take the next step sometime soon otherwise I could be here too long. There is a danger in that (HTSB1)

One interviewee was considering moving to a second headship. He was also aware that there was an option to remain at his current school but to do so felt he would have to change how he conducted his headship.

Yes, I would look to leave to have a second headship because most research and I can see it, heads are effective for seven to ten years. If you are going to be there for longer than ten, you have got to change the model in which the senior management team operates (HTSB3)

Another interviewee was considering becoming an executive headteacher because that would enable him to retain his staff, similar to a football manager, enabling him to bring about rapid results.

Mr Mancini at Manchester City. If he leaves he has built the backroom staff of people he's worked with for maybe fifteen years and actually they go with him. Yeah, because he's got a whole team of people he's working with, that he trusts and knows how they're working. In headships we get parachuted as individuals into an organisation ... but if I can become an executive head and I can draw on the strength of the residual people I know, my team, in different places, you can actually help people very quickly in a faster way (HTSE1)

It could be, therefore, that rather than a headteacher having to move schools, extending their headship and evolving their leadership style could have a positive impact not only on headship sustainability but also on the schools themselves. In order to do this, however, it will be essential to ensure that the headteachers have recognition of and access to the

necessary support structures. It was also interesting to find that many of the headteachers interviewed did not feel qualified or confident to take on a role outside of headship.

Sometimes I look at jobs and I think, and I do, and I have always said to them 'if somebody offers me an opportunity, just comes and says do you want to do this?', that might be enough for me to just go... [however] There are no other jobs that I could do. I haven't got any skills to do anything else. I could never do a different job. I could only be a headteacher. That's it. (HTSD1)

Satisfaction of Headship

Although the headteachers interviewed were positive about their headship, there was acknowledgement that not all headteachers felt the same with many wanting to leave the profession.

Most heads I know work as long as they can stay upright and retire (HTSD3)

We went to this leaving do on Friday for the heads who are retiring – talk about miserableness! Because people who are going out are just so pleased to be going and I think that's really sad, isn't it? (HTSE3)

One of the interviewees admitted to thinking of leaving headship due to the pressures of the role.

I am not sure what the statistics are for people quitting headship but I'd be lying if I said I hadn't thought about it because just some days it's just so bloody hard (HTSB1)

Although not thinking of leaving himself, one headteacher commented on the pressures of the role and how the need to perform and always get results can be too much for some headteachers to bear.

The pressure upon us to always get it right is great and that can drag people out of the profession (HTSE1)

However, for others the benefits and successes of headship far outweighed the everyday challenges of the role.

There are times when you get applauded and you see things going really well. You know we got another award last week for our improvement in standards and stuff. It's brilliant, brilliant. You feel as though you have done that

(HTSD3)

For some of the interviewees, there was almost a dread to leaving headship.

Because the guy I went to college with is my deputy and we started on the same day and he's retiring in a week's time and he wants to get out as early as he can at 55. He doesn't like the job and he wants to go, he's tired. And I'm thinking I've got so much more I'd like to do, you know, I feel like I'm on a cusp of a next generation of new ideas

(HTSE1)

One headteacher acknowledged that if he stayed in his current headship then he would have to evolve his leadership style.

I now have to evolve my headship and I could argue that one of the greatest leadership challenges is to change the nature of our leadership within the same context, and I now face that challenge

(HTSB3)

Another recognised the importance of finding the relevant support applicable to the individual.

The bottom line is most heads would, when push comes to shove, say 'well I've certainly enjoyed my role' but I think it is important to recognise what you need to keep yourself going

(HTSE3)

Of the thirteen headteachers who were interviewed, two thought that they may choose headship again and two were unsure. One headteacher who was uncertain if she would choose headship again didn't feel as if she had chosen the career in the first place.

I came home for Christmas after my first term and sort of talked about my new job, being an NQT, and my father said you are going to wake up one day and you will be a headteacher and you won't know how you have done it, and that's what happened... I woke up one morning and looked out of my bedroom window and I was a headteacher, and I don't know how it happened (HTSA3)

The remaining interviewees would choose headship again with some thriving on the diversity of the role and the challenges they face.

I mean it can be a lonely job, it's frightening but I've thoroughly enjoyed it and I wouldn't have missed it really... It gives huge opportunity, huge variety and I always say to people, 'being a deputy is probably harder than being a head', you don't have the ultimate responsibility but actually on a day-to-day basis you're doing a huge amount of the ground work, the slog and you don't get perhaps that head above the parapet to see the bigger picture and I don't know where it's here but people want the head, if there's anything going on, they don't want a substitute, they want you, so you do spend a lot of time in your own evenings and weekends, going and doing things and being seen but actually that is another aspect of the job that you enjoy and it's important for the school (HTSC1)

Yeah, yeah, no question about it. I'd do it better but you can never say that. If I knew now, when I became a head, I'd have made three times more rapid progress but that's kind of stupid, hypothetical, because you are what you are because of the journey you've gone on. And I'm happy that I've made mistakes, huge mistakes, huge successes and I'm really glad I am where I am now and I wouldn't, and I don't regret it at all (HTSE1)

Overall, the interviewees were satisfied with their role and wanted to remain in headship. For some the idea of moving to another school was something they thought they should do rather than wanting to do, whereas for others they were keen to move to another headship at a bigger school. It was refreshing to find that the headteachers were enthusiastic about their role, especially in light of the recent changes which have been made to the education sector and the challenges that these changes have brought.

Summary of chapter 7

This chapter has explored the forms of support which the headteachers interviewed either found the most beneficial in helping them fulfil their role of headship or identified those they would like to access. There was a discussion of the internal, external and headteacher-to-headteacher support experienced by the interviewees followed by their thoughts on engaging with networks, something which they all identified as being an important source of support. The importance of headteacher support in succession planning was identified and the ways in which the interviewees engaged in this was discussed. The final part of the chapter questioned the participants on their future career path and asked them about their satisfaction of headship to date. The following chapter will present a discussion of the analysis of the questionnaire and interview data taking into consideration literature around the subject of headship sustainability.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

Introduction and chapter outline

The previous chapters have addressed a number of the research questions designed to answer the overarching subject of how the preferred support mechanisms of experienced headteachers could help to facilitate headship sustainability. Consideration was given to the various forms of support which were identified in the literature as being available to headteachers, together with a review of what was available from official sources at the time of this study. The current educational policy context was considered together with how this impacts on the support needs of headteachers. The data from the interviews and questionnaires were analysed and from this several themes emerged.

This chapter will discuss the themes emerging from the analysis and findings, and will relate these to the literature. Consideration will be given as to how they could impact on the sustainability of headship. The first section of the chapter discusses how the challenges faced by headteachers affect headship sustainability and an argument is made that extending the career of a headteacher could have a positive impact on headship. Consideration is given to traditional forms of support available to a headteacher such as the local authority and senior leadership team and how these are perceived by the literature and by the findings of this research. The second part of the chapter discusses different aspects of headship and argues how various forms of personalised support, such as networking and opportunities for reflection, should be readily available and accessible to a headteacher throughout their career, and how these support mechanisms could have a positive impact on the sustainability of headship.

Extending careers

It is generally recognised that the headteacher of a school is the main source of leadership and has a direct effect on the expectations, values and ethics of the school community (Day et al., 2010; Ofsted (d) 2010). This was certainly the view of the interviewees who felt that the whole school community looked to them for leadership, ethos and direction (HTSD1, HTSD3, pg 143), and that they were the person that everyone turned to and wanted to engage with (HTSC1, pg 193). Strong links have been found between the quality of leadership and management and the quality of teaching as discussed in chapter 2, pg 39 (Ofsted, 2003:3). Length of service both in headship and at a particular school were considered to be key factors to being a successful headteacher (Ribbins & Zhang, 2005:83, pg 39), and there was also evidence to show that higher performing schools were run by experienced headteachers who have been in post for longer than six years, whereas lower performing schools tended to have less experienced headteachers (Select Committee, 2004, pg 39). However, it was also suggested in chapter 2, pg 39, that headteachers in post for more than eleven years can have a negative effect on a school (Mortimore, et al., 1989; Woods, 2002). The experience of one interviewee seemed to agree that being in a headship for too long could have a negative impact on the school and the staff. The headteacher he was talking about had been in post for twenty years. However, he also felt that he had personally benefited from the length of time the headteacher had been in position and valued the experience and advice he had offered (HTSB3, pg 187). The effect of a new headteacher on a school can be unsettling and can have a detrimental effect on pupil progress and development (Mortimore et al., 1989:222). Several of the interviewees commented on the negative impact a new headteacher can have on a school, and from their own experience admitted that at first they were unsure of their capabilities (HTSD1, HTSB1, pg 148; HTSE1, pg 149). It was only with time that they gained confidence in themselves, their abilities and their position (HTSB3, pg 185; HTSE3, pg 186). It was also the case that moving on to another headship could also have a negative impact on the

school they were leaving (HDSD1, pg 186). There is an argument to be made, therefore, that at a time of extensive educational reform, retaining a headteacher in position would bring a greater stability not only to the school but to the education system as a whole (Earley & Weindling, 2007). One interviewee discussed how there was an expectation for headteachers to move on to another school after six or seven years, but questioned if this was in the best interests of the school as a new headteacher 'certainly brings disruption to a school' (HTSB3, pg 185). He felt that most headteachers followed a certain pattern of changing systems, uniform, prospectus and structures before moving schools to take up another headship (HTSB3, pg 186).

It could be that facilitating an extension to the length of a headship in a particular school would enable an experienced headteacher to carry out sustainable reform and be a more effective leader, rather than being in post for a few years and carrying out more superficial improvement. Long serving headteachers have 'the confidence to pursue their goals with determination and, if necessary, to take risks' (Ofsted, 2003). It was certainly the case with the interviewees that their confidence grew with length of service (HTSE3, pg 186), and with the mistakes and successes they had made along the way (HTSE1, pg 193). It would appear that there needs to be a balance between retaining headteachers in position and releasing them at their most effective time. Having access to appropriate support mechanisms could enable an experienced headteacher to evolve their headship within the same school context and in so doing remain effective and have a positive influence on their school community.

Challenges

Headteachers face challenges on a daily basis and 'the dualism of support and challenge has become a strong theme in education' (Swaffield, 2008:2).

Although challenge could be seen as negative and aggressive as it could be meant to test or confront someone, it can also be used as a stimulus for reflection and questioning 'that prompts reasons and explanation or the consideration of different viewpoints' (Swaffield, 2008:2). Rapid change in educational policy has been and continues to be a challenge to headteachers, as does accountability, international standing and Ofsted (pg 52). How these changes and challenges are viewed by headteachers will vary and the level of support required will need to be flexible and of an individual nature to be beneficial to experienced headteachers in facing these challenges. The interviewees saw Ofsted as a challenge, some with very negative views (HTSD2, HTSD1, pg 161) whilst others seemed to welcome the challenges Ofsted brought (HTSA2, pg 162). It emerged during the interviews how the outcomes of Ofsted inspections had brought a vulnerability to those seeking a new headship. Whereas they would have welcomed the opportunity of taking on a challenging school, they were now considering their options very carefully before moving on to a new headship (HTSD3, pg 162). Success in one school does not automatically translate to success in another school (HTSD3, pg 162), and if results are not achieved within an acceptable inspection time-frame, it could impact negatively on the career of an experienced headteacher.

Headteachers are more aware of the implications to their career of taking on another headship and failing to deliver the required results. As a result, several headteachers questioned were looking to evolve their headship within their current school and continue to improve the teaching, learning and pupil outcomes (HTSC1, pg 188; HTSE1, HTSA3, pg 189; HTSB3, pg 192). This could be likened to the recession and the current housing market where people are more reluctant to move house and are instead improving and extending their current houses. One headteacher who had previously thought about moving to another school was now reconsidering his options, especially around the type of school he would move to (HTSD3, pg 162). Another felt that becoming an executive headteacher could be more

appealing as he would be able to retain his staff, similar to a football manager, enabling him to bring about rapid results (HTSE1, pg 190).

As discussed in chapter 2, pg 48, another opportunity which has arisen over recent years is that of Local (LLE) and National (NLE) Leaders of Education. These are headteachers of outstanding schools who are recruited to help failing schools on a temporary basis. This has been designed to bring the experience of successful headteachers to underperforming schools, and has also enabled these headteachers to fulfil other roles outside of their school. Being able to take on other challenges outside of school whilst maintaining overall control and direction of their school could be a way to keep headteachers energised and retained at their school for the long term (Ingate, 2010). There are concerns, however, over the implementation of this scheme as being trained to be a national or local leader did not mean headteachers would receive a placement as discovered in the interviews (HTSE3, pg 158). It was also the case that the help of a local or national leader was not always appreciated or welcomed, something which had caused frustration (HTSE1, pg 158). However, another interviewee felt that helping others brought balance to their role of headship (HTSA3, pg 159). There was also the impact on the school to consider, as one headteacher admitted, that he had pursued opportunities outside of his school which in hindsight had been helpful for his career prospects but detrimental to the school (HTSB1, pg 168). Being absent from school enabled a headteacher to take on other challenges and allowed their staff to develop their leadership skills. However, the headteachers interviewed were very aware that they were only able to take on other roles if they had a fully trustworthy and competent senior leadership team based at their school (HTSE1, HTSA1, HTSB2, HTSB3, pg 167).

Some of the headteachers interviewed had faced intense challenges such as building a new school and moving premises or converting to academy status. Others had had to face the challenge of extreme pupil behaviour and implementing complete staff restructuring (pg 142, 143, 144, 189). It

seemed that these challenges had stimulated their headship as all these headteachers were enthusiastic about their headship and were not contemplating leaving their current position. It could be that without having an extreme challenge to face these headteachers may have moved on to another headship. The scale of challenge, the stimulus it gives headship and the affect this has on extending the career of a headteacher would be an interesting area of further study.

The Role of the Local Authority

The complexities of the role of headteacher have changed over recent years, but the support mechanisms required to sustain a headteacher in their role and to avoid their premature departure do not seem to have been developed to keep pace with demands and changes (Wood, Woods & Cowie, 2009). Effective leaders need both experience and support and 'actively cultivating them can increase the leadership capacity of the system' (Barber, Whelan & Clark, 2010:28). However, 'professional development and renewal is often episodic and uncoordinated' (Chapman, 2005:2), and local provision can vary enormously, but it is something which is needed to sustain and strengthen headteachers throughout their career (Woods, Woods & Cowie, 2009). It has been reported that primary schools regret the diminishing role of the local authority whereas secondary schools are more accepting of the situation, and are turning to external sources to fill the gap in provision (Earley et al, 2012; Smithers & Robinson 2007). This study found there were no clear lines between primary and secondary schools; it was more between authority to authority. One local authority in this study was consistently praised in both the questionnaire data and the interview responses. The questionnaire data (pg 128) showed that York was the most effective authority and this was confirmed in the interviews (pg 172). There was consistent support for the authority from maintained, independent and academy schools in the area, and the majority of schools in the authority

were deemed to be good schools (pg 91). This was not the case, however, for other authorities in this research where increasingly the headteachers were looking to other external sources to fill gaps left by the authority (HTSD3, HTSA3, pg 171). A frustration of many of the interviewees was a perceived lack of support for financial, procurement and maintenance issues. They felt that these areas were hindering their headship by taking up time which could be devoted to teaching and learning (HTSA2, HTSB1, pg 152).

Some schools who did not rate the provision from the local authority had found both improvement and support when they had employed a business manager to take responsibility for these issues (HTSE1, HTSD2, pg 151). One headteacher was able to do this after converting to an academy school (HTSD3, pg 169). The headteachers of the independent schools interviewed all had financial and commercial managers who had responsibility for these issues, and again they were considered to be a great asset (HTSE2, pg 169). Having a colleague dedicated to the financial and maintenance side of running the school offered valued support to the headteachers who had them (HTSE1, HTSD2, pg 151), and was something other interviewees desired (HTSE1, HTSB1, pg 151). For smaller schools where there was an issue of funding, it may be that collaborating with other schools in the area and having a business or maintenance hub could be a solution (HTSB1, pg 151).

As well as maintenance and procurement, local authorities had also been one of the main providers for the training provision and personal development of staff and headteachers. With restructuring and the introduction of teaching schools, this was another area in which the local authorities were decreasing their provision. For some who were engaging in the teaching schools movement, this was regarded as a positive initiative (HTSE1, HTSB2, pg 153-154). However, others expressed frustration at having to source their own provision which had previously been available from the local authority (HTSB1, pg 152). Concerns were also raised at the

increase in administration which took them away from leading the school (HTSB1, pg 152).

Senior Leadership Team

The questionnaire data (pg 127) and the headteachers interviewed (pg 167) all commented on the importance of their senior leadership team, and this was also discussed in chapter 2, pg 48. The senior leadership team was recognised as a major source of support for the participants on a daily basis and was often mentioned first above other forms when questioned about sources of support (HTSA1, HTSD1, HTSB2, HTSA2, HTSC1, pg 167). Ingate (2010) suggested that the strength of the leadership team and the freedom with which a headteacher could create their own team rather than enduring the team inherited on appointment, had a profound effect not only on the success of the headship but also on the length of time a headteacher may remain in position at a school. One headteacher felt she had a strong senior leadership team and valued the fact that she had 'either appointed or had a significant input' into the team (HTSB2, pg 167). This headteacher had been in post for three years having previously been a deputy at the school, and was planning to remain in this headship for at least another ten years. Where interviewees had restructured the leadership team to their own design, they felt empowered to carry out the changes they felt necessary to lead a successful school as they had a very strong support structure (HTSC1, pg 167). Having in place a strong management structure also allows for effective succession planning, an essential element needed to bring sustainability to headship.

Succession

Succession planning and encouraging new people to aspire to the role of headteacher is a key element to the sustainability of headship (Hartle & Thomas, 2003). New headteachers can bring enthusiasm and a new perspective to the role, but the effects on the school also have to be taken into consideration as a change of leadership is one of the most significant events in the life of a school (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006:57). As one headteacher commented, 'there is always that balance to be achieved between the schools and they shouldn't be training grounds for heads necessarily' (HTSB3, pg 185). As discussed in chapter 2, pg 56, there are a number of programmes being carried out to talent spot and encourage people into leadership roles throughout schools, some specifically aimed at headship, and headteachers have a major role to play in this. All the headteachers interviewed felt that encouraging people into leadership positions was an essential element of their role, as well as ensuring that there were adequate and appropriate leadership opportunities offered to their staff (HTSB2, HTSE1, pg 184). The size of the school did impact on the number of opportunities available to aspiring leaders but headteachers with good networks were able to find suitable experiences available at other schools (HTSB3, pg 183). There was, however, a tension emerging from this research between staff career progression and retaining effective teachers in school. To be judged as outstanding in the new Ofsted framework, a school has to achieve an outstanding rating for teaching. This seems to have led to a shift in attitude, with headteachers now wanting to retain effective members of staff instead of encouraging them to progress their career elsewhere. They would make opportunities for them within the school thereby 'making it so great in your school that they don't want to leave' (HTSD3, pg 185). The impact of this new attitude towards staff progression and its relationship with headship sustainability would be an interesting area for further research.

Retention

As discussed in chapter 1, pg 15, retaining headteachers in position can have a beneficial effect on school performance. Headteachers are an expensive resource and losing the investment of an experienced headteacher can greatly impact on the education system, not only in financial terms but also in capacity and effective school leadership (Earley, Weinding, Bub & Glenn, 2009; Chapman, 2005). It has been commented on that 'there is an increasing lack of career opportunities for experienced school leaders' (Reeves, Mahony & Moos, 1997:54). As discussed in chapter 2, pg 48, headteachers of outstanding schools can become Local or National Leaders of Education, enabling them to assist schools facing challenging circumstances and to work with other headteachers. There are also opportunities for some headteachers to become involved with the National College for Teaching and Leadership. With recent policy changes on training, some may apply for their school to become a teaching school. However, as the education departments within local authorities have diminished substantially over the past few years, this has left very few, if any, career opportunities within the authorities for experienced headteachers. There was also a sense amongst the participants, of a lack of other career opportunities available to them, with some feeling unable or unqualified to seek a position out of headship (HTSD1, pg 190).

This may indicate that headteachers are 'stuck' in their current positions, but this was not the impression given by the interviewees, most of whom were enthusiastic about their current roles, still had vision and felt they had a worthwhile job to do (HTSE1, HTSD3, pg 191). To bring sustainability to headship a headteacher needs to be able to access the relevant support in order to maintain their drive and vision and avoid disenchantment and premature departure (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Although much of the literature seems to concentrate on the disenchantment and withdrawal of headteachers in the late stages of their career as discussed in chapter 1, pg 18, some studies have shown that experienced headteachers can renew

their enthusiasm and energy for the role (pg 21) and this can positively impact on long-term headships (Woods, 2002; Ingate, 2010; Pascal & Ribbins, 1998). Oplataka (pg 22) found that rather than looking for a premature exit or becoming disenchanted with the role, many headteachers continue to have high energy and enthusiasm late into their career (2007:363). Many of the headteachers in this study were still enthusiastic about the role of headship, and had no immediate plans to leave. The findings of the questionnaire, as quoted in chapter 5, pg 124, showed that only 9% of respondents were disenchanted with their position. When asked why they were not considering leaving the role it was interesting to note that the responses were similar to those reported by Reames, Kochan and Zhu (2013, pg 25). This study found that not all headteachers were thinking of leaving their position as they felt loyalty to their staff, wanted to support their school and felt they could make a difference. They still loved working with children, really enjoyed their job and didn't want to do anything else. Some felt they were unqualified to do anything else and saw a lack of opportunity beyond headship. For others it was due to financial commitments and they welcomed the security of the role. The majority of questionnaire respondents indicated satisfaction with headship. Knowing what they know now and in light of all the current changes in the role, the headteachers surveyed would still choose the role of headship if starting their careers again (pg 131).

Individualised Support for Headship Sustainability

A strong theme to emerge from this research was the individualism of headteachers and their need for different types of support and different levels of support to meet the various challenges they face throughout their career.

This next section will discuss the individual needs of headteachers and how recognising and satisfying these needs could help to bring sustainability to headship.

Self-confidence, Self-belief and Self-efficacy

All of the interviewees had followed a traditional route into headship working their way up from classroom teacher, with many having no ambition or aspiration towards headship to begin with (HTSC1, HTSE1, HTSA2, HTSE3, HTSB3, HTSD3, pg 135). It was the encouragement and nurturing by others, most often being their headteacher, which had planted the seeds of headship and provided leadership and development opportunities enabling them to achieve the position (HTSE3, HTSD3, HTSB3, HTSE1, pg 138).

This encouragement and belief in their ability gave the interviewees the confidence and self-efficacy needed to attain their goals. Self-efficacy is the amount of effort needed to not only succeed but to have the self-belief that you can succeed. Positive encouragement by peers was essential for the interviewees to embark and endure their journey into headship. Negative comments and experiences could alienate people from leadership and headship by diminishing their self-efficacy (Rhodes, 2012). Self-confidence and self-belief can impact on headship and it has been suggested that the more confidence a headteacher has in their own ability and in the decisions they take, the more they are enabled to push boundaries, try new ideas and take on other responsibilities (MacBeath, O'Brien & Gronn, 2012; Rhodes, 2012). As discussed in chapter 2, pg 39, there is evidence to suggest that length of service in a position can increase confidence, resulting in long serving headteachers being more willing to take risks and push boundaries (Ofsted, 2003). One interviewee felt that it was with time that confidence grew allowing them to make changes and challenge ideas, something they would not have done as a new head (HTSE3, pg 186).

Recent changes in educational policy have brought curriculum freedoms and autonomy to academy schools resulting in headteachers needing more confidence to take their school in a different direction and to try new ideas. The headteacher of one academy felt he was able to try new approaches because he had been given 'permission' to do so by having flexibility in the curriculum. He was, however, trying to find the confidence to push the

boundaries further as this was an unfamiliar freedom (HTSE1, pg 146). Confidence needs to be maintained and energised as it is something which can be challenged or even lost. Support measures need to enable confidence to grow and extend, not only to inspire people into headship, but also to empower long serving headteachers to maintain their vision and to remain an effective school leader.

Flintham (2003:2) refers to an 'internal reservoir of hope' being 'the calm centre at the heart of the individual leader, "the still point of the turning world" that sustains personal self-belief in the face of external pressure and critical incidents' (pg 15). He believes that this reservoir 'has to be replenished by a variety of personal sustainability strategies or there will be individual burn out or drop out, "when things fall apart and the centre cannot hold"' (2003:2). Many of the interviewees told of how they had people they could call on for help, some of these being other headteachers, whilst others were colleagues within the education field (HTSE3, pg 173; HTSD2, HTSE1, HTSE3, pg 176). One headteacher felt he had a very good network of support where he could 'phone anyone up and anyone is willing to help or assist'. He also had the benefit of being able to visit another school due to his geographical location, 'If I can't phone someone, I can walk over the road and that is really important' (HTSA2, pg 181). MacBeath, O'Brien and Gronn found that headteachers who felt able to 'pick up the phone' had much more self-confidence than those who were hesitant or felt unable to ask for help (2012:434). Others adopted a more informal, social approach where they would meet other headteachers in a pub to discuss issues and 'put the world to rights' (HTSB1, pg 181). However, some headteachers do not ask for help, especially formal help, as they feel it could be perceived as a weakness in their professional capabilities and they need to project a strong and powerful image to retain credibility (Nir, 2009).

Performance

Headship has been likened to a performance as the headteacher adopts a professional identity to enact their role to the expectations of their audience. Over a long period of time, this could cause stress and disenchantment as the headteacher has to suppress their true emotions in favour of presenting a response which is expected from their school community (Rhodes & Greenway, 2010). Several of the headteachers interviewed spoke of how they felt they had to appear in control at all times to staff, pupils, parents and other external bodies. It was felt that the whole school community looked towards them for leadership and as such they had to present a confident front at all times (HTSD1, HTSD3, pg 143). Headship is a public role and 'one of the most significant challenges facing heads is that the enactment of their leadership is a very public performance which can attract either success or failure on a day-to-day basis' (Rhodes & Greenway, 2010:149). One interviewee likened it to 'walking a tightrope' where it is very easy to go from 'hero to zero and back again' (HTSD3, pg 155). Another commented on how the burden to perform and to constantly make the right decisions could result in people leaving headship (HTSE1, pg 191). The effects of being part of a daily performance with negative and positive outcomes can cause a strain on headteachers (Crawford, 2007). Strain can impact on headship and without some sort of release or support, could bring about premature departure from the role.

Reflection

The emotional well-being and physical health of headteachers have been impacted by an excessive workload and difficulties with finding an acceptable work-life balance (MacBeath, O'Brien & Gronn, 2012). One headteacher of an independent school had recognised a need for reflection as 'schools are not always very healthy places' and consulted a clinical psychologist on a fortnightly basis in order to keep a healthy mental attitude (HTSB3, pg 176).

It was something he felt was an essential element of his professional support and as such he funded it himself. Flintham (2003:13) found that a key message to come from his research was the 'need to create the capacity for strategic reflection opportunities'. As discussed in chapter 1, pg 32, reflection is considered to be an important part of effective educational leadership, not only personal reflection but also strategic reflection. Headteachers need opportunities for reflection throughout their career in order to gain an understanding of both success and failure and how to move forward. It could help to sustain them and not being able to engage in reflection could be detrimental to the individual and could impact on their career (Bottery, 2003; Crawford, 2007). Money and time are often quoted as being barriers to participating in reflective activities. 'You've got to have lots of reflection and you don't have time in a school day to reflect' (HTSC1, pg 175). However, as it seems to be a necessary aid for wellbeing and therefore sustainability, it is one form of support that should not only be available to all headteachers but they should also be given the time and funding to participate fully (Flintham, 2003). Interviews can act as a catalyst for reframing a person's outlook and may lead to changes in behaviours or choices (MacBeath, O'Brien & Gronn, 2012). It has also been suggested that using a portrait methodology enables educational leaders to reflect on their role and develop an understanding of themselves and their situation (Bottery, Wong, Wright & Ngai, 2009). However, an interviewee may not realise that they are participating in a reflective exercise until later. Several of the interviewees taking part in this research found the interview to be a positive experience which had enabled them to reflect on certain aspects of their role and life, giving the impression that this was not something they normally did (HTSC3, HTSB1, HTSD3, HTSE2, pg 175). One headteacher told how he had found the process to be a 'very powerful experience' (HTSB3).

Mentoring

Mentoring was discussed in chapter 1, pg 32, and had been found to be an effective support tool and one where reflection is not only allowed but also encouraged to take place (Chapman, 2005). It is mandatory for all new headteachers to receive mentoring before and during their first year in headship and some of these relationships do last longer. However, mentoring was not something which had been experienced by many of the participants of this study (HTSA2, HTSA3, HTSD1, pg 173). The success of mentoring does depend on the relationship between the mentor and the mentee and the perceived support the headteacher gains from the arrangement. One interviewee told how she had been assigned a mentor when new into headship but had never seen them or had any contact with them (HTSCA1, pg 174). The successful mentoring relationships related by the interviewees had been with people they had come across during their journey into headship rather than someone who had been appointed to them (HTSB3, pg 174). Very often it was a headteacher they had worked for who was the person who had encouraged them into headship and acted as their mentor. "I had a fantastic headteacher, really inspirational headteacher, really good mentor" (HTSB1, pg 138). However, there did not seem to be continuity of the relationship. The same interviewee found that the mentor he had been assigned on becoming a headteacher was reluctant to engage in the mentoring process. This resulted in frustration and the breakdown of the mentoring relationship as he felt he could not call for advice or ask relevant questions (HTSB1, pg 174).

An important element of a successful mentoring partnership is the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. The majority of the interviewees had either never had a mentor, or the relationship had ended shortly after they had started in headship. The only interviewee who still had a mentor was the headteacher of an independent school. It transpired that he had been able to not only choose his mentor but had also been able to retain him throughout his headship, been able to set the level of contact and had developed the relationship so that his mentor also became his appraiser

(HTSB3, pg 174). He chose the headteacher who had encouraged him into headship, a relationship which has been consistently described as being an important one for all the participants of this study (HTSB1, HTSE3, HTSE1, HTSD3, HTSB3, pg 138). Being able to choose a mentor could be a crucial element of having a successful and beneficial partnership. It brings continuity to a relationship and if it is allowed to evolve, it could be a very strong source of support for headteachers. Further research into the relationship between mentoring and appraisals of headteachers could add another dimension to the sustainability of headship.

Networks

Networks can be an effective resource in which headteachers can participate as discussed in chapter 1, pg 33. They can act as a valuable source of support and can help to sustain an individual by aiding their renewal (Chapman, 2005). However, in order to be effective, members need to be able to see the benefit of joining a network and the experience needs to be of continued relevance otherwise enthusiasm and participation will begin to fade and the network will become ineffective. There also needs to be strong leadership of the network with a binding focus and supporting infrastructure for it to be successful (Woods, Woods & Cowie, 2009; Barber, Whelan & Clark, 2010). The leadership needs to be positive showing control, influence and validity but negative traits of power, bureaucracy or dominance need to be avoided if the network is to succeed (Moore & Kelly, 2009). To add value there also needs to be a variety of networks available, these being personal, professional and external 'with interests and experiences beyond the world of education' (Flintham, 2004:17). The participants of this study were members of a variety of networks, some which they considered valuable (HTSD3, HTSE3, pg 177) and others which they were obliged to be members of, but often found to be of little benefit (HTSD2, HTSB1, pg 179). One interviewee found certain networks to be very valuable as they could

meet colleagues from around the region, could share ideas, learn new information and keep up with local, regional and national developments (HTSD3, pg 177). Others embraced the opportunity to meet colleagues who shared their vision with whom they found a real connection (HTSE1, HTSB2, pg 178). However, another headteacher was reluctant to engage in any networks as she found them to be of little value and felt the information given could be sent on an email (HTSD2, pg 179). Rhodes suggested that belonging to a group which the member wanted to be part of gave the participant a sense of self-identity and raised a person's self-esteem, whereas the opposite happened when people felt they had to join a group or were declined access to a group they wanted to join (Rhodes, 2012). The headteacher of one school had been invited to join a select network and he admitted that this had appealed to his ego (HTSB1, pg 179). Another spoke of the benefits of being a member of a business network and how this gave him confidence when talking to the governing body and dealing with the business aspects of the school (HTSB3, pg 181). Several headteachers felt that attending local headteacher meetings was non-beneficial and attended only out of duty (HTSD2, HTSB1, pg 179), whereas others enjoyed the meetings and found them to be relevant and useful (HTSA2, HTSD2, pg 181). The headteacher of an academy school did not engage in any local networks judging them to be insular, preferring instead to join networks associated with her academy chain (HTSA1, pg 180). Another academy headteacher commented on the benefits of being part of an academy chain as they were now exposed to new networking opportunities, and found that meeting colleagues from a wider geographical area to be of great value (HTSC1, pg 180). The data from the questionnaire (pg 130) and from the interviews (HTSD3, pg 177; HTSE1; pg 178; HTSA2, HTSB1, PG 179) indicated that there was a desire amongst the participants to be able to network with colleagues from different areas, regions and with schools of a different context. This research has been conducted across maintained, academy, special and independent schools, involving both junior and senior schools. All of these types of schools are engaged in the education of children, but there seems to be limited opportunity for experienced headteachers from

different sectors to regularly network with each other. Networking with each other over a wider geographical area, with headteachers from different school contexts and with colleagues from beyond the educational sector, could bring new opportunities and insight to the participants and become a valuable source of support.

During networking and other formal events, social opportunities arise through coffee breaks and lunches, and these are the times which are often quoted as being the most valuable element of attending a network, conference or meeting. The informal periods 'provide an unrivalled opportunity' to discuss issues with peers and it is often through these breaks and interactions that meaningful and lasting relationships can be formed (Woods, Woods & Cowie, 2009:258). Collegial support by networking with peers and gaining insight into relevant matters can be a very powerful form of professional renewal (MacBeath, 2006:198). However, time constraints to attend and prepare for meetings can be barriers for headteachers as can maintaining an on-going commitment to the network (Moore & Kelly, 2009). Lack of time or the perceived relevance of the network or meeting could influence against a headteacher attending. It could also be that the headteachers do not have the confidence or self-esteem to attend certain events and meetings. This is an area which could be further investigated as not attending events and networks could result in them missing out on a potentially beneficial support opportunity.

Summary of chapter 8

This chapter has given consideration to how support mechanisms recognised from this research could help to retain and sustain experienced headteachers in the role headship. Although comparison and similarities have been made between the participants of this study and the forms of support they prefer, the data collected highlights the individuality of each

headteacher, the various contexts of schools and the complexities of the role. The findings suggest that having access to appropriate forms of support which are personal to an experienced headteacher could help them to face challenges and evolve their headship, and in so doing enable them to extend their career. The following chapter will draw on the findings of this study to address the research and sub-research questions of the thesis.

CHAPTER 9: Thesis Conclusion

The literature review together with the empirical research carried out in this study have sought to answer questions relating to the support needs of experienced headteachers and how their preferred support mechanisms could facilitate headship sustainability. Questions were asked about the current condition of headship sustainability, the implications of current policy on the support needs of experienced headteachers, and what the support mechanisms have been to date. The sample and locality selected were discussed, together with justification given as to why certain research methods were adopted. The questionnaire and interview data were analysed and the support needs of experienced headteachers were considered together with the preferred support mechanisms of the sample. This chapter will reflect on the findings of this research and the literature review in order to answer the research questions and gain an understanding of the role support has on headship sustainability.

Headship Sustainability

Although evolving in the 1980's, it was the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act which heralded a dramatic change in education policy. Since that time there has been continuous change with new initiatives being introduced by different governments, resulting in a period of legislative instability. This has continued with the current coalition government who, since being elected in 2010, have introduced a raft of new initiatives such as free schools and teaching schools, and have expanded on others such as the academies programme and new inspection frameworks. It is not only the initiatives themselves which have caused controversy, but also the speed with which they have been implemented. The role of headship has changed over recent years, with the demands on a headteacher being complex, time consuming and relentless. It would appear that potential new headteachers are reconsidering their career options as the number of headteacher

positions having to be re-advertised continues to increase (pg 40). It could be considered that the reluctance amongst suitable candidates to aspire into headship together with an ageing headteacher population and issues surrounding the retention of experienced headteachers collectively put the sustainability of headship under threat.

The literature reviews in chapters one and two considered sustainability and its relationship to headship. Two main elements of headship sustainability emerged; the recruitment of new headteachers and the retention of experienced headteachers, who it has been argued, are essential to school improvement. School improvement, pupil progress and attainment are at the top of the education agenda, as is the recruitment of new headteachers. However, in order to help bring sustainability to headship, the retention of experienced headteachers now requires focus, together with consideration of their support needs. Although the majority of career stage models discussed in chapter one indicated that most headship careers end in decline, disenchantment and premature departure, there was emerging literature suggesting that headteachers can remain motivated and enthusiastic throughout their career (pg 25), and that others make a conscious decision not to leave headship (Pascal & Ribbins, 1998; Reames, Kochan & Zhu 2013, pg 25). Oplataka et al, 2001(pg 21) believed that with self-renewal and support headteachers could remain motivated and extend their careers, and Fullan (pg 25) suggested that with headteachers experiencing peaks and troughs throughout their career, sustainability is not linear but cyclical (Fullan, 2005:25). It was found during this study that although there were challenges and uncertainties surrounding headship at present, the majority of the headteachers surveyed and interviewed remained committed to headship and had no immediate plans to leave (pg 191). Some expressed an enthusiasm for the role with others feeling that they still had more to give and felt a commitment to their pupils and colleagues (pg 186), which were similar findings to those of Reames, Kochan & Zhu (2013, pg 25).

With a growing consensus that effective headteachers are essential for school improvement and pupil outcomes, supporting experienced headteachers and enabling them to extend their careers would be of benefit to the whole education system (pg 15, 39). There is also the added benefit that with extending their career, a headteacher can gain more confidence not only in the role but also in their own abilities, enabling them to become more effective in their headship (pg 15). It was the inspection regime which receive the most negativity and caused the headteachers interviewed the most concern (pg 155). The majority of the headteachers interviewed were satisfied in their current positions and the ones who were looking for another headship were carefully considering their options. The increased accountability of the inspection regime and the threat of losing their position were influencing the career moves of headteachers, with some beginning to think of developing their headship within their current school (pg 160,191). If experienced headteachers are going to stay in position for a long period of time, it is essential that they have the support needed to maintain their motivation, enthusiasm and effectiveness. The support an experienced headteacher receives during their career could have a direct impact on the sustainability of their headship.

What have been the support mechanisms to date?

The literature on headteacher support mechanisms were explored in chapters one and two and, to date, these have been mainly provided by the local authority and the National College of Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), with unions, professional bodies and private providers also contributing some provision. There are practical courses aimed at running schools and academic courses aimed at extending knowledge, but it would appear there is limited provision aimed at the personal needs of the individual headteacher, especially after their first year in headship. Table 1:3, pg 27, showed the continuing professional development opportunities which were

available for headteachers at different times of their career. These were opportunities available from the NCTL, being the main designer of support, and were quoted by the participants of the study over and above other providers. It was also the case that other providers mentioned were mainly delivering support and training designed by the NCTL. The opportunities listed were mentoring, job shadowing and placements, networking, courses and training, Local (LLE) and National (NLE) Leaders of Education, fellowship programme and primary executive headteacher provision. The majority of these support mechanisms were available for aspiring and new headteachers. Certain ones were aimed at those training to be an LLE or NLE or for headteachers of schools requiring improvement. The development opportunities were for headteachers of outstanding schools. The support for experienced headteachers who did not fit into any of these categories was limited. The support offered through professional bodies was discussed in chapter one and table 1:4, pg 29, listed associations which were available for headteachers to join. However, the data suggested that the support available through professional bodies was of limited value (pg 126). Support available through some local authorities had diminished over recent years as their relationship with schools changed, resulting in less support being available to experienced headteachers.

The local authority had been a main source of support however, with authorities losing their influence and reducing their provision, headteachers were beginning to look elsewhere for their support. As recognised in chapter, pg 30, questions remain over who will provide this support and in what form this support will take. As more schools become academies and with the establishment of free schools and teaching schools, this has led to a fragmentation in educational provision, resulting in headteacher support losing focus and direction. There are programmes in place but these tend to be training and qualification based as opposed to specific and relevant to the individual. Headteachers of schools in challenging circumstances or those requiring improvement receive help and support, although as discussed in the interviews, this support and help is not always welcomed (pg 157).

Headteachers of schools who are good or outstanding, who are not a teaching school and do not want to participate in the Leaders of Education scheme do not appear to be accommodated within the current programme of the NCTL, as shown in the table 2.6, pg 60. However, in order to help bring sustainability to headship, the retention of experienced headteachers now needs to receive focus with specific, individualised support accessible for experienced headteachers throughout their career.

The relevance of the support offered was questioned by the interviewees, as was the benefit they felt they gained by attending some meetings and conferences. The majority of both interviewees and the respondents of the questionnaires who had undertaken the NPQH had found it to be of benefit (pg 126, 138, 139), although some questioned its relevance in preparation for headship (pg 138). One aspect which had been particularly beneficial was the opportunity to meet colleagues from other areas whilst undertaking the qualification, from which friendships and professional relationships were formed (pg 140, 176). Official networks are available but these seemed limited and tended to be restricted in the diversity of participants. Mentoring is available and encouraged for new and aspiring headteachers but is not officially provided for experienced headteachers. The data from the surveys and interviews indicated that the majority of participants had not experienced any form of mentoring, and there were mixed reviews from those who had (pg 126, 172). The questionnaire data, confirmed by the interviews, suggested that the most effective forms of support were the senior leadership team and the governing body of the school, informal peer support and informal networks. Other headteachers and family were also quoted as being valuable sources of support. Less effective support came from unions, the local authority, LLEs and NLEs (pg 126-128).

What are the support needs of experienced headteachers?

Headteachers can experience highs and lows throughout their career. Experienced headteachers require on-going support that is relevant, accessible and accommodating to help keep them motivated, enthusiastic and sustained, leading to an increased possibility of them extending their career. The majority of support provision tends to be delivered through a standardised top-down approach, regardless of age, experience, context and personal circumstances whereas an individualised bottom-up approach would give beneficial support to experienced headteachers. This would be support experienced headteachers valued, appreciated and engaged with, rather than support which is generalised for all headteachers.

Since 1988, headteachers have been challenged to consider, understand, accept and implement a raft of educational reforms. These have continued since 2010 with the coalition government introducing new curriculums; new exams; teaching school alliances; extending the academy programme; new inspection framework and accountability measures as well as giving responsibility to headteachers to talent spot individuals suitable for headship. On a daily basis, experienced headteachers need the support of their school community, especially from their senior leadership team and the governing body to implement these changes, and this support is highly valued (pg 126, 173). Experienced headteachers also need external support such as conferences and networks and this was provided by a variety of sources such as the local authority, academy chains, private providers, unions, professional associations, peers, networks and conferences. However, although this external support could be valuable, it is often ad-hoc and limited in both provision and appeal.

As some local authorities reduced their involvement in schools, their influence, school and headteacher support is also diminishing. This has resulted in some headteachers looking for alternative sources of support, whereas others are failing to replace personal support requirements. All the

headteachers interviewed were very aware of the importance of support for their staff, and ensured that relevant support was provided (pg 182). However, it appeared that few seemed to recognise the need for self-support as opposed to practical support such as from a solicitor, accountant or from attending a course. Experienced headteachers do need ad-hoc support, but this is mainly for immediate, practical reasons such as implementing new policy or understanding new frameworks. On-going personal support would enhance the support provision of experienced headteachers, giving time for reflection and developing meaningful relationships which would help to sustain them throughout their career.

What are the preferred support needs of experienced headteachers?

A significant theme to emerge from the findings is that experienced headteachers need individual support which is relevant and of value to them. As discussed in chapter one, others have advocated an individualised approach to training and support (Flintham, 2003; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Crawford, 2007; Swaffield, 2008), but there are still barriers to understanding and accessing this support. Some headteachers were very proactive in finding support by engaging with others schools, headteacher networks and the business community (pg 179). However, this tended to be support for practical issues. Only one interviewee raised the issue of headship and the need to sustain mental health. He regularly engaged with a clinical psychologist and was the headteacher who still had a successful and beneficial mentoring relationship (pg 173, 175). Others talked of friends from other professions who they found they could discuss issues with away from the school environment (pg 174). These headteachers had recognised the need for reflection and had sought out opportunities for contemplation. The majority of the participants were used to having support provided for them by the local authority and were now engaged with finding support for their staff, the fabric of the buildings and the school community generally, as opposed

to identifying and accessing support for themselves. If experienced headteachers are to sustain themselves in headship it is essential that they are aware of their own personal needs and build support structures around themselves. Support could be seen as two-fold: practical support which is needed to overcome challenges and new initiatives, and personal support which is needed for individual sustenance.

A form of support which experienced headteachers found to be personally very beneficial was networking. There was also a desire expressed to network with a wider range of people drawn from a broader area (pg 130, 178, 179). In an open question on the questionnaire, respondents wrote that they would like networking opportunities, especially over a larger geographical area (pg 130), and this was also expressed during the interviews (pg 179). The interviewees also indicated that networking opportunities that arose from attending conferences were very valuable (pg 178), something which had been found by Swaffield 2008 (pg 29) and Earley & Evans, 2003; Woods, Woods & Cowie, 2009 (pg 34). However, there were barriers found to attending networks such as time, money and relevance (pg 179,182).

There could be an opportunity to develop new networks across a wider geographical area and across all school sectors: primary, secondary, maintained, academy, special and independent. Whilst these sectors have differences there are many similarities. There has been a fragmentation of the education sector over recent years, and having the opportunity to meet and share ideas across all sectors of education could be valuable, especially if there was a facilitator to provide stimulus for discussion. Enabling experienced headteachers to network with colleagues from across the regions broadens the discussion and can help to build up trust amongst the profession. Networking with the wider business community could add a different dimension and enable headteachers to access information not readily accessible in the education arena. This would also provide social

opportunities across a wider diversity of people and experience, enabling experienced headteachers to build their own networks to aid their sustainability. Networks need to have meaning and value to the participants in order to be successful. Facilitation gives structure and relevant themes give focus. Facilitating networks could not only give focus to the discussion but could also allow meaningful relationships to be developed, bringing sustainability into the network.

Despite a vast literature on the benefits of mentoring, this form of support had not been experienced by many of the participants of this study. There were mixed reviews on mentoring by the headteachers who were interviewed, with only a few having engaged in it (pg 172). Of those who had, very few reported it as being a positive experience. Headteachers who had found mentoring to be of benefit knew their mentors previously, rather than having one allocated (pg 173). How mentors are allocated and how the relationship develops would need to be explored further in order to see if it would be a beneficial form of support for headship sustainability.

Time and finance were perceived to be barriers to attending networks and engaging with mentors, and the relevance of participating was also brought into question (pg 174). Experienced headteachers need to feel they are able to address their personal needs, and opportunities for reflection and self-reflection are important elements of headship sustainability (pg 207). Headship is a public role and there are pressures associated with performing the role of headteacher to different audiences; i.e., pupils, parents, staff, governors, were discussed in chapter eight (pg 206). Headteachers need time and a safe, non-judgemental environment in which they can practise reflection and receive relevant support. The results of this thesis suggest that it is through a combination of support mechanisms which include both personal and practical elements that experienced headteachers will be enabled to sustain themselves and their careers, and will be less likely to seek premature departure.

What are the support needs of experienced headteachers and what are the preferred support mechanisms to facilitate headship sustainability?

The role of headship has changed over recent years, leaving some disillusioned and electing to leave the role prematurely. However, 'the experience of change itself, and the dissonance it creates, fuels new thinking, discoveries, and innovations that can revitalize the health of organizations, communities and the earth' (Ferdig, 2007:25). This research has found that although there are continuous challenges, increased accountability and new frameworks to negotiate; the majority of headteachers interviewed and those who participated in the questionnaires overall were satisfied with their role, had no immediate plans to leave headship and would chose headship again if starting their careers over. Several of the headteachers were excited by new changes brought about by recent education policy and saw them as great opportunities to bring about transformation, whereas others were more sceptical and questioned the amount of change being introduced and the speed with which the changes were being implemented.

As this thesis was being concluded, findings of a survey by the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) were published at the beginning of November 2013. The report reflected the findings of this thesis as it found that the majority of headteachers, nearly 80 per cent of those who participated, remained enthusiastic about the role of headship despite having to face many challenges and have an ever increasing workload (NAHT, 2013). There was also evidence found in another recent study that many headteachers were deciding against premature departure and early retirement as they were still enthusiastic about the role and felt they had more to offer (Reames, Kochan & Zhu, 2013).

Experienced headteachers are essential to school stability and to the sustainability of headship. However, in order to be successful throughout their headship and to navigate the complexities of the role, an experienced headteacher needs to be able to evolve their leadership. They need to be

able to sustain themselves and be able to recognise and access relevant and appropriate forms of support. Some headteachers were more isolated in their schools finding that time, finance and relevance were barriers to their seeking out support. The headteachers who appeared most confident in their role had sought out a range of support mechanisms, some of which they funded privately. It should not be that headteachers have to ask for help, the help and support required to carry out the role of headship should be readily available and easily accessible.

Taking part in this research by participating in an interview was a positive experience for many of the interviewees of this study, and it had enabled them to reflect and comment openly on their headship. The performance of headship, being seen to be in control and not showing vulnerability, can cause stress and insecurity. Talking to colleagues or professional partners may not be a solution for all headteachers and alternative sources of release need to be explored. Engaging in regular interviews could be a valuable support mechanism for experienced headteachers, enabling them to have on-going opportunities for reflection. However, thought would need to be taken on who would conduct these interviews in order for the headteachers to feel comfortable participating, and feel benefit and value from the interview process.

The individuality of each headteacher emerged from the data suggesting that instead of generic support being offered, effective support is required which is specific to individual needs. Barriers to accessing support such as time, money, prejudice and awareness need to be addressed. By being able to access relevant support not just for practical issues but also on a personal basis, a headteacher could build confidence in their abilities and feel more able to extend their career in headship. The confidence a headteacher has in their own abilities impacts on the whole school community. With increased confidence, a headteacher could be more willing to take the risks they feel necessary to bring about educational reform in their school. A headteacher with confidence also projects a positive message, especially to

others who may aspire into headship. Headship sustainability requires not only the retention of experienced headteachers, but also the recruitment of suitable candidates into the role. It is imperative, therefore, that experienced headteachers are encouraged to extend their headship in order that the next generation of headteachers are attracted into headship and the role is seen not only as aspirational, but also one which is attainable, achievable, desirable and enjoyable. Support is needed throughout the career of a headteacher and there should be variety of provision. The support should enable a headteacher to evolve their headship, and should also be of value to the recipient, accessible and adaptable to personal context. The majority of participants in this study were enthusiastic about the role of headship and did not have any immediate plans to leave. There were others, however, who were concerned about the challenges of headship, especially the inspection regimes and the consequences associated with increased accountability. The amount of recent policy change must be acknowledged and the challenge this presents to headteachers. Whilst some headteachers embrace new policies, tensions will arise in others who do not agree with the implementation of certain new policies. This reflects back to the morale purpose of schools as discussed by Michael Fullan (2001) and finding ways to support experienced headteachers through these challenges and retain their enthusiasm is essential to the sustainability of the role of headship.

This chapter has concluded this thesis by considering the support needs of experienced headteachers. The following chapter reflects on the thesis and gives recommendations of support mechanisms which, if implemented, could contribute towards headship sustainability. The limitations of this study are discussed, followed by suggestions of areas for further research which could contribute further to the understanding of headship sustainability.

CHAPTER 10: RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Introduction of chapter and outline

Chapter nine drew on the previous chapters in order to answer the research questions of this thesis. This chapter begins by giving recommendations of support drawn from the research findings which, if implemented, could help to sustain experienced headteachers longer in their career and aid headship sustainability. A discussion of the limitations of this study is followed by suggestions being given for additional study which could contribute further to the understanding of headship sustainability.

Recommendations

This thesis argued that retaining experienced headteachers would be of benefit the education system and is an important element of the sustainability of headship. Access and participation in appropriate support throughout their career would enable headteachers to build confidence in their abilities. This would encourage experienced headteachers to extend their career and avoid leaving headship prematurely. The following recommendations, shown in table 10:1 below, are for the support needed by experienced headteachers and the preferred support mechanisms to facilitate headship sustainability.

Table 10:1 Recommendations of headteacher support which could contribute to headship sustainability	
Support	Flexible, accessible, financed, time allocated, personalised, valuable and relevant
Practical Support	Business advice, Purchasing, HR, Finance, Maintenance, Inspection, Policy implementation
Personal Support	Regular opportunities for reflection and self-reflection – delivered through Interviews and Portraits, Mentoring, Networks
Facilitated Networks	On-going regular facilitated network meetings. Diverse membership - across all school contexts and types, drawn from wide geographical area. Extend membership to beyond the education sector. Ensure relevance to membership - Facilitated through learning conversations

Flexible and Accessible Support Support for experienced headteachers should be flexible as they need to be able to access it as and when they need it. There should not be limitations or criteria set as to who is eligible for certain forms of support. Headteachers will experience a variety of challenges throughout their career and it is only by having access to flexible support that these challenges can be faced and overcome.

Relevant Support The support needs to be relevant to the individual headteacher as not all headteachers will require the same forms of support. Generic forms of support are useful for certain challenges, for example, implementing a new inspection framework, but personal support needs to be both relevant and accessible for each headteacher.

Valuable Support If the support a headteacher can access is flexible and relevant, then it will be of value. Support which is effective has to be of value to the recipient in order for them to participate fully and therefore benefit from the support offered.

Personalised Support By ensuring that the support available is flexible, accessible and relevant to the individual, they will value the support offered. This can only be done by ensuring that a variety of support mechanisms are available which are personalised to each headteacher.

Financed Support Money was quoted as being a barrier to accessing support. All experienced headteachers should have a support budget available which can be used to access relevant support throughout their career.

Time for Support Time was also quoted as being a barrier for engaging in support. By engaging in valuable support, it could help to sustain an experienced headteacher in their career. It is, therefore, essential that experienced headteachers have adequate time available to participate in support they find of personal benefit.

Practical Support

HR, finance, maintenance, purchasing and business advice These were all areas which were quoted as being challenging and where participants wanted support. Headteachers who had employed a business manager to cover these areas felt well supported. However, the headteachers who did not have a business manager felt swamped with the numerous daily tasks, and they felt these took them away from their teaching and learning responsibilities. Local authorities have offered support in these areas, but in many areas this support is being reduced or rescinded as a consequence of new policy implementation. It was also found in this study that depending on the local authority, headteachers did not value the support provided. Consequently, headteachers were beginning to source their own support in these areas, but again felt this was very time consuming and detracted from the teaching and learning of the school. It could be that schools form clusters in which they share these responsibilities, or maybe they could employ a business manager on a shared basis. However, these

are essential elements of running a school and support mechanisms need to be available which will help headteachers face these daily challenges.

Inspection On-going collaboration between Ofsted and the school.

Although many of the participants felt that inspections were necessary, they objected to the inspection being an isolated judgement on their school, and would welcome a more informative and supportive inspection process.

Practical support surrounding the inspection such as how to interpret the framework and how to prepare for inspection could be sourced, but support to deal with inspection outcomes was felt to be limited. There was also a tension between the support offered and the support welcomed by the headteacher.

Policy Implementation New ways of implementing policy initiatives should be investigated. Although there was training and advice available from a variety of organisations, there was still a feeling amongst the headteachers that they were alone and had to find their own way of implementing policy. It was also felt that there was no consistent message or expectation of how a policy should be implemented which caused anxiety for headteachers.

Personal Support Personal support for an experienced headteacher is essential in order to sustain them throughout their career. They need to have regular opportunities for reflection and self-reflection which can be delivered through a variety of ways.

Interviews The headteachers who were interviewed for this study found it to be a positive experience, with one commenting that he had found it to be very powerful and thought provoking. Interviews tend to be one off experiences. However, having the opportunity to have regular interviews throughout their career could provide experienced headteachers with an opportunity to engage in reflection and self-reflection. In this study, the headteachers fully engaged with the interviews as they were confidential and

any findings were to be anonymised. Portrait interviews are also conducted in this way and it could be that this would be a useful methodology to utilise.

Mentoring Although mentoring receives a lot of attention in the literature and is being used for new and aspiring headteachers; the headteachers who participated in this study had little or no experience of it. The participants who had been able to choose their own mentor reported a more positive experience of mentoring than those who had been allocated a mentor. Mentoring may be a useful support for experienced headteachers, but more research into the area would need to be done in order to establish this.

Networking Networks should be established which allow experienced headteachers to meet and engage with a wide range of people across a wide geographical area. Networks could include headteachers from different school contexts and colleagues from other areas such as children's services, the health profession and the business community. This would enable experienced headteachers to engage with a diverse body of people and extend their contacts beyond their own school area.

Facilitated Networks Facilitated networks would give focus to the networks and ensure that they were relevant to the participants with flexibility to follow themes which interested the members. By ensuring that the networks were regular and relevant, experienced headteachers would be more likely to attend. By facilitating the network it would give structure and ensure that members had the opportunity to meet and interact with a variety of colleagues from within and outside the education arena. Over time and regular contact, experienced headteachers would have the opportunity to form lasting and supportive relationships with a wide range of people from whom they would be able to call upon for relevant support.

The findings of this study recommend that a number of support mechanisms are needed to help sustain headteachers throughout their career. There

needs to be combination of both practical and personal support which is accessible, flexible and on-going, as previously summarised in table 10:1.

Limitations

The overall response rate for the survey was 39% and when broken down by authority, the response rate ranged from a low of 26% to a high of 48%. Discussion around sample size considers a 50% response rate in social research as 'adequate for analysis and reporting' although 60% or 70% would be good or even better (Babbie, 2008; 289). However, as Bryman (2008:220) states 'many published articles report the results of studies that are well below this level ... [and] found a range of response rates of 30 to 94 per cent'. Consideration was given to sending out follow-up letters to try and increase the response rate as these are acknowledged as being an effective way to raise the number of participants in a study. However, it may not always be the case that high response rates show significant differences to substantive answers than those with a low response rate, and it could be that 'the substantial expense of attaining higher rates may not be worth it' (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012:406). After consideration of the number of questionnaires returned as opposed to the percentage of responses, it was decided not to try and increase the response rate. The 39% of respondents translated into 178 completed and returned questionnaires. These were distributed amongst the five local authorities, and thirteen of these respondents also participated in one-to-one interviews. It is acknowledged that the headteachers who did not return their questionnaires may have had other viewpoints to the ones which did reply and this could affect the validity of the study, therefore further research would need to be carried out to substantiate any outcomes (Bush, 2007). It was felt that the return of 178 completed questionnaires from headteachers, who are a hard to access cohort, and having consent to carry out in-depth interviews, gave justification for the study. The approach taken to this research produced relevant and interesting data and has captured a snapshot of the issues relating to the sustainability of headship in the Yorkshire and Humber region. However, it is

recognised that this is a small scale study. The findings may be of interest and contribute to the understanding of headship sustainability, but caution should be taken when used for generalisations.

The focus of the study was on experienced headteachers, those who had been in position for three years or more at the time when the research was being carried out. A more comprehensive study would have included headteachers who had recently left headship, enabling consideration to be given as to whether or not their support needs had impacted on their decision to leave headship.

Areas of further study

Facilitated Networks A theme which arose from both the questionnaire and interview data was that of networking with colleagues from different authorities and a wider geographical area (pg 212). As this research was being carried out over five local authorities it seemed relevant to extend the research and invite the headteachers who had shown interest in this area to research network meetings. These meetings were to be held with four or five headteachers from different school contexts and from different local authorities. Unfortunately, it was not possible to invite all the headteachers who had expressed interest in networks as the questionnaires were anonymous, and only the headteachers who wanted to attend an interview had provided their contact details. The headteachers who had been interviewed were excluded as were those who had been in headship for less than three years, resulting in invitation letters being sent out to nineteen headteachers. Despite several attempts being made to arrange network research meetings with the nineteen headteachers, it proved impossible to get a suitable mix of headteachers available at the same time. On reflection, more time should have been given to arranging these meetings,

and they should have been thought of and conducted earlier in the research schedule. However, it was not until the data from the questionnaires and interviews had been analysed that the significance of networks was realised and consideration given to extending the research. Facilitated networks and their impact on headship sustainability would make a very interesting area of further research. Establishing networks and conducting research on their effectiveness would extend the research of this thesis and would also contribute to the understanding of headship sustainability.

Challenge – the stimulus to sustain and retain experienced

headteachers Several of the headteachers interviewed had faced intense challenges during their headship such as extreme pupil behaviour, building a new school, converting to academy status and heading a teaching school alliance (pg 199). The headteachers interviewed who quoted such challenges had all succeeded and none of the headteachers were planning on leaving their current headship. It could be that the facing and succeeding with an intense challenge could act as a stimulus for self-renewal, meaning that the headteacher could find satisfaction in their current role rather than having to move onto another headship. Further research into the role challenge has on extending the career of a headteacher could add further to the literature on headship sustainability.

Vulnerability of Young and Inexperienced Headteachers Questions were raised during interviews over the resilience of younger headteachers (pg 163). In this study, as shown on pg 116, 28% of questionnaire respondents were under the age of 40. As fast track headship programmes such as Future Leaders become more effective, it could be that a greater number of younger people will be recruited into headship. The findings of this research also suggested that some newly qualified and less experienced headteachers were unsure of their future in headship (pg 121). As discussed in Chapter four, pg 103, of the headteachers who indicated that

they would like to be interviewed, twelve had been in position for less than three years, and of these, three were unsure if they would choose headship again and three were disenchanted with the position. As it was experienced headteachers who were of interest to this study, these headteachers were not approached for interview. However, as half of these headteachers had shown concern over their future in headship, further research into headship satisfaction amongst younger and inexperienced headteachers would be of interest to the sustainability of headship.

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Appendix 1 University ethics pro-forma

A PROFORMA FOR

STAFF AND STUDENTS BEGINNING A RESEARCH PROJECT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Research Proposer(s): Mrs Joanna Asquith

Programme of Study PhD Faculty of Education

Research (Working Dissertation/Thesis) Title:

What are the support needs of experienced headteachers and what are the preferred mechanisms to facilitate headship sustainability? A study across five local authorities

Description of research (please include (a) aims of the research; (b) principal research question(s) (c) methodology or methodologies to be used (d) who are the participants in this research, and how are they to be selected.

There has been growing concern regarding the recruitment and retention of headteachers, locally, nationally and internationally. It has been reported that a third of headteachers in Britain will retire before 2014 and there seems to be a reluctance of new candidates coming forward to take on the role. Very few headteachers stay in position until they are 65, and it is reported that 40% will leave either for early retirement or to pursue other careers. One area which may affect a headteachers decision to stay or leave the profession is the amount of personal support they receive. Questions need to be asked not only about the support received, but what is effective support and what would make a real difference. This PhD will research what experienced headteachers actually require to motivate, stimulate and support them, and who should provide this support in order to give a greater sense of ownership and confidence in the profession. Yorkshire and Humberside have been chosen for the PhD as it is also proving very difficult to recruit new headteachers within this area as it was reported that 34% of headteacher vacancies had to be re-advertised in 2009/10. There is also a collaborative leadership group established across the region consisting of five local authorities, two universities, the national college, the training and development agency and several independent educational consultants and training providers. This gives a unique opportunity to compare and contrast headship support across a diverse area both in terms of what is provided and what experience headteachers would actually find beneficial in order to bring sustainability to school leadership.

The overarching research question for this PhD is:-

What are the support needs of experienced headteachers and what are the preferred mechanisms to facilitate headship sustainability? A study across five local authorities

The following sub-questions will be asked in order to give structure and focus to the research question:-

- 1 What is headship sustainability and what is its current condition?
- 2 What are the implications of the current policy context on headteachers and their support needs?
- 3 What have been the support mechanisms to date?
- 4 What are the support needs of experienced headteachers?
- 5 What are the preferred support mechanisms?

It is proposed to use a mixed methods approach for the data collection. Questionnaires will be sent out to all the headteachers across the five local authorities. This will give a good picture of attitudes towards support and sustainability from a wide and diverse cohort of headteachers. Consideration will be given to both paper and electronic surveys as a means of distribution. In order to gain a greater in-depth understanding of the issues raised in the questionnaires, it is proposed to carry out interviews with 15 headteachers, this being 3 from each region. It is the intention to send the questionnaires out to every headteacher in the five local authorities, and to include all types of school, ie primary, secondary, academy, independent, community, free etc. This will total approximately 450 questionnaires being distributed, and will take into account the diverse and increasingly fragmented educational sector across a wide geographical area. There will be a section on the questionnaire asking respondents if they would like to participate in an interview. The headteachers selected for interview will be drawn from these respondents. It is the intention to interview headteachers who represent different types of school, have different lengths of headship and to select headteachers who are satisfied or dissatisfied with the role of being a headteacher. It will, however, depend on the headteachers who volunteer to be interviewed.

Proforma Completion Date:

This proforma should be read in conjunction with the Faculty of Education research principles, and the Faculty of Education flow chart of ethical considerations. It should be completed by the researchers. If it raises problems, it should be sent on completion, together with a brief (maximum one page) summary of the problems in the research, or in the module preparation, for approval to the Chair of the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee prior to the beginning of any research.

Appendix 2 Ethics form for participants



The FACULTY OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE CONSENT FORM: SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES

I, _____ of _____

Hereby agree to participate in this study to be undertaken

by Joanna Asquith

and I understand that the purpose of the research is

I understand that

1. The interview will be recorded and the contents will then be coded, and my name and address kept separately from it.
2. Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity to an outside party ie. that I will remain fully anonymous.
3. Aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.
4. Individual results **will not** be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.
5. That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Signature:

Date:

The contact details of the researcher are:

Mrs Joanna Asquith, Doctoral Researcher, Faculty of Education, University of Hull, Room 347, 3rd Floor, Wilberforce, Hull, HU6 7RX email j.c.asquith@2010.hull.ac.uk

The contact details of the secretary to the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee are Mrs J.Lison, Centre for Educational Studies, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.

Email: j.lison@hull.ac.uk tel. 01482-465988.

Appendix 3 Pilot Questionnaire

PILOT Questionnaire - The Sustainability of the Role of Headteacher

Section One General demographic information and understanding of the school context

- 1 Are you male or female? (please tick)**
1) Male ☐ or 2) Female ☐
- 2 What is your age range? (please circle)**
1) 25-30 2) 31-35 3) 36-40 4) 41-45 5) 46-50 6) 51-55
7) 56-60 8) 61+
- 3 How long have you been a headteacher? – please include all your headships (please circle)**
1) 0-3 years 2) 4-8 years 3) 9-12 years 4) 13-17 years
5) 18+ years 6) Other _____
- 4 Which headship are you undertaking at present? (please circle)**
1) 1st 2) 2nd 3) 3rd 4) 4th
5) Other (please specify) _____
- 5 Which statement best describes your present school? (please tick)**
1) Maintained/State primary ☐ 2) Maintained/State secondary ☐
3) Independent primary ☐ 4) Independent secondary ☐
5) Special School ☐ 6) Free School ☐
7) Academy Primary ☐ 8) Academy Secondary ☐
8) Other (please specify) _____
- 6 Which statement best describes the size of your present school? (please tick)**
1) Very Small (30-100 pupils) ☐ 2) Small (101-250 pupils) ☐
☐ ☐
☐

- 3) Medium (251-750) 4) Large (751-1000)
- 5) Very Large (1000+) ☐

7 Which of the following best describes the socio-economic status of your school?

(please rate – 1 being extreme deprivation and 10 being very affluent)

- 1) 1 2) 2 3) 3 4) 4 5) 5 6) 6 7) 7 8) 8
9) 9 10) 10

8 What percentage of children who attend your present school are eligible for free school meals? *(please circle)*

- 1) 0 2) 1-10% 3) 11-20% 4) 21-30%
5) 31-40% 6) 41-50% 7) 51%+

Section Two Consideration of the sustainability of a headteacher

9 Please indicate how satisfied you are in your current role of being a headteacher

*(1 being not at all satisfied and 10 indicating that you really enjoy the job)
(please write)*

10 How much is this the job what you thought it was going to be?

(please rate with 1 being it is not the job you thought it was going to be and 10 being it is the job you thought it would be)

11 Do you ever consider how long you will remain in the position of headteacher? *(please tick)*

- 1) Never ☐ 2) Seldom ☐ 3) Sometimes ☐ 4) Often ☐
5) Always ☐

12 If you are considering leaving the role of headteacher, please indicate why *(please specify)*

13 If you are thinking of leaving your current role, please indicate what you might do next *(please tick)*

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) Retirement | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) Redundancy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) Another Headship | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) Consultant in Education | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5) An Educational related job | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6) A job out of the educational field | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7) Something else – please specify | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-

14 If you have considered leaving the role of headteacher but have decided to stay, please specify the main reasons behind this decision *(please specify)*

15 When thinking of your career, do you ever consider it as passing through different phases? *(please tick)*

- 1) Never ☐ 2) Seldom ☐ 3) Sometimes ☐ 4) Often ☐
- 5) Always ☐

16 Below are emotions which have been suggested that a headteacher may experience. Please tick the ones which you feel are the most dominate emotions associated with being a headteacher *(please tick)*

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1) Excitement | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2) Loneliness | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3) Delight | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) Swamped | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5) Anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6) Motivated | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7) Self Doubt | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8) Proudness | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9) Enthusiasm | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10) Stability | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11) Resistance | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12) Happiness | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13) Failure | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14) Fulfilled | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15) Decline | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16) Confident | <input type="checkbox"/> | 17) Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

16a How would you best describe how you feel in your headship at the present time. Please specify using either the words above or using your own words *(please specify)*

17 Do you feel that you receive adequate personal support to help sustain you in the role of headteacher? (please tick)

1) Yes ☐ 2) No ☐ 3) Don't Know ☐

18 Below are forms of support which may be available to a headteacher. Please indicate any which you have experienced whilst being a headteacher (please tick all which apply)

1) NPQH	<input type="checkbox"/>	2) Masters or other qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Training courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	4) Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Mentoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	6) Networks	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Union	<input type="checkbox"/>	8) Headteacher Associations	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	10) National College	<input type="checkbox"/>
11) Senior Leadership Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	12) Governing Body	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) Being a Local or National Leader			<input type="checkbox"/>
14) Receiving help from a Local or National Leader			<input type="checkbox"/>
Any others not listed			<input type="checkbox"/>

19 Looking at the list again, please indicate (1 being not effective and 10 being very effective) how effective you felt your particular experiences were in helping you in your role as a headteacher (please specify or circle) *This question will be either writing or circling.*

Do you think it is best to circle 1-10 or write the number in yourself?

Circle ☐ **Write number** ☐

1) NPQH										
2) Masters or other qualification										
3) Training courses										
4) Coaching										
5) Mentoring										
6) Networks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7) Union	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8) Headteachers Assocs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9) Local Authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10) National College	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11) Senior Leadership Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12) Governing Body	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13) Being a Local or National Leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14) Receiving help from a LLE or NLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
15) Any others not listed (please specify)										

- 20** **What, if any, support would you like to receive which you think would help keep you in your current position? *(please specify)***

I will be interviewing headteachers from across the region in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the current position of the role of a headteacher and also to investigate what forms of support – both internal and external – a headteacher has access to and finds beneficial. If you would like the opportunity to be interviewed, please give your details below.

Name _____

School _____

Contact Telephone Number _____

Contact email _____

**Thank you again for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
It is very much appreciated**

Please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided as soon as possible

Appendix 4 Actual Questionnaire

Researching the impact of support on the sustainability of headship across the Yorkshire and Humberside region

1 Are you male or female? <i>(please circle)</i>					
1 Male			2 Female		

2 What is your age range? <i>(please circle)</i>							
1 30-35	2 36-40	3 41-45	4 46-50	5 51-55	6 56-60	7 61-65	8 66+

3 How long have you been a headteacher? Please include all your headships <i>(please state)</i>	
1 _____ years	

4 Which headship are you undertaking at present? <i>(please circle)</i>				
1 1st	2 2nd	3 3rd	4 4th	5 Other _____

5 Which of the following statements best describes your present school? <i>(please circle)</i>				
1 Infant	2 Junior	3 Primary	4 Secondary	5 Middle

6 Which of the following statements best describes the pupil intake of your school? <i>(please circle)</i>		
1 All girls	2 All boys	3 Co-ed

7 Which of the following statements best describes the status of your school? <i>(please circle)</i>			
1 Faith	2 Independent	3 Special	4 Free
5 Academy	6 Community	7 Foundation	8 Voluntary Aided
9 Grammar	10 Voluntary Controlled	11 Other (please specify) _____	

8 In which local authority is your school located? <i>(please circle)</i>					
1 Hull City Council	2 East Riding Of Yorkshire	3 North East Lincolnshire	4 North Lincolnshire	5 City of York Council	6 North Yorkshire

9	How many pupils are on the role at your current school?	<i>(please state)</i>
1	_____ pupils on the current role	

10	What is the governmental deprivation indicator of your current school?	<i>(please state)</i>
1	_____ is the deprivation indicator of the school	

11	Please estimate the number of children in your school who are eligible for free school meals	<i>(please state)</i>
1	_____ is the estimated number of children eligible for free school meals	

Please read the following three statements and circle the most appropriate answer

12	"I am very satisfied with my current role of being a headteacher"	<i>(please circle)</i>
1	Strongly Agree	2 Agree
3	Neither Agree nor disagree	4 Disagree
5	Strongly Disagree	

13	"The role of headteacher is the job I thought it was going to be"	<i>(please circle)</i>
1	Strongly Agree	2 Agree
3	Neither Agree nor disagree	4 Disagree
5	Strongly Disagree	

14	"I think about how long I will remain in the role of headteacher"	<i>(please circle)</i>
1	Always	2 Often
3	Sometimes	4 Seldom
5	Never	

15	If you are planning on leaving your current role, what is the major influence on this decision?	<i>(please circle)</i>
1	Retirement	2 Redundancy
3	Disenchantment with the position	4 Desire to try something new
5	I am not thinking of leaving	
6	Something else (please specify) _____	

16 If you are planning on leaving your current role, what do you intend to do next? (please state)
1 _____

17 If you have considered leaving the role of headteacher but have decided to stay, please give the main reasons behind this decision (please state)
1 _____ _____

18 How long are you planning to stay in the position of headteacher? (please circle)
1 0-2 years 2 3-5 years 3 6-9 years 4 10 + years 5 Don't Know

19 If starting your career again, would you still choose to be a headteacher? (please circle)
1 Yes 2 No 3 Maybe 4 Don't Know

20 Please indicate if you have any of these responsibilities alongside your headship? (please circle)				
1 Local Leader of Education	2 National Leader of Education	3 Mentor to other headteachers	4 Coach to other headteachers	5 Other (please specify) _____ _____ _____

21 Below are forms of support which may be available to a headteacher. Please indicate how effective you have found any of these at helping you in your role as a headteacher (please circle all you have experienced – please circle n/a if you have not experienced the option)						
	1 = VERY effective at all				5 = NOT effective	
1	NPQH	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
2	Master or other higher qualifications	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
3	Training courses	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
4	Coaching	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
5	Mentoring	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
6	Informal peer support	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
7	Formal networks	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
8	Informal networks	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
9	Union	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
10	Headteachers Association	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
11	Local Authority	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
12	National College	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
13	Senior leadership team	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
14	Governing body	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
15	Formal headteacher meetings	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
16	Informal headteacher meetings	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
17	Being a local or national leader	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
18	Receiving help from a local or national Leader of Education	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
19	Family and friends not associated with school	1	2	3	4	5 N/A
20	Any others not listed (please specify)	_____				

22 What support would you like to access which may benefit you in the role of headteacher? (please specify)	
1	_____

Following on from this questionnaire, I will be carrying out interviews with headteachers in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the effect support has on the sustainability of headship across the region. If you would like to participate in the interviews, please give your contact details below.

Name

School

Contact Telephone Number

Contact email

Thank you again for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided as soon as possible

Mrs Joanna Asquith email j.c.asquith@2010.hull.ac.uk
Doctoral Researcher
Faculty of Education
University of Hull
Room 347, 3rd Floor, Wilberforce
Hull, HU6 7RX

Appendix 5 Questionnaire covering letter

Date

XXX

The Headteacher

School

School Address

A study into the impact of support on the role of headship across five regions

Dear XXX

My name is Joanna Asquith and I am at present undertaking a PhD at the University of Hull. My area of research is headship and in particular how the support headteachers receive impacts on the role of headship across the region. I would really value your contribution to my research by completing and returning the attached short questionnaire which will only take a few minutes.

I am conducting my research in the following regions: Humberside, North and East Lincolnshire, York and the East Riding. This will allow comparisons and contrasts to be made over a large and diverse geographical area and will give a good insight into the current role of headship within these areas.

Once the data is collated I will be able to identify categories of school, ie primary or secondary, however all data collected will be anonymised in order to ensure that individuals and schools cannot be recognised in my written work.

Thank you again for reading this letter. The attached questionnaire is short and should only take you about 5-10 minutes to complete, and a prepaid envelope is provided for ease of return.

It is hoped that the findings will give a current insight into headship across the region and any recommendations made will contribute to the sustainability of the role of headship. If you would like to receive a summary of my findings in due course, please contact me at the address or email below.

If you have any questions about any aspects of the research, please do not hesitate to email me, and I very much look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire.

Very best wishes

Joanna Asquith

Mrs Joanna Asquith

Encs

Mrs Joanna Asquith
Doctoral Researcher
Faculty of Education
University of Hull
Room 347, 3rd Floor,
Wilderforce
Hull, HU6 7RX

Email:
j.c.asquith@2010.hull.ac.uk

Appendix 6 Letter acknowledging interest in interview participation

Date

Faculty of Education
University of Hull
Room 347, 3rd Floor, Wilberforce
Hull
HU6 7RX

XXX
Headmaster
School Address

Dear XXX

Thank you for returning the questionnaire on Headteacher support – it is very much appreciated - and I am now in the process of inputting and analysing the data.

You indicated on your questionnaire that you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. I just wanted to acknowledge your interest and to say that I will be in touch later regarding the interview once I have analysed the data received on the questionnaires. I would anticipate that I will be carrying out the interviews in June.

I have had a fantastic response to my questionnaire so far, and am confident that together with the interview data, we will be able to contribute to the sustainability of headship in the region with some valuable research.

Thank you again for your interest and support in my research, and I will be in touch again shortly.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Joanna Asquith
Doctoral Researcher

j.c.asquith@2010.hull.ac.uk

Appendix 7 Email giving notice of contact to arrange interview

Follow up email

Dear

You recently completed and returned my research questionnaire on headteacher support across the region and you very kindly indicated that you would like to participate in a one-to-one interview. I am now in a position to carry out the interview and this email is just to let you know that I will be contacting you later in the week to arrange a suitable appointment with yourself. I would envisage that the interview will take no more than one hour.

Many thanks again for your interest in my research, and I look forward to meeting with you soon and discussing the issues around headteacher support.

Very best wishes

Joanna Asquith

Appendix 8

Letter enclosing a copy of the interview transcript

Date

Faculty of Education
University of Hull
Room 347, 3rd Floor, Wilberforce
Hull
HU6 7RX

Name
Headteacher
School

Dear (named)

I wanted to thank you again for the time you gave me, for showing me around your school and for allowing me to interview you as part of my research.

Enclosed is a copy of the transcription of the interview for your information. If there is any part of it which you do not agree with or would rather I do not refer to in my research, please do tell me and I will omit it from my thesis. I can assure you, again, that no reference will be made either to you, the school or any of the colleagues you mentioned in the interview, and I will be more than happy to let you see my thesis (or just the relevant bit as it will be quite long!) before I submit it.

I really appreciated your frankness and honesty during the interview, and I just wanted to reassure you of my confidentiality and discretion.

I thoroughly enjoyed our interview and discussions and really appreciate the interest you have shown in my research.

Thank you again.

Very best wishes

Mrs Joanna Asquith
Doctoral Researcher

j.c.asquith@2010.hull.ac.uk
01759-368727