

Promoting safe and enjoyable sporting experiences for children in Wales

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Summary

The overall purpose of this thesis was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of young people, parents, and coaches regarding bullying, emotional abuse, and enjoyment in sport in Wales. Additionally, it aimed to explore ways to enhance safety and enjoyment in sport. Study 1 employed a two-phase mixed methods explanatory sequential design to investigate the safeguarding landscape in youth sport throughout Wales. The findings revealed that emotional abuse and bullying were widespread, with peer-perpetrated bullying being the most observed and experienced. Moreover, the results indicated that young people, parents, and coaches often struggled to recognise these behaviours as emotional abuse or bullying. Instead, they attributed the prevalence of these abusive behaviours to cultural and environmental factors. Furthermore, the results also highlighted various barriers and facilitators related to intervening in cases of emotional abuse and bullying. These factors were influenced by both personal and contextual factors. Informed by Study 1, Study 2 used a grounded theory methodology to develop a substantive theory of the process through which an optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience is created for young people in sport. The resultant theory highlighted that establishing positive relationships between young people and key individuals in a physically and developmentally safe environment was a fundamental requirement for fostering an optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience. Achieving this required consideration of factors both in the immediate and broad sporting context. Finally, drawing on the findings of the first two studies, Study 3 employed a feasibility study design with the primary aim of developing, implementing, and evaluating the feasibility of conducting a creative educational workshop designed to enhance young people's awareness of safeguarding, emotional abuse, bullying, and enjoyment in sport. Participants reported that the workshop helped them reflect on their own behaviour, enhanced their understanding of the consequences of bullying and emotional abuse, and provided guidance on how to report concerns. However, the results also highlighted some significant challenges in delivering the initiative. These challenges included varying levels of participant engagement with, and interest in, the creative approaches (i.e., story completion interviews and creative arts-based tasks). Another challenge was related to the group dynamics among participants. Overall, this body of research has highlighted the ongoing need to enhance understanding of emotional abuse and bullying in sport, while also ensure steps are taken by all individuals and organisations to proactively seek to enhance children's sporting experiences.

Declaration and Statements

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed 

Date 20/12/2023

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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Publications

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Youth sport has gained widespread popularity, seeing increased numbers of young people worldwide participating in highly structured and adult-led sport programmes (Kjønniksen et al., 2009; Light, 2010). The widespread popularity of youth sport positions it as the most common extracurricular activities among children and adolescents globally (Hulteen et al., 2017). Findings from the UK suggest that roughly 86% of young people take part in youth sport every month (Department of Digital, Cultural, Media and Sport, 2018). In Wales, figures show that 39% of young people take part in extracurricular or club sport for three or more occasions per week (Sport Wales, 2022). Such involvement in sport is typically viewed as positive because sport is regarded as a key domain contributing to the health and physical developmental outcomes for young people (Eime & Harvey, 2018; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). However, not all children experience these benefits due to their varied encounters during participation (Larson et al., 2006). In fact, for some children sport participation can be a negative experience, including encountering maltreatment, which has the potential to compromise young people's welfare and deprive them of their human rights (Donnelly & Petherick, 2004; Fasting et al., 2004).

In recent years there have been several high-profile cases of athlete maltreatment in sport. For example, a notable case came to light in the United States, revealing the sexual abuse perpetrated by team physician Dr Larry Nassar on hundreds of gymnasts (Hobson & Boren, 2018). Additionally, in the United Kingdom (UK), a distressing case unfolded involving the sexual abuse of young male football players by coach Barry Bennell (Taylor, 2018). Moreover, systemic accounts of both physical and emotional abuse inflicted on young gymnasts led to an independent review, co-commissioned by UK Sport and Sport England (Whyte, 2022). As a result, increased research attention has been directed toward incidents of maltreatment occurring in sport (Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2022).

Maltreatment is an encompassing term that includes “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence, and commercial or other exploitation, which leads to actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power” (World Health Organization, 1999, p. 19). Maltreatment includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect, which are relational forms of maltreatment as they occur within a critical relationship, where an individual is dependent upon another for a sense of

365 safety, trust, and fulfilment of needs (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007; Stirling, 2009). Additionally,
366 non-relational maltreatment comprises various types of harassment and bullying occurring
367 outside of the context of a critical relationship (Stirling, 2009).

368 While research indicates that young people experience various forms of maltreatment
369 in sport (Vertommen et al., 2016), the predominant focus, both in media coverage and
370 academic discourse, has been on sexual abuse experiences perpetrated by adults in positions
371 of authority (Parent & Fortier, 2018). This is despite research consistently indicating that
372 emotional abuse is the most common form of maltreatment reportedly experienced by young
373 people in sport (Alexander et al., 2011; Vertommen et al., 2016). Defined as “a pattern of
374 deliberate non-contact behaviours by a person within a critical relationship role that have the
375 potential to be harmful” (Stirling & Kerr, 2008, p. 178), research indicates that prevalence
376 estimates of emotional abuse in sport vary between 23% and 79% (Alexander et al., 2011;
377 Parent et al., 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2022). Moreover, it is apparent
378 that emotional abuse is highly normalised by young people, coaches and parents and
379 considered a necessary means to enhance performance (Jacobs et al., 2017; Kerr & Stirling,
380 2012).

381 Of those studies that have examined emotional abuse in sport, most have been
382 qualitative in nature involving former elite athletes (e.g., Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Jacobs et al.,
383 Knoppers, 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2014). In addition, our understanding of prevalence is
384 somewhat limited, because most prevalence studies rely on retrospective accounts from
385 retired athletes recalling past experiences (Alexander et al., 2011; Vertommen et al., 2016).
386 Recognising the limitations inherent in memory bias, researchers have begun to conduct
387 studies involving young people currently participating in sport. However, there is still a lack
388 of insights on this topic from adolescent participants currently involved in sport (Parent et al.,
389 2019). If we are seeking to implement early interventions before the consequences of abuse
390 become entrenched (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013; Gomez, 2011), it is important to understand
391 the experiences of young people currently involved in sport to inform the creation of effective
392 practices (Parent & Vallaincourt-Morel, 2021).

393 Alongside emotional abuse, it is also important to address non-relational
394 maltreatment, such as bullying. Bullying is characterised as intentional and repetitive
395 aggressive behaviour, with an imbalance of power between perpetrator and victim and can
396 occur online and in person (Olweus, 1993, Wang et al., 2009). Research exploring bullying in
397 sport indicates varying prevalence rates between 9% and 48% (Jewett et al., 2019; Ventura et
398 al., 2019), with young people themselves identified as perpetrators, victims, and bystanders

399 (Mishna et al., 2019; Nery et al., 2019; Rios et al., 2021). Although research in bullying is
400 growing there is still a need to explore perceptions of bullying from other individuals'
401 perspectives such as coaches and parents.

402 Gaining insights into experiences of emotional abuse and bullying is clearly needed
403 and important. However, there is also a need to look beyond the prevention of maltreatment
404 in youth sport and explore how we can positively enhance children's sporting experiences
405 (Gurgis & Kerr, 2022; Lang & Hartill, 2015). Although safeguarding young people from
406 maltreatment in sport remains paramount, prevention of maltreatment does not guarantee
407 optimal sporting experiences (i.e., accessible, inclusive, fair, positive, and enjoyable) (Gurgis
408 et al., 2023). To-date, research has predominantly focused on either enhancing enjoyment
409 (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986) or exploring maltreatment (Alexander et al., 2011)
410 independently within the sporting context but there is limited research that focuses on
411 addressing both aspects simultaneously. While prioritising safety is paramount, it is equally
412 important to create sporting experiences that are not only safe but also enjoyable to ensure the
413 continued involvement of young people in sport and their access to the extensive benefits
414 associated with participation (Mountjoy et al., 2015).

415 Such insights would subsequently enable the development of evidence-based
416 educational approaches which aim to reduce maltreatment in sport but seek to proactively
417 enhance experiences. The need for education pertaining to safeguarding and particularly
418 prevention of maltreatment has been consistently recommended by researchers (e.g.,
419 Mountjoy et al., 2016; Mergaert., 2016). Despite such calls, limited research studies have
420 been conducted in this area. Previous studies focusing on education have primarily focused
421 on sexual or emotional abuse together, primarily perpetrated by adults in positions of trust
422 (McMahon et al., 2013; 2018; 2022; 2023). However, there is a dearth of research focusing
423 on harmful interactions among peers or teammates in sport, such as bullying. Of the studies
424 that have been conducted they have mainly included coaches (McMahon et al., 2013), parents
425 (McMahon, 2018), or young people aged between 16-22 years (Rulofs et al., 2015). To the
426 author's knowledge, only one intervention has included young people below the age of 16
427 years (McMahon et al., 2023). Clearly, given the importance of addressing and preventing
428 issues of maltreatment in youth sport, there is a pressing need for further educational
429 interventions targeting young people directly.

430 **The Current Thesis**

431 Given the aforementioned limitations with extent literature the purpose of the current
432 thesis was two-fold; firstly, to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of young

433 people, parents, and coaches regarding bullying, emotional abuse, and enjoyment in sport in
434 Wales and; secondly, to explore ways to enhance safety and enjoyment in sport. To address
435 these aims, numerous steps were taken detailed across five subsequent chapters. Following
436 this chapter, chapter two provides a critical review of existing literature pertaining to
437 maltreatment in sport. Specifically, it begins with a brief overview of the broader literature on
438 maltreatment, followed by an in-depth examination of sport related literature. Chapter three
439 details the use of a two-phase mixed methods explanatory sequential design study which
440 investigated the safeguarding landscape in youth sport throughout Wales. Chapter four
441 subsequently provides a substantive theory of the process through which an optimally safe
442 and enjoyable sporting experience is created for young people in sport. Chapter five describes
443 the development, implementation, and evaluation of a creative educational workshop for
444 young athletes (aged under 16 years of age) regarding emotional abuse, bullying,
445 safeguarding, and their overall enjoyment of sport. The final chapter, Chapter six, brings
446 together the findings from across the previous chapters, highlighting their conceptual,
447 theoretical, methodological, and applied contributions to the field of safeguarding in sport.
448 Furthermore, the final chapter addresses limitations, suggests future research directions, and
449 includes personal reflections and key insights gained from researching emotional abuse and
450 bullying with young people and other key individuals in sport. The reflections aim to offer
451 support and guidance to others who plan to embark on research in this area.

452

Chapter 2: Literature Review

453

454 Although issues of child maltreatment span centuries, the study of maltreatment in
455 sport is relatively new. Increased attention has been given to sexual abuse in the response to
456 high-profile cases, however, more recently there is increased attention being given to other
457 forms of maltreatment such as emotional abuse and bullying. Maltreatment issues within
458 youth sports have emerged as primary concerns for sport governing bodies, authorities, and
459 practitioners (Stirling, 2008). Consequently, safeguarding young individuals from
460 maltreatment in sport has surged as a critical priority. This chapter provides a critical review
461 of the literature within this area. Specifically, the chapter begins with a brief overview of
462 broader child maltreatment concerns and its conceptualisations. Subsequent sections outline
463 the concept of maltreatment in sport, focusing specifically on emotional abuse and bullying.
464 This includes prevalence rates, associated behaviours and risk factors, reasons for occurrence,
465 and resulting consequences. This is followed by an examination of approaches and
466 recommendations for safeguarding young people from maltreatment in sport, particularly
467 highlighting recommendations aimed at optimising youth sport experiences as well as
468 information about enjoyment in sport. Finally, this chapter concludes with a critical
469 evaluation of the existing literature on maltreatment in sport.

470 **2.1 Youth sport**

471 Youth sport is an inclusive term used to represent all types of organised adult
472 structured competitive sport provided for children and adolescents (Brustad et al., 2008). The
473 structure of youth sport involvement can vary, for instance, some programmes are highly
474 structured emphasising the development of young people's physical skills and tactical
475 understanding and are often led by professional coaches. On the other hand, some sports
476 programmes are more recreational and focus less on competition and more on encouraging
477 participation, providing opportunities to play which can indirectly facilitate the development
478 of physical skills and tactical understanding (Merkel, 2013). As youth sport has grown in
479 popularity around the world, highly structured adult sports programmes that emphasise
480 competition are growing in prominence (Kjønniksen et al., 2009; Light, 2010).

481 However, participation in structured and unstructured youth sport has become
482 increasingly popular. In fact, it is one of the most common extracurricular activities among
483 children and adolescents worldwide (Hulteen et al., 2016). Within the United Kingdom, data
484 indicates that, on a monthly basis, 86% of children participate in sport (Department of Digital
485 culture, Media and Sport, 2018). In Wales, 39% of young people take part in extracurricular
486 or club sport on three or more occasions per week (Sport Wales, 2022). Clearly, youth sport

487 holds great popularity, which is positive given that it is recognised as a significant avenue
488 through which the health and physical development of young people can be influenced
489 (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005).

490 Specifically, participation in sport is associated with several physical, physiological,
491 psychological, social, and intellectual benefits (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Merkel, 2013).
492 For instance, sport can promote the enhancement of psychological development because
493 many children voluntarily take part in sports activities, demonstrating high concentration and
494 motivation (Light, 2010; Pate et al., 2000; Sabo et al., 2005). In addition, sport serves as an
495 important avenue for fostering psychological growth in young people by affording them
496 agency to actively pursue their goals and involvement (Smith, 2007; Steptoe & Butler, 1996).
497 Furthermore, sport participation outcomes are important not only for young people
498 themselves but for their communities and significant others in their lives (Gould, 2019).

499 ***2.1.1 Outcomes of youth sport participation***

500 Although participation in sport is linked with various positive outcomes, it is
501 important to note that these benefits are not automatic and do not occur passively simply
502 because of participation (Gould, 2019). In fact, benefits are dependent on various factors such
503 as the organisation of particular sporting activities, the relationships young people have with
504 parents, coaches, and peers, the norms and culture linked with a particular sport, perceptions
505 of the sporting experience, the way in which young people integrate their sporting
506 experiences into other domains of their life, and the length of participation (Coackley, 2011;
507 Lavoie & Stellino, 2008; Sibley & Etnier, 2003). As such, previous research has cautioned that
508 advocates for youth sport should not blindly assume that sport is inherently good leading to
509 positive consequences for all involved (Coackley, 2011).

510 Clearly, the outcomes associated with sport participation are complex and influenced
511 by various factors including the young person's characteristics, significant others (i.e.,
512 parents, coaches, peers), and the social environment (Gould, 2019). In fact, critics of
513 organised competitive youth sport have highlighted a range of issues including cheating,
514 corruption, exploitation of young athletes, and maltreatment associated with sport
515 participation, which all having the potential to prevent the above listed benefits from
516 occurring and in fact compromise young people's welfare and their human rights
517 (Brackenridge, 1997; David, 2005; Fasting et al., 2004; Kerr et al., 2020). Notably there is a
518 growing concern regarding child maltreatment in sport.

519

520 **2.2 Maltreatment**

521 Despite the increased attention given to maltreatment within sporting contexts, the
522 roots of this issue stretch back over centuries, dating to the 1870's when child maltreatment
523 was recognised as a social issue (Radford et al., 2011). Over the past 150 years, notable
524 developments have been made in relation to child maltreatment. Particularly, since the 1970s,
525 concerted efforts have been dedicated to enhancing child protection measures. The following
526 section outlines some of these developments.

527 ***2.2.1 Historical context of child maltreatment***

528 In developed Western nations, the 1870s served as a critical period when public
529 awareness and acknowledgement of maltreatment significantly increased. Even though issues
530 of maltreatment existed long before this time, the 1870s signified a notable shift in societal
531 recognition of such concerns (Radford et al., 2011). Specifically, public attention increased in
532 1874 following a case in the United States in which Mary Ellen who was subjected to severe
533 physical abuse, neglect, and starvation from her adoptive mother (Radford et al., 2011). This
534 resulted in the establishment of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to
535 Children which was the first organisation dedicated to combating cruelty against children.
536 The late 19th century also witnessed growing concern about child maltreatment in the UK.
537 Subsequently, in 1889, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
538 (NSPCC) was founded in England. This occurred concurrently with the introduction of the
539 first UK law specifically addressing the protection of children from maltreatment through the
540 Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act, commonly known as the 'Children's
541 Charter' (Radford et al., 2011)

542 Legal and social attitudes towards children shifted considerably at the end of the 19th
543 century, and in the UK for the first time, the state was granted permission by the Children's
544 Charter to intervene in parent-child interactions and criminalised acts of child maltreatment
545 (Hendrick, 1994). During the period between 1890 and 1900, new legislation was enacted
546 while the NSPCC underwent significant expansion in authority and size (NSPCC, 2006). For
547 instance, The Children's Charter in 1894 expanded its definitions of maltreatment to include
548 'mental cruelty.' Additionally, NSPCC inspectors were given authorisation through the
549 Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act (1904) to remove children from homes where abuse or
550 neglect occurred. That said, during the war years (1914-1918 and 1939-1945) the concern
551 surrounding child maltreatment dwindled. Even though significant changes were made to
552 child protection laws in 1932, 1933, and 1948 (Children and Young Persons Act, 1933;

553 Children Act, 1948) attention on child maltreatment did not regain prominence until the
554 1960s (Kempe, 1962).

555 Specifically, in the 1960's American paediatricians introduced the term 'battered
556 child syndrome.' This term was developed in response to radiological evidence that
557 facilitated the identification of unseen patterns of physical injuries that resulted from
558 childhood abuse (Kempe et al., 1962). Recognition of the 'battered child syndrome' surfaced
559 in the UK in 1963 (Crane, 2015; Griffiths & Moynihan, 1963). Previous research highlighted
560 the common misdiagnosis of battered babies, which resulted in the underestimation of
561 instances of child maltreatment (Baher et al., 1976; Griffiths & Moynihan, 1963). Additional
562 legislation was enacted during the late 1970's to encourage community involvement and
563 provision (e.g. Local Authority Social Services Act, 1970). Nonetheless, it was not until the
564 Colwell Inquiry in 1974 following the killing of Maria Colwell that the public and media
565 began to shine a spotlight on child maltreatment (Hendrick, 1994). This renewed public
566 concern and subsequent moral outrage helped bring child maltreatment back to the forefront
567 of public consciousness (Hendrick, 1994). In the subsequent years, increased financial
568 resources and initiatives were developed focusing on the improvement of child protection,
569 involving several significant legislative amendments and the implementation of the child
570 protection register (Children Act, 1975 1989) (Parton, 1985).

571 Following this initial emphasis on preventing cruelty to children and recognition of
572 the impact physical abuse could have on children, in 1989 a significant milestone was
573 reached. Specifically, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
574 was established. This was the first international treaty dedicated to defining universally
575 recognised and legally binding rights for children worldwide (UNCRC, 1989). The UNCRC
576 sought to define norms and standards to ensure the protection of children's rights (UNCRC,
577 1989). The introduction of the UNCRC was a step forward in altering perceptions of children,
578 going beyond traditional notions of welfare and paternalistic approaches to acknowledge
579 children as individuals who have rights (Verhellen, 2015). Specifically, the UNCRC
580 explicitly stated that a child's best interest is of paramount importance, and it outlined rights
581 across three main categories: 1) Rights of provision, 2) Rights of protection, and 3) Rights of
582 participation. One right pertinent to the current thesis is that all children have the right of
583 protection, including, the protection from any maltreatment, discrimination, or exploitation
584 that could pose a threat to their survival, development, or well-being (UNCRC, 1989). Given
585 this emphasis, the creation of the UNCRC marked a pivotal moment in establishing a legal

586 framework for acknowledging maltreatment, implementing policies and accountability, and
587 clarifying governmental roles in ensuring the protection of children's rights

588 **2.2.2 Defining maltreatment**

589 Maltreatment is a multifaceted concept subject to extensive debate regarding its
590 meaning and individual-specific concepts. According to Crooks and Wolfe (2007)
591 maltreatment is, “volitional acts that result in or have the potential to result in physical
592 injuries and/or psychological harm” (p.640). In addition, it is believed that maltreatment can
593 arise from acts of commission (abuse) and omission (neglect) (Claussen & Crittenden 1991).
594 The United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) outlines acts of
595 commission as, deliberate, or intentional, words, or overt actions resulting in harm, potential
596 harm, or threat of harm” (Leeb et al., 2008). Such acts are explicitly described as deliberate
597 and intentional, irrespective of whether harm is an intended outcome. Acts of commission
598 include sexual, physical, and emotional forms of abuse. Conversely, acts of omission refer to
599 failure to cater to a child’s basic physical, emotional, or educational requirements to protect
600 them from harm or potential harm (Leeb et al., 2008). Such acts typically include failure to
601 provide, including instances of physical and emotional neglect, as well as a lack of adequate
602 supervision.

603 Based on this, maltreatment is considered a comprehensive term encompassing a
604 range of behaviours that may lead to physical or psychological harm of a child. This is
605 articulated in the definition of child maltreatment provided by the World Health Organisation
606 (WHO, 1999). Specifically, they define child maltreatment as an umbrella term including “all
607 forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and
608 commercial or other exploitation, which leads to actual or potential harm to the child’s health,
609 survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or
610 power” (World Health Organisation, 1999, p.19). Of note, within the WHO definition, the
611 term child refers to any individual under the age of 18 years. Providing more specificity, the
612 term young people is sometimes used. Within the UK, the Child and Young Persons Act
613 1933 stipulates that a young person is any human being who has reached the age of 14 years
614 but is below the age of 18 years. Within this thesis, the term young person is used to define
615 children aged between 13-18 years.

616 Maltreatment can occur in various settings, including family, institutional, or
617 community contexts including sport (UK Department for Education, 2013). It can be
618 perpetrated by a range of individuals including family members, parents, caregivers,
619 acquaintances, peers, as well as strangers, resulting in actual harm or potential for harm (UK

620 Department for Education, 2013). Harm is characterised by any immediate disruption
621 resulting from actual or threatened acts of commission or commission to a child's cognitive,
622 physical, and emotional development (Leeb et al., 2008). Within The Children Act in the UK,
623 emphasis is placed on maltreatment that causes significant harm, whereby significant harm is
624 "...the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of
625 children, and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should
626 take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer,
627 significant harm" (UK Department for Education, 2010, p.36).

628 **2.3 Maltreatment in sport**

629 Although the awareness of child maltreatment spans centuries, the study of
630 maltreatment in sport is relatively new. Recent research highlights that the unique
631 characteristics of sports can create an environment where young individuals are notably
632 susceptible to various forms of maltreatment (Gattis & Moore, 2022). Both historic and
633 ongoing reports of maltreatment highlight that maltreatment is an undeniable problem within
634 sport. Consequently, significant efforts have been directed towards gaining insights into this
635 issue within sporting contexts. The following section outlines the historical background of
636 maltreatment in sport, conceptualisations and types of maltreatment experienced in sport, as
637 well as the prevalence of maltreatment in sport with a particular focus on emotional abuse
638 and bullying.

639 ***2.3.1 High profile cases of maltreatment in sport***

640 Research on maltreatment in sport emerged in the 1990s, prompted by high-profile
641 incidents of athlete abuse and growing public concern for the well-being of young athletes
642 involved in sport (Brackenridge, 2001). Specifically, cases came to light concerning
643 maltreatment of a sexual nature of athletes by their coaches. For example, in 1993, in the UK,
644 Paul Hickson, a British Olympic swim coach, was convicted and sentenced to 17 years in
645 prison for 15 sexual offences involving former teenage swimmers under his supervision,
646 spanning a period of over 20 years (Lang & Hartill, 2015).

647 Shortly after this, in 1996, Sheldon Kennedy brought forward accusations against
648 celebrated National Hockey League (NHL) coach Graham James. Kennedy reported James to
649 the police, explaining he had been sexually abused by James for a period spanning over 10
650 years (Staff, 2015). After pleading guilty to over 350 counts of abuse, James was sentenced to
651 3 and half years in prison for cases relating to Kennedy and another NHL player. He was
652 given a lifetime ban from coaching in the Canadian Hockey Association (Kennedy &
653 Grainger, 2006). Following this, several other athletes including NHL player Theoren Fleury

654 also came forward disclosing sexual abuse carried out by James. Subsequently, James was
655 sentenced to a further two years in prison in 2012 (Fleury & McLelland Day, 2009).

656 In the 1990s, reports were also made in the UK regarding football coach Bob Higgins.
657 Initially, Higgins was found not guilty of these allegations. However, in 2016 various
658 individuals came forward which, in 2018, led to his conviction of 46 counts of indecent
659 assault and groping of twenty-four young individuals between 1971-1996. Higgins was
660 sentenced to twenty-four years in prison (Morris, 2019). Also, within football, Barry Bennell
661 was jailed in 1994 in the United States for sexually assaulting a 13-year-old British boy while
662 on a football tour in the States (BBC, 2018). Shortly after his release, in 1998, Bennell was
663 arrested by British authorities and received a subsequent nine-year sentence after pleading
664 guilty to twenty-three charges of abuse which spanned over two decades (BBC, 2018). Then,
665 in 2015, Bennell was arrested and sentenced again for sexually abusing a 12-year-old boy in
666 the 1980's (BBC, 2018). In 2016, Andy Woodward who was abused by Bennell waived his
667 anonymity and disclosed the extent of the abuse he experienced to the media. This resulted in
668 over a hundred other individuals coming forward regarding abuse experienced by Bennell. In
669 2018 he was sentenced to thirty-one years for the abuse he had perpetrated, as well as his
670 involvement in a paedophile ring in football in the UK (Masters & Veselinovic, 2018).

671 Meanwhile, in November 2011, reports had surfaced that former Pennsylvania State
672 University Assistant American Football coach Jerry Sandusky had been sexually abusing
673 boys at the university facilities. In 2012, Sandusky was found guilty of 48 counts of sexual
674 abuse against children spanning a 14-year period and he was sentenced to 30 to 60 years in
675 prison (Kelly, 2013). The aftermath of the case led to the removal of the head football coach
676 and the university president, and the NCAA imposed sanctions on the university's football
677 programme (Schuck, 2020). This case prompted a nationwide initiative to enhance legislation
678 regarding child abuse, and the scope of professionals mandated to report suspected abuse was
679 broadened (Kelly, 2013). Following this, Larry Nassar the former Michigan State University
680 and USA Gymnastics doctor was accused and later convicted for sexually assaulting young
681 girls and women over a twenty-year period (Levinson, 2018). In 2018, Nassar was sentenced
682 to up to 175 years in prison (Smith & Pegoraro, 2020). Nassar allegedly abused had over 300
683 victims, many who were reported to have been minors (Levinson, 2018).

684 More recently, reports of non-sexual maltreatment incidents in sport have emerged. For
685 example, in the UK in 2020, an independent review co-commissioned by UK Sport and Sport
686 England described systemic accounts of physical and emotional abuse and neglect of young
687 gymnasts (Whyte 2022). Reports included reoccurring issues of belittling, bullying, extreme

688 weight management, use of excessive physical force, training on serious injuries, regular
 689 overstretching, gaslighting, excessive controlling behaviour and suppression of athletes’
 690 opinions and emotions (Whyte 2022). Other cases of non-sexual maltreatment in the UK
 691 have also been identified in cycling, canoeing, swimming, and cricket, among others (Adams
 692 & Kavangh., 2020; BBC, 2023; Phelps et al., 2017).

693 **2.3.2 Defining maltreatment in sport**

694 In response to the concerning numbers of maltreatment cases being reported across
 695 different sports and nations, researchers have recently begun to commit extensive attention to
 696 examining maltreatment in sport cases. As part of this work, scholars have focused on
 697 classifying forms of maltreatment, typically utilising terminology in line with their research
 698 discipline (i.e., psychology, sociology etc) (see Table 2.1 for examples of definitions
 699 available within the extant literature).

700 **Table 2.1**

701 Theoretical definitions of maltreatment in sport

Terminology and Author	Definition
Violence Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989)	All forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent, treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal, or other person who has care of a child.
Maltreatment (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007) Utilised by Stirling (2009)	Volitional acts that result in or have the potential to result in physical injuries and/or psychological harm.
Maltreatment World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020)	All types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

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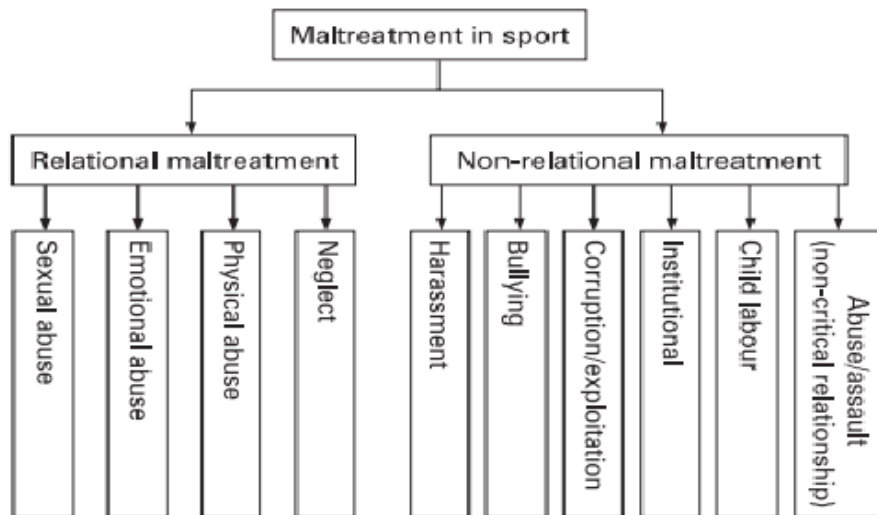
703

704 Early work on sexual abuse, drew upon a continuum which classified harm into
705 sexual abuse, harassment, and discrimination based on differing levels of severity
706 (Brackenridge et al., 2001). As work has progressed, there is increased recognition that each
707 of these situations can have equally detrimental effects and thus a continuum is not
708 necessarily the best representation. Nevertheless, this framework has been fundamental in
709 highlighting the various ways in which sexual harm can be encountered by young people in
710 sport (Brackenridge et al., 2001).

711 More recent work into maltreatment conducted by the International Olympic
712 Committee (IOC) has expanded understanding of harm in sport and has employed the term
713 non-accidental violence to conceptualise this phenomenon (Mountjoy et al., 2015; 2016).
714 Likewise, Vertommen et al. (2016) also utilise the term violence but differentiate among
715 three general categories of violence including self-directed violence (i.e., any deliberate
716 action that could result in self-harm or death), collective violence (i.e., when large groups
717 react to a shared trigger), and interpersonal violence (i.e., violence involving an adult in a
718 position of power like a coach, conflicts between athletes, or aggression from spectators).
719 (Krug et al., 2002; Parent & Fortier, 2018; Reicher, 2001). Specifically, Vertommen and
720 colleagues describe interpersonal violence based on the definition of violence outlined in the
721 United Nations convention on the rights of a child (UNCRC; United Nations General
722 Assembly, 1989) "... all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or
723 negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse in the care of
724 parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child" (p.5) The use
725 of the term violence is arguably broader than maltreatment and may encompass less "severe"
726 behaviours such as unwelcomed stares and teasing (Vertommen et al., 2016; Kerr & Stirling,
727 2019).

728 In addition to maltreatment within physical spaces, the increase in harmful behaviours
729 being carried out on social media prompted the conceptualisation of virtual maltreatment.
730 Such virtual maltreatment includes physical, sexual, and emotional mistreatment, and
731 discrimination which can be experienced directly or indirectly (Kavanagh et al., 2016).
732 Kavanagh et al. (2016) developed this based on the classification of maltreatment in sport
733 developed by Stirling (2009; Figure 2.1), which fosters an understanding of maltreatment
734 associated with the misuse of power in different relationship contexts. Similarly, it is
735 Stirling's framework from which the conceptualisation of maltreatment that has informed the
736 current thesis.

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738

739 **Figure 2.1** Stirling's Framework of Child Maltreatment in Sport (2009)

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Stirling's (2009) framework draws on an earlier broad definition of maltreatment, in which maltreatment is considered as, "volitional acts that result in or have the potential to result in physical injuries and/or psychological harm" (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007, p. 640). This definition is developed on the basis that instances of maltreatment arise from the misapplication of power within relationships and broader structures in the sporting environment. Consequently, it provides definitions and behaviours constituting maltreatment in the context of sport based on the critical nature of the relationship in which the behaviours occur. Moreover, Stirling (2009) provided a distinction between relational and non-relational maltreatment.

Relational maltreatment occurs within a critical relationship in which an individual is dependent upon another for a sense of safety, trust, and fulfilment of needs (e.g., parent-child, doctor-athlete, coach-athlete; Crooks & Wolfe, 2007). Stirling specified that relational maltreatment includes, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect and occurs within the context of a power relationship. Meanwhile, non-relational maltreatment is that which occurs outside the contexts of a critical relationship and recognises incidents in which a perpetrator could be an institution or a stranger to the child (Stirling, 2009). Non-relational maltreatment includes harassment, bullying, corruption/exploitation, institutional, child labour and abuse/assault. Whether relational or non-relational, Stirling considers the volitional or deliberate aspect of the action important in distinguishing the behaviour from an accident (Kerr & Stirling, 2019). Importantly, however, the perpetrator's intent has no bearing. Consequently, even if the intent was not to cause harm, if harm was experienced, an

761 adult in a position of authority, responsibility, and caregiving for a young person remains
762 responsible (Kerr & Stirling, 2019).

763 **2.3.3 Relational maltreatment in sport**

764 Regarding relational maltreatment, this occurs within a critical relationship. That is,
765 the perpetrator holds an important role in the young person's life and the young person is
766 dependent on the individual for a sense of safety, trust, and fulfilment of needs (e.g., parent,
767 doctor, coach; Crooks & Wolfe, 2007). Within sport, cases of relational maltreatment have
768 been reported in relation to coaches, mentors, and other members of the performance team
769 who are within the immediate environment working closely with them (Stirling, 2009). Such
770 relational maltreatment may take the form of abuse or neglect.

771 **2.3.3.1 Abuse.** Within Stirling's (2009) framework, abuse is characterised as a
772 recurring pattern of physical, sexual, emotional, or negligent mistreatment by an individual
773 assuming a critical relationship role such as a coach, a parent, or/and adult in a position of
774 trust within the sporting context which may lead to actual or potential harm (Stirling, 2009).
775 Specifically, there are three main subcategories of abuse: sexual, physical, and emotional.

776 **2.3.3.1.1 Sexual abuse.** There are various definitions and conceptual frameworks
777 available to conceptualise sexual abuse. Nonetheless, crucial to these definitions are defining
778 characteristics that the experienced behaviour is "unwanted or threatening, troublesome,
779 insulting offensive and an abuse of power" (Fasting, 2015, p. 438). In sport, sexual abuse is a
780 comprehensive term describing different forms of sexual maltreatment varying in severity
781 (Brackenridge, 2001; Brackenridge et al., 2008; Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005). Developed
782 by Brackenridge (2001) the sexual harassment continuum classifies three forms of sexual
783 exploitation: sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse. Sexual
784 discrimination refers to the unfair treatment of individuals based on their gender. This form
785 of sexual exploitation unjustly prejudices one demographic while overlooking the needs of
786 another (Brackenridge, 2001). Sexual discrimination is present at all levels of the sexual
787 exploitation continuum and can occur in isolation reflecting patterns of individual or
788 institutional conduct or concurrently with other forms of sexual exploitation (Brackenridge,
789 2001).

790 Despite challenges with defining it, sexual harassment is classed as unwanted sexual
791 attention on the basis of sex (e.g., crude remarks, pinching, stalking touching or caressing,
792 and sexual jokes) (Brackenridge, 2001). Sexual harassment usually involves a misuse of
793 power between the perpetrator and the victim (Brackenridge, 2001). Differentiating sexual
794 harassment and abuse can be challenging as they are both discriminatory and involve a

795 misuse of power. However, the main difference lies in the extent to which the individual
796 being harassed is coerced to comply with perpetrators' sexual advances (Brackenridge &
797 Fasting; 2005; Brackenridge et al., 2008; Volkwein-Caplan & Sankaran 2002). Sexual
798 harassment has the potential to lead to more severe sexual misconduct and is considered more
799 widespread than sexual abuse.

800 According to Ryan and Lane (1997) sexual abuse is, "any sexual interaction with
801 person(s) of any age that is perpetrated (1) against the victims will, (2) without consent, or (3)
802 in an aggressive, exploitative, manipulative or threatening manner" (p.3). Considered the
803 most severe and personally invasive forms of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse may occur
804 concurrently with other forms of sexual exploitation and includes groping, rape, and sexual
805 violence (Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005). Distinct from sexual harassment, the victim of this
806 sexual abuse is normally groomed, coerced, or forced to submit to the sexual demands of the
807 perpetrator and occurs even when there is no consent or even an inability to provide consent
808 (Brackenridge, 1997, 2001; Fasting & Brackenridge 2005; Leahy et al., 2002).

809 **2.3.3.1.2 Physical abuse.** Despite being documented as one of the most easily
810 detectable forms of abuse, limited empirical research exists on physical abuse in sport
811 (McPherson et al., 2017; Stafford et al., 2013; Stirling, 2009). According to Matthews (2004)
812 physical abuse is nonaccidental trauma or physical injury. Meanwhile, Stirling (2009)
813 stipulated that physical abuse can be categorised into contact and non-contact physical
814 abuses. Physical contact behaviours include, punching, beating, slapping, kicking, or
815 choking. Conversely, behaviours associated with non-contact physical abuse include forced
816 physical exertion and denial of access to water, food, sleep, or bathroom facilities (DiLillo et
817 al., 2006; Stirling 2009). Such behaviours are classified as physical abuse when they are
818 deliberate, regardless of an intention to cause harm (Matthews, 2004). Examples of physical
819 abuse reported by young athletes in sport include physical aggression and violence by
820 coaches as a means of control or punishment, playing through pain, and excessive training
821 (Alexander et al., 2011).

822 **2.3.3.1.3 Emotional abuse.** Despite the increased focus on sexual abuse, emotional
823 abuse is the most common form of maltreatment in sport. According to Stirling (2009)
824 emotional abuse (synonymously referred to as psychological abuse) is a pattern of deliberate
825 noncontact behaviours by a person within a critical relationship role, that has the potential to
826 be harmful. Emotional abuse in sport is characterised by behaviours such as, shouting,
827 belittling, criticism, degrading comments, insulting, denial of support and attention,
828 humiliation, scapegoating, threatening, isolation, discriminating against an individual or

829 group based on identity variability, throwing objects out of anger or frustration (without
830 striking another individual), as well as ignoring or denial of attention and support (Gervis &
831 Dunn, 2004; Stirling, 2009; Stirling & Kerr, 2007, 2008, 2014).

832 **2.3.3.2 Neglect.** The final form of relational maltreatment outlined by Stirling (2009)
833 is neglect. In contrast to abuse, neglect is broadly defined as acts of omission that occur when
834 a caregiver does not adequately meet a child's physical, educational, psychological, and/or
835 medical needs (Leeb et al., 2008; Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2007). Specifically, neglect
836 signifies a lack of reasonable care, inadequacies in meeting fundamental needs, as well as a
837 lack of attention (Glaser, 2002; Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2007). This relates to things such as
838 protection, shelter, food, and affection (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007). Although physical and
839 emotional needs may not directly be connected, a caregiver may address a child's physical
840 needs but overlook their emotional needs. However, consistent disregard for a child's
841 emotional needs will always lead to overall neglect (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2007).

842 According to Stirling's (2009) framework, four variations of neglect exist in sport:
843 physical, educational, emotional, and social neglect (Stirling, 2009). Physical neglect is when
844 a young athlete may not receive appropriate health care for an injury, or educational neglect
845 where a coach disregards time for an athlete's academic commitments (Stirling, 2009).
846 Meanwhile, an athlete may experience emotional neglect where a coach overlooks their
847 emotional needs, or social neglect where an athlete's social needs are disregarded (Stirling,
848 2009). Neglect may occur alongside other types of maltreatment such as emotional abuse or it
849 can exist independently (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2007). The severity of neglect varies, and it
850 is based on the frequency, duration, and extent of the consequences of neglectful behaviours
851 (Glaser, 2002: Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2007). For instance, high severe neglect is that which
852 that persists over an extended period leading to severe consequences, because of recurrent
853 failure in providing appropriate care.

854 **2.3.4 Non-relational maltreatment**

855 Non-relational maltreatment refers to all types of maltreatment that occur outside of a
856 critical relationship context (Stirling, 2009). While non-relational maltreatment can be
857 broadly understood at an institutional level, it is important to recognise that it can be
858 perpetrated by coaches, teammates, or other individuals in sport who hold a position of
859 authority who are not personally acquainted with an athlete or are influential in fulfilling an
860 athlete's needs (Stirling, 2009). Stirling's framework highlights six forms of non-relational
861 maltreatment, including abuse or assault (non-critical relationship), institutional
862 maltreatment, corruption/ exploitation, child labour, harassment, and bullying (Stirling,

2009). Given its relevance for this thesis (and with a mind to length!), I will proceed by solely defining and outlining bullying.

2.3.4.1 Bullying. According to Olweus (1993) bullying is repeated actions that have hostile intent that involve a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim and can occur in person or online. Specifically, according to Stirling, bullying includes “physical, verbal or psychological attacks or intimidations that are intended to cause fear, distress or harm to the victim” (2009. p.1097). Bullying has been divided into four categories: physical (e.g., hitting, punching), verbal, (e.g., name-calling, taunting, making threats/remarks), social, (e.g., social exclusion, spreading rumours/gossip), and cyber (e.g., occurring through computers and/or text) (Olweus, 1999). Even though there is extensive research on bullying in the education context (Merrel et al., 2008), limited research exists on bullying in the sport domain (Kerr et al., 2016). Nevertheless, recognising the increase in harmful interactions among peers, researchers have started to focus on examining bullying within youth (Evans et al., 2016; Jewett et al., 2020; Nery et al., 2019, 2020).

2.4 Prevalence of Maltreatment in Sport

In the following section, prevalence of maltreatment is detailed, divided between abuse and bullying.

2.4.1 Abuse prevalence

Across all forms of maltreatment, sexual abuse has received the most media and research attention. Early research on sexual abuse in sport focused on athletes’ experiences of sexual abuse and harassment perpetrated by coaches. Findings showed between 14-57% of collegiate and high-performance athletes reported experiencing sexually harassing behaviours such as gesture, sexual jokes, and propositions (Fejgin & Hanegby, 2001; Kirby & Greaves, 1996; MacGregor, 1998). Since these early studies, there has been a growth in studies worldwide pertaining to prevalence and experience of sexual abuse. For instance, studies have taken place in Australia (Leahy et al., 2002), the United States of America (Volkwein et al. 1997), Canada (Kirby & Greaves, 1996), Norway (Vanden Auweele et al. 2008; Fasting et al. 2004; Sundgot-Borgen et al. 2003), Denmark (Nielsen, 2001), and the UK (Benedict & Klein, 1997; Alexander et al., 2011). Furthermore, studies have focused explicitly upon on various forms of sexual abuse toward males and females, carried out by individuals’ key stakeholders in sport, such as coaches, other members of the athlete entourage, spectators, and peer athletes (Leahy et al., 2002; Nielsen, 2001; Vertommen et al., 2017; Willson et al., 2021).

896 Overall, the reported prevalence of sexual abuse varies widely, and rates tend to differ
897 based on variables such as sport, level of competition, victim's gender, and geographical
898 location. Studies suggest that the prevalence of sexual abuse ranges between 2% and 49%
899 (Mountjoy et al., 2016). For example, Vertommen et al. (2015) conducted a study in the
900 Netherlands and Belgium investigating the prevalence of sexual exploitation against children
901 in sport. Using a retrospective online survey, results indicated prevalence estimates of 14%
902 before the age of 18 years, highlighting a statistically significant higher presence of female
903 victims than males. The variability in prevalence rates is usually a result of variations in
904 definitions of sexual abuse, sampling, dimensions measured, perpetrators of abuse included in
905 the study response rate, and trustworthiness (Fasting, 2005; Parent et al., 2016; Parent &
906 Fortier, 2017). Consequently, the varying methodologies employed in different studies make
907 it difficult to compare results (Ohlert et al., 2021).

908 Extending the research beyond sexual abuse, researchers have recently highlighted a
909 significant prevalence of harm across different types of abuse. For example, in the UK
910 Alexander et al. (2011) conducted a retrospective study with 6,124 former youth athletes
911 (aged between 18-22 years) competing at various levels and asked them to reflect on their
912 experiences in sport up until the age of 16 years. The findings of the study showed the most
913 common form of harm reported was emotional abuse, with 75% of participants reporting
914 experiencing some form of emotional abuse such as being teased, criticised for
915 performance, shouted or sworn at, or embarrassed or humiliated. Results found that
916 teammates and peers were the most common perpetrators of emotional abuse across every
917 sporting level (i.e., recreational, local, district, national, and international), followed by
918 coaches. Males reported experiencing emotional abuse more often than females. In contrast,
919 29% of participants reported experiencing sexual abuse and 29% reported experiencing
920 physical abuse. The findings showed that a higher proportion of male participants reported
921 experiencing physical harm, while sexual harassment was more likely to be experienced by
922 females. Furthermore, results also found a higher prevalence of physical harm and sexual
923 harassment at higher competition levels, with coaches and trainers being the main
924 perpetrators of physical harm, while teammates and peers were for sexual harassment.

925 A similar retrospective study was conducted in the Netherlands and Flanders by
926 Vertommen and colleagues (2016). Specifically, 4000 Belgian and Dutch adults were
927 surveyed about their experiences of interpersonal violence in sport before the age of 18 years.
928 Results showed that 44% of participants reported experiencing at least one type of
929 interpersonal violence (i.e., sexual, physical, or psychological) in sport. Consistent with

930 findings from the study conducted by Alexander and her colleagues (2011), results showed
931 that psychological violence (38%) was most prevalent, followed by sexual (14%), and
932 physical violence (11%). Findings also showed that male athletes reported experiencing
933 higher rates of psychological (39%) and physical violence (14%) compared their female
934 counterparts (36% psychological abuse; 9% physical abuse). However, results showed that
935 sexual violence was more prevalent among female athletes (17%) compared to males (11%).
936 The findings did not provide information regarding perpetrators of violence experienced and
937 findings showed no significant differences between violence experienced by Dutch and
938 Flemish participants, despite slightly higher rates of reported violence in the Flanders region.

939 Both studies provided valuable insights into the prevalence of maltreatment in sport.
940 However, it is important to note that both were retrospective in nature and were reliant on
941 adult participants' recollections of childhood sporting experiences. Recently, researchers have
942 acknowledged the value of understanding maltreatment experiences among young individuals
943 actively participating in sport (Parent et al., 2019). In fact, research suggests that involving
944 young people currently competing helps reduce the risk of memory bias (Finkelhor et al.,
945 2014; Priebe et al., 2010; Ybarra et al., 2009). As such, more recent studies have examined
946 the prevalence of maltreatment experienced by young people currently participating in sport
947 (Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2021; Vertommen et al., 2022; Willson et al., 2022).

948 For example, Willson et al. (2022) examined experiences of maltreatment in sport by
949 758 current and 237 retired National team athletes in Canada. Results showed that 75% (n =
950 751) of the 995 participants reported experiencing at least one type of harmful behaviour (i.e.,
951 sexual, physical, psychological, or neglect) in sport. Findings showed that emotional abuse
952 was the most common form of abuse experienced by participants (24%), followed by neglect
953 (23.7%). Participants reported experiencing sexual harm (4.7%) and physical harm (3.4%) far
954 less. The results showed that coaches were the most common perpetrators of neglect,
955 followed by high-performance directors and sport administrators, while physical harm was
956 most perpetrated by coaches. In the case of sexual harm, peers were the most common
957 perpetrators followed by coaches, and peers. Finally, psychological harmful behaviours were
958 mainly enacted by coaches, followed by peers, then high-performance directors (Willson et
959 al., 2022).

960 Facilitating future prevalence studies, Parent and colleagues (2019) developed the
961 first validated questionnaire, the Violence Towards Athletes Questionnaire (VTAQ) to
962 measure the prevalence of interpersonal violence towards young athletes in sport. The VTAQ
963 measures various forms of mistreatment including neglect/psychological, physical, and

964 sexual violence perpetrated by coaches, peers, and parents. Employing this questionnaire,
965 Parent and Vaillancourt-Morel (2020) investigated the prevalence of interpersonal violence
966 among 1,055 youth athletes in Québec, Canada aged between 14 and 17 years, who were
967 currently competing in sport. Results indicated that psychological violence as the most
968 experienced form of violence (79.2%). This was followed by physical violence 40%, neglect
969 36%, and sexual violence at 28.2%. The results indicated a relationship between female
970 gender, increased age, early sport specialisation, and increased weekly training hours with
971 psychological violence or neglect. Additionally, male gender, increased age, non-
972 heterosexual orientation, increased weekly training hours, involvement in team sports, and
973 interregional and provincial competition level were associated with increased reports of
974 physical violence. Notably, some items considered as psychological violence in this
975 study/scale were previously categorised as physical abuse/violence and neglect in other
976 prevalence studies (Alexander et al., 2011; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2021).
977 Such differences in classifications, as well as measures used, make comparisons across
978 prevalence studies challenging.

979 **2.4.2 Bullying prevalence**

980 Research on bullying has highlighted harmful peer-to-peer interactions within sport.
981 For example, Mishna et al. (2019) conducted a study with 122 Canadian university athletes
982 examining the prevalence of bullying and cyberbullying in sport, results showed that 48% of
983 athletes had been victims of bullying, 31% reported being a bully, and 62% claimed they had
984 witnessed bullying behaviour in sport. When it came to cyberbullying, 7% reported being a
985 victim, 9% reported being a perpetrator of bullying, and 15% reported witnessing
986 cyberbullying. In 2018, Nery and colleagues conducted a study with 1458 adolescent male
987 athletes in Portugal. Of participants, 10% reported being a victim of bullying, 11% reported
988 perpetrating bullying episodes as a bully, and 35% reported witnessing bullying. Findings
989 showed that 10% of victims reported experiencing repeated episodes of bullying, and 90%
990 reported experiencing bullying occasionally. When it came to perpetrating bullying 12%
991 reported repeated participation in bullying and 88% reported occasional participation.
992 Furthermore, 35% of bystanders reported that they usually defended victims of during
993 instances of bullying, while 27% reported that they observed without interfering and 33%
994 reported multiple reactions.

995 Meanwhile in Spain, Ventura and colleagues (2019) conducted a study with male
996 (82.2%) and female athletes aged between 8-13 years on bullying in football. Results showed
997 that 8.9% of participants reported being a victim of bullying, of those, 0.2% reported

998 experiencing bullying very often, 1.4% sometimes, and 7.4% sometimes. Findings also
999 showed that 34.7% of participants reported witnessing bullying, and 14.8% reported that they
1000 had perpetrated bullying in sport. There were also notable differences between boys and girls,
1001 specifically, 15.5% of boys reported being bullies compared to 9% of girls, moreover, 36.4%
1002 of boys reported being bystanders to bullying compared to 21.9% of girls.

1003 Finally, Vveinhardt et al. (2017) conducted a study focusing on bullying and
1004 harassment among male youth basketball players aged 14-18 years in Lithuania. Findings
1005 showed that 27% of participants reported experiences of bullying, 35% of participants
1006 reported witnessing bullying perpetrated by a teammate, while 33.2% witnessed bullied
1007 perpetrated by individuals from other teams. Moreover, 16% of participants reported
1008 perpetrating bullying behaviours against a teammate, whereas 12.8% reported bullying
1009 individuals from other teams. Studies focusing on bullying highlight that prevalence rates
1010 may vary depending on the specific group being targeted. For instance, other studies
1011 conducted in Canada with adolescent athletes aged between 13-17 years showed that 14% of
1012 reported experiences of bullying (Evans et al., 2016). While research conducted in the
1013 Netherlands with judo and football players (ages 7-12 years) found that 14% of participants
1014 reported experiencing bullying (Escury & Dudink, 2010).

1015 **2.5 Research on Maltreatment in Sport**

1016 As outlined, much of the early research considering maltreatment focused upon sexual
1017 abuse and there has been particular attention paid to identifying prevalence. Furthermore,
1018 researchers have sought to identify factors linked to cases of sexual abuse. Research indicates
1019 that individuals from ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, and those from LGBTQI
1020 social groups are more likely to experience sexual abuse (Fasting et al., 2008; Peltola &
1021 Kivijärvi 2017; Vertommen et al., 2016). Moreover, factors such as young age (Cense &
1022 Brackenridge, 2001), being female, and competing at an elite level pose higher risks for
1023 experiencing sexual abuse (Alexander et al., 2011; Leahy et al., 2002; Vertommen et al.,
1024 2016). In sporting environments, relational and organisational factors have been linked with
1025 sexual abuse. These factors include power disparities within young athlete relationships
1026 (Mountjoy et al., 2016; Owton & Sparkes, 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2009), situations where
1027 young individuals are unsupervised with a potential perpetrator (Cense & Brackenridge,
1028 2001; Stirling & Kerr, 2009), and the absence of preventive measures within sports
1029 organisations (Lang & Hartill, 2016; Mathews et al., 2017).

1030 Examinations of the impact of sexual abuse that occurs in the sporting domain has
1031 also been conducted. Overall, such findings have shown that sexual abuse that occurs within

1032 sport has long-term consequences, including anxiety, depression, feelings of guilt, emotional
1033 distress, diminished self-esteem, and increased susceptibility to eating disorders, and post-
1034 traumatic stress (Brackenridge, 1997; Parent et al., 2021; Wekerle et al., 2017). Furthermore,
1035 in non-sporting populations, instances of sexual abuse serve as an indicator for non-suicidal
1036 self-injury/self-harm and suicide attempts, showing an escalating trend with the frequency of
1037 a person's exposure to sexual abuse (Joiner et al., 2007). As such, addressing issues of sexual
1038 abuse must be a priority for all.

1039 Compared to research on sexual abuse, far less attention has been given to physical
1040 abuse. Research suggests that this may be because sport struggles with recognising a balance
1041 between intense training that offers physical benefits, and practices that verge on being
1042 abusive (Oliver & Lloyd, 2015). Consequently, it is contended that there is a high level of
1043 acceptance of physically abusive behaviours and a limited capability to identify these
1044 behaviours within sport (Alexander et al., 2011), which could potentially shape an
1045 organisational culture which accepts abuse as the norm, resulting in reduced reports of such
1046 behaviours through formal channels. One example of this, and the topic which has been
1047 researched most substantially, is the use of exercise as punishment (George, 2001; Kerr et al.,
1048 2016).

1049 Research shows that the use of exercise as punishment is detrimental but is
1050 widespread in sport, with reports indicating that 89% of athletes have experienced this type of
1051 disciplinary measure (Kerr et al., 2016). Research in physical education has shown that
1052 teachers adopting this style of discipline believed that it improves fitness, reinforces authority
1053 between pupil and teacher, and builds mental toughness (Richardson et al., 2012). Moreover,
1054 athletes expressed their intention to adopt similar techniques when they take on coaching
1055 roles, despite experiencing and reporting negative responses while undergoing and after being
1056 subjected to this form of punishment. In fact, research has shown that the use of exercise as
1057 punishment can lead to decreased self-perception, increased intentions to stop participating,
1058 heightened doubt regarding coaching methods, increased negative thoughts about, and
1059 decreased respect for, the coach (Battaglia et al., 2018).

1060 Compared to physical abuse, more attention has been given to emotional abuse in
1061 sport research, particularly recently. As this, along with bullying, are the key focus of the
1062 current thesis research on these topics will now be describe in detail.

1063 ***2.5.1 Emotional abuse in sport***

1064 Experiences of emotional abuse are pervasive in youth sport, previous studies
1065 focusing on the prevalence of maltreatment in sport show that emotional abuse is the most

1066 common form of maltreatment in youth sport (Alexander et al., 2011; Parent & Vaillancourt-
1067 Morel, 2020; Vertommen et al., 2016), with prevalence rates between 24% (Willson et al.,
1068 2021) to 79.2% (Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2020). This is consistent across diverse
1069 athletic populations and in various countries (Alexander et al., 2011; Parent & Vaillancourt-
1070 Morel, 2020; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2021). Despite emotional abuse being
1071 prevalent it is a commonly overlooked form of maltreatment in sport, and although it is
1072 widespread, it can be subtle making it difficult to challenge and regulate (Kavanagh et al.,
1073 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2014). Emotional abuse in sport has been broadly categorised into
1074 verbal negative behaviour (i.e., verbal demeaning, humiliating, degrading, and threatening
1075 comments), physical behaviour (i.e., (i.e., throwing objects out of frustration or anger,
1076 without causing physical harm), and denial of attention and support (i.e., actively ignoring
1077 individual in response to poor performance) (Stirling, 2008).

1078 Gervis and Dunn (2004) conducted a qualitative study investigating the prevalence of
1079 emotional abuse with 12 former elite child athletes in the UK. All participants reported
1080 experiencing some form of emotionally abusive behaviour, and results showed that the most
1081 common forms of emotional abuse reported were humiliation, shouting, belittling, and
1082 threats. Athletes also reported that despite being aware of the abusive environment they were
1083 in, they felt trapped. Specifically, participants believed they had to persevere and endure the
1084 abuse from their coach if they wanted to achieve their goal of becoming an international
1085 athlete. Furthermore, participants recounted that experiences of emotional abuse intensified
1086 once they were recognised as elite performers. Consequently, participants reported feeling
1087 “stupid,” “worthless,” “upset,” “fearful,” “humiliated,” “hurt”, “non-confident,” and
1088 "depressed,” (Gervis & Dunn, 2004, p. 221). Similarly, Stirling and Kerr (2008) conducted a
1089 qualitative study in Canada with 14 elite, retired female swimmers aged 19-29 years. Results
1090 showed that participants' experiences differed depending on their stage of athletic
1091 development (e.g., early career, mid-career, and late career) and performance level in their
1092 sport and their experiences of abuse got worse as athletes progressed through their careers.
1093 Reflecting on when they started participating in their sport and experiencing emotional abuse,
1094 many reported being socialised to believe that abusive coaching behaviours were normal.

1095 More recently body shaming has been acknowledged as a form of emotional abuse
1096 with various detrimental consequences and growing attention has been given to
1097 understanding it sport. Willson and Kerr (2022) conducted a qualitative study involving eight
1098 female national team athletes aged between 24-29 years exploring the experiences of body
1099 shaming as a form of emotional abuse from coaches. Athletes reported experiencing body

1100 monitoring, negative verbal comments from their coaches about their bodies, public
1101 criticisms, forced restrictions of food and water, about their body, and punishment if body
1102 related standards were unmet. Participants reported various negative consequences including,
1103 disordered eating, performance decline, and decreased enjoyment. Similarly, McMahon and
1104 Colleagues (2022) conducted a study with three female swimmers exploring their experiences
1105 of body shaming as a form of psychological abuse and the role the athlete entourage (i.e.,
1106 people associated with the athlete) played in body shaming. The findings showed that the
1107 athletes experienced psychological abuse through acts of body shaming from members of the
1108 athlete entourage (i.e., coach, team manager, partner, and mother) when their physique failed
1109 to meet socio-cultural norms (i.e., too fat, 'slim to win'). Athletes reported being ridiculed,
1110 yelled at, and spoken to in a demeaning manner. Additionally, they reported being subjected
1111 to punishment including severe calorie restriction, and excessive running to manage
1112 weight/body shape.

1113 Despite variations in how concepts of emotional abuse are understood and assessed,
1114 the above studies indicate the widespread prevalence of emotional abuse in sport and the
1115 extensive forms in which it can occur. However, it is important to note the difficulty in
1116 comparing the prevalence of emotional abuse across studies due to the differences in
1117 measurement approaches and behavioural definitions. For instance, some studies have
1118 grouped emotional abuse with other forms of maltreatment (e.g., Parent & Vaillancourt-
1119 Morel., 2020) while others have kept constructs separate (Vertommen et al., 2016).
1120 Moreover, most existing prevalence studies are retrospective in nature which may have issues
1121 associated with recall bias.

1122 Research focusing on emotional abuse has often been qualitative in nature and
1123 typically focused on coach-athlete relationships (Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Stirling & Kerr,
1124 2013). This focus is likely due to coaches often being reported as the most frequent
1125 perpetrators of emotional abuse (Willson et al., 2021). Particularly, research has shown that
1126 as young people advance to higher participation levels coaches increasing become a prevalent
1127 source of emotional abuse (Parent & Fortier, 2017; Stafford et al., 2015; Vertommen et al.,
1128 2017; Willson et al., 2021). Notably even when coaches are not directly involved as
1129 perpetrators of emotional abuse, research has highlighted their indirect involvement. For
1130 instance, according to Alexander et al. (2011) roughly a third of participants who reported
1131 emotional harm reported it being related to coaches, either through direct participation or
1132 indirectly by fostering an environment where such behaviours were endorsed or left
1133 unaddressed (i.e., emotional abuse was accepted).

1134 Despite the prevalence of coaches as perpetrators of abuse, recent research has shown
1135 that peers are among the most common perpetrators of emotional harm reported in sport. For
1136 example, Vertommen et al. (2017) found that peers or other athletes were the most common
1137 perpetrators of psychological violence (82%), with males identified as perpetrating at higher
1138 rates than females. Similarly, Stafford et al. (2015) reported that peers or teammates were the
1139 most common perpetrators of emotional abuse (81% main sport and 79% secondary sport).
1140 Conversely, Willson et al. (2021) reported peers as the second most common perpetrator of
1141 psychological harm. It should be noted that these studies conceptualised emotional abuse as
1142 psychological violence or emotional harm, which encompasses peers as perpetrators.
1143 Therefore, the differences regarding individuals responsible for emotional abuse may be
1144 attributed to the use of diverse participant samples, variations in definitions and assessment
1145 tools used to measure emotional abuse. In addition, the first two studies were retrospective,
1146 while the last study involved participants currently involved in sport. Thus, the differences
1147 may be generational (i.e., a change in perpetrators with time or perceived acceptability of
1148 behaviours) or arising due to difficulties with recall in retrospective studies.

1149 While peers and coaches have received attention within emotional abuse literature.
1150 More limited consideration has been given to parents from a specific abuse or safeguarding
1151 perspective. However, studies on parental involvement have highlighted problematic
1152 interactions between parents and young people (Knight, 2019). Specifically, research has
1153 shown that parents shout from the sidelines, exert pressure, ignore children when
1154 expectations have not been met, as well as supporting coaches use of punitive coaching
1155 practices (Holt & Knight, 2014; Knight et al., 2020; Smits et al., 2017). While these
1156 behaviours have not explicitly been categorised as emotional abuse within this literature, they
1157 share similarities with behaviours labelled as emotional abuse in peer and coach
1158 relationships. Specifically, early survey data from young people pertaining to parents has
1159 indicated that parents hit their children in response to bad competitions, belittle and
1160 embarrass them, and hold them to excessively high standards (DeFrancesco & Johnson, 1997;
1161 Shields et al., 2002), which based on definitions provided above are clear illustrations of
1162 maltreatment.

1163 Moreover, research on maltreatment in sport has highlighted that parents, like young
1164 people, are heavily reliant on coaches guidance, as a result can become complicit in relation
1165 to harmful practices (McMahon et al., 2018). For example, studies examining parents'
1166 perspectives regarding their child's experiences with emotional abuse show that that parents
1167 tend to be silent bystanders, despite acknowledging certain behaviours as being potentially

1168 problematic because parents rely on the coach's expertise and tended to normalise abusive
1169 coaching practices (Kerr & Stirling, 2012; Smits et al., 2017). Moreover, because of
1170 accepting the behaviours presented by coaches and more broadly within the elite sport
1171 environment, parents may actually start to adopt behaviours aligned with abuse. For instance,
1172 a study of parents within elite swimming demonstrated how the slim to win culture in which
1173 dieting, excessive training, and weight loss were highly valued and rewarded, parents started
1174 to reinforce detrimental behaviours associated with this (McMahon & Penny, 2015).

1175 Similarly, Kerr and Stirling (2012) conducted research with parents of retired elite
1176 athletes, results showed that parents tend to become socialised in the elite sport culture. They
1177 place trust in the coach and surrender control to them consequently potentially assuming the
1178 role of a silent bystander to their children's experiences of emotional abuse. Moreover,
1179 McMahon et al. (2018) conducted a study with parents and found that most parents
1180 normalised and accepted abusive coaching practices as they believed in the coaches' expertise
1181 and perceived certain behaviours as being essential for achieving peak athletic performance.
1182 Besides athletes and parents accepting emotionally abusive practices in sport, research also
1183 shows that coaches and sport administrators tend to also normalise these behaviours (Jacobs
1184 et al., 2017).

1185 Currently, however, there is limited research explicitly examining emotional abuse
1186 perpetrated by parents or other adults in positions of authority (aside from coaches) in sport.
1187 Some previous prevalence studies attempted to address this by including a category called
1188 'other' alongside coach, peers, which allowed for respondents to identify parents or other
1189 adults as perpetrators (Alexander et al., 2011; Vertommen et al., 2016). Much more recently,
1190 researchers examining the prevalence of all forms of maltreatment in sport have begun
1191 considering parents as potential perpetrators. However, findings from these studies have not
1192 explicitly shown the specific percentage of emotional abuse perpetrated by parents, instead,
1193 they have provided rates including all forms of maltreatment perpetrated by parents
1194 (Vertommen et al., 2022; Pankowiak et al., 2023).

1195 Researchers have also explored the consequences of emotional abuse. Specifically,
1196 studies have shown that emotional abuse has various short-term and long-term detrimental
1197 consequences (Kerr et al., 2020; Stirling & Kerr, 2007, 2008, 2014; Yabe et al., 2019).
1198 Considering how emotional abuse impacts young people in their athletic career, Stirling and
1199 Kerr (2013) conducted a retrospective study with fourteen male and female elite athletes
1200 examining the perceived effects of experiences of emotional abuse in the coach-athlete
1201 relationship. Specifically, the study focused on how athletes responded to emotional abuse

1202 from their coach. Three overarching categories were developed to highlight the perceived
1203 impacts of emotional abuse within the coach-athlete relationship: (1) psychological effects
1204 (low mood, low self-esteem, anger, anxiety, low self-efficacy, sense of accomplishment), (2)
1205 training effects (increased motivation, impaired focus, decreased motivation, difficulty with
1206 skill acquisition, reduced enjoyment,) and (3) performance effects (performance decrements,
1207 enhanced performance). Findings showed that some participants perceived a few positive
1208 outcomes as a result of experiences such as a sense of accomplishment, increased motivation,
1209 and performance improvements. Given participants achieved high levels of success in their
1210 sport, it is plausible that participants rationalised and normalised abusive coaching practices,
1211 considering them as essential ingredients for achieving greater performance. Given that the
1212 participants possibly believed that the abusive coaching techniques were effective given that
1213 they had achieved performance success (Stirling & Kerr, 2013).

1214 Emotional abuse has also been linked to other short-term and long-term consequences
1215 including, anger, maladaptive eating disorders, anxiety, depression, social withdrawal and
1216 decreased motivation and enjoyment for the sport (Kerr et al., 2020; Stirling & Kerr, 2007,
1217 2008, 2014; Yabe et al., 2019). To understand the long-term consequences of emotionally
1218 abusive coaching, Kerr et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study with eight retired female
1219 Canadian National Team athletes from three different team and individual sports. The study
1220 explored the experiences and effects of emotional abuse. Findings showed that athletes
1221 reported experiencing depression, increased nervousness and fear, decreased self-confidence,
1222 eating disorders, anxiety, and symptoms resembling post-traumatic stress disorder as a result
1223 of experiences of emotionally abusive coaching behaviours. Additionally, all participants in
1224 the study sought professional mental health assistance after retiring (Kerr et al., 2020).
1225 Despite the negative consequences of emotional abuse, defining and recognising it poses a
1226 challenge because, as alluded to above, these behaviours tend to be normalised within youth
1227 sport culture (McMahon et al., 2018; Smits et al., 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2010). Unlike sexual
1228 or physical abuse, emotional abusive behaviours are more subtle and lack visible indications
1229 of harm such as bruises or scars. As such, research has found that emotionally abusive
1230 behaviours have been accepted by coaches, athletes, and parents as normal practice (Stirling
1231 & Kerr, 2010).

1232 **2.5.2 Bullying in sport**

1233 While initial studies on bullying primarily concentrated on bullying within school
1234 settings, research shows that bullying extends to various settings including sport (Monks &
1235 Coyne, 2011; Nery et al., 2021). In fact, recognising the increase in harmful interactions

1236 among peers in sport, increased attention has been given to examining bullying within youth
1237 sport. Despite increased research attention, bullying research in sport is still limited,
1238 unfortunately, bullying is commonly regarded as a taboo topic or alternatively categorised as
1239 normal sport-related aggression (Kirby & Wintrump, 2002). Research examining bullying in
1240 sport has mainly been descriptive, offering insights into various aspects, such as the
1241 prevalence of bullying, the various types of bullying, risk factors, reasons for bullying
1242 occurrences, and consequences of bullying (Jewett et al., 2020; Nery et al., 2021).

1243 Research has shown differences in the prevalence of different types of bullying in
1244 sport. Two of the most visible and widespread forms of bullying within sport settings are
1245 physical (i.e., hitting, kicking, punching) and verbal (name-calling, teasing, making
1246 threats/remarks) (Mishna et al., 2018; Nery et al., 2019; Ventura et al., 2019). However,
1247 equally common is social bullying (i.e., social exclusion, spreading rumours/gossip (Mishna
1248 et al., 2018; Nery et al., 2019; Ventura et al., 2019). For example, Mishna et al. (2019) found
1249 that verbal bullying was most common (29.5%), followed by social bullying (19.7%), and
1250 physical bullying (17.2%). Similarly, Nery et al. (2019) found that verbal bullying was the
1251 most common form of bullying, followed by social bullying then physical bullying, and cyber
1252 bullying. Specifically, findings showed that verbal bullying such as insults and mocking was
1253 experienced most typically only occasionally, whereas repeated episodes of bullying mainly
1254 included both verbal and social bullying (i.e., exclusion).

1255 Research suggests that the risk factors associated with becoming a victim of bullying
1256 within sport settings differ significantly depending on the specific social group involved,
1257 mirroring the variations observed in bullying within school contexts (Menesini & Salmivalli,
1258 2017). For instance, within sport factors increasing the risk of being bullied include, having a
1259 disability (Danes-Staples et al., 2013), belonging to an ethnic minority group (Kentel &
1260 McHugh, 2015), being overweight or varying from body, weight, or size norms (Bacchini et
1261 al., 2015), and being part of the LGBTQ+ community (Baiocco et al., 2018). Other risk
1262 factors that increase susceptibility to bullying include being a newcomer in a sport compared
1263 to experienced athletes, age, personality traits, team tenure, or displaying lower levels of skill
1264 (Jewett et al., 2019; Kerr et al., 2016; Rivers, 2010). Furthermore, highly competitive setting
1265 and preferential treatment by coaches (Mishna et al. 2019; Shannon 2013) can lead to
1266 bullying.

1267 Exploring some of these ideas further, Nery and Colleagues (2020) examined coaches
1268 and young athletes' perceptions of what motivated young people to bully. Results were
1269 categorised into three themes: Fundamental reasons, peer pressure, and individual

1270 characteristics indicating reasons for bullying. Fundamental reasons included abuse of
1271 perceived power (e.g., belittling victim to increase social status), hierarchy (e.g., older or
1272 higher status players targeting newcomers or younger athletes), envy (e.g., bullying based on
1273 envy of perpetrators), and rivalry (e.g., bullying based on peer supportive rivalry). Peer
1274 pressure includes divergence from standards (e.g., Bullying is rooted in the victim's perceived
1275 divergence from the accepted standards of the peer group) and imitation (e.g., bullies mimic
1276 bullying behaviour to gain acceptance and recognition from other bullies who are teammates
1277 and have high status). Finally, individual characteristics included low sport performance (e.g.,
1278 perpetrators target athletes with low physical ability), body (e.g., bullied because of differing
1279 physical appearances such as being overweight) and personality (e.g., bullied for thinking and
1280 behaving differently from teammates).

1281 The reasons bullying is so pervasive in sport are likely varied, but the actual nature of
1282 youth sport may be a contributing factor. Youth sport is a unique environment in which
1283 young people develop tight bonds, solidified by the extensive time they spend together during
1284 training, competitions, and social interactions (Kerr et al., 2016), thus there are many
1285 opportunities for bullying to occur. Moreover, studies suggest that aggressive behaviours are
1286 frequently normalised in sport and bullying is commonly mistaken for standard aggressive
1287 behaviour in sport (Volk & Lagzdins, 2009). In addition, research indicates that victims tend
1288 to maintain silence because of the dominant tough culture that exists in many sport settings.
1289 This culture fosters the normalisation and acceptance of various types of maltreatment in
1290 sport, such as bullying, as standard practice in the sporting setting (Stirling et al., 2011).

1291 Like other forms of maltreatment bullying occurs in various places, however research
1292 suggests that within the sporting setting, the changing room is the most common location
1293 (Escury & Dudink, 2010; Evans et al., 2016; Roberts, 2008; Ventura et al., 2019). For
1294 instance, research by Ventura et al. (2019), identified that bullying occurred in training areas
1295 (i.e., the pitch, pool, or gym), however, the changing room was reported as the key location in
1296 which bullying occurred. Similarly, Nery et al. (2019) found that victimisation of bullying
1297 occurred mainly inside the sport setting, in the changing room. Research shows that bullying
1298 is more likely to occur in secluded, segregated environments (Parker & Manley, 2016; Nery
1299 et al., 2020; Ventura et al., 2019). It has been suggested that the changing room is a common
1300 place for bullying to take place in sport as it is a place in which young athletes interact
1301 privately and it tends to be less supervised by adults.

1302 Like other forms of maltreatment, bullying can have various personal and social
1303 consequences for young people. For example, research shows that young people who

1304 experience bullying report various consequences including social rejection, depression,
1305 increased anxiety, reduced self-esteem, poor relationships, physical health issues or
1306 symptoms such as headaches, colds, and stomach aches, and in severe cases, suicide ideation
1307 (Wolke & Lereya, 2015). For example, Tamminen and colleagues (2013) conducted a
1308 qualitative investigation focusing on the adversity experiences of elite female athletes (ages
1309 18-13 years). Findings showed that there was a correlation between bullying and athletes'
1310 experiences of social isolation, resulting in a decline in their psychological well-being.
1311 Similarly, Jewett et al. (2019) highlighted various detrimental psychological consequences of
1312 bullying including, feelings of isolation, lack of enjoyment, and negative emotions arising
1313 from compromised athletic performance, and disrupted team cohesion, frequently
1314 exacerbated by a concurrent decline in academic performance.

1315 Much like bullying within an academic setting, being a victim in sport can result in
1316 consequences that extend beyond the period when the bullying occurred (Rios et al., 2022).
1317 For example, Rios and Colleagues (2022) conducted a qualitative study in Spain with 11
1318 male and female participants (ages 17-27 years) investigating their experiences with bullying.
1319 Results showed that participants reported experiencing short and long-term consequences. In
1320 the short-term, participants reported various negative consequences including, sadness, anger,
1321 anxiety, helplessness, feelings of loneliness, and feeling like a nuisance. Participants also
1322 expressed that bullying experiences negatively affected confidence, perceptions of athletic
1323 ability, performance, concentration, and enjoyment, as well as some participants reported
1324 wanting to drop out of sport at the time. Additionally, participants reported various long-term
1325 consequences including, changes in personality over time, having a chip on their shoulder,
1326 difficulty with social relationships, and low self-esteem (Rios et al., 2022). Some researchers
1327 concur that bullying can also lead to athletes subjected to bullying dropping out of sport
1328 prematurely or change to another sport club (Evans et al., 2016; Nery et al., 2020).

1329 **2.6 Approaches to Protecting Children from Maltreatment in Sport**

1330 In response to the issues of maltreatment within and beyond sport, numerous
1331 approaches have been developed to try and protect children. Specifically, within sport these
1332 have included child protection, safeguarding, and the development of Child Protection Unit in
1333 the UK.

1334 **2.6.1 Safeguarding in the UK**

1335 According to Lang and Hartill (2015), safeguarding is the benchmark for preventing
1336 maltreatment against children in sport, emphasising a child-focused approach that places
1337 significant importance on promoting human rights to enhance children's welfare. In the UK,

1338 all individuals working with children bear a legal responsibility to ensure the children's
1339 safety. As outlined in the UK Department of Education's (2018) Working Together to
1340 Safeguard Children guide, safeguarding consists of four key components:

1341 Protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental
1342 and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances
1343 consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all
1344 children to have the best outcomes. (p. 7).

1345 Ensuring the protection of children's human rights within sport is considered a moral
1346 imperative that sporting organisations and all key stakeholders should aim to achieve (Rhind
1347 & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018). Particularly, a safeguarding approach emphasises the need to
1348 promote children's human rights in sport. While every child should have the opportunity to
1349 experience a safe environment or nurturing relationships within a sports organisation, as
1350 detailed above, sadly this is not the case for every child (Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018).

1351 In the UK, the term safeguarding signified a transition from a reactive child protection
1352 approach to a more child-centred perspective on child welfare (Lang & Hartill, 2015).

1353 Although safeguarding and child protection have often been used interchangeably, they
1354 represent distinct concepts (Lang & Hartill, 2015). Particularly this change in terminology
1355 demonstrates a fundamental change that prioritises preventive efforts aimed at proactively
1356 safeguarding the rights and well-being of athletes, children, and vulnerable individuals.

1357 Within this evolution, the reactive objective of protecting children specifically at risk of or
1358 experiencing maltreatment (i.e., child protection) assumes a secondary role, and emphasises
1359 the proactive nature inherent in safeguarding (Gurgis et al., 2021; Lang & Hartill, 2015).

1360 **2.6.1.2 The Child Protection in Sport Unit.** Following the high-profile sexual abuse
1361 scandal of the former British Olympic swimming coach Paul Hickson, numerous incidents of
1362 sexual abuse cases emerged in sport in England. Specifically, cases emerged in diving,
1363 karate, football, horse riding, and gymnastics (Lang & Hartill, 2015). The repeated instances
1364 of sexual abuse of children in sport triggered moral distress and elicited widespread moral
1365 panic among the public (Lang & Hartill, 2015). In fact, numerous stakeholders within sport
1366 were compelled to promptly address and respond to reports of sexual abuse as many sporting
1367 organisations began losing sponsorships and facing financial repercussions. As a result of
1368 this, in 2000, Sport England who was the primary funder, through UK Sport a government
1369 funded agency, of Sport National Governing Bodies (NGB'S) in England collaborated with
1370 the National Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) (Lang & Hartill, 2015) to
1371 establish a task force and action plan to address child protection in sport. In 2001 this resulted

1372 in the establishment of the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) (Lang & Hartill, 2015).
1373 Consequently, the UK became one of the first countries to establish a state-funded
1374 organisation responsible for overseeing safeguarding and child protection in sport (Rhind et
1375 al., 2017). The CPSU is now a collaboration between four agencies: Sport England, Sport
1376 Wales, Sport Northern Ireland, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to
1377 Children (NSPCC).

1378 Aligned with the afore argued emphasis on safeguarding, the CPSU focus on a
1379 safeguarding approach within sport. According to the CPSU (2020), safeguarding is the
1380 process of protecting children and adults to ensure the delivery of safe and effective care,
1381 which encompasses all procedures intended to prevent harm to a child. However, besides
1382 safeguarding and protecting children and adults from harm, the CPSU also acknowledge the
1383 importance of advancing child welfare to establish a sports culture that is equitable, and
1384 rights based. Particularly, the CPSU recognise the right that every child and young person has
1385 to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience (Boocok, 2002).

1386 Following its creation, the CPSU began the implementation of the action plan
1387 developed by the task force by creating specialised sports focused resources designed to
1388 educate national sport bodies about child welfare and protection, inclusivity, ethical
1389 standards, and procedures for reporting concerns (Boocock, 2002; Lang & Hartill, 2015).
1390 Demonstrating the importance of sports' engagement with this work, financial support for
1391 NGB's was dependent on their adherence to implementing policies related to the protection of
1392 children in sport (Lang & Hartill, 2015). By 2002 every NGB funded by Sport England had
1393 implemented policies in line with these requirements (Boocock, 2002).

1394 In efforts to further enhance the safeguarding of children in sport, in 2003, the CPSU
1395 created the Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport. Subsequently,
1396 funding for NGBs became dependent upon their commitment to complying with these
1397 Standards (Lang & Hartill, 2015). There are ten standards that NGB's should aim to achieve
1398 covering policies, procedures operating systems, to ethics and conduct, equity,
1399 communication, education and training, and monitoring of cases (Child Protection in Sport
1400 Unit, 2018). The standards required that NGB's establish a dedicated team responsible for
1401 managing all aspects related to safeguarding and child protection. In addition, sport
1402 organisations were instructed to appoint a club Welfare officer (CWO), and NGB's were
1403 obligated to have a national Safeguarding Lead officer (SLO). Furthermore, the standards
1404 mandated all NGB staff ought to complete child protection and safeguarding training every
1405 three years as this was considered the most effective in fostering changes in behaviour.

1406 Additionally, it is mandatory that all stakeholders working with children or vulnerable
1407 individuals are required to undergo a criminal background check (Lang & Hartill, 2015).

1408 Building on the starts, in 2012, the CPSU subsequently developed the Sports
1409 Safeguarding Framework to enhance the safeguarding and child protection strategies of
1410 NGB's (Lang & Hartill, 2015). NGBs that successfully met the Safeguarding Standards
1411 would be required to evaluate their current safeguarding status in sport against four stages:
1412 forming, developing, embedding, or continually improving. Similar to the Standards, the
1413 funding allocated to NGBs is dependent in their compliance with the Post-Standards
1414 Framework. Finally, an independent body named the National Safeguarding Panel for Sport
1415 (NSP) was set up in 2013, to provide additional support to the NGB's throughout England
1416 with the child protection and safeguarding initiatives (Lang & Hartill, 2015). Consisting of
1417 solicitors and professionals such as police officers, social workers, the NSP was tasked with
1418 conducting investigations into abuse and safeguarding issues for NGB's. Additionally, they
1419 acted as judges in major disciplinary hearings (CPSU, 2013; Lang & Hartill, 2015).

1420 ***2.6.2 Recommendations for enhancing the protection of children in sport***

1421 While organisations such as the CPSU have been pushing for better safeguarding of
1422 children involved in sport, researcher have also been exploring the efficacy of different
1423 approaches in sport. Efforts aimed at combatting maltreatment in sport have focused on
1424 various areas, including the provision of evidence-based education to promote safeguarding,
1425 prevent and intervene in cases of maltreatment and encourage behavioural changes within the
1426 sporting context (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014). While research suggests that maltreatment
1427 issues should be considered and addressed at a systemic level (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014;
1428 Kerr et al., 2019), many researchers have suggested the development and provision of
1429 education initiatives targeted at various stakeholders including parents, coaches, and young
1430 people to help prevent maltreatment in sport is needed (Gurgis & Kerr, 2021; Willson et al.,
1431 2020; Wurtele, 2012). To date, however, limited research studies evaluating such initiatives
1432 currently exist (e.g., McMahon et al., 2013; 2018; 2022; 2023; Rulofs et al., 2015).

1433 Focusing on coaches, McMahon (2013) conducted an education initiative with ten
1434 swimming coaches using narrative stories. Utilising narrative pedagogy, coaches were
1435 presented with athletes' stories highlighting the consequences of emotionally abusive
1436 coaching practices, with the aim of providing an alternate perspective to challenge their
1437 coaching practices, both in the present and long term. Results indicated that the workshop
1438 proved valuable in encouraging self-reflection, enhancing empathy, and advocating for a
1439 more comprehensive and athlete-centred coaching approach (McMahon, 2013).

1440 Subsequently, McMahon et al. (2018) conducted an educational intervention
1441 employing narrative pedagogy with 14 parents from gymnastics and swimming. Participants
1442 were presented with three athlete stories representing instances of physical and emotional
1443 abuse. They were subsequently asked to share their perspectives about each story and then
1444 provided with academic literature focusing on emotional and physical abuse (i.e., constituents
1445 and consequences of abuse). Finally, participants revisited the stories and were questioned
1446 about their perceptions of each narrative. The findings indicated that parents viewed the
1447 coaching practices as unacceptable, yet they believed they were necessary for performance.
1448 In addition, many parents normalised and accepted the abusive behaviour, as they believed
1449 the coach knew best (McMahon et al., 2018).

1450 In 2015, Rulofs and colleagues developed an education program on sexual violence
1451 and harassment in sport titled, 'Sport Respects your Rights' to support European sport
1452 participants across eight organisations in six European countries. The educational initiative
1453 was developed to empower young people aged 16-22 years. The education program helped
1454 empower young athletes to develop their own youth-led campaigns fostering awareness
1455 within their peer groups regarding sexual violence in sport. Additionally, it empowered
1456 young people to serve as influential catalysts and proactive promoters of societal change in
1457 their respective settings. Furthermore, concurrently each project partner established multi-
1458 sector networks to develop lasting collaborations in combating violence and harassment in
1459 sport (Rulofs et al., 2016).

1460 Most recently, focusing on emotional abuse and neglect McMahon and colleagues
1461 (2023) designed, implemented, and evaluated an online educational program focused on
1462 teaching coaches and young people ages 8-17 years old regarding non-sexualised forms of
1463 abuse and the resulting consequences. Utilising narrative pedagogy and culturally relevant
1464 and responsive content, the authors outlined the challenges faced while delivering the
1465 programme alongside the possibilities of the applications used. They also provided
1466 recommendations to help enhance future initiatives based on feedback from participants and
1467 the facilitators. While the recent educational interventions have been beneficial in providing
1468 insights into potentially effective and beneficial approaches to reducing maltreatment in
1469 sport, they have not included any emphasis on enhancing children's experiences.

1470 **2.7 Optimising Sporting Experiences**

1471 Unfortunately, despite the efforts employed in existing safeguarding work globally,
1472 which include ongoing and upcoming education, research, and policies (Kerr et al., 2020;
1473 Mountjoy et al., 2016; Rhind & Owusu-Sekereye, 2018) instances of maltreatment persist.

1474 Addressing earlier concerns regarding sport solely valuing performance outcomes (Kavanagh
1475 et al., 2020), researchers have highlighted the need for change. Specifically, it has been
1476 suggested that there is a need for a shift towards a values-based culture that emphasises
1477 rights-based strategies needed to successfully prevent harm via the above efforts (Gurgis et
1478 al., 2021, 2022; Kerr et al., 2019; Stirling, 2009). In fact, recent research focusing on
1479 safeguarding emphasises the importance of not only preventing maltreatment in sport but also
1480 prioritising the optimisation of sporting experiences. Specifically, researchers contend that
1481 when sporting organisations focus on optimising experiences it offers protection from
1482 relational, physical, and environmental harm in sport (i.e., positive, inclusive, healthy,
1483 growth-enhancing, and respectful of human rights for all individuals) (Gurgis et al., 2023).
1484 Particularly, aligned with the approach of the CPSU, enhancing enjoyment should be
1485 considered another of the key approaches to optimise overall sporting experiences (Scanlan et
1486 al., 1986).

1487 Sport enjoyment is described as, “a positive affect response to sport experience that
1488 reflects generalised feelings such as pleasure, liking and fun” (Scanlan et al., 1993, p. 6).
1489 Research shows that sport enjoyment is a critical component linked to participation and
1490 commitment in sport (Scanlan et al., 1993). In fact, extensive research indicates that
1491 enjoyment is the main reason that young people participate and maintain involvement in sport
1492 (Gould et al., 1985; Salguero et al., 2004; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Vissek et al., 2015;
1493 Weiss & Williams, 2004). Furthermore, researchers have identified enjoyment as a key
1494 predictor of sport commitment (Scanlan et al., 1993).

1495 The concept of enjoyment however remains relatively elusive and there is no
1496 universal agreement on the definition (Vissek, 2015). In fact, several theoretical perspectives
1497 have been adopted by researchers to guide the inquiry into youth sport enjoyment including
1498 self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), fun integration theory (Vissek et al. 2015),
1499 and the sport enjoyment model (Scanlan & Lewthwaite 1986; Vissek et al. 2015). The above
1500 definition of enjoyment originates from the work of Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1986) in their
1501 development of the sport enjoyment model. Within this model, enjoyment is categorized
1502 across four quadrants, highlighting that sources of enjoyment can be either intrinsic (e.g.,
1503 excitement, personal accomplishment) or extrinsic (e.g., winning, pleasing others) and can be
1504 achievement or nonachievement-related.

1505 The intrinsic factors of the model emphasise that enjoyment can arise from individual
1506 perceptions of competence and control, such as mastery and perceived ability (i.e.,
1507 Achievement-Intrinsic) (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Tjomsland et al. 2015; Vissek et al.

1508 2015). The non-achievement intrinsic aspect also emphasises that enjoyment can derive from
1509 intrinsic factors, such as movement sensations, tension release, a sense of exhilaration, and
1510 engagement in action, as well as the excitement experienced in competitive scenarios
1511 (McCarthy & Jones, 2007; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986).

1512 The extrinsic factors incorporated in the model suggest that enjoyment can be derived
1513 from extrinsic-achievement, which relates to perceptions of success or mastery resulting from
1514 external factors, such as outperforming others or receiving acknowledgment from others for
1515 involvement in sports (Nicholls, 1989; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Wankel & Kreisel,
1516 1985). Meanwhile, the nonachievement-extrinsic, highlights that enjoyment can be derived
1517 from non-performance aspects of sports, such as affiliating with peers and engaging in
1518 positive interactions with adults (e.g., coaches and parents) revolving around the shared sport
1519 experience (Babkes & Weiss; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Tjomsland et al., 2015).

1520 Research on enjoyment has highlighted that positive interactions with significant
1521 others such as, peers, parents, and coaches can positively influence enjoyment and overall
1522 sporting experiences in sport (e.g., McCarthy, 2008). For example, a study by Weiss and
1523 Allen (2002) on youth tennis players (ages 10-18 years) found that tennis players who had
1524 stronger positive friendships reported having more enjoyable experiences and reported
1525 feeling more committed to continue their involvement in tennis. Additionally, research
1526 conducted by Babkes and Weiss (1999) examined both perceived and reported parental
1527 attitudes as well as behaviours on motivational outcomes in youth soccer (ages 9-12 years).
1528 The results showed that children who perceived their parents as positive role models, who
1529 had more positive beliefs about their competency and who provided more frequent positive
1530 feedback about their performance success, reported higher intrinsic motivation, perceived
1531 competence, and overall enjoyment. More recently, Tjomsland et al. (2015) conducted a
1532 qualitative study with youth soccer players (ages 12-14 years) and found that being with
1533 friends, collaborating with teammates, choosing to play sports, learning new skills,
1534 demonstrating mastery skills, and having a supportive coach were among the six main things
1535 that contributed to children's overall enjoyment in sport. The players highlighted that positive
1536 comments and supportive behaviour from the coach made them feel valuable and this helped
1537 them enjoy their sport more. In contrast, negative coach feedback or support was perceived as
1538 detrimental and negatively affected their overall enjoyment.

1539 While research shows that positive interactions with significant others can enhance
1540 young people's enjoyment, research also shows that they can negatively influence enjoyment,
1541 particularly when they involve abusive behaviours. For example, a study conducted by Jewett

1542 et al. (2019) examined female university athletes' experiences with bullying victimisation in
1543 sport. The results showed a range of consequences including, negative emotions such as fear,
1544 sadness, embarrassment, reduced self-esteem, reduced athletic and academic performance, as
1545 well as reduced enjoyment. Similarly, research conducted by Stirling and Kerr (2013)
1546 conducted a study with 14 retired elite athletes examining the perceived effects of
1547 experiences of emotional abuse by coaches. The findings indicated that participants who
1548 perceived emotional abuse from their coach reported experiencing negative psychological
1549 effects (i.e., anger, depression, low self-efficacy) and training effects (i.e., decreased
1550 motivation and performance, as well as reduced enjoyment). Such findings are concerning
1551 given that research shows that when there is a lack of enjoyment (especially if combined with
1552 pressure to excel) young people often lose interest and drop out of sports entirely or pursue
1553 other activities they find more enjoyable (Gardner et al., 2016; Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989).
1554 Furthermore, it is also suggested that significant others such as coaches, parents, and peers
1555 can influence levels of dropout from sport (Sheridan, Coffee, & Lavalley, 2014).

1556 **2.8 Current State of Research**

1557 Despite the extensive and expanding research on maltreatment in sport, various
1558 limitations persist within this field of study. Firstly, although considerable research attention
1559 has been given to understanding the prevalence of maltreatment in sport the extent to which
1560 maltreatment occurs in sport is still understudied (Parent & Fortier., 2017). Moreover, there
1561 are also some limitations within these prevalence studies. For example, definitional
1562 inconsistencies present challenges, some scholars refer to harm in sport as interpersonal
1563 violence (Vertommen et al., 2016), others refer to it as abuse and harassment (Mountjoy et
1564 al., 2016), or broadly define it as maltreatment (Stirling, 2009). The varying ideological
1565 perspectives in relation to how researchers conceptualise maltreatment make it unlikely that
1566 consensus will be reached on a universal framework applicable across the globe (Rhind &
1567 Owusu-Sekyere, 2018). These divergent perspectives have resulted in considerable
1568 challenges regarding the advancement of safeguarding research in sport (Porter et al., 2006).
1569 Specifically, researchers have been limited in their capacity to replicate studies and make
1570 broad generalisations based on findings (Stirling, 2009). As a result, inconsistencies have
1571 emerged in prevalence research because of differing conceptualisations, methodological
1572 approaches, sampling techniques, response rates, and varying levels of reliability across
1573 studies (Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018).

1574 Secondly, although noticeable advances have been made in understanding the
1575 prevalence of maltreatment in sport, the majority of studies have adopted a retrospective

1576 approach, relying on adults to reflect on past experiences of maltreatment in sport. This is an
1577 issue because it relies on participants remembering previous experiences years later which
1578 may not truly represent their past experiences. Recognising the limitations of asking adults to
1579 reflect on past experiences, recent studies focusing on the prevalence of maltreatment in sport
1580 have shifted focus to examine experiences of maltreatment among young participants
1581 currently participating in sport. Nevertheless, limited studies exist on young people currently
1582 participating in sport, which restricts our understanding of the extent of maltreatment being
1583 experienced by young people currently participating in sport. Additionally, while evidence
1584 highlights that young people experience maltreatment by various individuals including adults
1585 in positions of authority, most research has focused on maltreatment perpetrated by coaches.
1586 Therefore, the nature of maltreatment young people may experience from other adults such as
1587 parents in relation to their involvement in sport remains unclear.

1588 Thirdly, research focusing on maltreatment in sport is rapidly advancing and has
1589 recently expanded beyond sexual abuse to include other forms of maltreatment in sport.
1590 Despite this, most of the research continues to be focused on sexual abuse (Rhind &
1591 Sekereye, 2018). This is concerning given that prevalence studies in the field consistently
1592 indicate that young people report experiencing other forms of relational maltreatment in
1593 sport, particularly emotional abuse. Where research has been conducted on emotional abuse,
1594 it has typically been qualitative in nature examining ex-athletes' experiences of emotional
1595 abuse in elite sport (Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Jacobs et al., 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2014).
1596 Prevalence estimates indicate that maltreatment occurs at various levels across sport,
1597 including the club level. Therefore, it seems relevant for more studies to focus on lower
1598 participation levels not just elite level, especially considering the widespread occurrence of
1599 maltreatment across all sporting levels (Alexander et al., 2011). To ensure that young people
1600 have positive sporting experiences and the best opportunity to progress into elite development
1601 pathways, it is important to understand and mitigate maltreatment throughout their sporting
1602 development.

1603 As well as the limited research on relational maltreatment (i.e., emotional abuse,
1604 physical abuse, and neglect), there has been even more limited attention given to non-
1605 relational forms of maltreatment, notably bullying. This is surprising given the increased
1606 prevalence of harmful peer interactions in sport. Like prevalence studies on other forms of
1607 maltreatment in sport, research on bullying highlights varying prevalence rates, making it
1608 challenging to understand the full extent of the problem within sport (Nery et al., 2021).
1609 However, research on bullying, unlike research into emotional abuse, has provided

1610 information of young people's bullying experiences as perpetrators, victims, and bystanders
1611 (Mishna et al., 2019; Nery et al., 2019; Rios et al., 2022). Specifically, it has highlighted the
1612 connection between various types of bullying and responses and perceptions of bullying
1613 (Nery et al., 2019). However, limited research has focused on the role adults in positions of
1614 trust such as parents and coaches play in bullying. Given that parents and coaches are in
1615 positions of trust and have a significant influence on the prevention and intervention among
1616 young people (Nery et al., 2019) it seems relevant for research to focus on their experiences
1617 of bullying.

1618 Fourth, linked to the above point, research shows that positive bystanders play a key
1619 role in maintaining a safe environment (Banyard, 2008). While research has examined
1620 coaches' (Jacobs et al., 2017) and parents' (Kerr & Stirling, 2012) perspectives on
1621 emotionally abusive coaching behaviours in sport, there has been little consideration of the
1622 experiences of observers or attempts to understand the types or frequency of emotional abuse
1623 witnessed in sports by coaches and parents. Recognising that bystanders possess the ability to
1624 prevent harm by identifying potentially harmful situations and choosing to respond in a
1625 manner that could positively influence the outcome (Banyard, 2008), it is important not only
1626 to understand the prevalence of emotional abuse experienced by young people but also to
1627 understand the bystander's experiences (i.e., parents, coaches, and young people). Given that
1628 safeguarding is considered everyone's responsibility (Hedges, 2015), gaining a
1629 comprehensive perspective on emotional abuse can assist in understanding challenges and
1630 enhance intervention strategies aimed at encouraging the recognition and reporting of cases
1631 of emotional abuse in sport.

1632 Fifth, despite calls for the development and provision of evidence-based education
1633 initiatives aimed at various stakeholders including parents, coaches, and young people
1634 (Mergaert et al., 2016; Mountjoy et al., 2016), limited research studies exist in this area (e.g.,
1635 McMahon et al., 2013; 2018; 2022; 2023; Rulofs et al., 2015). Of the few studies that do
1636 exist, most have reported achieving success in some capacity. One study, however, did not
1637 explicitly outline what educational theory underpinned the initiative, the process in which the
1638 initiative was evaluated, the educational outcomes, the evaluation process, or practical
1639 implications for organisational integration of the initiative (Rulofs et al., 2015). Other studies
1640 did not provide an overview of the design considerations, or the practical implications upon
1641 integration into educational initiatives within sport (McMahon et al., 2013; 2018; Rulofs et
1642 al., 2015).

1643 A very recent study conducted by McMahon et al. (2023) attempted to address the
1644 limitations with intervention studies. However, this initiative was conducted online with
1645 mixed populations (i.e., young people and coaches; McMahon et al., 2023), which is an issue
1646 because findings may not translate across to in-person initiatives and the results reflect
1647 outcomes pertaining to mixed populations and does not provide explicit information on how
1648 young people responded to the initiative. Additionally, most interventions have focused on
1649 sexual or emotional abuse together, primarily perpetrated by adults in positions of trust
1650 (McMahon et al., 2013; 2018; 2022; 2023). None of the studies focused on harmful
1651 interactions enacted by peers/and or teammates (i.e., bullying) which seems relevant
1652 considering the prevalence of bullying and harmful interactions in sport. Thus, while progress
1653 has been made in the development of educational initiatives, there is a dearth of studies
1654 explicitly targeting young people aged between 13-18 years (McMahon et al., 2023). This
1655 seems imperative given that research shows that they have limited awareness of behaviours
1656 constituting maltreatment, including bullying and emotional abuse (Mountjoy et al., 2020).

1657 Sixth, although several advances have been made as it pertains to safeguarding young
1658 people in sport (CPSU, 2018; Rhind & Sekyere, 2018). Specifically, researchers have
1659 suggested the need for a comprehensive and holistic approach that addresses individual,
1660 interpersonal, and systemic factors contributing to maltreatment in sport (Brackenridge &
1661 Rhind, 2014; Kerr et al., 2019; Kerr & Kerr, 2020; Owusu-Sekyere & Rhind, 2022). To date,
1662 however, most of the research emphasises the prevention of maltreatment (Rhind &
1663 Sekeyere, 2018). While ensuring safety and preventing maltreatment in youth sport is
1664 paramount, researchers have recently acknowledged the need also to prioritise the
1665 optimisation of sporting experiences, ensuring accessibility, promoting growth, and
1666 upholding all young people's rights in sport (Gurgis et al., 2023). Solely preventing harm in
1667 sport does not guarantee that young people will have optimal sporting experiences (i.e.,
1668 accessible, inclusive, fair, positive, and enjoyable) (Gurgis et al., 2023). Unfortunately, while
1669 strides have been made in the prevention of maltreatment, limited attention has been given to
1670 establishing how to both ensure safety and optimise sporting experiences together to ensure
1671 that young people remain in sport and have access to positive sporting experiences.

1672

1673 **2.9 Thesis Aims**

1674 In summary, research shows that young people are experiencing various forms of
1675 maltreatment across a range of sports, levels, and countries. Despite increased awareness of
1676 maltreatment in sport, most of the research focused on sexual abuse. While research on other
1677 forms of maltreatment is advancing, there is still limited research focusing on emotional
1678 abuse and bullying in sport. Particularly, little is understood about young peoples', parents',
1679 and coaches' understanding or experiences of bullying and emotional abuse. Furthermore,
1680 recognising the issue of maltreatment in sport, increased attention has focused on preventing
1681 maltreatment in sport, but this has typically occurred without consideration of the factors that
1682 may help enhance children's sporting experiences. Finally, suggestions have been made for
1683 increased evidence-based education for young people, parents, and coaches in sport. That
1684 said, only a few studies have been conducted in this area. To this end, the purpose of the
1685 current thesis was two-fold; firstly, to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of
1686 young people, parents, and coaches regarding bullying, emotional abuse, and enjoyment in
1687 sport in Wales and secondly, to explore ways to enhance safety and enjoyment in sport.

1688 **Chapter 3: Understanding and experiences of emotional abuse, bullying, and**
1689 **safeguarding within youth sport in Wales**

1690 **3.1 Introduction**

1691 News from around the world frequently highlights issues of abuse and maltreatment
1692 in sport. For instance, in 2018, the USA gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar was convicted
1693 and sentenced to 40-175 years in prison for sexual abuse of 156 female youth gymnasts under
1694 the guise of medical treatment (Fisher & Anders, 2019). Meanwhile, in South Korea, female
1695 athletes disclosed incidents of widespread abuse in ice-skating, including sexual, physical,
1696 and emotional abuse (BBC, 2019). More recently, in the United Kingdom (UK), systemic
1697 accounts of both physical and emotional abuse of young gymnasts have been investigated
1698 (Whyte 2022). Clearly, evidence indicates that adults and children are experiencing various
1699 forms of maltreatment across a range of sports, levels, and countries (Ohlert et al., 2021,
1700 Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2022).

1701 Maltreatment is an umbrella term defining, “all forms of physical and/or emotional
1702 ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which
1703 leads to actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the
1704 context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power” (World Health Organisation, 1999,
1705 p.19). There are two main types of maltreatment: Relational and non-relational, and they are
1706 categorised depending on the nature of the relationship in which the inappropriate behaviour
1707 occurs (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007). Both types of maltreatment are present within relationships
1708 where differences in power exist. However, it is the critical nature of the relationship in
1709 which the inappropriate behaviour occurs which differentiates relational and non-relational
1710 maltreatment in sport (Stirling, 2009).

1711 Relational maltreatment takes place within a critical relationship, which is one in
1712 which an individual is dependent upon another for a sense of safety, trust, and fulfilment of
1713 needs (e.g., parent-child, doctor-athlete, coach-athlete; Crooks & Wolfe, 2007). This type of
1714 maltreatment consists of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, as well as neglect (Crooks &
1715 Wolfe, 2007; Stirling, 2009). In response to the rising high-profile cases around the world,
1716 relational maltreatment in sport has started to receive a great deal of academic and practical
1717 (i.e., organisational and policy) attention (Lang & Hartill, 2015; Mountjoy et al., 2016; Parent
1718 & Fortier, 2018). Specifically, a large proportion of studies have examined sexual abuse
1719 occurring in the coach-athlete relationship (Brackenridge, 1997; Kirby & Greaves, 1997;
1720 Toftegaard Nielsen, 2010). However, it is increasingly recognised that other forms of
1721 relational maltreatment, such as emotional abuse, are also pervasive (Wilson et al., 2022).

1722 Emotional abuse (synonymously referred to as psychological abuse) is defined as, a
1723 pattern of deliberate noncontact behaviours by a person within a critical relationship role, that
1724 has the potential to be harmful (Stirling & Kerr, 2008). Emotionally abusive behaviours
1725 include humiliation, insulting, criticising, shouting, rejection, scapegoating, threatening,
1726 isolation, throwing objects out of anger or frustration (without striking another individual), as
1727 well as, ignoring or denial of attention and support (Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Stirling, 2009;
1728 Stirling & Kerr, 2008, 2014). Such behaviours can negatively affect young people in several
1729 ways including lowered self-esteem, increases in depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and
1730 decreased motivation and enjoyment in their sport (Kerr et al., 2020; Stirling & Kerr, 2014;
1731 Yabe et al., 2019). Given such a detrimental impact, it is critical that steps are taken to
1732 address emotional abuse in youth sport.

1733 The first step to addressing emotional abuse in youth sport is to gain a detailed
1734 understanding of the issue. To date, studies have indicated varying prevalence estimates
1735 between 23% and 79% (Alexander et al., 2011; Parent et al., 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016;
1736 Willson et al., 2022). These statistics reinforce the need to address emotional abuse as a
1737 matter of urgency. However, they are limited in the breadth and depth of understanding they
1738 provide. For instance, the focus is typically upon the relationship between coach and athlete
1739 (Kerr & Stirling, 2012; Mountjoy et al., 2016). However, growing evidence has found parents
1740 to be perpetrators of different types of maltreatment in sport, including emotional abuse
1741 (McMahon et al., 2022). Although parents have been included in recent prevalence studies
1742 conducted in Canada, Australia, and Belgium as potential perpetrators of maltreatment
1743 towards young people in sport (Pankowiak et al., 2023; Parent & Vaillancourt-Moral, 2021;
1744 Vertommen et al., 2022), such information has yet to be gained within the UK. Furthermore,
1745 except for these recent studies, most prevalence studies pertaining to emotional abuse have
1746 been retrospective in nature asking adults to reflect on their childhood experiences of
1747 maltreatment in sport (Vertommen et al., 2016). It is recognised that including adolescents in
1748 such studies reduces the risk of memory bias and gives young people the opportunity to
1749 participate in the social discourse (Finkelhor et al., 2014; Priebe et al., 2010). Adolescence is
1750 also a critical juncture to conduct early interventions that could assist in minimising negative
1751 consequences of maltreatment before they become defiant (Gomez, 2011). As such, seeking
1752 insight from adolescents in the UK regarding their current experiences of abuse is warranted.

1753 There is also a need to consider non-relational maltreatment within youth sport. Non-
1754 relational maltreatment may include harassment, exploitation, child labour, corruption, abuse,
1755 or assault within a non-critical relationship, institutional maltreatment, and bullying (Stirling,

1756 2009). It may still involve power differentials, however non-relational maltreatment does not
1757 occur within the contexts of a critical relationship and recognises incidents in which a
1758 perpetrator could be an institution or a stranger to the child (Stirling, 2009). Recent studies
1759 indicate that maltreatment is increasingly occurring outside a critical relationship context,
1760 with peers (i.e., teammates or opponents) being reported as the main perpetrators
1761 (Vertommen et al., 2016; Marsollier et al., 2021). However, to date our understanding of how
1762 peers are involved in experiences of maltreatment within youth sport contexts remains
1763 limited.

1764 Specifically, within youth sport, there is a need to explore experiences of bullying
1765 (Nery et al., 2019). Bullying is a non-relational form of maltreatment that can occur between
1766 peers (Nery et al., 2020; Stirling, 2009). It is characterised as intentional and repetitive
1767 aggressive behaviour, with an imbalance of power between perpetrator and victim and can
1768 occur online and in person (Olweus, 1993). There are four main types of bullying: physical
1769 (e.g., hitting, punching), verbal, (e.g., name calling, taunting, making threats/remarks), social,
1770 (e.g., social exclusion, spreading rumours/gossip), and cyber (e.g., occurring through
1771 computers and/or text) (Olweus, 2010). Like other forms of maltreatment bullying can have
1772 severe personal and social consequences for young people's health and wellbeing. For
1773 example, effects include depression, social anxiety, poor relationships, and in severe cases,
1774 suicide ideation (Evans et al., 2015; Wolke & Lereya, 2015). The extent to which young
1775 people are experiencing bullying in sport is currently unknown, although it is speculated that
1776 rates may be high given that most incidents are generally covert and tend to be minimised due
1777 to the competitive nature of sport (Kerr et al. 2016; Mishna et al. 2019).

1778 Further, although understanding the prevalence of bullying and emotional abuse in
1779 youth sport is clearly important, if progress is to be made in minimising and removing these
1780 behaviours from sport, it is also necessary to understand if and how individuals may respond
1781 to witnessing such behaviours. The high prevalence of bullying and emotional abuse speaks
1782 to the issue of maltreatment being normalised within youth sport (Evans et al., 2015; Smits et
1783 al., 2017). Consequently, there is a potential for young people, coaches, and parents within
1784 sporting environments to become silent bystanders to experiences of harmful behaviours
1785 (Jacobs et al., 2016; Kerr & Stirling, 2012). Not intervening or reporting cases of
1786 maltreatment in sport allows it to persist, consequently prolonging and making the victims
1787 suffering worse (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001; Spaaij & Schailée, 2019).

1788 If individuals do witness abuse or bullying in sport, whether they understand how to
1789 report it or feel comfortable doing so, will influence whether it can be appropriately managed.

1790 Despite regulations requiring sporting organisations (in the UK and across other countries) to
1791 provide young people and stakeholders involved in sport with equitable access to
1792 safeguarding information and reporting mechanisms (CPSU, 2018; Rhind & Owusu-
1793 Sekeyere, 2018), it is apparent that challenges still exist when it comes to recognising,
1794 reporting, and discussing experiences of maltreatment (CPSU, 2022; Mountjoy et al., 2022).
1795 In fact, research suggests that some young people and parents remain unaware where to
1796 report concerns and lack understanding of the concept of maltreatment (CPSU, 2022;
1797 Mountjoy et al., 2022). This is a matter of concern because lack of clarity concerning
1798 definitions, constituents of maltreatment, and reporting mechanisms can increase young
1799 people’s vulnerability to negative experiences in sport (Brackenridge, 1997; Mountjoy et al.,
1800 2018).

1801 Recognising the varying gaps in pre-existing evidence, the purpose of the current
1802 study was to explore understanding and experiences of emotional abuse, bullying, and
1803 safeguarding within youth sport in Wales. Specifically, this study sought to answer the
1804 following questions:

- 1805 1) To what extent do young people (13-18 years), coaches, and parents recognise
1806 emotional abuse and bullying?
- 1807 2) How frequently is emotional abuse and bullying experienced and witnessed in youth
1808 sport in Wales?
- 1809 3) Who are the perpetrators of emotional abuse and bullying in youth sport in Wales?
- 1810 4) What factors enable or prevent intervention in cases of emotional abuse and bullying
1811 within youth sport?
- 1812 5) What resources would be beneficial for supporting the prevention and intervention in
1813 cases of emotional abuse and bullying within youth sport?

1814 **3.2 Method**

1815 **3.2.1 Methodology**

1816 The current study utilised a two-phase mixed methods explanatory sequential design
1817 to examine the safeguarding landscape in youth sport across Wales. This design occurs in two
1818 distinct interaction phases in which the quantitative phase is conducted first followed by a
1819 subsequent qualitative phase (Cresswell, 2003). Specifically, the current study utilised a
1820 follow-up explanations variant of an explanatory sequential design in which quantitative data
1821 is collected and analysed in the first phase, then based on the need to further understand the
1822 results, a qualitative phase is conducted to explain the initial quantitative findings in more
1823 depth (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

1824 Given the aims of this study, the explanatory sequential design approach was useful
1825 because the first phase enabled the use of a cross-sectional survey which provided an
1826 opportunity to obtain information from many people involved in a range of different sports
1827 across a wide geographical area (Rowley, 2014). Particularly, it enabled investigation of
1828 frequencies and perpetrators of emotional abuse and bullying across Wales and provided an
1829 opportunity to explore associations between risk factors such as gender and age against
1830 emotional abuse and bullying experienced and/or witnessed. Using semi-structured
1831 interviews, the second phase permitted the expansion on the initial findings such as, what
1832 types of negative behaviours were being witnessed or being experienced. It also provided an
1833 opportunity to explore why participants were not recognising negative behaviours as bullying
1834 or emotional abuse and what factors enabled or prevented people from intervening in or
1835 reporting cases of negative experience in sport.

1836 ***3.2.2 Philosophical Underpinnings***

1837 Considerable attention has been given to establishing which world view(s) best fit a
1838 mixed method study, and this issue has generated multiple perspectives (Tashkkori &
1839 Teddlie, 2010). One perspective, the dialectical perspective, proposes that mixed method
1840 research may be influenced by multiple paradigms but that researchers must be explicit in
1841 their use of them, giving each one relatively equal footing and merit (Greene & Caracelli,
1842 1997, 2003). In fact, it recommends that the inquirer should concurrently acknowledge and
1843 equally value multiple perspectives and paradigms (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This
1844 perspective acknowledges that different paradigms produce contradictory ideas and opposing
1845 arguments that each deserve to be respected but are by no means consistent with another
1846 (Greene, 2007; Greene & Caracelli, 1997). It is suggested that the opposing arguments,
1847 tensions, and contradictions associated with different paradigms can contribute to new and
1848 diverse insights (Johnson & Stefurak, 2013).

1849 This dialectical perspective informed the current study. In this regard, I was guided by
1850 both post-positivist and interpretivist paradigms. Post-positivism contends that reality and
1851 truth are conditional and can be understood in various ways (Greene & Caracelli, 1997,
1852 2003). Post-positivists consider certainty with caution and acknowledge that human
1853 limitations exist and individual characteristics must be accounted for when making truth
1854 claims (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Post-positivists are typically concerned with determining and
1855 investigating cause and effect relationships between variables and use quantitative methods to
1856 do this. Given that the study aimed to examine the safeguarding landscape in youth sport
1857 across Wales, a post-positive perspective aligned with phase one of the study.

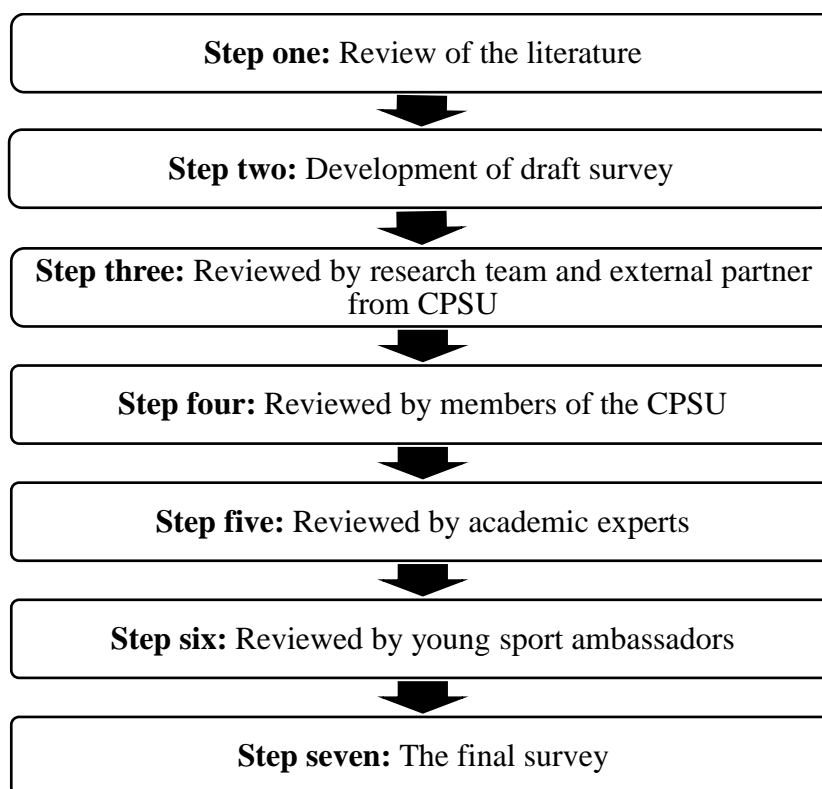
1858 However, there was also a desire within the current study to elicit meanings from
1859 participants and gain a deeper understanding of individual experiences, beyond that which
1860 could be provided by the survey results in phase one. As such, the second phase was guided
1861 by an interpretivist perspective, which proposes that reality is subjective and constructed by
1862 the individual (Lather, 2006). This perspective accepts that multiple realities exist and tend to
1863 differ between individuals, due to people’s past experiences, personalities, social interactions,
1864 and environment (Ponterotto, 2005). Furthermore, interpretivism acknowledges that the
1865 researcher and the object of inquiry both influence one another to shape the construction of
1866 the research outcomes (Morrow, 2005).

1867 **3.2.3 Phase 1: Procedure**

1868 Given the absence of a validated questionnaire on abuse against children in sport at
1869 the time this study was conducted, a bespoke cross-sectional survey was developed.
1870 Considering the highly sensitive nature of the research topic, the survey went through an
1871 extensive development process over a period of one year and three months and included
1872 seven steps (see Figure 3.1).

1873 **Figure 3.1**

1874 Overview of steps taken to develop survey



1875

1876 **3.2.3.1 Step one: Review of the literature.** The first step involved reviewing the
1877 literature on maltreatment in sport to identify what research had been conducted and what
1878 approaches had been used to assess young people’s experiences of maltreatment in sport. The
1879 literature provided a clear insight into the types of behaviours that constituted emotional
1880 abuse and bullying, as well as a variety of definitions of these two concepts.

1881 **3.2.3.2 Step two: Development of the draft survey.** Based on the information
1882 obtained from the literature three initial versions of the survey were created; a young person
1883 version (for adolescents aged between 13-18 years old), a parent version, and a coach
1884 version. Each survey covered similar topics (i.e., demographic questions, negative experience
1885 questions, and keeping safe in sport questions; see Appendix D, E and F) but was tailored to
1886 the specific participant population (i.e., young people, parents, coaches). The survey drew on
1887 questions and items used in other prevalence studies on abuse in sport (e.g., Alexander et al.,
1888 2011; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2021) as well as specific behaviours used by
1889 the National Society for the Prevention and Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the Child
1890 Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU), as these criteria applied to sports in Wales. A combination
1891 of sport specific academic (e.g., Mountjoy et al., Stirling, 2008; Stirling & Kerr, 2008) and
1892 practical definitions (e.g., CPSU, 2018; NSPCC, 2019) were used to construct the definitions
1893 of emotional abuse and bullying to improve accessibility for participants and to ensure that all
1894 aspects of maltreatment were encompassed in the definitions and questions (see Appendix A)

1895 **3.2.3.3 Step three: Review by research team and an external partner from the**
1896 **CPSU.** After the initial survey was developed, it was then reviewed by the supervisory team
1897 and an external partner at the CPSU who shared feedback from National Governing Bodies
1898 from across Wales. During this stage many ethical considerations were discussed.
1899 Specifically, it was understood that exploring issues regarding abuse raised complex ethical
1900 issues and participants’ welfare was our main priority. The main concerns raised were
1901 regarding questioning children (under 18 years old), who were classified as vulnerable, about
1902 their negative experiences. The primary concern was that asking children to answer such
1903 questions could cause discomfort, distress, and traumatise them again. That said, previous
1904 abuse related research has suggested that emotional distress among child participants is
1905 unusual (Finkelhor et al., 2014) and that some participants may gain value from participating
1906 (Chu, DePrince, & Weinzierl, 2008). Addressing these concerns, it was ensured that
1907 participants did not have to complete all questions (allowing them to skip any they found
1908 uncomfortable).

1909 Another ethical consideration raised pertained to sport reputation and expectations
1910 regarding addressing issues. Specifically, some sport governing bodies voiced concerns about
1911 their reputation if it was identified that a lot of children experienced negative experiences in
1912 their sport. Consequently, they said they were more likely to endorse participation only if
1913 sports were unidentifiable. Additionally, they were unsure of what would be expected of
1914 them with regards to addressing issues that were raised confidentially and with limited detail
1915 but appeared to occur in their sport. To manage these concerns, participants were not asked to
1916 specify in which sport they had experienced negative behaviours, but rather to initially list all
1917 the sports in which they participated. The consequence was that it was not possible to identify
1918 in which sports negative experiences were occurring, which had been an initial interest.
1919 However, gaining sport buy-in to help was deemed to be of greater importance.

1920 **3.2.3.4 Step four: Review by members of the CPSU.** After revising the survey
1921 based on the above feedback, it was sent to a further five members of CPSU for review (three
1922 senior consultants and two child protection in sport officers). They were provided with a
1923 feedback form and compiled a list of suggestions and revisions to be made following the
1924 review of the survey (see Appendix B). Specifically, it was suggested that the parent and
1925 young person survey should include positive questioning around enjoyment to provide
1926 balance to the survey and ensure that participants, especially adolescents, were not only
1927 responding to negative questions. As such, the Sport Enjoyment Questionnaire (Scanlan et
1928 al., 1993) was added to the young person and parent versions of the survey. It was also
1929 suggested that a warning should be included in the survey regarding the questions to come
1930 and the details of professional bodies should be signposted on each page. This was addressed.
1931 Finally, it was believed that the definitions of emotional abuse and bullying included in the
1932 survey were too complex and unsuitable for younger adolescents. Consequently, the
1933 definitions were simplified.

1934 **3.2.3.5 Step five: Review by Academic Experts.** After modifications were made to
1935 the survey based on the feedback from CPSU, it was then emailed to ten international
1936 academic safeguarding subject experts. These individuals completed a feedback form
1937 providing comments on the content, relevance, accuracy, language, length, and layout of the
1938 survey (see Appendix B). The academic safeguarding subject experts had various
1939 suggestions.

1940 One of their main concerns was the wording for the definitions of bullying and
1941 emotional abuse. The academic experts believed it was still too complex for an 11-year-old
1942 and recommended the use of more child friendly language and provision of explicit examples

1943 within the definitions. Additionally, it was decided to change the youngest age for
1944 participants from 11 years to 13 years of age. Consequently, further changes to the definitions
1945 of emotional abuse and bullying were made to increase clarity and accessibility (see
1946 Appendix A). Other suggestions related to the wording of specific negative behaviour
1947 questions. For example, it was suggested that questions such as “been repeatedly criticised or
1948 made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards,” should be separated
1949 into two separate items because the concepts were different – this change was made. They
1950 also advised clarity was required for questions relating to physical bullying to enable
1951 participants to differentiate between physical harm that is a normal part of sport and physical
1952 bullying behaviours.

1953 The experts raised concerns that demographic questions allowed participants to select
1954 multiple sports and participants were not explicitly asked which sport they had witnessed or
1955 experienced emotional abuse or bullying in. The academics believed that considering
1956 different sports might highlight different cultures. However, given the considerations raised
1957 with the external partner at CPSU and the indication that sport governing bodies were more
1958 likely to support engagement if specific sports were not identifiable, it was decided that the
1959 questions regarding sport participation would remain the same.

1960 **3.2.3.6 Step six: Review by Young Sport Ambassadors.** Following the changes
1961 suggested by the academics, the survey was then sent to 15 young people (ages 13-18years)
1962 who were members of the CPSU young athlete advisory group to review the relevance and
1963 comprehension of the questions. These young ambassadors were selected because they were
1964 responsible for providing a voice on safeguarding issues for children involved in sport in the
1965 local vicinity. The young people were each provided with the survey and a feedback sheet
1966 and asked to provide their thoughts on the survey (see Appendix B). This process enabled the
1967 establishment of face validity, specifically it allowed respondents to judge the items of an
1968 assessment instrument for their appropriateness to the assessment objectives (Hardesty &
1969 Bearden, 2004).

1970 The young people understood the content of the survey and none of them reported any
1971 feelings of discomfort when answering any of the questions. However, they recommended
1972 that changes be made to some questions to ensure clarity. For example, two questions in the
1973 initial survey provided respondents with the definition of emotional abuse or bullying and
1974 asked participants to answer if they had experienced or witnessed it. Following their feedback
1975 these questions were separated onto separate pages. Similarly, changes were made to the
1976 question regarding frequency, the response “Regularly” was changed to “Regularly/often

1977 (most training sessions, matches/competitions),” to provide clarity because the young
1978 ambassadors reported that they were unable to distinguish it from “a few times.”

1979 Following written feedback from the young ambassadors, final revisions were made
1980 to the survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted with three participants (2 boys
1981 and 1 girl) aged 13 years to discuss the survey further. This process, referred to as ‘cognitive
1982 interviewing,’ aimed to identify any issues with the survey questions to improve formulation
1983 of questions, and to reduce any discrepancies between the intent and the respondent’s
1984 interpretation (Willis, 2017). Following the interview, the font size of the information on
1985 professional support organisations on each page of the survey was increased to make it stand
1986 out more in case participants wished to seek support regarding any concerns arising from
1987 participating in the survey.

1988 **3.2.3.7 Step seven: The final survey.** The final version of the cross-sectional survey
1989 consisted of either three (coach survey) or four (child and parent surveys) sections: (i)
1990 Demographic questions, (ii) Sport enjoyment questions (parent and child surveys only), (iii)
1991 Negative sport experience questions, and (iv) Keeping safe in sport questions. In total, the
1992 young person survey consisted of 57 questions, the parent survey 39 questions, and the coach
1993 survey 33 questions (see Appendix D, E, and F for the final version of each survey).

1994 All three surveys began with demographic questions (age, gender, ethnicity, sport,
1995 level, and frequency of sport participation). For the young person survey questions were
1996 asked directly about the child, for the parents and coaches they focused on their child or
1997 children they work with respectively. In the young person and parent survey the next
1998 questions were related to sport enjoyment (either theirs or their perceptions of their child’s).
1999 Sport enjoyment was assessed through questions taken from the sport enjoyment component
2000 of the SCQ (Scanlan et al., 1993). This questionnaire comprises of 4 items (e.g., “did you
2001 enjoy playing sport”) and responses were provided on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1
2002 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). It should be noted that the results from the sport enjoyment
2003 component of the SCQ are not included in the current thesis, as they were not relevant to the
2004 current study aims. Instead, they were included following feedback from members of the
2005 CPSU, who advised to include them to provide balance to the survey and ensure that
2006 participants, especially adolescents, were not only responding to negative questions.

2007 The main section of the survey comprised negative sport experience questions, which
2008 focused on emotional abuse and bullying, experienced by the child and witnessed by a child,
2009 parent, coach. The questions started by providing participants with a definition of emotional
2010 abuse and then bullying, with participants being asked to respond either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to

2011 whether they had experienced (children only) or witnessed either within sport in the
2012 preceding year (which was the year prior to the first national lockdown; i.e., March 2019 -
2013 March 2020).

2014 This was then followed by questions pertaining to specific behaviours associated with
2015 emotional abuse and bullying. Participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which
2016 they had experienced and/or witnessed the behaviours in the preceding year. Participants
2017 were provided with four options on a matrix rating scale 1-4; (i.e., (1) never (2) once or twice
2018 (3) a few times (4) regularly/often [most training sessions/matches/competitions]). If
2019 respondents indicated they experienced or witnessed any of the specific behaviours, they
2020 were then asked to indicate who carried out the specific behaviour (i.e., (i) another
2021 child/teammate did this (ii) a parent did this (iii) a coach did this (iv) other (someone who
2022 was NOT another child, a parent, or coach did this). Participants were given the option to
2023 select more than one perpetrator for each negative behaviour. Based on practical and
2024 academic literature the first ten behaviours on the list were deemed as emotional abuse and
2025 the last three behaviours were deemed as bullying. However, during the survey development
2026 it was recognised that most of behaviours overlapped and could be considered as bullying or
2027 emotional abuse. As such, it was decided that the specific behaviours were less important,
2028 instead it was agreed that it would be the perpetrator that dictated whether something was
2029 considered emotional abuse or bullying given that the continuum of behaviours for both were
2030 extensive (e.g., CPSU, 2019; Mountjoy et al., 2015; NSPCC, 2019; Stirling, 2009; Stirling &
2031 Kerr, 2008). Consequently, a decision was made that if a behaviour was perpetrated by
2032 another child it was bullying, and any behaviours perpetrated by any other person (i.e.,
2033 parent, coach, or other) was considered emotional abuse.

2034 The final section comprised questions examining the extent to which participants
2035 understood to whom to refer concerns and from whom to seek information regarding
2036 safeguarding in sport. For example, multiple choice questions included “have you been told
2037 anything about how to keep safe in sport?” and “if you were worried about someone's
2038 behaviour towards another child in sport and wanted to tell someone, who would you tell?”.
2039 This section also investigated factors enabling or preventing individuals from intervening in
2040 or reporting cases of negative experience in sport and included open ended questions asking
2041 participants what resources they deemed beneficial for supporting the prevention and
2042 intervention in cases of negative experience in sport.

2043 **3.2.4 Data Collection**

2044 Following receipt of ethical approval and development of the final version of the
2045 survey, participant recruitment commenced. It should be noted that when the survey
2046 development began COVID-19 had not yet occurred. However, during the process of
2047 development, the pandemic arrived, and this had substantial consequences for recruitment.
2048 Initially, the plan was to develop and distribute the survey across various sports clubs across
2049 Wales with support from safeguarding lead officers and coaches from various national
2050 governing bodies and sporting organisations. However, during survey development, COVID-
2051 19 hit and consequently this process became extended as people adjusted to the lockdown,
2052 sports shut down, and numerous contacts were furloughed. Opportunities to engage with
2053 CPSU staff, sports, and young ambassadors were particularly delayed and the final survey
2054 was ready for distribution during the first National Lockdown. Given the uncertainty of when
2055 sports would return, distribution of the survey was initially delayed in the hope that sport
2056 would return quickly. As the lockdown continued it was decided that it would need to be
2057 distributed and that respondents would be asked to reflect on their experiences for the year
2058 prior to the COVID-19 lockdown.

2059 Unfortunately, staff (i.e., safeguarding lead officers) who were lined up to help with
2060 distribution were furloughed, so it was a challenge to access them to help distribute the
2061 survey. Furthermore, sport training was cancelled which prevented distribution of the survey
2062 at training sessions and for many individuals, especially those in more grassroots settings,
2063 there was limited engagement available to distribute the survey online. Consequently, an
2064 alternative approach to distribution was developed but it was more limited than initially
2065 planned/hoped.

2066 First, my partner at CPSU was contacted to gain support and help with recruiting
2067 participants. A virtual meeting was hosted on zoom with safeguarding lead officers who were
2068 still working from various national governing bodies. During the meeting a short presentation
2069 outlining the details of the study was shared and the lead safeguarding officers were given
2070 electronic recruitment flyers to distribute with their network of sports clubs/organisations
2071 across Wales. The recruitment flyers included pertinent information about the survey and
2072 hyperlinks to each version of the anonymous online survey hosted by Survey Monkey (i.e.,
2073 young person, parent, and coach version).

2074 Next, electronic recruitment flyers were shared directly with local sports
2075 clubs/organisations in Wales. The recruitment flyers were shared on their social media
2076 platforms (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) to increase access to the survey amongst their

2077 members. Finally, the electronic recruitment flyers were shared via the researcher's personal
2078 twitter profile. Interested participants were asked to click on the hyperlinks provided to
2079 access the anonymous online survey and indicate their consent/assent at the outset of the
2080 survey. The young person survey included information for both parents and children at the
2081 start of the survey and required parental consent followed by assent from the child before
2082 they could begin the survey.

2083 Despite these approaches, engagement with the survey was far more limited than
2084 initially hoped. Thus, when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, permitting outdoor activities,
2085 an alternative approach was adopted to increase participation numbers. Specifically, paper
2086 versions of the survey were developed, and contact was made with local sporting clubs to
2087 distribute the survey. Four clubs agreed and the paper versions of the survey were distributed
2088 in person.

2089 ***3.2.5 Data Analysis***

2090 All statistical analyses were carried out using IBM SPSS version 26. A descriptive
2091 analysis was performed for exploration of demographic information. In addition, means and
2092 standard deviations were calculated for explicit responses regarding experiencing/witnessing
2093 of emotional abuse and bullying as well as the different types of behaviours experienced/
2094 witnessed. The frequency of emotional abuse and bullying which was witnessed/experienced
2095 was calculated based on the frequency in which participants reported at least once/twice an
2096 encounter of a specific behaviour. Similarly, the frequency of emotional abuse and bullying
2097 witnessed/experienced by certain perpetrators was measured based on participants' reports of
2098 encountering specific behaviours at least once or twice. If a participant had witnessed or
2099 experienced a specific behaviour perpetrated by another child/teammate it was deemed
2100 bullying and if it was perpetrated by anybody else it was classed as emotional abuse.

2101 ***3.2.6 Phase 2: Procedure***

2102 Following analysis of the phase one data, participant recruitment commenced for
2103 phase two. To recruit participants, contact was made with the safeguarding lead officers and
2104 individuals from all the various national governing bodies and sporting organisations in
2105 Wales who helped with the dissemination of the survey during phase 1 of the study.
2106 Individuals were provided with information sheets detailing the purpose of phase two and the
2107 participant criteria and asked to share this with individuals meeting the criteria. Interested
2108 participants then contacted the researcher who organised online interviews.

2109 **3.2.7 Participants**

2110 Sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven young people, four
2111 parents, and five coaches. The young people were involved in four sports: field hockey ($n =$
2112 2), football ($n = 2$), rugby ($n = 2$) tennis ($n = 1$) and ranged in age from 15 to 18 years (M age
2113 = 15.3, $SD = 1.7$). Parent participants were two fathers and two mothers, who had children
2114 ranging between 15-18 years of age involved in field hockey ($n = 2$), football ($n = 1$), tennis
2115 ($n = 1$). Finally, the coaches included 4 men and 1 woman who currently coached field hockey
2116 ($n = 2$), football ($n = 1$), rugby ($n = 1$), and swimming ($n = 1$) to children ranging between 13
2117 to 18 (M age = 15.2, $SD = 2.13$).

2118 **3.2.8 Data Collection**

2119 Across all participants, each interview began with introductory questions, followed by
2120 main questions, before concluding with summary questions (see Appendix F, Appendix E,
2121 and Appendix G) (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Introductory questions were general in nature
2122 focussed on collecting demographic information (i.e., sport, competitive level, training and
2123 competition frequency) and understanding participants' involvement in sport. Young people
2124 were asked what they enjoyed and found challenging about their sport, parents were asked
2125 about their sport experiences, and coaches were asked about their experiences of being a
2126 coach. The introductory questions aim to build rapport between the researcher and
2127 participants and were used as an icebreaker before moving onto questions about negative
2128 sporting experiences.

2129 The main questions sought to provide further detail regarding survey findings.
2130 Specifically, the questions examined participants' understanding of emotional abuse and
2131 bullying as well as insights into any information they had received on this topic. Participants
2132 were also asked to indicate if they would be comfortable reporting abuse. To further
2133 understand what enabled or prevented people from intervening in cases of negative
2134 experience in sport, participants were then presented with the findings from phase one of the
2135 study. They were then asked, based on those results, what do you think allows for such
2136 behaviours to happen in sport?", and "what do you think would prevent or stop such things
2137 from happening?". This was then followed by questions which aimed to establish what
2138 resources would be beneficial for supporting the prevention and intervention in cases of
2139 negative experience in sport. To conclude participants were asked summary questions
2140 regarding what they believed could be done to make sure people understand about emotional
2141 abuse, bullying, and keeping safe in sport. On average the interviews were 60.31 minutes
2142 ($SD = 9.51$), ranging from 44-74 minutes.

2143 **3.2.9 Data Analysis**

2144 Prior to starting the analysis, the audio files were transcribed verbatim. To ensure
2145 confidentiality, all identifiable information was removed, and participants were assigned
2146 pseudonyms. Transcribed data were then analysed using Miles et al. (2018) approach to
2147 qualitative analysis. Specifically, data was analysed in three concurrent flows of activity
2148 namely, data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusion/verifying. The first step,
2149 data condensation, involved a process of selecting, concentrating, simplifying, and/or
2150 transforming the data collected in the interview transcripts. This step occurred in two cycles,
2151 which had different purposes but were both intended to prepare for data display. The main
2152 purpose of the first cycle coding was to summarise segments of data and form codes (Miles et
2153 al., 2018). The began with me familiarising myself with the data by reading through the
2154 transcripts repeatedly and returning to audio recordings at times, and descriptively coding,
2155 labelling segments based on phrases, topics, and issues across the entirety of the data set with
2156 the purpose of answering the research question.

2157 The second cycle coding involved pattern coding in which summaries from the first
2158 cycle were grouped into smaller categories, themes, or constructs (Miles et al., 2018). The
2159 process involved organising relevant descriptive coded extracts and condensing them into
2160 smaller analytical units. During this process any causes, explanations, or relationships among
2161 participants were identified. It is believed that this process enables the researcher to explain a
2162 cognitive map and evolving more integrated representation for understanding specific
2163 occurrences and interactions in the data.

2164 The second major flow of analysis activity was data display. This phase provided an
2165 organised and compressed gathering of information that permits for conclusion drawing
2166 (Miles et al., 2018). This was done through use of visual representation; all relevant codes
2167 were collated into piles and organised into theme piles on A3 paper, according to their
2168 relationship, allowing conclusion to be drawn from the data. During this phase networks were
2169 created, which were a series of connections with links (lines arrows) between them (Miles et
2170 al., 2018). For example, factors that prevented people from intervening included inherent
2171 personality and personal experiences therefore links were made, and lines were drawn,
2172 between these variables because they formed a coherent pattern related to personal factors
2173 which was in line with the research question.

2174 The final flow of analysis was drawing and verifying conclusions. This stage involved
2175 stopping to acknowledge and consider the meaning of the analysed data and assessing its
2176 implication for the research question. Furthermore, data had to be checked for plausibility,

2177 their sturdiness, their confirmability, that is, its validity. According to Miles et al., (2014)
2178 checking representativeness is a tactic for verifying or confirming data validation. Although
2179 participation in the study was voluntary, attempts were made to ensure that the sample of
2180 participants that were selected provided a comprehensive representation of children, parents,
2181 and coaches across sports and levels to maximise opportunities to identify commonalities and
2182 differences in preferences/experiences. In addition, during analysis importance was placed on
2183 looking purposively in the data for contrasting cases to provide representation.

2184 ***3.2.10 Methodological Rigour***

2185 Over the past few years, there has been considerable interest among researchers
2186 regarding the strategies adopted to assess the quality of mixed methods research (O’Cathain
2187 et al., 2008; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The unique characteristics of mixed methods
2188 research creates challenges that require additional quality criteria, beyond those used to
2189 individually appraise quantitative and qualitative research (Collins, Onwuegbuzie & Johnson,
2190 2012). For this study, Cresswell and Plano Clark’s (2018) core criteria that are expected in a
2191 good mixed methods study were used to consider the rigour of the current study.

2192 First, Cresswell and Plano Clark (2018) suggest that in response to the research
2193 question and hypothesis, it is imperative that the researcher should collect and analyse both
2194 quantitative and qualitative data rigorously. Consistent with the first element of the criteria,
2195 the current study used established, comprehensive approaches to collecting both the
2196 quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was collected through a survey which
2197 underwent an extensive review process. Statistical analyses were carried out using IBM
2198 SPSS, then results were examined closely, and surprising or unusual findings were isolated
2199 (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Subsequently, participants were purposefully sampled for
2200 phase two of the study based on maximum variation sampling (Patton 2002), for the purpose
2201 of exploring stage one findings in more depth (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In line with
2202 interpretivist philosophical perspective semi-structured interviews were conducted and data
2203 were analysed using qualitative analysis (Miles et al., 2018).

2204 Second, both quantitative and qualitative data and results should be intentionally
2205 integrated, which occurred in the current study. Specifically, this involved connecting
2206 quantitative results from the first phase to help plan and develop questions for the qualitative
2207 data collection phase (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Further, following the analysis of the
2208 qualitative results, another analysis was conducted to answer the mixed methods question.
2209 Consequently, both quantitative and qualitative data were connected and presented together

2210 throughout the results section and integrated conclusions were made which represented how
2211 phase two results expanded phase one results (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

2212 The third criteria suggests that both research approaches should be organised into
2213 specific research designs that provide a clear rationale for conducting the study. Consistent
2214 with third element of the criteria, the methodology section was detailed and well-structured
2215 and presented in accordance with the mixed methods explanatory sequential approach
2216 employed. Specifically, the quantitative section was presented first, followed by the
2217 qualitative approach, which was in line with the rationale for conducting the study using both
2218 research designs.

2219 Finally, the fourth criteria is that quantitative and qualitative procedures used should
2220 be framed within theory and philosophy (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018). As detailed, the
2221 current study utilised a dialectical perspective which proposes that mixed method research
2222 may use multiple paradigms, and they must be explicit in their use of each, giving both
2223 relatively equal footing and merit (Greene & Caracelli, 1997, 2003). In this regard, the study
2224 was framed both in a post-positivist and an interpretivist paradigm.

2225 **3.3 Results**

2226 In total, 464 participants began the online survey, with 249 completing a sufficient
2227 portion of the survey to be included in the results and meeting the inclusion criteria.
2228 Specifically, participants were removed if they did not meet the age or location criteria (i.e.,
2229 were/coached/or had a child under 13 years of age or they participated or were involved in
2230 sport outside of Wales). Others were removed because they only completed demographic
2231 questions and no other elements of the survey. Following this, the final sample consisted of
2232 84 young people ($M_{age} = 14.7$; $S.D = 1.54$), 126 parents, and 39 coaches (see Tables 3.1, 3.2
2233 and 3.3 respectively for demographic data). Please note that the total number of respondents
2234 varied across questions as not all participants answered all questions. The number of
2235 participants per question is indicated within the analysis.

2236

2237 Table 3.1

2238 Demographic and sports participation characteristics for young people

		Total Sample: N (%)
Sex	Male	66 (78.6%)
	Female	16 (19%)
	Transgender	1 (1.2%)
	Preferred not to say	1 (1.2%)
Age (years)	13	20 (23.8%)
	14	25 (29.8%)
	15	17 (20.2%)
	16	6 (7.1%)
	17	11 (13.1%)
	18	5 (6%)
Ethnicity	White	78 (91.8%)
	Asian	4 (5.9%)
	Black	1 (1.2%)
	Mixed race	1 (1.2%)
Competitive Level	Club	60
	School	1
	County	23
	Regional	20
	Academy Level	2
	National	11
	International	10
Sport Participation Frequency (Days per week)	1	3 (3.5%)
	2	11 (12.9%)
	3	13 (15.3%)
	4	23 (27.1%)
	5	14 (16.5%)
	6	12 (14.1%)
	7	9 (10.6%)
Competition Frequency	Every week	64 (75.3%)
	Every two weeks	7 (8.2%)
	Every month	8 (9.4%)
	Every few months	3 (3.5%)
	3-4 times per year	3 (3.5%)

2239

2240 **Table 3.2**

2241 Demographic and sports participation characteristics for parent respondents

		Total Sample: N (%)
Sex	Male	45 (35.7%)
	Female	79 (62.7.7%)
	Prefer not to say	1 (0.8%)
Child's Sex	Male	97 (77%)
	Female	28 (22.2%)
	Prefer not to say	1 (0.8%)
Child's Age (years)	13	37 (29.4%)
	14	37 (29.4%)
	15	36 (28.6%)
	16	12 (9.5%)
	17	3 (2.4%)
	18	1 (0.8%)
Ethnicity	White	123 (97.6%)
	Asian	1 (.08%)
	Mixed race	2 (1.6%)
Number of years child's been involved in sport	2	3 (2.4%)
	3	7 (5.6%)
	4	7 (5.6%)
	5	10 (8%)
	6	12 (9.5%)
	7	10 (8%)
	8	24 (19.2%)
	9	15 (12%)
	10+	37 (29.6%)
Child's Competitive Level	Recreational	5
	Club	97
	School	1
	County	32
	Regional	20
	Academy	9
	National	18
	International	3
	Academy	9
Child's Sport Participation Frequency (Days per week)	1	6
	2	20 (15.9%)
	3	30 (23.8%)
	4	30 (23.8%)
	5	18 (14.3%)
	6	15 (11.9%)
	7	7 (5.5%)
Child's Competition Frequency	Non-competitive	4 (3.2%)
	Every week	87 (69%)
	Every two weeks	11 (8.7%)
	Every month	14 (11.1%)
	Every few months	8 (6.3%)
	3-4 times per year	2 (1.6%)

2242

2243 **Table 3.3**

2244 Demographic and sports participation characteristics for coach respondents

		Total Sample: N (%)
Coach Sex	Male	29 (74.4%)
	Female	9 (23.1%)
	Prefer not to say	1(2.6%)
Sex of children coached	Male	27 (69.2%)
	Female	9 (23.1%)
	Preferred not to say	3 (7.7%)
Age of children coached	13-15 years	28 (71.8%)
	16-18 years	11 (28.2%)
Coaching Experience (years)	1	1 (2.6%)
	2	3 (7.7%)
	3	4 (10.3%)
	4	0 (0%)
	5	3 (7.7%)
	6	2 (5.1%)
	7	4 (10.3%)
	8	6 (15.4%)
	9	2 (5.1%)
	10+	14 (35.8%)
Participation level coach	Recreational/non-competitive	9
	Club	29
	County	3
	Regional	8
	National	8
	International	5

2245

2246 **3.3.1 Young People’s Experiences of Emotional Abuse and Bullying**

2247 Only young people were asked if they had experienced abuse. When presented with a
 2248 definition of emotional abuse and bullying, 10.7% (n=9/84) participants said they had
 2249 experienced emotional abuse and 6% (n=5/84) said they had experienced bullying in sport.
 2250 However, when presented with the list of behaviours which constituted emotional abuse or
 2251 bullying 17.9% (n=15/84) and 45.2% (n=38/84) reported experiencing emotional abusive or
 2252 bullying behaviours respectively (see Table 3.4). A McNemar’s test (McNemar, 1947)
 2253 determined the difference in the proportion of young people that experienced emotional abuse
 2254 or bullying when presented with a definition compared to behaviours. There was no
 2255 statistically significant difference for emotional abuse (p = .238), whereas a significant
 2256 difference was observed for bullying (p = .001).

2257 **Table 3.4**

2258 Reported rates of emotional abuse and bullying experienced by young people

	Yes	No
Experienced Emotional abuse	9/84 (10.7%)	75/84 (89.3%)
Experienced Bullying	5/84 (6%)	79/84 (94%)
Experienced emotional abuse from list of behaviours	15/84 (17.9%)	69/84 (82.1%)
Experiencing bullying from a list of behaviours	38/84 (45.2%)	46/84 (54.8%)

2259

2260 During the interviews participants were asked why experiences of bullying were not
 2261 recognised by young people when presented with definitions. Most attributed it to lack of
 2262 understanding and believed that young people were unaware that certain behaviours
 2263 constituted emotional abuse or bullying. For example, Darren (father of an academy level
 2264 football player) said, “That’s an education thing [...] I don’t think many children have even
 2265 been told what bullying or emotional abuse is, so they don’t know what it is.” Similarly,
 2266 Carys (female regional level tennis player) said:

2267 I don’t think someone has actually told them [children] what bullying or emotional
 2268 abuse is, and this is what it consists of, they might be like yeah, I have been teased or
 2269 made fun of, but if you ask them, have you been bullied? They’ll be like, no! Because
 2270 nobody has told them that those things are bullying.”

2271 Participants also believed that, even if participants were provided with explanations
 2272 and definitions of bullying, some people may still not associate certain behaviours with these
 2273 two concepts. Specifically, participants believed that young people’s personal perception of
 2274 the acceptability of behaviours played a crucial role in identifying bullying. For example,
 2275 Martyn (regional tennis level parent) said:

2276 I’m sure if you say to someone, “that’s bullying, here’s the definition.” Oh, actually it
 2277 is bullying, that’s your definition of bullying, but what’s my own personal definition
 2278 of bullying and I guess everybody sets the bar based on their own perception.

2279 **3.3.1.1 Behaviours Experienced by Young People.** The three most commonly
 2280 experienced behaviours by young people were being, ‘teased, made fun of, or called names’
 2281 (26.9%, n=26), ‘ignored on purpose’ (19%, n=15), and ‘made to feel under pressure to
 2282 perform to unrealistically high standards’ (13.9%, n=11) (see Table 3.5). When behaviours
 2283 were experienced, they were mostly experienced once or twice. Few behaviours were

2284 experienced regularly/often¹, with only seven instances of regularly experienced behaviours
 2285 reported.

2286 **Table 3.5**

2287 Frequency of negative behaviour experienced by young people

Negative Behaviour	Never N (%)	1-2 times N (%)	A few times N (%)	Regularly N (%)
Teased, made fun of or called names	51 (65.4%)	21 (26.9%)	5 (6.4%)	1 (1.3%)
Ignored on purpose	61 (77.2%)	15 (19%)	1 (1.3%)	2 (2.5%)
Made to feel under pressure to perform	65 (82.3%)	11 (13.9%)	3 (3.8%)	0 (0%)
Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed	64 (81%)	10 (12.7%)	3 (3.8%)	2 (2.5%)
Left out of an activity by others on purpose	64 (81%)	10 (12.7%)	5 (6.3%)	0 (0%)
Physically hurt by someone on purpose	65 (82.3%)	10 (12.7%)	4 (5.1%)	0 (0%)
Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone	65 (82.3%)	8 (10.1%)	5 (6.3%)	1 (1.3%)
Embarrassing/upsetting stories spread online or in person	68 (86.1%)	7 (8.9%)	3 (3.8%)	1 (1.2%)
Repeatedly criticised for how they looked/because of weight	71 (89.9%)	7 (8.9%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)
Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to do	73 (92.4%)	5 (6.3%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)
Made to feel scared without being physically attacked	74 (93.7%)	4 (5.1%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)
Have someone break/throw an object out of anger/frustration	75 (94.9%)	3 (3.8%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)
Made to feel they are only important if successful in sport	72 (91.1%)	2 (2.5%)	5 (6.3%)	0 (0%)

2288 N.B. Negative behaviours are summarised for brevity. The full explanation of behaviours is available in the
 2289 appendix in the survey.
 2290

2291 Within the interviews participants were asked why they believed being teased/made
 2292 fun of, being ignored, and feeling pressure to perform were the behaviours children
 2293 experienced most often. Participants reported that it was because these behaviours are just
 2294 typically associated with sport and are not considered as bullying or emotional abuse. As
 2295 Gemma (female academy level football player) said, “If I’m honest, I don’t think players
 2296 even realise that some of these things are classed as bullying or emotional abuse.” Similarly,
 2297 Steffan (male club level football player) said, “I think most people don’t even see it as that
 2298 they just consider it to be messing around, you know, like harmless banter.” In fact,
 2299 Jacob (male national level hockey player) admitted that he and his teammates engaged in
 2300 certain bullying behaviours listed, which he did not perceive as bullying, “you wouldn’t want
 2301 to hear how some of us talk to each other, haha but we’re all good mates like, it’s just banter
 2302 to be fair, that’s how we bond. None of us would think its bullying like.”

2303 **3.3.1.2 Perpetrators of Abuse and Bullying.** The most common perpetrator of
 2304 negative behaviours was another child/teammate (n=119) who mainly ‘teased, made fun of or

¹ In the following sections of this thesis, the term ‘regularly’ is used to refer to ‘regularly/often’ as indicated in the survey instrument for the sake of brevity.

2305 called names’, followed by parents (n=26) who primarily made children ‘feel under pressure
 2306 to perform to unrealistically high standards’, then coaches (n=16) who tended to ‘ignore
 2307 children on purpose’ and finally others (n=5) who were indicated to behave similarly to
 2308 parents (see Table 3.6).

2309 **Table 3.6**

2310 Perpetrators of negative behaviours experienced in sport according to young people

Negative Behaviours Experienced	Child/ teammate	Parent	Coach	Other
Teased, made fun of or called names	25	1	0	0
Ignored on purpose	16	0	2	1
Made to feel under pressure to perform	4	9	2	2
Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed	10	4	1	1
Left out of an activity by others on purpose	13	0	1	0
Physically hurt by someone on purpose	10	1	1	1
Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone	12	3	1	0
Embarrassing/upsetting stories spread online or in person	8	1	2	0
Repeatedly criticised for how they looked/because of weight	7	1	0	0
Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to do	2	2	2	0
Made to feel scared without being physically attacked	5	1	1	0
Have someone break/throw an object out of anger/frustration	4	0	0	0
Made to feel they are only important if successful in sport	3	3	3	0
Total (Numbers of responses)	119	26	16	5

2311 Note. Percentages for perpetrators of emotional abuse or bullying are not shown because participants had the option to choose more than one
 2312 perpetrator for each behaviour.

2313

2314 **3.3.2 All Participants Experiences of Witnessing Abuse**

2315 All participants (parents, coaches, and young people) provided insights regarding
 2316 witnessing abuse or bullying. When presented with a definition of emotional abuse and
 2317 bullying, 20.6% (n=51) of 247 participants said they had witnessed a child experiencing
 2318 emotional abuse, while 20.2% (n=50) out of 247 indicated they had witnessed a child being
 2319 bullied (Table 3.7). More coaches report witnessing emotional abuse (23.1%) and bullying
 2320 (26.3%) compared to 20.8% and 21.6% of parents respectively and 19.3% and 15.5% of
 2321 young people.

2322 When presented with the behaviours which constituted emotional abuse or bullying,
 2323 participants indicating they had witnessed at least one of these behaviours increased.

2324 Specifically, behaviour that accounted for emotional abuse was witnessed by 41.8% of the
 2325 sample (n=104) and bullying by 65.9% (n=164). Witnessing emotional abuse increased to
 2326 36.9% (n=31) for the 84 young people, 39.7% (n=50) for parents, and 59% (n=23) for

2327 coaches and for bullying to 69% (n=58) of athletes, 62.7% (n=79) of parents, and 69.2%
 2328 (n=27) of coaches (Table 3.7).

2329 Using a McNemar’s test (McNemar,1947), for all participant groups, the difference in
 2330 witnessing of emotional abuse or bullying when presented with a definition compared to the
 2331 behaviours was statistically significant for abuse ($p = .004$ for young people, $p=.001$ for
 2332 parents and coaches) demonstrating that across participant groups there were significantly
 2333 more instances of abuse being witnessed when participants were provided with examples of
 2334 abusive behaviours rather than the definition of abuse. Similarly, the difference in the number
 2335 of participants who indicated they had witnessed bullying based on the definition compared
 2336 to behaviours was statistically significant for all participant groups ($p = .001$).

2337 **Table 3.7**

2338 Reported rates of emotional abuse and bullying from all participants

	All participants		Young people		Parents		Coaches	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Witnessed emotional abuse by definition	51/247 (20.6%)	196/247 (79.4%)	16/83 (19.3%)	67/83 (80.7%)	26/125 (20.8%)	99/125 (79.2%)	9/39 (23.1%)	30/39 (76.9%)
Witnessed bullying by definition	50/247 (20.2%)	197/ 247 (70.8%)	13/84 (15.5%)	71/84 (84.5%)	27/125 (21.6%)	98/125 (78.4%)	10/38 (26.3%)	28/38 (73.7%)
Witnessed emotional abuse from list of behaviours	104/249 (41.8%)	145/249 (58.2%)	31/84 (36.9%)	53/84 (63.1%)	50/126 (39.7%)	76/126 (60.3%)	23/39 (59%)	16/39 (41%)
Witnessed bullying from list of behaviours	164/249 (65.9%)	85/249 (34.1%)	58/84 (69%)	26/84 (31%)	79/126 (62.7%)	47/126 (37.3%)	27/39 (69.2%)	12/39 (30.8%)

2339

2340 When seeking to explain the difference between reports of emotional abuse and bully
 2341 based on the definition of these and the specific behaviours, interview participants explained
 2342 that young people, parents, and coaches had their own personal perceptions and thresholds in
 2343 relation to emotional abuse and bullying based on their own personalities and experiences. As
 2344 such, they believed this impacted on whether they would recognise certain behaviours as
 2345 emotional abuse or bullying if they were to witness it. For example, Jade (female national
 2346 level swimming coach) shared, “You know, it’s tough, everyone has different personalities,
 2347 everyone has different sensitivity, like how they feel towards different things, plus it’s a
 2348 massive mix of people.”

2349 Interview participants also expressed that the terms bullying and emotional abuse tend
 2350 to be associated with extreme overt behaviours or outcomes. They believed that this might be

2351 the reason why participants did not recognise it when asked explicitly. For example, Rhodri
2352 (male county and regional level hockey coach) said:

2353 I think a lot of it comes from the word abuse or bullying, I think they are such
2354 buzzwords for what most people think are quite serious circumstances. So then,
2355 people think, well no, that's not me, I haven't seen that, done it or had it happen to
2356 me. I think it's the cultural definition of it, like how we use those terms in society, it's
2357 the severity of it. I do it myself, like I've been teased repeatedly, but I wouldn't say I
2358 have if you asked me have, I been emotional abused or bullied, but then if you asked
2359 me those behaviours I would probably tick a lot of those boxes because I have
2360 experienced most of those things.

2361 Similarly, Angela (mother of a club level football player) said:

2362 I also think there's that kind of education awareness. When they people think of the
2363 word abuse everybody will assume it has to be physical violence, or sexual abuse.
2364 When you know it might be stuff further down the spectrum that you need to be aware
2365 of.

2366 **3.3.2.1 Behaviours Witnessed.** Across all the participant groups, the most commonly
2367 witnessed behaviours (at least one or twice) were 'being teased, made fun of or called names'
2368 (31.7% n=79/249), 'shouted or sworn at angrily by someone' (29.7% n=74/249), and
2369 'repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed' (24.7% n=61/247) (see Table 3.8).
2370 These were the same three most frequently witnessed by young people (34.5% n=29/84, 31%
2371 n=26/84, and 28.9% n= 24/83, respectively). The top two were the same for parents (reported
2372 by 27.8% n= 35/126 of parents in both instances) and the third most common behaviour
2373 witnessed by parents was 'being left out of an activity on purpose' (27% n=34/126). Coaches
2374 reported two of the top three ('being teased, made fun of or called names'; 38.5% n=15/39,
2375 and being 'shouted or sworn at angrily by someone', 33.3% n=13/39), but their second most
2376 frequently reported behaviour was being 'made to feel under pressure to perform to
2377 unrealistically high standards' (38.5% n=15/39).

2378

2379 **Table 3.8**

2380 Frequency of negative behaviours witnessed

Negative Behaviour	1-2 times N (%)				A few times N (%)				Regularly N (%)			
	Young Person	Parent	Coach	Total	Young Person	Parent	Coach	Total	Young Person	Parent	Coach	Total
Teased, made fun of or called names	29 (34.5%)	35 (27.8%)	15 (38.5%)	79 (31.7%)	9 (10.7%)	18 (14.3%)	7 (17.9%)	34 (13.7%)	6 (7.1%)	4 (3.2%)	0 (0%)	10 (4.0%)
Ignored on purpose	19 (22.6%)	20 (15.9%)	5 (12.8%)	44 (17.7%)	6 (7.1%)	8 (6.3%)	1 (2.6%)	34 (13.7%)	2 (2.4%)	4 (2.2%)	0 (0%)	3 (1.2%)
Made to feel under pressure to perform	14 (16.7%)	19 (15.2%)	5 (12.8%)	38 (15.3%)	2 (2.4%)	6 (4.8%)	2 (5.1%)	10 (4%)	0 (0%)	4 (3.2%)	0 (0%)	4 (1.6%)
Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed	11 (13.1%)	14 (11.1%)	5 (12.8%)	30 (12%)	5 (6%)	2 (1.6%)	2 (5.1%)	9 (3.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Left out of an activity by others on purpose	25 (29.8%)	14 (11.1%)	9 (23.1%)	48 (19.3%)	4 (4.8%)	8 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	12 (4.8%)	3 (3.6%)	3 (2.4%)	0 (0%)	6 (2.4%)
Physically hurt by someone on purpose	26 (31%)	35 (27.8%)	13 (33.3%)	74 (29.7%)	8 (9.5%)	12 (9.5%)	5 (12.8%)	25 (10.0%)	5 (6%)	4 (3.2%)	1 (2.6%)	10 (4%)
Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone	24 (28.9%)	27 (21.4%)	10 (26.3%)	61 (24.7%)	7 (8.4%)	10 (7.9%)	6 (15.8%)	23 (9.3%)	3 (3.6%)	5 (4.0%)	0 (0%)	8 (3.2%)
Embarrassing/upsetting stories spread online or in person	9 (10.7%)	14 (11.1%)	5 (12.8%)	28 (11.2%)	3 (3.6%)	3 (2.4%)	1 (2.6%)	7 (2.8%)	2 (2.4%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	3 (1.2%)
Repeatedly criticised for how they looked/because of weight	22 (26.2%)	14 (11.1%)	15 (38.5%)	53 (21.4%)	7 (8.3%)	3 (2.4%)	3 (7.7%)	18 (7.3%)	1 (1.2%)	1 (0.8%)	2 (5.1%)	5 (2%)
Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to do	10 (10.7%)	17 (13.5%)	12 (30.8%)	38 (15.3%)	5 (6%)	6 (4.8%)	1 (2.6%)	12 (4.8%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (1.6%)	2 (5.1%)	5 (2%)
Made to feel scared without being physically attacked	14 (16.7%)	24 (19%)	10 (25.6%)	48 (19.3%)	4 (4.8%)	6 (4.8%)	1 (2.6%)	11 (4.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.4%)
Have someone break/throw an object out of anger/frustration	18 (21.4%)	34 (27%)	9 (23.7%)	61 (24.6%)	3 (3.6%)	6 (4.8%)	2 (5.3%)	11 (4.4%)	1 (1.2%)	5 (4.0%)	0 (0%)	6 (2.4%)
Made to feel only important if successful	7 (8.4%)	2 (1.6%)	0 (0%)	9 (3.6%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (1.6%)	1 (2.6%)	4 (1.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

2381

2382 Across all the participant groups, the most witnessed behaviours were all ‘witnessed
2383 ‘once or twice’. Behaviours witnessed ‘regularly’ were considerably lower, with ‘being
2384 teased, made fun of or called names’ reported as a regular occurrence for 4.0% (n=10) of 249
2385 of all participants, followed by ‘being shouted or sworn at angrily by someone’ reported by
2386 4.0% (n=10) out of 249, and ‘repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed’ reported
2387 by 3.2% (n= 8) out of 247 (see Table 3.8). When considering behaviours that were witnessed
2388 regularly by young people they were the same three as listed above (witnessed by 7.1%, 6%,
2389 and 3.6% respectively) and were all bullying behaviours. Similarly, all the behaviours parents
2390 witnessed ‘regularly’ were bullying, including being ‘shouted or sworn at angrily by
2391 someone’ (3.2%) which ranked second and ‘repeatedly criticised for how they
2392 played/performed’ which ranked joint first with ‘being left out of an activity on purpose’
2393 (4.0%). Behaviours most witnessed by coaches regularly were ‘made to feel under pressure to
2394 perform to unrealistically high standards’ (5.1%) and ‘made to feel that you are only
2395 important or valuable if you are successful in sport’ (5.1%).

2396 In seeking to explain why these behaviours occurred and were witnessed, participants
2397 suggested it was due to cultural environmental factors. Specifically, many shared the view
2398 that certain types of emotional abusive and bullying behaviours were commonplace in most
2399 settings due to their normalisation. Participants suggested that most sporting environments
2400 regardless of age or level of competition, were intensely competitive and centred around
2401 achieving success. As such, they considered it a crucial factor in the occurrence of abuse and
2402 bullying as Bryn (male regional level hockey coach) shared, “I’ve seen rugby clubs at grass
2403 roots who want to win everything at under 7’s and under 8’s. It’s the be all and end all for
2404 them, nothing else matters, that’s why these things happen.” Similarly, Dafydd (male
2405 academy level football coach) expressed, “everything is money driven, the behaviour at the
2406 top is all wrong, it’s all about winning trophies, so all that [bullying and emotional abuse]
2407 doesn’t really matter.” Consequently, participants believed that because a lot of the
2408 behaviours were seen as normal and even necessary to achieve success, which was perceived
2409 as the ultimate goal for most sports clubs and organisations, they were just accepted.

2410 **3.3.3 Perpetrator of abuse**

2411 The most common perpetrator of negative behaviours witnessed by participants was
2412 another child/teammate (n=559), reported 216 times by young people, 257 times by parents
2413 and 86 times by coaches. Parents were the second most common perpetrator of abuse
2414 witnessed for young people and coaches (reported by 45 individuals respectively), whereas
2415 coaches were the second most common perpetrator noted by parents (n=85; see Table 3.9).

2416 **Table 3.9**

2417 Young people, parents, and coaches' responses of perpetrators of negative behaviours witnessed in sport

Negative Behaviour	Child/teammate (N)			Parent (N)			Coach (N)			Other (N)		
	YP	Parent	Coach	YP	Parent	Coach	YP	Parent	Coach	YP	Parent	Coach
Teased, made fun of or called names	39	52	21	3	4	0	5	6	0	1	2	0
Ignored on purpose	28	26	12	8	15	6	6	21	4	2	2	1
Made to feel under pressure to perform	22	19	4	7	10	8	6	16	6	0	1	1
Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed	17	36	10	2	0	1	2	5	2	1	0	0
Left out of an activity by others on purpose	16	7	3	8	13	15	8	10	3	1	1	1
Physically hurt by someone on purpose	21	15	6	3	3	1	4	12	4	0	1	0
Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone	12	26	8	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	1	0
Embarrassing/upsetting stories spread online or in person	21	23	4	2	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	0
Repeatedly criticised for how they looked/because of weight	6	11	4	4	7	12	5	6	2	2	1	0
Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to do	10	16	4	1	6	1	5	8	2	1	1	1
Made to feel scared without being physically attacked	11	12	5	3	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	1
Have someone break/throw an object out of anger/frustration	10	12	4	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	1
Made to feel only important if successful	3	2	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0

2418

2419 In seeking to explain why different population groups may be engaging in bullying or
2420 abusive behaviours, participants felt that generational differences were a contributing factor.
2421 Although they did not specify which behaviours parents and coaches perpetrated, many
2422 expressed a perception that adults tended to be abrasive in their communication towards
2423 young people in sport and that this resulted in certain behaviours being viewed as accepted
2424 and going unchallenged. Darren (father of an academy level football player) said:

2425 It's more forth coming [abuse] from the side-lines, when the people on the side-line
2426 are of an older generation [parents, coaches, and other]. They have a perceived
2427 understanding on what is acceptable and what isn't and that is entirely different to
2428 what is acceptable these days. A throwaway comment means a lot more now than it
2429 did two or three generations ago. I think it's an age thing and an education thing,
2430 hopefully as younger players develop that will improve.

2431 Moreover, participants explained that people with power and influence in sport were typically
2432 of an older generation, who used language differently and viewed certain behaviours as more
2433 acceptable. Angela (mother of a club level football player) shared, "My only concern is that
2434 the coaches are in that older age bracket, and they say stuff that they perceive as throwaway
2435 comments, but they're actually not."

2436 Participants also expressed that if coaches demonstrated negative behaviours, it was
2437 likely to influence the behaviours young people and parents displayed in the environment.
2438 Rachel (mother of a regional level hockey player) shared, "If the coach is leading by example
2439 and then kids or parents see them behaving in this way [negatively], they'll will see it as
2440 normal and that will just carry on." Despite other children being reported as the most
2441 common perpetrator of negative behaviours, participants believed that younger people were
2442 more conscious about their interactions due to current societal changes and increased
2443 awareness of negative behaviours and consequences. For example, Gemma, (female academy
2444 level football player) said, "obviously, us being a younger generation, are noticing, 'oh,
2445 maybe that's not the right way of saying things or it's not a good thing to say.' Similarly,
2446 Bryn (male regional level hockey coach), expressed:

2447 I'm quite lucky in that I'm still quite young. I've grown up with this change. I mean
2448 I'm of that generation that gets called snowflakes, but that's just because I think we're
2449 like just been more aware of the world and the consequences of our actions, and I
2450 think some people are a bit older and bit more stuck in their ways I think.

2451

2452 **3.3.4 Keeping safe in sport**

2453 **3.3.4.1 Information Provision.** When asked if they had been provided any verbal
2454 guidance/information about how to keep safe in sport, 85.1% (n=63/86) of young people,
2455 76.0% (n=92/121) of parents, and 97.4% (n=38/39) of coaches indicated they had received
2456 verbal information. These numbers declined slightly when asked if they had been given
2457 specific information about keeping safe in sport (i.e., leaflet, flyer, email etc) (67.1% of
2458 young people, 57.9% of parents, and 94.9% of coaches). Aligned with these figures, within
2459 the interviews, it was apparent that coaches had received more information about
2460 safeguarding and keeping safe in sport than parents and young people. For most coaches
2461 safeguarding training was a requirement for their role, as Jade (female national level
2462 swimming coach) shared, “as part of my role as a coach we have to do safeguarding training
2463 every three years.”

2464 Meanwhile, information received by parents and young people differed. Typically,
2465 those involved in higher level sport had received some form of information on keeping safe
2466 in sport, either informally or formally. For example, Owain (male academy level rugby
2467 player) shared, “I have had some safeguarding talks when I went to a training camp and there
2468 were also talks about safety and different aspects of the game like concussion and about
2469 social media.” Similarly, Martyn (regional tennis level parent), said:

2470 ...you see the posters up in tennis centres advertising the welfare officer. Yes, and
2471 I’ve recently seen posters and banners kind of like, if you see it, speak out. If you get
2472 called names on court that sort of thing advertising it.

2473 Conversely, young people and parents who were involved in lower-level/grassroot
2474 sport did not receive any information. For example, when asked if they had received any
2475 information about keeping safe in sport both Steffan (male club level football player) and
2476 Angela (mother of a club level footballer) responded, “no, not at all.” It was apparent in the
2477 interview that lower-level sports did not have the resources to communicate this information
2478 as Dafydd (male academy level football coach) mentioned, “you know at grassroot level, the
2479 clubs can't really afford to hire people to come in to talk to people about safeguarding.”

2480 **3.3.4.2 Reporting Negative Behaviours.** With regards to reporting negative
2481 behaviours, 80.8% (n= 59/73) of young people indicated that they would tell someone if they
2482 were worried about how someone behaved towards them, while 86.5% (n= 64/86) reported
2483 they would tell someone if they were worried about behaviours directed towards another
2484 child in sport. Numbers were slightly higher for parents (98.3%, n=118/120) and coaches

2485 (100%, n=39), with the majority indicating they would tell someone if they were worried
2486 about how someone behaved towards another child.

2487 Typically, young people indicated they were most likely to tell their parent/guardian if
2488 they witnessed (n=32) or experienced (n=38) something they were worried about in sport
2489 (Table 3.10). However, who they would go to next if they had concerns regarding behaviour
2490 towards themselves or to others subsequently differed. Specifically, they indicated they
2491 would tell their own coach if they experienced negative behaviours (n=12) but someone else's
2492 parent/guardian (n=26) if they were to witness something they were worried or concerned
2493 about in their sport. Parents (n=86) and coaches (n=37) both reported they would most likely
2494 tell their sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead. However, parents also
2495 indicated that they would inform the child's parent/guardian (n=42) as their next choice,
2496 while coaches reported that they would notify the child's coach (n=13). It is important to note
2497 that participants were allowed to provide more than one option for this question, however,
2498 incidentally most young people only selected one option unlike parents and coaches who
2499 selected multiple options.

2500

2501 **Table 3.10**

2502 Young people, parents, and coaches' responses of who they would tell if they were worried
 2503 about someone's behaviour towards them or another child

	Young Person Experienced N (%)	Young Person Witnessed N (%)	Parent N (%)	Coach N (%)
Another child/teammate	11	7	2	1
Your parent/guardian	38	32	0	0
The child's parent/guardian	0	1	42	13
Someone else's/Another parent/guardian	0	26	10	4
Your coach/ The child's coach	12	1	91	14
A different coach (i.e., a coach who was not your coach)	1	0	21	9
A physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist	1	4	4	1
Your sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead	3	4	86	37
I don't know who I would tell	1	0	4	1
I would not tell anyone	4	1	1	1
Other				
Boyfriend and question if it was me or should I take it further	0	1	0	0
I would punch him	0	1	0	0
Police if criminal matter	0	0	1	0
Team manger	0	0	1	0
Refer to social services if behaviour was deemed beyond our general remit as a club to handle	0	0	0	1
Team manger	0	0	0	1
Safeguarding team for federation	0	0	0	1
Speak to the person whose behaviour it was	0	0	0	1
Total (Numbers of responses)	71	78	263	85

2504

2505 In the interviews, young people explained they would report concerns to their parents
 2506 because they trusted them and believed that they had their best interests at heart:

2507 Because I can definitely trust them, no matter what, also rumours spread so quickly,
 2508 and you never know who who's going to tell who. That's why I would go to someone
 2509 I really trust like my mom or dad, or grandmother (Carys, female regional tennis
 2510 player).

2511 Furthermore, young people also believed their parents were better positioned to know how
 2512 best to respond to concerns as Angharad (female regional level hockey player) shared, "I'd
 2513 probably go to my mom and dad because, I think my dad knows everything at this stage, so
 2514 I'm sure he would know what to do."

2515 **3.3.4.3 Barriers to Intervening.** Within the survey and the interviews, participants
2516 were asked to explain (qualitatively) what would prevent them from intervening if they were
2517 worried about how someone behaved towards them or another child in sport. Firstly, it was
2518 suggested that confidence might have an impact. With regards to confidence in reporting,
2519 young person participant 6 answered in the survey, “Nothing [would stop me reporting], I
2520 would always question things to see if they were suspicious and then take them further if
2521 needed.” Similarly, parent participant 111 wrote, “Nothing would stop me saying
2522 something.” During the interview when asked if anything would prevent her from intervening
2523 or reporting concerns Rachel (mother of a regional level hockey player) said, “absolutely
2524 nothing, but that’s just how I am though, I’m not afraid to speak up.” Likewise, Jacob (male
2525 national level hockey player) expressed “I am a very confident person I don't care what
2526 people think about me. So, if I saw something wrong going on I would go tell the coach or go
2527 to the manager.”

2528 That said, others found it daunting, as a young person participant answered, “I’m
2529 quite shy, so I am not sure I would say anything,” similarly James (male county level rugby
2530 player) shared, “I am not that type of person to speak out [if witnessed negative behaviour], I
2531 don’t really like people, so I’d be a bit nervous.” Meanwhile parent participant 12 responded,
2532 “lack of confidence” would prevent reporting and Dafydd (academy football coach)
2533 summarised, “one of the biggest things stopping people [players and parents] from doing or
2534 saying anything I think, is lack of confidence, if I’m honest.”

2535 Personal experiences and knowledge were also perceived to influence participants’
2536 ability to intervene or report concerns. For example, some participants had received
2537 information on safeguarding and felt equipped with knowledge enabling them to recognise
2538 and/or respond to cases of negative experiences in sport. For example, Martyn (regional
2539 tennis level parent) was a tennis referee, so he received safeguarding training as part of his
2540 role in the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA):

2541 I’ve got my safeguarding knowledge in tennis from a different route, I’ve qualified as
2542 a tennis referee and as part of that you have to do safeguarding training every few
2543 years...it was great interactive workshop and they tell you what things to look out for
2544 and what resources are available on the LTA website, so I feel up to speed on how to
2545 handle any issue that may arise.

2546 One parent also explained they were a PE teacher, so she was more vigilant and able to
2547 recognise concerning behaviours, therefore she felt more confident to intervene or report
2548 concerns, “you need to be aware of your duty of care to the child, but then again, I suppose,

2549 I'm a PE teacher, so it's second nature to me I know how people should be behaving."
2550 Similarly, young people expressed that their ability to intervene or report concerns was a
2551 result of the knowledge they had received within school, as Angharad (female regional level
2552 hockey player) shared, "we learn a lot about bullying in school, so I know what is and isn't
2553 okay."

2554 However, not all participants had received information or felt they had sufficient
2555 knowledge to know what to do. James (male county level rugby player) explained, "I have
2556 not received anything [information on abuse]" and was not sure how best to respond if they
2557 had any concerns about a child. While Angela (mother of a club level football player) shared,
2558 "safeguarding is something that I am not aware of, I've not had any information on it, so I
2559 wouldn't really know what to do." Despite the fact that some young people had received
2560 information on bullying and negative behaviours in school, some explained that it was
2561 challenging to transfer that knowledge into a sporting context, as Gemma (female academy
2562 level football player) shared, "obviously we hear a lot of bullying like in school, but you
2563 wouldn't really think, bullying like that can happen on a football pitch, so I wouldn't really
2564 know what to do."

2565 Other personal experiences included whether participants had experienced or
2566 witnessed incidents of emotional abuse and/or bullying previously and depending on how this
2567 was handled, they perceived this may subsequently be a barrier or facilitator to future
2568 reporting. For example, Darren (father of an academy level football player) had a daughter
2569 who had experienced bullying in sport and expressed that he was impressed at how efficiently
2570 the situation was handled and felt confident to intervene or report concerns and knew where
2571 to go to if ever something were to happen again, "I was pleasantly surprised and very pleased
2572 with the way it was handled.... the initial response was very, very good. I was pleased
2573 because it reinforced that it was being dealt with." Unfortunately, others had negative
2574 personal experiences when it came to intervening which put them off intervening or reporting
2575 concerns, as parent participant 44 shared, "When I did [intervened/reported concerns] my
2576 child was victimised further and banned from playing, till they felt they had resolved the
2577 situation. They also told other children on the team, which was not very professional."

2578 Various contextual factors also influenced participants' ability to intervene or report
2579 concerns. In fact, how participants responded was contingent on the context of the situation.
2580 For example, when asked what would prevent them from intervening, parent participant 60
2581 wrote, "it would depend on the situation and who was involved." Most participants
2582 mentioned that it was dependent on the nature of the situation they had observed, as Steffan

2583 (male club level football player) said “it really depends on the severity of it [incident], I guess
2584 if it looks really bad and like it shouldn't be happening, then I would try to do something.”
2585 Similarly, young person participant 80 reported, “If the behaviour was minor, I might pass it
2586 off as a one off and not report it, unless it was really serious, and I saw it repeated or
2587 worsened.”

2588 Most indicated they would find it challenging to intervene when they did not have the
2589 entire context of a situation. Martyn (regional tennis level parent) explained:

2590 You can see you know a father shouting at a child, you know you look at it from afar
2591 and think are they telling them off because they've been naughty? Or is it because
2592 they've not behaved? It's tough because you don't really know what's going on.

2593 This appeared to be a barrier for many including young person participant 47 who mentioned,
2594 “I would be worried that it [situation] was not what it seemed,” Many participants explained
2595 that they would not instinctively intervene if they witnessed negative behaviour, mainly
2596 because they were uncertain of why the incident was occurring as parent participant 30
2597 shared as a barrier for intervening, “not knowing the full story.”

2598 That said, if participants thought they did not have all the details but nevertheless the
2599 incident was sufficiently severe, they would be more inclined to intervene. Carys (female
2600 regional level tennis player) expressed, “if I saw someone who had done nothing wrong and
2601 someone was just having a go at them, then I probably would get involved.” That said, the
2602 severity of each situation appeared to be dictated by individual perceptions, therefore there
2603 would be discrepancies in how individuals responded to similar situations. For example, Bryn
2604 (male regional hockey coach) was asked what would prevent or facilitate him from intervene
2605 if he witnessed bullying in sport, he said, “I think sometimes, we are being a little bit
2606 overprotective, some people may class things as verbal bullying, but I sometimes think it's
2607 just kids being kids, so I wouldn't always do anything about it.”

2608 Participants also highlighted that intervening was also contingent on the individuals
2609 involved an incident (e.g., perpetrators and/or victims). Most reported that they would
2610 respond differently depending on whether a child or an adult was the perpetrator. Young
2611 people were less likely intervene or report concerns if a parent was involved as a perpetrator.
2612 For example, Owain (male academy level rugby player) said, “I think if it was a parent, I
2613 would be even less likely to do something about it, because to me that person as a stranger
2614 and honestly I might not see them again.” Overall, young people felt less confident to
2615 intervene when adults were involved, they appeared to believe that it was either the coaches
2616 or other adults in the environments responsibility to recognise and challenge negative

2617 behaviours perpetrated by adults. In addition, some coaches also found it difficult to
2618 intervene if a parent was involved, as coach participant 13 expressed, “if it is the parent of the
2619 child, it can be hard to 'interfere' as they may just take the child away from the sport.”

2620 Additionally, participants reported that they would find it difficult to intervene if they
2621 knew the perpetrators involved. For example, in the survey, young person participant 59
2622 wrote, “if I knew the person, I may be less likely to report it.” Similarly, parent participant 30
2623 indicated, “If the parent of the child was a friend [wouldn't intervene], but if the adult
2624 perpetrator was someone I didn't know, no hesitation in telling someone.” Unfortunately,
2625 some coaches also expressed similar sentiments as, coach participant 44 said a barrier to
2626 reporting would be, “if that coach was really well respected and you wanted to be respected
2627 by them.” On the other hand, not knowing or having a relationship with the perpetrator also
2628 posed as a barrier for intervening as Darren (father of an academy football player) shared, “at
2629 times you don't know the person that you are dealing with [parent], you don't know the
2630 situation, so you don't want to inflame the situation.” Participants were mainly unsure of how
2631 that individual would respond if they intervened, so this posed as a barrier.

2632 Finally, participants explained that they would not intervene or report concerns, due to
2633 fear of repercussions. Many participants feared that it would negatively impact relationships
2634 with staff and other personnel within their sports organisation. For example, when responding
2635 to what would prevent her from intervening or reporting concerns, Angela (mother of a club
2636 level football player) shared, “it's tough because I feel I would be viewed as interfering and
2637 its none of my business, therefore I could be seen as a troublemaker for highlighting an issue
2638 by others.” In addition, some participants believed it could impact their child regardless of
2639 whether they were involved in the incident or not, as parent participant 48 responded in the
2640 survey, “fear that the coaches would see me as 'a troublemaker' and this would influence how
2641 they would treat my son.” Many young people expressed similar sentiments, for instance,
2642 young person participant 25 in the survey said, “fear of backlash from others” would prevent
2643 them from intervening, similarly young person participant 80 answered, “scared that
2644 something would happen to me maybe.” Like parents, most young people feared it would
2645 negatively impact them directly or the relationships they had with people involved in the
2646 incident, including staff or personnel in their sport, as Owain (male academy level rugby
2647 player) said “one thing that would stop me is the negativity I would receive from the coach in
2648 return, if I called something out they would be like, well I'm [coach] not going to be nice to
2649 you now.”

2650 **3.3.4.4 Further Information Required.** Participants were asked what they believed
2651 would be helpful in the prevention and intervention in cases of emotional abuse and bullying
2652 in sport. All participant groups unanimously expressed the need for education on emotional
2653 abuse, bullying, and keeping safe in sport as Gemma (female academy level football player)
2654 expressed, “I think education which will raise awareness, is obviously key.” Specifically,
2655 participants explained that information would help increase knowledge and awareness which
2656 would assist in the intervention in cases of emotional abuse and bullying. James (male county
2657 level rugby player) explained, “the main things is, education to raise awareness and for
2658 people to know what to do and know where the support is.” Participants specified that it was
2659 important that information was accessible for everybody, as coach participant 12 expressed,
2660 “Information available in the club for all people to access.” Parent participant 3 and young
2661 person participant 18 shared similar sentiments, “available information for all.”

2662 Evidently the provision of information was paramount, however, the content of
2663 information suggested varied. For example, some participants expressed the need for
2664 information relating to personal conduct, as coach participant 23 suggested, “information
2665 highlighting expectations of good behaviour for parents and children. Parents sometimes get
2666 carried away with a must win attitude.” In fact, many recommended that information
2667 outlining appropriate behaviours would be useful as parent participant 6 answered,
2668 “Examples of poor behaviour and what is deemed ‘acceptable’ or not. Some coaching
2669 behaviour is very entrenched, and parents may not realise it is inappropriate.” According to
2670 participants, having access to information or a clear code of conduct would be beneficial as it
2671 could have a positive impact on both individual and organisational culture. Moreover, it
2672 would educate individuals about emotional abuse and bullying and potentially reduce
2673 negative behaviour in sport.

2674 Other desired information was regarding constituents of emotional abuse and bullying
2675 and the consequences of such behaviours. Given that many believed there was a lack of
2676 knowledge regarding what constitutes emotional abuse and bullying, such information would
2677 help increase knowledge. Dafydd (male academy level football coach) shared:

2678 Well, for one, I think your definition and examples of abuse and bullying is very, very
2679 good, and I think something like that would be useful for people to actually physically
2680 understand what constitutes each element of it. It makes you aware of when it
2681 happens, and hopefully when you're doing something you'll think well hang on a
2682 minute, now that is that which constitutes this. So, if there's a greater understanding of
2683 it then then yeah people are less likely to do it.

2684 In addition, participants also felt that many people were unaware of the consequences of
2685 emotional abuse and bullying and did not recognise how damaging it could be. Therefore,
2686 they believed such information would potentially encourage people to reflect on their own
2687 behaviour as well as that of others. Owain (male academy level rugby player) expressed:

2688 I think like if you provide an actual example to say right this person's the bully and
2689 this person's getting bullied and this is what it has done to them, then people can see
2690 how someone's words or actions can negatively affect someone. I actually think stuff
2691 like this can help some kids understand better and maybe speak up for themselves.

2692 Furthermore, participants discussed the need for information relating to where to seek
2693 help and support if they had any concerns. Parent participant 19 indicated, “general
2694 information of who to contact if needed.” Similarly, Dafydd (male academy level football
2695 coach) expressed, “information, so if any of the players are experiencing anything they have
2696 information of where they can get help.” Many participants did not know how or where to
2697 report concerns, subsequently many were lacking confidence when it came to reporting
2698 concerns. Therefore, information regarding where to report concerns would help increase
2699 confidence which would be useful in preventing cases of emotional abuse and bullying.

2700 Participants had varied recommendations regarding ways in which information on
2701 prevention and intervention in cases of emotional abuse and bullying in sport could be
2702 conveyed. For example, some suggested tangible resources such as posters and leaflets as
2703 young person participant 76 stated, “Posters around the place and leaflets.” Incidentally,
2704 parents and coaches had similar suggestions, as parent participant 129 suggested, “posters up
2705 in club stating who the safeguarding officer is and how to report concerns, and coach
2706 participant 15 said, “leaflets and just general information of who to contact if needed.” Many
2707 believed that posters and leaflets were easy to circulate and display and were a tangible
2708 resource for people to access when needed. James (male county level rugby player)
2709 summarised, “leaflets are great because people can keep them and look at them whenever
2710 they want.”

2711 Others expressed a preference for online information; young participant 26 suggested,
2712 “more online resources would help,” and parent participant 45 suggested, “an email with
2713 links to online information.” Participants preference for accessing online resources, including
2714 information and online videos, was because they believed it was more easily accessible and
2715 convenient for individuals to seek out information. For instance, Dafydd (male academy level
2716 football coach) shared, “I like the idea of team’s or zoom presentation is great, for me
2717 personally it is a lot more amenable media than to physically be somewhere.” On the other

2718 hand, some participants thought that utilising online resources would be challenging and they
2719 perceived it as being somewhat disconnected from their own personal experiences as, Liam
2720 (male county level rugby coach), “If it was just like PowerPoint slides online, or a video of
2721 what somebody else has done, there isn't that personal connection there, I don't think people
2722 would learn much, I think having a talk would be better.”

2723 Consequently, many participants believed that having face-to-face sessions focused
2724 on emotional abuse, bullying, and keeping safe in sport would be useful. For example, young
2725 person participant 44 answered, “I think workshops and just any awareness on what to do and
2726 how to handle it.” Similarly, when asked what would be useful, Carys (female regional level
2727 tennis player) said, “I think having someone come in and talk to us in person about all this
2728 stuff would be helpful.” For some, face-to-face delivery was preferred because it provided an
2729 opportunity for discussion as Rachel (mother of a regional level hockey player) shared, “I
2730 think a small session with parents in person would be great, because it would give us a
2731 chance to ask questions at the end.” Martyn (regional tennis level parent) similarly shared
2732 “They would work best if they were interactive, it would allow everyone to talk through
2733 stuff.” Meanwhile, some participants perceived that in-person formats expressed greater
2734 authenticity. Gemma (female academy level football player) expressed, “I think in person, for
2735 me would definitely be the best, because then I'd know that it's genuine.”

2736 Participants conveyed that an optimal duration for an interactive session would be
2737 roughly about one hour as James (male county level rugby player) explained, “I think if you
2738 did small groups, 45 minutes to an hour with activities and a bit of interacting it would be
2739 better. I think I would understand the information more.” Many participants communicated
2740 that anything exceeding an hour would be excessive and might pose challenges for people to
2741 maintain concentration as Carys (female regional level tennis player) expressed, “you know
2742 doing some of these talks, can get boring, and you know that us kids have a very short focus
2743 time, so you don't want it to be too long.”

2744 Group dynamics for the interactive sessions were also discussed and the majority of
2745 participants recommended having separate sessions for young people, parents, and coaches,
2746 as they believed that mixing groups could limit people's ability to learn and express their true
2747 thoughts and feelings. For example, Martyn (regional tennis level parent) said:

2748 Let's say you've got them both in the same room [parents and children] and you're
2749 talking about, you know the behaviour we don't want to see is parents shouting at
2750 children all the time. In that room there could be a child who knows their parent
2751 always shouts at them. Maybe one, or two, there will be that, so maybe you want to

2752 think, if we separated them would we be able to have a really honest conversation
2753 with the kids.

2754 Finally, participants also offered suggestions regarding who should conduct or deliver
2755 in person sessions. Some participants expressed a preference for having the session delivered
2756 by a coach, as it would demonstrate cohesion and reinforce expected behaviour within the
2757 organisation. For example, when asked who he would like to deliver the sessions Darren
2758 (father of an academy level football player) said:

2759 I'd like to see it delivered by the coaches because it presents a unified front also its
2760 means there's a connection there. If you're seeing that person, week in, week out on
2761 the in the club, subconsciously you know that's the level of the code of conduct that
2762 that person [coach] is expecting to see on the side-lines.

2763 Others believed that, given their existing relationship, it would be more personal if a coach
2764 delivered it as, Angharad (female regional level hockey player) shared "It would feel more
2765 personal if it was done by my coach, whereas if they got someone else it would just feel like,
2766 we need to get this person in, just to like tick that box, you know." That said, most
2767 participants expressed a lack of concern about who delivered the session, provided it was
2768 tailored to their needs, and remained relevant to their experiences as Martyn (regional tennis
2769 level parent) said:

2770 I don't mind who delivers it. What I think is important is that they [presenter]
2771 understand the types of audiences they've got. You know you've got male and female
2772 athletes, you've got different sports, you've got different pressures on the different
2773 sports, you've got different age groups, different generations. Different sports
2774 different genders, so yeah there's a lot of things, it's just making sure that the
2775 awareness and education is there and appropriate and relevant for everyone involved
2776 in that particular sport.

2777 Participants highlighted the significance of content reflecting their own experiences, as they
2778 believed it would facilitate greater relatability, which would enable them to better connect
2779 with the material. For example, Owain (male academy level rugby player) explained, "It
2780 would be good if they included like a real-life scenario, you know a real experience, you want
2781 it to be relatable. I've seen stuff in school and it's the worst thing because it's like okay well
2782 this has nothing to do with what I'm living, I can't relate."

2783

2784 **3.4 Discussion**

2785 The purpose of the present study was to explore understanding and experiences of
2786 emotional abuse, bullying, and safeguarding within youth sport in Wales. Overall, in line
2787 with previous research, findings from the current study indicated that young people
2788 experienced emotional abuse and bullying in sport (Alexander et al., 2011; Nery et al., 2019;
2789 Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2022). In relation
2790 to bullying, 6% of young people in this study reported experiencing bullying when presented
2791 with a definition of bullying. These results are slightly lower than those found in other
2792 studies, which yielded results between 9-10% (e.g., Nery et al., 2019; Ventura et al., 2019).
2793 However, it is important to note that, when presented with a list of behaviours which
2794 constituted bullying, 45.2% of participants indicated that they had experienced bullying
2795 behaviours at least once or twice. This is substantially higher than those reported in other
2796 studies involving young athletes of similar ages (i.e., 13-18 years) (Collot D'Escury &
2797 Dudink, 2010; Evans et al., 201). Similar differences were identified in relation to
2798 experiences of emotional abuse – with more limited numbers of respondents indicating abuse
2799 when provided with a definition (i.e., 10.7%) than a list of behaviours (i.e., 17.9%).

2800 When considering young people, parents, and coaches witnessing emotional abuse
2801 and bullying in sport, again there was some alignment with previous research, as well as
2802 some differences. Findings indicated that 20.6% of all participants reported witnessing
2803 bullying in sport when presented with a definition, this number increased to 65.9% when
2804 participants were presented with a list of behaviours constituting as bullying. Coaches
2805 reported witnessed the most bullying in sport (26.3%), followed by parents (21.6%) then
2806 young people (15.5%). These results showed that 36.9% of young people in this study
2807 reported witnessing (at least once or twice in the preceding year) behaviours that constitute
2808 bullying. This is consistent with bystander rates reported by young people in other studies
2809 focusing on bullying (Nery et al., 2019; Rios et al., 2022; Vveinhardt et al., 2018).
2810 Comparisons cannot be made regarding parents' and coaches' observations of bullying as
2811 previous studies reporting bystander experiences have not included these perspectives.
2812 Nevertheless, the findings indicate that bullying is commonplace in youth sport context, and
2813 it is being witnessed by multiple stakeholders.

2814 Compared to bullying, emotional abuse was witnessed by fewer participants, with
2815 20.6% of all participants reporting witnessing emotional abuse when presented with a
2816 definition which rose to 41.8% when participants were presented with a list of behaviours
2817 constituting as emotional abuse. Similar to bullying, coaches reported witnessing it the most

2818 (59%), followed by parents (39.7%), and young people (36.9%). Given the increased focus
2819 and coverage of emotional abuse both within and outside sport in the media and the increased
2820 debate of such topics in the sport context and in general society, it could be suggested that
2821 young people, coaches, and parents now possess greater awareness of emotionally abusive
2822 behaviours perpetrated by adults in positions of power. This heightened awareness may
2823 potentially enable them to more readily identify, acknowledge, and report such negative
2824 behaviours, which might explain why the rates were lower than bullying (Vertommen et al.,
2825 2022). However, the difference in identification based on definitions and behaviours point to
2826 a continuing need to further enhance understanding. Particularly, it highlights an important
2827 methodological consideration when seeking to identify the prevalence of these behaviours in
2828 sport and also compare across different settings. Specifically, it is necessary to understand
2829 how prevalence information was sought (based on behaviours or definitions) in previous
2830 studies and also consider which approach should be adopted moving forwards. That is, would
2831 it be most appropriate to focus on behaviours or on definitions? Definitions provide the
2832 option of enabling individuals to consider a broader range of behaviours than perhaps a list
2833 would, but the lack of understanding of definitions is clearly a limitation.

2834 Consistent with previous literature (Mountjoy et al., 2022), within the current study,
2835 participants attributed the difference in recall of bullying and emotional abuse between
2836 definitions and behaviours to lack of understanding, and many believed that most young
2837 people were unaware that certain behaviours constituted emotional abuse or bullying.
2838 Although it is not surprising that young people may struggle to understand definitions, what
2839 is concerning is that this study also highlighted that parents and coaches, who are in loco
2840 parentis roles and have a legal and moral responsibility over children's welfare (see
2841 Department for Education, 2018), also struggled to recognise emotional abuse and bullying in
2842 sport, despite there being a requirement that coaches have access to training and resources
2843 pertaining to safeguarding.

2844 The lack of understanding of bullying and abuse demonstrated in the current study
2845 was also likely influenced by the specific behaviours that were most frequently recalled. In
2846 line with previous research (e.g., Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Nery et al., 2019; Rios et al., 2021),
2847 the most witnessed negative behaviours across participants in the current study were, being
2848 teased, made fun of, or called names, followed by being shouted or sworn at angrily by
2849 someone, and then being repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed. The presence
2850 of regulations governing more overt forms of abusive behaviours within sporting contexts
2851 and the wider society may explain the reason why being teased was most common abusive

2852 behaviour witnessed and experienced. For example, teasing can be disguised as banter, which
2853 is considered normal and socially acceptable in some sporting contexts (Newman et al., 2021;
2854 2022). Banter is generally considered acceptable when there is a well-established relationship
2855 between the parties involved. However, banter should be evaluated on an individual basis,
2856 considering the existing relationships and knowledge of learned behaviour (Booth et al.,
2857 2023). Therefore, parties involved, or bystanders, should not automatically assume that
2858 something is banter, as banter can sometimes escalate into bullying (Booth et al., 2023) and
2859 being a victim of abusive behaviour is a subjective experience and dependent on the
2860 individual on the receiving end interprets the negative behaviours (Collot D'Escury &
2861 Dudink, 2010; Kirby & Wintrump, 2002).

2862 Similar to perceptions of banter compared to bullying, previous research has
2863 highlighted that individuals have different perceptions regarding abusive behaviours in sport
2864 (Gervis et al., 2016). In line with previous research, participants in the current study believed
2865 that bullying and emotional abuse occurred and were not recognised because individuals had
2866 different sensitivity and tolerance levels, and they felt that emotionally abusive and bullying
2867 behaviours were subjective and dependent on individuals' perceptions. Such findings are
2868 concerning because it can result in a situation where abusive or bullying-type behaviours are
2869 ignored or "brushed under the carpet" because it is seen as the issue of the victim not being
2870 resilient or tough enough, rather than the behaviour being the issue. In an environment such
2871 as sport where resilience and mental toughness are portrayed as particularly important,
2872 especially within highly masculine environments, this can be particularly troubling.
2873 Moreover, if there is a perception that abuse or bullying is simply due to the victim being
2874 unable to cope with banter or similar, it is understandable that young people and their parents
2875 might be hesitant to report abusive behaviours. Addressing this "individualised" take on
2876 abuse and bullying should, therefore, be a priority.

2877 Further, the varied perspectives on bullying and emotional abuse also reaffirm the
2878 need to consider culture when it comes to safeguarding young people in sport (Owusu-
2879 Sekereye et al., 2022). As participants suggested, the reason why behaviours occurred and
2880 were not recognised, is due to the immediate and broader sporting culture in which
2881 participants are located, which did not acknowledge or recognise certain behaviours as
2882 abusive. Research suggests that different cultural factors can make it easier for abuse to
2883 occur, difficult for people to recognise, and more challenging to respond in youth-serving
2884 organisations (Palmer & Feldman, 2017). The results of this study underscore the important
2885 need to address organisational culture within the youth sport (Knight et al., 2017; Mountjoy

2886 et al., 2015). In fact, by actively trying to transform negative cultures into healthy ones with
2887 positive norms and behaviours, this could help provide young people and key individuals
2888 within the environment role models of standards that can effectively reduce the prevalence
2889 and acceptance of negative behaviours such as bullying and emotional abuse.

2890 The prevalent perception that abusive behaviours are necessary for performance also
2891 needs to be dismantled. Rather, emphasis should be placed on successful performance
2892 environments where young people thrive, and their welfare is prioritised. Over time, negative
2893 cultural factors that endorse and normalise abusive behaviour can make young people and
2894 key individuals in the environment less likely to intervene or report cases of negative
2895 behaviour (Roberts et al., 2020; Willson et al., 2022). In fact, the current study speaks to
2896 researchers' suggestions of embracing a broad organisation-wide approach that considers
2897 how the culture within the organisation can encourage and support safeguarding efforts and
2898 eliminate harmful behaviours such as bullying and emotional abuse (Mountjoy et al., 2015).
2899 Organisations should look to develop a culture that values safeguarding, as it is suggested
2900 that organisations that are most successful at protecting young people will have a
2901 safeguarding culture (Owusu -Sekeyere et al., 2022).

2902 According to young peoples' responses, when negative behaviours were experienced,
2903 they were most frequently the result of behaviour by peers, which is consistent with recent
2904 studies on maltreatment in sport (Alexander et al., 2011; Pankowiak et al., 2023; Vertommen
2905 et al., 2016, 2022). However, parents were reported as the second highest perpetrators
2906 followed by coaches. This contrasts with other prevalence studies which identified coaches as
2907 the first or second most frequent perpetrator of maltreatment in sport (Pankowiak et al., 2023;
2908 Willson et al., 2021). One potential explanation for this disparity is that most participants in
2909 the present study were between the ages of 13 - 15 years and mainly competed at local club
2910 level. Research has shown that bullying occurs at all ages, but the peak incidence is between
2911 10 - 13 years of age (Brown et al., 2005; Finkelhor, et al., 2015). Moreover, most participants
2912 reported competing at club level and volunteers such as parents play a key role in the
2913 organisation and delivery of grassroots sport, which could explain why parents were reported
2914 among the most common perpetrators.

2915 Over the last decade, research pertaining to parental involvement in sport has grown
2916 exponentially (Knight, 2019). Through this research much attention has been given to both
2917 the positive and negative influences parents might have on children's experiences (see Knight
2918 et al., 2017, 2023 for summaries). However, to date, limited attention has been given to
2919 examining parents' role and influence as perpetrators of maltreatment in sport (Parent &

2920 Fortier, 2017). The data from the current study is amongst some of the few (Pankowiak et al.,
2921 2023; Vertommen et al., 2016, 2022; Willson et al., 2021) to explicitly demonstrate abusive
2922 behaviours perpetrated by parents in sport. Participants reported that the most commonly
2923 experienced or witnessed abusive behaviours perpetrated by parents included, being made to
2924 feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards, being shouted at or sworn at
2925 angrily, and being criticised for how they played or performed. These results are unsurprising
2926 as research in the youth sport parenting context has recognised that parents can be involved in
2927 negative ways and exhibit some of the negative behaviours mentioned above (Leff & Hoyle,
2928 1995). Such findings point to the need for future research to better understand the nature and
2929 influence of all significant others within the context of sport (Willson et al., 2022) to gain a
2930 better understanding of how they contribute to maltreatment. Particularly, the current findings
2931 highlight the need for researchers to consider research beyond the abuse and maltreatment
2932 literature such as that on youth sport parenting to help improve efforts of preventing abusive
2933 behaviours perpetrated by parents.

2934 Moreover, these findings reinforce the importance of considering what might be
2935 leading to such behaviours from parents (Knight et al., 2017), and particularly the impact of
2936 specific sporting cultures on parental involvement (Holt & Knight, 2014; Knight et al., 2017).
2937 Research has indicated that certain sporting cultures can influence parents' identities, which
2938 can lead to patterns of engagement in the values they endorse. In fact, research shows that
2939 parent identities can be shaped by a culture based on perfection and performance, and
2940 consequently parents can engage in various (often negative) behaviours to uphold attitudes
2941 and expectations ingrained in the specific cultural context (McMahon & Penney, 2015).
2942 Moreover, literature has indicated that there is a tendency of parents to defer to the expertise
2943 of the coach and to normalise and rationalise behaviours that occur within the sporting
2944 environment (Kerr & Stirling, 2012; McMahon et al., 2018). Such a situation can be
2945 particularly problematic, especially if coaches and other individuals within the environment
2946 engage in these harmful behaviours, because parents end up becoming silent bystanders who
2947 do not know they should or can intervene and even worse can replicate the abusive
2948 behaviours (e.g. McMahon & Penney, 2015).

2949 These findings reinforce recommendations that sporting organisations should
2950 endeavour to share information regarding all forms of maltreatment, especially bullying and
2951 emotional abuse, in a publicly accessible way to help parents better recognise and be
2952 empowered to challenge the socialisation and normalisation of poor practices (Johnson et al.,
2953 2020; Kerr, 2020). Moreover, prevention initiatives aiming to address the issue of abuse

2954 perpetrated by parents would benefit from drawing on youth sport parenting educational
2955 initiatives (see Burke et al., 2021 for review). These evidence-based educational programs
2956 have considered the influence of parental involvement, factors influencing it, and strategies to
2957 enhance parental engagement in sport (Dorsch et al., 2017). Therefore, integrating some of
2958 this literature could contribute to a better understanding of how abusive parental behaviours
2959 may occur and inform future initiatives aimed at preventing abusive behaviours by parents in
2960 sport. In addressing issues of parents as perpetrators as abuse, consideration of them as
2961 important individuals to whom young people can report concerns should also be considered.

2962 The findings of the current study reinforced previous literature that had shown that a
2963 lack of knowledge of behaviours that constitute as abusive, fear of repercussions, and not
2964 knowing where to report concerns are barriers to young people intervening in cases of
2965 bullying and abuse (Mountjoy et al., 2020; Willson et al., 2020). Of particular concern, within
2966 the current study participants also expressed hesitancy to intervene if they did not have a full
2967 understanding of the incident because they feared that they might misjudge it and thus were
2968 only likely to intervene in more severe incidents. Given that many bullying and emotional
2969 abusive behaviours are subtle and have been normalised and/or accepted in the context of
2970 sport (Jacobs et al., 2016; Smits et al., 2017; Stirling et al., 2011), such findings demonstrate
2971 why they may go unchallenged. Moreover, it suggests that young people may not fully
2972 recognise the detrimental consequences of behaviours they perceive as less severe, Therefore,
2973 these findings highlight the importance of educational initiatives that incorporate information
2974 about the negative outcomes of bullying and emotional abuse (Mountjoy et al., 2015; Nery et
2975 al., 2020). Such initiatives can help sensitise individuals to certain behaviours (McMahon et
2976 al., 2023) and promote a shift in attitudes towards various forms of bullying and emotional
2977 abuse, even those that may appear less severe (Melim & Oliveira, 2013).

2978 Young people also reported that they were less likely to intervene if they witnessed an
2979 adult perpetrating emotional abuse against a child. In fact, many believed that it was the
2980 responsibility of other adults in the environment to intervene in such cases. This is perhaps
2981 not surprising given that adults hold power and privilege over children. However, given the
2982 lack of understanding parents and coaches appeared to have regarding bullying and
2983 emotionally abusive behaviours, as well as their own hesitation to intervene in different
2984 situations, young people's reliance on adults may be misplaced. Nevertheless, the findings do
2985 highlight the responsibility that adults have in creating a culture in which abusive behaviours
2986 and bullying are addressed and further emphasis the need for clubs and organisations to

2987 ensure that adults have appropriate information, and confidence in that information, the
2988 intervene.

2989 Previous research suggests that providing accessible information can help effectively
2990 communicate information about different forms of maltreatment, young athletes' rights, and
2991 avenues to report concerns about their safety and welfare in sport (Macpherson et al., 2022).
2992 In line with such findings, in the current study when asked what would be beneficial in
2993 preventing and intervening in cases of emotional abuse and bullying, participants
2994 recommended the need for easily accessible information on emotional abuse, bullying and
2995 safeguarding in sport. Moreover, many participants suggested that face-to-face, interactive
2996 workshops be conducted separately, without mixing populations such as young people,
2997 coaches, and parents. Participants believed that separating the population groups could
2998 encourage honest conversations, especially if young people had encountered or witnessed
2999 such behaviours from adults in their sporting environment. This reaffirms research
3000 suggestions that evidence-based education is one of the key methods to prevent abuse in sport
3001 (Mountjoy et al., 2022). Moreover, these current findings highlight the need to ensure that
3002 education initiatives are comprehensive and include definitions of all forms of abuse and their
3003 associated behaviours within the specific context of sport, clarity on power dynamics
3004 associated with vulnerabilities for young people, outline roles and responsibilities of key
3005 individuals in preventing and addressing abuse, guidance on fostering positive sporting
3006 culture, and advancing equity and promoting equity and inclusivity (Gurgus et al., 2023;
3007 McMahon et al., 2023, Mountjoy et al., 2015).

3008 Furthermore, consideration should be given to how evidence-based educational
3009 initiatives are delivered to various populations. Given the high rates of bullying witnessed
3010 and experienced by young people in this study consideration should be given to developing
3011 and utilising creative research approaches to help provide evidence-based comprehensive
3012 education to young people on issues pertaining to bullying, emotional abuse and other forms
3013 of maltreatment in sport. Creative research methods, such as arts-based approaches, are
3014 suggested as both enjoyable and highly beneficial (Punch, 2002). They can help promote
3015 engagement, empowerment, and various forms of expression, as well as provide valuable
3016 insights into young people's perspectives, allowing them control over self-expression and the
3017 discussion of complex, sensitive, topics (Brown & Leigh, 2019; Fargas-Malet, 2010; Thomas
3018 & O'Kane, 1998).

3019 Moreover, beyond interventions with young people, the current findings reinforce the
3020 need for evidence-based educational initiatives which focus on bystanders' attitudes towards

3021 emotional abuse and bullying, in order to promote more frequent defence of people
3022 experiencing bullying and emotional abuse (Corboz et al., 2018; Nery., 2019; Verhelle et al.,
3023 2022). However, such interventions should go beyond merely changing bystander attitudes
3024 toward bullying. Instead, they should actively involve bystanders in the situation, clarify how
3025 their actions can influence abusive incidents such as bullying and emotional abuse, and equip
3026 them with the necessary confidence and skills to intervene effectively (Nery et al.,
3027 2020). Research shows that bystanders tend to perceive that they are not involved in abusive
3028 behaviours especially bullying (Nery et al., 2020). Nonetheless, their tolerance or
3029 condemnation of abuse and bullying has an impact on the prevalence of such behaviours.
3030 Therefore, it is essential to work with bystanders to help motivate them to reject negative
3031 behaviours and advocate more frequently for victims. It is believed that bystander initiatives
3032 that encourage individuals to proactively intervene can be useful in addressing abusive
3033 behaviours (Nery et al., 2020).

3034 ***3.4.1 Practical implications***

3035 There are several applied implications that should be considered given the present
3036 findings. First, the findings reinforce the need for more evidence based educational initiatives
3037 that teach about various forms of maltreatment in sport (Gurgis & Kerr, 2021; Mountjoy et
3038 al., 2016; Wurtele, 2012; Willson et al., 2022). Particularly, there is a need for sport
3039 organisations to develop evidence-based comprehensive educational initiatives that are
3040 tailored to specific sporting contexts, and include all forms of harm and relevant examples, to
3041 enhance engagement, and understanding of abusive behaviours in sport (McMahon et al.,
3042 2023). Given that coaches and parents were among the most common individuals to whom
3043 participants said that they would report concerns, including them within educational
3044 initiatives appears important. Moreover, such education should highlight the different
3045 nuances of how abusive behaviours can manifest and be perpetrated by different individuals
3046 within the environment.

3047 Next, it was clear that contextual and environmental factors influenced experiences
3048 /observations of abuse as well as the likelihood of reporting. Therefore, coaches and sports
3049 organisations should strive to create safe and enjoyable environments that prioritise
3050 children's human rights, developmental needs, and overall enjoyment and well-being.
3051 Specifically, coaches and sports clubs should work with children, parents, and other key
3052 individuals in sport to develop a clear philosophy to promote children's safety and welfare in
3053 sports. This philosophy should outline the responsibilities of children and other key
3054 individuals in preventing and addressing abusive behaviours. In addition, it should include

3055 acceptable behaviours and should be communicated effectively to young people, parents, and
3056 other key individuals within the sporting environment.

3057 Many participants were unaware where to report safeguarding concerns, particularly
3058 those involved at lower levels of sport. Therefore, it is important that sports clubs ensure that
3059 they have visible and accessible reporting mechanisms for children and other key individuals
3060 in the environment. Based on the results, it is recommended that sports clubs should
3061 introduce the welfare officer to young people, parents, and other key individuals throughout
3062 the season/year, and where possible provide poster, leaflets, infographics on what to do if
3063 they want to report concerns. Additionally, sports clubs should consider using digital
3064 platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or other social platforms to continuously
3065 communicate reporting mechanisms for individuals wish to report concerns.

3066 ***3.4.2 Limitations***

3067 Results from the current study should be interpreted considering certain limitations.
3068 First, even though a mixed methods explanatory sequential design was employed for the
3069 current study, it is important to acknowledge the ethical considerations pertaining to
3070 anonymity prevented direct follow-up of participants from phase one in phase two. To
3071 address this limitation participants from phase two were recruited based on maximum
3072 variation and snowball sampling (Morgan, 2008; Patton, 2002). Moreover, phase two
3073 included a small sample size, although this provided valuable data, it is important to
3074 recognised that the full breadth of phase one answers may not have been fully captured and
3075 explored in phase two.

3076 In addition, due to ethical considerations relating to confidentiality, participants were
3077 not permitted to disclose in which sport negative behaviours were experienced. Therefore,
3078 comparisons could not be made across different sporting contexts or participation levels.
3079 Research has highlighted that there are various risk factors pertaining to certain forms of
3080 maltreatment in sport in relation to sport and participation level, (Parent & Vaillancourt-
3081 Morel, 2021). Although the findings of the current study provide insights into bullying and
3082 emotional abuse in Wales, unfortunately, the findings are somewhat limited in being able to
3083 provide specific information on these risk factors.

3084 Another limitation, driven by ethical considerations to avoid causing harm to
3085 participants, was the non-compulsory nature of the survey questions. Participants were not
3086 obliged to answer every question. Consequently, many participants opted not to respond to all
3087 questions, which, in some instances, resulted in a limited number of responses. This
3088 limitation made it challenging to obtain an accurate and representative understanding of the

3089 landscape, particularly regarding the frequency of abusive behaviours witnessed and
3090 experienced, as well as the identification of perpetrators. Therefore, the results are limited in
3091 their ability in truly reflecting the overall landscape.

3092 ***3.4.3 Future Directions***

3093 Findings from the current study provide several suggestions for future research and
3094 practice. Firstly, the current study explicitly focused on experiences of bullying and
3095 emotional abuse without examining other forms of maltreatment in sport. Research suggests
3096 that studies which focus on single forms of maltreatment or specific contexts limits the
3097 overall understanding of the problem and the links between diverse forms of maltreatment in
3098 sport (Hamby et al., 2017; Vertommen et al., 2017). In fact, investigating multiple forms of
3099 maltreatment and understanding the context in which maltreatment occurs can improve
3100 understanding of common risk factors and links between various forms which can
3101 subsequently help in the development of more effective prevention initiatives (Hamby et al.,
3102 2017). Therefore, future research should endeavour to utilise or develop a validated
3103 instrument to examine experiences of multiple forms of maltreatment in sport.

3104 The current study found that young people, parents, and coaches were witnessing
3105 bullying and emotional abuse in sport. However, limited research exists in the youth sport
3106 context that examines bystanders' (i.e., peers, coaches, and parents) perceptions,
3107 understanding or experiences of maltreatment. Given that bystanders have the ability to
3108 intervene and improve a situation it would be useful to further explore their experiences.
3109 Studying bystander experiences can help researchers gain further understanding of attitudes,
3110 beliefs, norms, and the impact of maltreatment on both victims and those who witness it.
3111 Moreover, it can help identify risk factors that can subsequently contribute to the
3112 development of effective prevention initiatives, and also enhance awareness of maltreatment
3113 in youth sport.

3114 While there has been a growing body of research on maltreatment in sport, many
3115 studies have been cross-sectional. Although such research has provided valuable insights into
3116 maltreatment in sport. Future research should endeavour to utilise longitudinal designs which
3117 focus on experiences throughout a season or multiple seasons to help enhance understanding
3118 of midterm and long-lasting experiences and consequences of maltreatment, and how young
3119 people who are targeted might cope with such negative experiences. Moreover, there is
3120 paucity of studies that have utilise a mixed methods approach to examine maltreatment in
3121 sport. Further research would benefit from mixed methods study designs that utilises a

3122 validated psychometrically sound instrument to explore a range of different abuse in order to
3123 help enhance comprehensive understanding of maltreatment in sport.

3124 Although there has been an increased focus on preventing maltreatment in sport,
3125 solely focusing on preventing maltreatment does not necessarily ensure that young people
3126 will have enjoyable experiences. Recognising the important role of enjoyment in motivating
3127 young people to initiate and sustain their involvement in sport, future research should
3128 consider integrating these two concepts. Specifically, researchers should explore the
3129 relationship between safety and enjoyment to establish ways to optimise young people's
3130 overall sporting experiences, potentially leading to increased participation and commitment
3131 in sport.

3132 ***3.4.4 Conclusion***

3133 Overall, the current study highlighted that young people, parents, and coaches are
3134 experiencing and witnessing bullying and emotional abuse in sport. Participants believed that
3135 these negative behaviours were occurring due to various individual and cultural and
3136 environmental factors. Further, the study illustrated that young people, parents, and coaches
3137 do not appear to recognise emotional abuse and bullying behaviours in sport and various
3138 challenges exist when it comes to intervening in cases of such negative behaviours. Taken
3139 together, findings from this study highlight the importance in developing evidence-based
3140 education initiatives to help educate young people, parents and other key individuals about
3141 abuse behaviours and safeguarding in sport.

3142

3143 **Chapter 4: Developing optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience**

3144 **4.1 Introduction**

3145 The findings of study one (Chapter 3) indicated that emotional abuse and bullying
3146 were prevalent in youth sports across Wales. Specifically, the results highlighted that young
3147 people, parents, and coaches were unable to recognise emotionally abusive or bullying
3148 behaviours. This is consistent with previous literature, with various researchers highlighting
3149 how the unique socio-cultural context of youth sport presents various possibilities for
3150 different forms of maltreatment including bullying and emotional abuse to occur (e.g.,
3151 Brackenridge, 2001; Fasting & Brackenridge, 2009; Mountjoy, 2020; Parent, 2011; Owton &
3152 Sparkes, 2015).

3153 In response to the recognition of youth sport as a location in which various forms of
3154 maltreatment can occur, there has been increasing interest in promoting young people's (i.e.,
3155 18 years and under) rights and creating positive sporting experiences (David, 2005; Gurgis et
3156 al., 2021, International Olympic Committee, 2020). Under the United Nations Convention on
3157 the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) all young people (under 18 years) around the world
3158 are universally granted rights. Specifically, the UNCRC emphasises that the responsibility to
3159 protect the safety, health, development, and well-being of the young person lies with all
3160 individuals who bear clear legal, ethical, professional, and/or cultural responsibilities over
3161 them (UNICEF, 2005a, 2005b, 2005). This includes sports coaches and other adults in loco
3162 parentis (David, 2004). Although the context of sport is not explicitly included in the
3163 UNCRC, the rights established within the UNCRC apply universally to all contexts including
3164 youth sport (David, 2005). Specifically, Article 19 of the UNCRC states that "children (under
3165 18 years of age) have a right to be protected from all forms of maltreatment, abuse, and
3166 violence" (Article 19, UNCRC, 1989). Therefore, all forms of maltreatment including
3167 bullying and emotional abuse in sport constitute a breach of young people's human rights
3168 (Tuakli-Wosornu et al., 2022).

3169 Recognising the rights of young people in sport has led to the emergence of various
3170 strategies to protect young people from different types of harm including emotional abuse
3171 and bullying (Rhind & Sekeyere, 2018). The most notable approach is safeguarding, which is
3172 a comprehensive and proactive approach to keeping children (i.e., 18 years and under) and
3173 vulnerable adults safe from harm or abuse (Department of Education, 2018). Safeguarding
3174 includes "protecting children from abuse and maltreatment; preventing harm to children's
3175 health or development; ensuring provision of safe and effective care; enabling young people
3176 to have the best outcomes" (HM Government, 2018, p. 7). Safeguarding was formally

3177 introduced in the UK sport context in 2001 with the formation of the Child Protection in
3178 Sport Unit (CPSU) and the publication of National Standards for Safeguarding Children in
3179 Sport (CPSU, 2003).

3180 The CPSU work in collaboration with National governing bodies (NGB's), sports
3181 organisations, active partnerships and other organisations and individuals involved in youth
3182 sport, to provide guidance about safeguarding and to implement safeguarding principles and
3183 protect children's rights within sport (CPSU, 2018). Since CPSU was established, policy
3184 guidance has developed to align the Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance (HM
3185 Government, 2018). As a requirement, all organisations that receive funding from UK Sport
3186 or Sport England must adhere to the Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in
3187 Sport established by the CPSU (CPSU, 2018; HM Government, 2018). In accordance with
3188 these guidelines, sports clubs and organisations should implement procedures to minimise
3189 young people's risk of all forms of maltreatment including emotional abuse and bullying.
3190 They should also work towards ensuring that sport remains safe and enjoyable for everyone
3191 involved (CPSU, 2018).

3192 Since the establishment of the CPSU there has been a growing emphasis on
3193 safeguarding and the protection of children in youth sport across the UK. Research has
3194 demonstrated that maltreatment is influenced by various factors, including interactions
3195 between individuals, interpersonal dynamics, and organisational systems (Brackenridge &
3196 Rhind, 2014; Everley, 2020; Nite & Nauright, 2020). As such, it has been recognised that
3197 merely focusing on individuals, their interactions, or organisational systems in isolation is
3198 insufficient in ensuring young people's safety in sport (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014).
3199 Instead, more recently research has highlighted the importance of simultaneously considering
3200 these factors to protect young people from harm in sport and researchers have suggested the
3201 need for a comprehensive and holistic approach that addresses individual, interpersonal, and
3202 systemic factors contributing to maltreatment in sport (Owusu-Sekyere & Rhind, 2022).

3203 However, while the focus on ensuring children have safe sporting experiences is an
3204 extremely important one, recent research emphasises the importance of not only preventing
3205 harm in sport but also optimising sporting experiences (Gurgis & Kerr, 2022; Lang & Hartill,
3206 2015). In fact, such an approach aligns with the view of the CPSU which is to ensure that all
3207 children have access to safe and enjoyable sporting experiences. Sport enjoyment is "a
3208 positive affective response to the sport experience that reflects generalised feelings such as
3209 pleasure, liking, and fun" (Scanlan et al., 1993, p. 6). Among the various motives for youth
3210 sport participation, enjoyment is commonly identified as one of, if not the, main reason

3211 children participate in sport (Salguero et al., 2004). Previous research has found enjoyment to
3212 be the primary motive and key predictor influencing commitment to organised youth sport
3213 programmes (Scanlan et al., 1993). When there is a lack of enjoyment (especially if
3214 combined with pressure to excel), research suggests that young people often lose interest and
3215 drop out of sports entirely or pursue other activities they find more enjoyable (Gardner et al.,
3216 2016).

3217 As one may expect, research indicates that various forms of maltreatment including
3218 bullying and emotional abuse can substantially decrease experiences of enjoyment in sport
3219 (Jewett et al., 2020; Stirling & Kerr, 2013; Willson & Kerr, 2022). As such, ensuring young
3220 people's safety in sport is likely to have positive impacts on enjoyment. However, merely
3221 ensuring their safety does not automatically guarantee that they will have enjoyable
3222 experiences (Gurgis et al., 2022). Ensuring safety during participation remains paramount,
3223 but creating sporting experiences which are both safe and enjoyable is necessary to ensure
3224 young people remain in sport and have access to the extensive benefits that can be gained
3225 through participation (Merkel, 2013; Scanlan et al., 1993). To date, however, most research
3226 has focused on one or the other. That is, researchers have either concerned themselves with
3227 increasing/understanding enjoyment (e.g., Furusa et al., 2020; McCarthy et al., 2008) or they
3228 have sought to examine experiences of abuse within sport (Alexander et al., 2011; Gervis &
3229 Dunn, 2004). Little consideration has been given to how we can address both of these
3230 together. As such, the purpose of the current study was to explore the process through which
3231 an optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience is created for young people.

3232 **4.2 Method**

3233 ***4.2.1 Methodological Approach and Philosophical Underpinnings***

3234 The current study utilised a Grounded theory (GT) methodology. Grounded theory is
3235 a group of methodologies that are concerned with generating theory of a phenomena that is
3236 grounded within empirical data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Weed, 2017). It is suggested that
3237 GT is beneficial when exploring novel areas of investigation with limited existing theories
3238 (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Moreover, research suggests that GT is useful in investigating
3239 research topics that focus on social processes (i.e., causes, contingencies, consequences,
3240 covariances, and conditions) present in human interaction specifically in the environments in
3241 which they take place (Glaser, 1978; Stern et al., 1982). Specifically, GT is suited to research
3242 questions which focus on ways in which individuals and groups interact, adjust, readjust, and
3243 establish relationships and patterns of behaviour which are modified through social
3244 interactions (e.g., 'process') (Glaser, 1996; Stern et al. 1982). Given that the current study

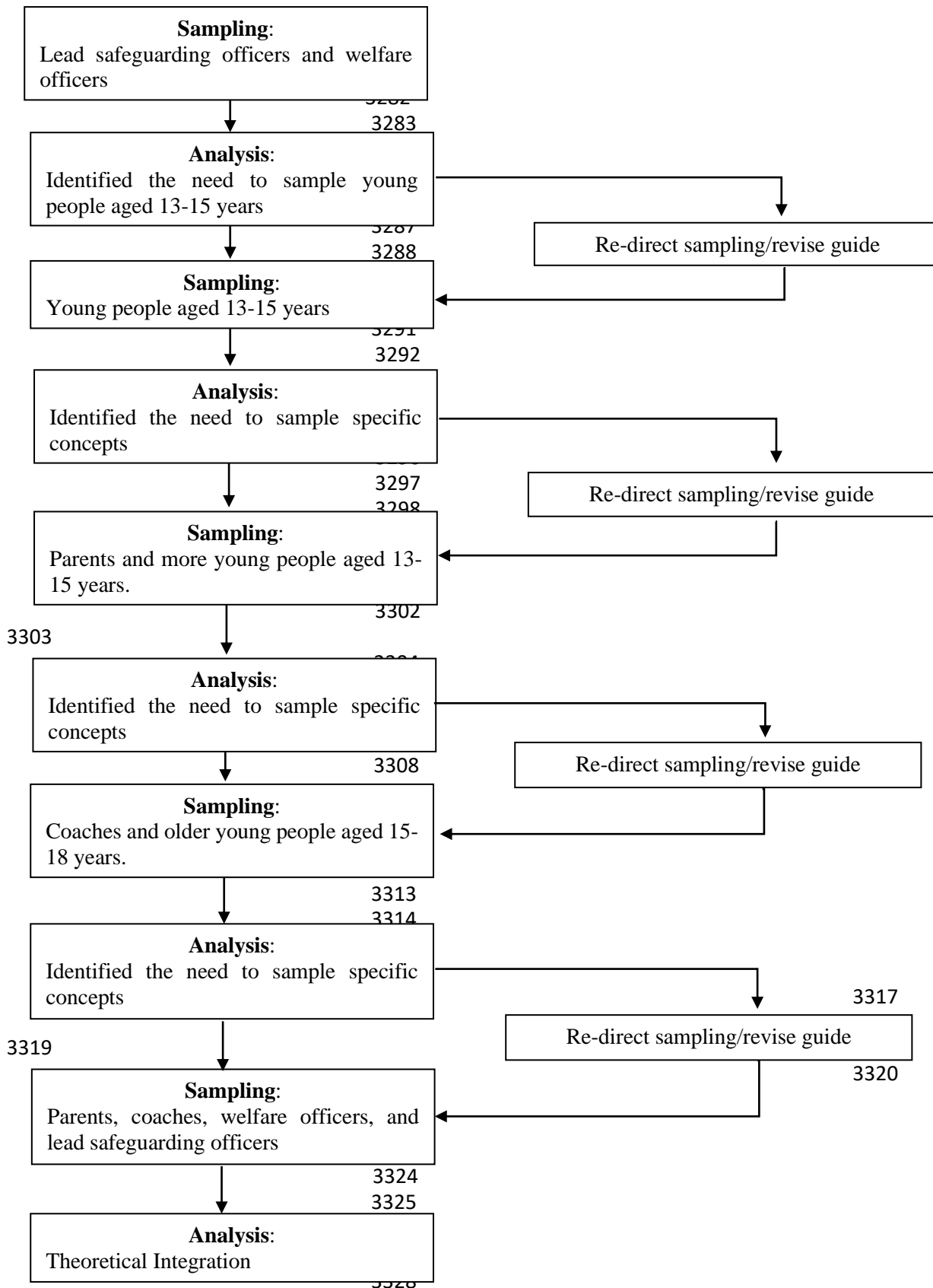
3245 sought to explore the process leading to optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experiences,
3246 GT was deemed a suitable approach to employ. Furthermore, although there has been a recent
3247 increased emphasis on preventing maltreatment in sport and optimising young people's
3248 sporting experiences (Gurgis et al., 2023; Owusu-Sekyere et al., 2021), to the best of my
3249 knowledge there are no existing theories on this topic. Therefore, GT was considered a useful
3250 approach to utilise.

3251 Specifically, the current study employed the Straussian version of GT (Corbin &
3252 Strauss, 2015). In line with the more recent versions of Straussian GT, an interpretivist
3253 approach was adopted in the current study. An interpretivist perspective proposes that reality
3254 is subjective and constructed by the individual (Lather, 2006). Additionally, interpretivism
3255 suggests that there is no single reality or precise route to knowledge (Smith & Sparkes,
3256 2008). Instead, this approach accepts that multiple perspectives exist and tend to differ
3257 between individuals because of people's past experiences, personalities, social interactions,
3258 and environment (Ponterotto, 2005). This acceptance of multiple realities allows the
3259 researcher to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon
3260 under study (Morehouse, 2011). Further, interpretivism understands that the researcher and
3261 the object of inquiry both influence one another to shape the construction of the research
3262 outcomes (Morrow, 2005).

3263 **4.2.2 Sampling**

3264 Following receipt of University Ethics Board approval, participant recruitment
3265 commenced. A combination of purposive and theoretical sampling strategies were employed
3266 for this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Patton, 2002) (see Figure 4.1 for an overview of
3267 sampling process). In GT methodology, initial participants are sampled based on their ability
3268 to best address the research aims (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Given that sport organisations in
3269 Wales have a responsibility for protecting and promoting children's safety and wellbeing in
3270 sport (CPSU, 2018), lead safeguarding officers and/or club welfare officers were recruited
3271 first because they have a fundamental responsibility to safeguard children in sport. These
3272 participants were recruited first because it was anticipated that due to the nature of their roles,
3273 they would possess relevant knowledge of policies and procedures related to safeguarding
3274 and the protection of young people in sport. Furthermore, it was also thought that these
3275 individuals would have had access and interactions with different individuals at various levels
3276 in sport. Therefore, they were approached to provide a comprehensive overview and detailed
3277 insights into the research topic (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

3278



3329 **Figure 4.1:** Theoretical sampling process

3330 Subsequent recruitment of participants involved theoretical sampling, which enables
 3331 researchers to explore leads in the data by sampling participants or other material that provide

3332 relevant information relating to concepts developed in preceding stages of data collection and
3333 analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Paramount to GT methodology is the iterative process of
3334 data collection, sampling, and analysis throughout the research process to develop a
3335 substantive or formal theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Specifically, GT focuses on theory
3336 development, with data collection and analysis occurring concurrently, allowing for
3337 subsequent data collection to be informed by the emerging theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).
3338 This continual interplay between data collection, sampling, and analysis is directed by
3339 theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). As concepts and explanations develop
3340 through rounds of data analysis, researchers may identify new interview questions, additional
3341 participants, or different data collection sites/settings to enhance the understanding of the
3342 emerging theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The process is guided by the requirements of the
3343 emergent theory and cannot be predetermined.

3344 Based on the initial interviews with lead safeguarding officers and welfare officers it
3345 was apparent that peer relationships were of paramount importance in ensuring optimally safe
3346 and enjoyable experiences. Consequently, the decision was made to sample young athletes
3347 involved aged between 13-15 years based on the three emerging concepts: ‘positive peer
3348 relationships,’ ‘welcoming environment,’ and ‘enhancing skill development through fun
3349 drills.’ As theoretical sampling progressed other concepts emerged pertaining to ‘parental
3350 involvement’ and the nature of interactions between young people and parents. These insights
3351 stimulated the need to recruit more young people and parents. Furthermore, as the ongoing
3352 analysis progressed, it became evident that the inclusion of coaches and older athletes was
3353 essential. This was driven by the recognition that the dyadic relationship between young
3354 people, parents, and coaches played a crucial role in fostering an optimally safe and enjoyable
3355 sporting experience. Consequently, a decision was made to recruit coaches and older young
3356 people aged between 15-18 years. The objective was to explore how the previously identified
3357 concepts applied to this specific group and to gain a deeper understanding of how parental
3358 involvement and the dyadic relationship between coaches, young people, and parents differed
3359 or exhibited similarities at different developmental stages.

3360 Finally, as the process of theoretical sampling advanced, additional concepts
3361 continued to be developed pertaining to ‘coach competence,’ ‘developmentally appropriate
3362 training sessions,’ ‘designated and accessible welfare officer,’ among others. As a result,
3363 additional parents, coaches, safeguarding lead officers and welfare officers were sampled to
3364 explore these ideas. Then, in the final phases of data collection additional young people,
3365 coaches, safeguarding lead officers, welfare officers, and parents were recruited based on the

3366 emerging concepts. Sampling concluded once the processes of constant comparison no longer
3367 generated new concepts, theoretical insights or interpretations between concepts, and the
3368 researcher felt that the theory was sufficiently developed (i.e., theoretical saturation; Corbin
3369 & Strauss, 2008). At this point, theoretical saturation was reached, in which the theory had
3370 achieved a satisfactory level of development as such data collection concluded (Corbin &
3371 Strauss, 2008).

3372 **4.2.3 Participants**

3373 In total, the sample consisted of 39 participants: 19 young people, six parents, nine
3374 coaches, and five individuals in safeguarding roles. The young people were involved in eight
3375 sports: tennis ($n=7$), swimming ($n=3$), football ($n=3$), rugby ($n=3$), hockey ($n=1$), and cricket
3376 ($n=2$). Young people ranged in age from 13 to 18 years (M age =14.89, $SD=1.88$), and had
3377 been involved in their self-declared “main” sport for between four to 12 years ($M= 7.21$,
3378 $SD=2.14$). Parent participants were four fathers and two mothers, who had children ranging
3379 between 13-17 years of age involved in tennis ($n =4$), rugby ($n = 1$), and swimming ($n= 1$).
3380 Coaches included six men and three women who currently coached tennis ($n = 2$), football (n
3381 $= 3$), rugby ($n =1$), basketball ($n=1$), hockey ($n=1$), and rugby ($n= 1$) to young people ranging
3382 between 8 – 23 years (M age = 16, $SD =3.59$). Finally, the individuals in safeguarding roles
3383 included five women, who worked as a lead safeguarding officer ($n=2$), a club welfare officer
3384 ($n=2$) and a child protection senior consultant ($n=1$).

3385 **4.2.4 Data Collection**

3386 Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Due to COVID-19 restrictions
3387 participants were unable to take part in face-to-face interviews, therefore all interviews were
3388 conducted via zoom. Before each interview commenced, participants were given an
3389 information sheet detailing the study aims and asked to provide informed consent/assent and
3390 parental consent (Appendix G) and reminded that their participation was voluntary and that
3391 they were free to withdraw at any time without fear of harm. On average the interviews were
3392 approximately 60.31 minutes ($SD= 9.51$), ranging from 44.01-74.00 minutes.

3393 Separate interview guides were developed for young people, parents, coaches, and
3394 individuals in safeguarding roles. Across all participants, each interview began with
3395 introductory questions, followed by main questions, before concluding with summary
3396 questions (see Appendix G for examples) (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The introductory questions
3397 aimed to establish rapport while collecting demographic information (i.e., sport, competitive
3398 level, competition frequency) and understanding participants’ involvement in sport. For
3399 example, young people were asked, what led to their participation in sport and how long they

3400 had been involved in their sport; parents were asked about their experiences, and; coaches
3401 and those in safeguarding roles were asked about their roles within sport. The main questions
3402 examined perceptions of enjoyment and safety within sport. For example, young people were
3403 asked what they enjoyed and disliked about taking part in sport. In addition, they were asked
3404 what made them feel safe or unsafe in sport. All other participants were asked about what
3405 they believed young people enjoyed and disliked about sport, and what they believed it meant
3406 to feel safe or unsafe in sport.

3407 As new concepts emerged, the interview guides were revised, and the questions were
3408 amended. This allowed for the exploration of new concepts and relationships, aligning with
3409 the principle of theoretical sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For example, during the
3410 earlier interviews, questions were quite broad asking participants what they believed a safe
3411 and enjoyable experience included. During the later interviews, questions were adapted and
3412 more focused on exploring concepts generated in previous interviews. For instance,
3413 participants were asked questions on the concepts related to ‘positive relationships’ such as,
3414 “who are the most important people involved in your sport?”, “what about these people that
3415 make them so important in sport?”, “what influence do these people/relationships have on
3416 sporting experiences – positive and negative.” In total 25 interview guides were developed.

3417 **4.2.5 Data Analysis**

3418 Data analysis commenced after the initial interview and continued throughout the
3419 entire data collection process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Due to the short period between the
3420 initial interviews, it was not possible to transcribe the first few interviews. Therefore, initial
3421 interviews were analysed while listening to the interview audio files (Holt et al., 2012).
3422 Subsequently, as soon as possible, interviews were transcribed, and were further analysed
3423 using the recommended coding strategies outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2015). Initially,
3424 open coding occurred, which involved breaking down the data and defining concepts to
3425 represent the interpreted meaning of raw data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Specifically, during
3426 open coding, analysis explored data for concepts which were relevant to the research.
3427 Characteristics and defining features of each concept referred to as properties, as well as
3428 variations within each concept known as dimensions, were also identified and coded. For
3429 instance, in the initial phases of data collection and analysis codes such as “friendly
3430 atmosphere”, and “positive relationships” were used.

3431 Next, axial coding was conducted. This involved reconstructing fractured data by
3432 making connections between the various categories and subcategories (Corbin & Strauss,
3433 2015). Specifically, data were reviewed and coded again to identify connections between

3434 concepts that were identified during the initial coding process. For example, “welcoming
3435 environment helps increase enjoyment and safety”, and “making sure training drills are
3436 developmentally appropriate” are some of the axial codes used. The final stage, known as
3437 theoretical saturation, occurred once all concepts were fully developed in terms of properties
3438 and dimensions and careful consideration was given to the context and process, and
3439 relationships between categories had been identified (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Specifically,
3440 theoretical saturation involved identifying and organising concepts around the core category
3441 (the category representing the primary focus of the research).

3442 **4.2.5.1 Analytical tools.** To facilitate data analysis, various analytic strategies and
3443 tools were employed for this study (see Corbin and Strauss, 2015 for a comprehensive list of
3444 recommended tools and strategies). For the current study, the key strategies used included,
3445 asking questions of the data, constant comparison, flip flop technique, and asking so what?
3446 By questioning the data with prompts such as, what, how, who, are participants definitions or
3447 meanings different, how and with what consequences, this helped facilitate the identification
3448 of key properties and dimensions of developing concepts. Additionally, the process of
3449 constant comparison, which involved comparing different pieces of data against each other
3450 for similarities and differences (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), enabled the discovery of patterns
3451 and variations within the concepts. For example, several participants mentioned that having
3452 positive relationships where people were on the same page helped optimise enjoyment and
3453 safety. As a result, data analysis included comparisons of participant responses for
3454 similarities and differences focussing on follow-up questions such as, what, who, are
3455 participants’ definitions or meanings different, and how and with what consequences.

3456 Furthermore, the flip-flop technique was used in which questions were asked of the
3457 data to obtain different perspectives. For example, when participants explained that having
3458 shared goals and expectations helped optimise their safety and enjoyment, follow-up
3459 questions were asked to subsequent participants exploring situations where goals and
3460 expectations were not shared, and the consequences of such instances. This process facilitated
3461 the exploration of variations and the identification of significant properties within the concept
3462 of “shared goals and expectations.” Further, so what questions were asked of the data, for
3463 example, when participants expressed the importance of having a “coach that cared,”
3464 questions were asked, so what if a coach is caring, what does it mean to have a coach that
3465 cares, what does having a caring coach mean in the grand scheme of enjoyment and safety in
3466 sport, what does it matter.

3467 In addition to coding for concepts, properties, and dimensions, the analysis process
3468 also included coding for context and process. According to Straussian GT, a context pertains
3469 to a set of conditions that shape the nature of situations, or problems, to which individuals
3470 respond to by way of action/interaction/emotions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Process refers to,
3471 ongoing responses to problems or circumstances that arise out of the context (Corbin &
3472 Strauss, 2008). Including context and process is a fundamental component to GT studies, as it
3473 plays a key role in making sure concepts are grounded in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).
3474 Within the current study, the concept of having appropriate ‘safe and hygienic sports
3475 facilities’ highlights the context and the importance of situating young people within a safe
3476 and clean environment to enhance their overall experiences. Similarly, the concept, ‘engage
3477 in honest communication’ refers to the process through which individuals in the environment
3478 interact, and the way communication takes place can either positively or negatively impact
3479 young people’s enjoyment and safety in sport.

3480 To evaluate the grounded theory, feedback was sought from participants regarding the
3481 emerging diagrams, which was subsequently used to refine and modify the developing
3482 theory. Furthermore, throughout the data collection and analysis process, the developing
3483 theory was discussed with my PhD supervisor and postgraduate peers who acted as critical
3484 friends actively questioning interpretations and served as conceptual sounding boards
3485 stimulating reflection and exploration of various alternative explanations and interpretations
3486 (Smith & McGannon, 2018).

3487 **4.2.5.2 Memos.** Throughout data collection and analysis, memos were also created.
3488 These memos, along with diagrams, were used to facilitate the identification of properties and
3489 dimensions of concepts, as well as understanding the relationships between them. Moreover,
3490 these memos served as an audit trail documenting thought processes and decision-making
3491 throughout the study. In total, 43 memos were created varying in length, some a paragraph
3492 long and others almost two pages in length. Most memos from the initial interviews were
3493 shorter in length and were based on interesting information/topics that emerged during the
3494 interview which warranted further exploration in either the follow-up interviews, or by
3495 reading relevant literature, or both. As the study progressed towards the later stages of data
3496 collection and analysis, the memos became longer and served to assist in considering the
3497 potential connections between different concepts. These memos drew upon previous memos,
3498 interview data, and existing literature to inform my reasoning. They also played an important
3499 role in highlighting concepts and categories that were not fully developed, indicating the need
3500 for further exploration.

3501 **4.2.5.3 The Use of Literature.** Straussian GT encourages a basic review of the
3502 literature as it can be useful in providing context to the phenomenon being studied and assist
3503 in developing a strong rationale for the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Moreover, it is
3504 acknowledged that integrating pertinent literature at appropriate stages throughout the data
3505 collection, analysis, and theory generation process can increase theoretical sensitivity and
3506 avoid duplicating existing knowledge (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2020). In the current study, a
3507 literature review was conducted prior to commencement to gain a comprehensive
3508 understanding of safeguarding and enjoyment in sport. Subsequently, following the initial
3509 stages of data collection and analysis, existing literature was used to further explore the
3510 concepts that had been developed. This helped inform questions asked to subsequent
3511 participants and ensure that each concept was fully developed in terms of its properties and
3512 dimensions. For example, initial interviews highlighted that having positive peer relationships
3513 influenced young people’s safety and enjoyment in sport.

3514 **4.2.6 Methodological Rigour**

3515 Over the past two and a half decades numerous sport and exercise GT studies have
3516 been published (Holt, 2016) and there has been extensive debate in the field over the quality
3517 of GT studies (see Weed, 2009, 2010; Holt & Tamminen, 2010a, 2010b; Holt et al., 2022).
3518 More recently, researchers have emphasised the importance of GT studies adopting and
3519 disclosing an approach to evaluate the rigour of the implemented GT within the study (Holt et
3520 al., 2022). In the current study, the quality of the GT was assessed using criteria proposed by
3521 Holt and Tamminen (2010b) who employ the concept of ‘methodological coherence’ to
3522 judge the quality of a GT study.

3523 First, the authors suggest that *epistemological and ontological perspectives* and the
3524 *research questions* should align with the *variant* of GT employed in the study. Consistent
3525 with these suggestions, the current study employed a Straussian GT approach which aligned
3526 with the researcher’s ontological and epistemological perspective (i.e., interpretivism).
3527 Following the selection of the Straussian GT approach all subsequent research decisions were
3528 informed and in line with this approach. For example, prior to data collection and analysis, a
3529 review of the literature was conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the
3530 phenomenon under study. Moreover, analytic tools such as the flip flop technique, and asking
3531 so what, which are specific to Straussian GT were employed to enhance theoretical sensitivity
3532 (Corbin & Straus, 2015). Furthermore, other key features of this approach such as axial
3533 coding were utilised to identify connections between concepts and/or categories (Corbin &
3534 Straus, 2015).

3535 Secondly, Holt and Tamminen (2010b) suggest that researchers consider *participant*
3536 *sampling* and *sample size*. Unique to grounded theory GT studies is the concept of theoretical
3537 sampling and theoretical saturation, which are critical in determining the suitability of
3538 participants and decisions regarding the conclusion of data collection (e.g., Corbin & Strauss,
3539 2015). Thus, purposive sampling and theoretical sampling were utilised in the current study.
3540 For example, initially safeguarding lead officers were purposively sampled given that have a
3541 responsibility over young people’s safety and wellbeing in sport. However, as data collection
3542 and analysis progressed theoretical sampling included the recruitment of young people,
3543 parents, and coaches. This process facilitated the development and refinement of emerging
3544 concepts such as ‘shared goals and expectations’ by identifying properties and dimensions.
3545 This process helped identify connections between different concepts.

3546 Thirdly, the authors suggest that methodological congruence should be demonstrated
3547 throughout *the planning and execution of data collection and analysis* (Holt & Tamminen,
3548 2010b). Aligned with these suggestions, the planning and execution of the current study
3549 followed an iterative process of data collection and analysis throughout the duration of the
3550 study. Furthermore, congruent with GT methodology, several methods such as memos,
3551 diagrams, and constant comparison were used throughout the data analysis process (Corbin &
3552 Strauss, 2008).

3553 Finally, Holt and Tamminen (2010b) suggest that the last step should involve the
3554 contemplation of the final product, *theory generation* which should be the ultimate aim of a
3555 GT study (e.g., Corbin and Strauss, 2008). A theory is regarded as a well-developed
3556 framework, that is comprised of different categories (i.e., themes and concepts). These
3557 categories are systematically explored regarding their characteristics and connections,
3558 forming a theoretical structure that helps explain a particular phenomenon (Hage, 1972, p.
3559 34). Congruent with GT, the current study presented results as an interconnected set of
3560 categories, instead of a descriptive set of independent themes. As a result, the categories and
3561 connections between categories provide a substantive GT of an optimally safe and enjoyable
3562 sporting experience, which is open to future exploration and modification. A substantive
3563 theory serves as a useful tool in enhancing researchers’ initial understanding of a subject and
3564 providing guidance on future actions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These types of theories are
3565 intentionally designed to be adaptable, and open to modifications, allowing them to be
3566 adapted and tested through future research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

3567

3568 **4.3 Results**

3569 The purpose of this study was to explore the process through which an optimally safe
3570 and enjoyable sporting experience is created for young people. The substantive grounded
3571 theory (GT) generated consists of twelve categories, each containing underlying concepts,
3572 revolving around the core category of positive relationships between young people and key
3573 individuals in a welcoming, environmentally safe, and developmentally appropriate setting.
3574 The following sections provide an explanation of what constitutes an optimally safe and
3575 enjoyable experience, followed by a detailed exploration of each category and underlying
3576 concepts. Subsequently, an overview of the grounded theory is presented to illustrate the
3577 interconnectedness between these categories. This overview serves as the foundation for the
3578 theoretical claim and is presented at the end of the results section.

3579 ***4.3.1 Optimally safe and enjoyable sport experiences***

3580 In developing a theory of optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experiences, it is first
3581 necessary to detail what constitutes a safe and enjoyable sporting experience. Devin (14-year-
3582 old county cricket player) shared, “cricket is fun, I love the sport it helps because I’ve got
3583 good friends and coaches at my club, I feel comfortable there because we all know each
3584 other, and I enjoy playing with my mates.” Meanwhile, Jason (18-year-old academy football
3585 player) said “I think for me the most important thing is that players feel happy, comfortable,
3586 and I think there should be some sort of togetherness, community spirit you know, that’s
3587 what makes you enjoy it more.” For Sian (14-year-old national tennis player), it was the
3588 relationships that were important, “I feel really comfortable at my club because people smile
3589 at me every day, they say hi and stuff, they always try and include us in stuff which makes
3590 me feel good, I really enjoy it.” Further, participants also explained that an optimally safe and
3591 enjoyable sporting experience is one in which young people feel secure and perceive personal
3592 development occurring. For example, Brian (county rugby coach/national coach development
3593 officer) expressed:

3594 If we want kids to have safe and enjoyable experiences it’s important that we ensure
3595 that they’re treated correctly, you know, that they’re treated like children and we need
3596 to make sure they’re in a safe environment where they can come and enjoy and get
3597 better at their sport without fear of any abuse or anything whether that’s physical or
3598 psychological.

3599 Taken together, within the context of this grounded theory, an optimally safe and
3600 enjoyable sporting experience is one in which young people feel happy, comfortable,
3601 confident, competent, relaxed, and connected with others in the environment. It is an

3602 environment in which young people feel valued, that things feel familiar, they have a sense of
3603 security (free from anticipation of any harm both emotionally or physically), and they
3604 experience and perceive self-development.

3605 ***4.3.2 Core Category: Positive relationships between individuals in a welcoming,***
3606 ***developmentally appropriate, and physically safe setting***

3607 To achieve the optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience, unanimously
3608 participants expressed that having *positive relationships* was core. Susan (Lead safeguarding
3609 officer/chairperson) summarised, “for me, I think having positive relationships are key to
3610 ensuring kids are safe and enjoying themselves.” Participants explained that positive
3611 relationships made them feel comfortable, which in turn enabled them to have positive
3612 experiences as Jacinda (17-year-old county football player) said “I’ve always felt
3613 comfortable at my club, I think because everyone knows everyone, we’re all familiar with
3614 each other and for the most part everyone gets along as well, you know.” Furthermore,
3615 participants also believed that positive relationships were crucial for safety as it facilitated
3616 opportunities to address any safeguarding concerns, Jenny (CPSU Development officer)
3617 shared:

3618 I think relationships, impact on these policies and procedures, and I’d like to think that
3619 they don’t and that they would be followed regardless, but I think it would be very
3620 naïve of me to assume that. There needs to be positive relationships for people to know
3621 what to do if anything happens.

3622 For such relationships to exist, participants consistently expressed that it was essential
3623 for people in the immediate sporting environment to be *welcoming, friendly, approachable,*
3624 *and acknowledge one another.* For instance, when explaining how positive relationships
3625 could be developed Katie (18-year-old national hockey player) shared, “it’s as simple as
3626 everyone saying hi and if someone new joins, make the effort to introduce yourself, that
3627 obviously makes new players feel comfortable, you know just say hi and involve them in the
3628 group.” Aligned with this, Iona (BUCS basketball coach), highlighted her responsibility as a
3629 coach was to make players and parents feel comfortable and valued, stating, “I guess as a
3630 coach it’s my responsibility to make players and parents feel comfortable and let them know
3631 they can approach me, because I really value them and want them to feel comfortable.”
3632 Importantly, as indicated, such sentiments extended beyond young people and it was
3633 recognised that it was important for parents in the environment to feel valued as, Toni (Lead
3634 safeguarding officer/Head of governance) expressed, “You know, it’s not just about making
3635 children feel safe, coaches also need to make parents feel that the children are safe.”

3636 Beyond relationships and interactions within the immediate environment, participants
3637 also placed emphasis on the physical environment. Specifically, participants expressed that
3638 the sport setting should be safe for young people to participate in as Jermaine, (father of a
3639 regional tennis player), mentioned, “I guess the facilities are important. As a parent, you’re
3640 always looking for a club with the right facilities. It should be hygienic and safe for her to be
3641 in.” Participants believed that it was important for the sport setting to be clean, hygienic, and
3642 equipped with appropriate sport-specific equipment for young people to participate safely.
3643 Jerome, a county football coach, stated, “In a grass root environment, I have to always think
3644 about the physical space, is it safe? Have they got the correct equipment? That’s really
3645 important to make sure things are ok before kids even start kicking a ball.” Meanwhile, Jason
3646 (18-year-old academy football player) expressed this sentiment when talking about his old
3647 club, “the aesthetics of the place weren’t great. It was very rundown, and it wasn’t a pleasant
3648 environment. The facilities were poor, so I didn’t really enjoy playing there.”

3649 Another factor pertaining to the physical sporting environment was the importance of
3650 having efficiently run sports clubs with health and safety protocols. For example, when asked
3651 about the role his child’s club had in facilitating safe and enjoyable sporting experiences,
3652 Rhodri, (father of an academy rugby player), said:

3653 I think the academy has a duty to create a safe environment for the players and have
3654 processes and systems in place so that whatever is happening follows strict guidelines.

3655 Children should be at the centre of it, and their safety should be paramount.

3656 Similarly, Des (county cricket coach) expressed, “There needs to be systems in place, or at
3657 least staff in the environment should have some sort of health and safety training or protocols
3658 in place to ensure players’ safety if anything happens.” Given the physical risks associated
3659 with sports, participants stressed that having health and safety policies and procedures in
3660 sports clubs or facilities was essential for ensuring young people had safe and enjoyable
3661 experiences.

3662 Finally, participants expressed that it was fundamental for sports clubs to provide
3663 *developmentally appropriate activities* to ensure that young people were safe and able to
3664 enjoy and develop in their sport. Participants believed that by offering age and skill-
3665 appropriate activities, sports clubs could enhance young people’s overall enjoyment and
3666 experiences of children involved in sports. For example, Brian (county rugby coach/national
3667 coach development officer) explained:

3668 Tag rugby is for under 7’s and under 8’s, then around under 9’s and under 11’s that’s
3669 when players learn to tackle and have contact. So, when you’re teaching things, you

3670 know, you need to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate, and players
3671 understand. Especially tackling, that's a massive thing for kids going from pulling
3672 tags off someone to tackling someone, you know it's a step-by-step approach.
3673 Age-appropriate sessions enabled young people to adapt to the demands and physical aspects
3674 of their sport without risking injury. Furthermore, it appeared crucial that sessions were
3675 pitched at the right level to ensure that children are both enjoying themselves and learning
3676 new skills. By doing so, their confidence increased, in turn enhancing their overall
3677 enjoyment. For example, Mona (14-year-old county tennis player) shared:

3678 My coach gives us stuff to do which is hard but not too hard that you want to stop if
3679 you know what I mean. It's challenging, but I think if it was too hard, I'd struggle and
3680 probably wouldn't enjoy it as much.

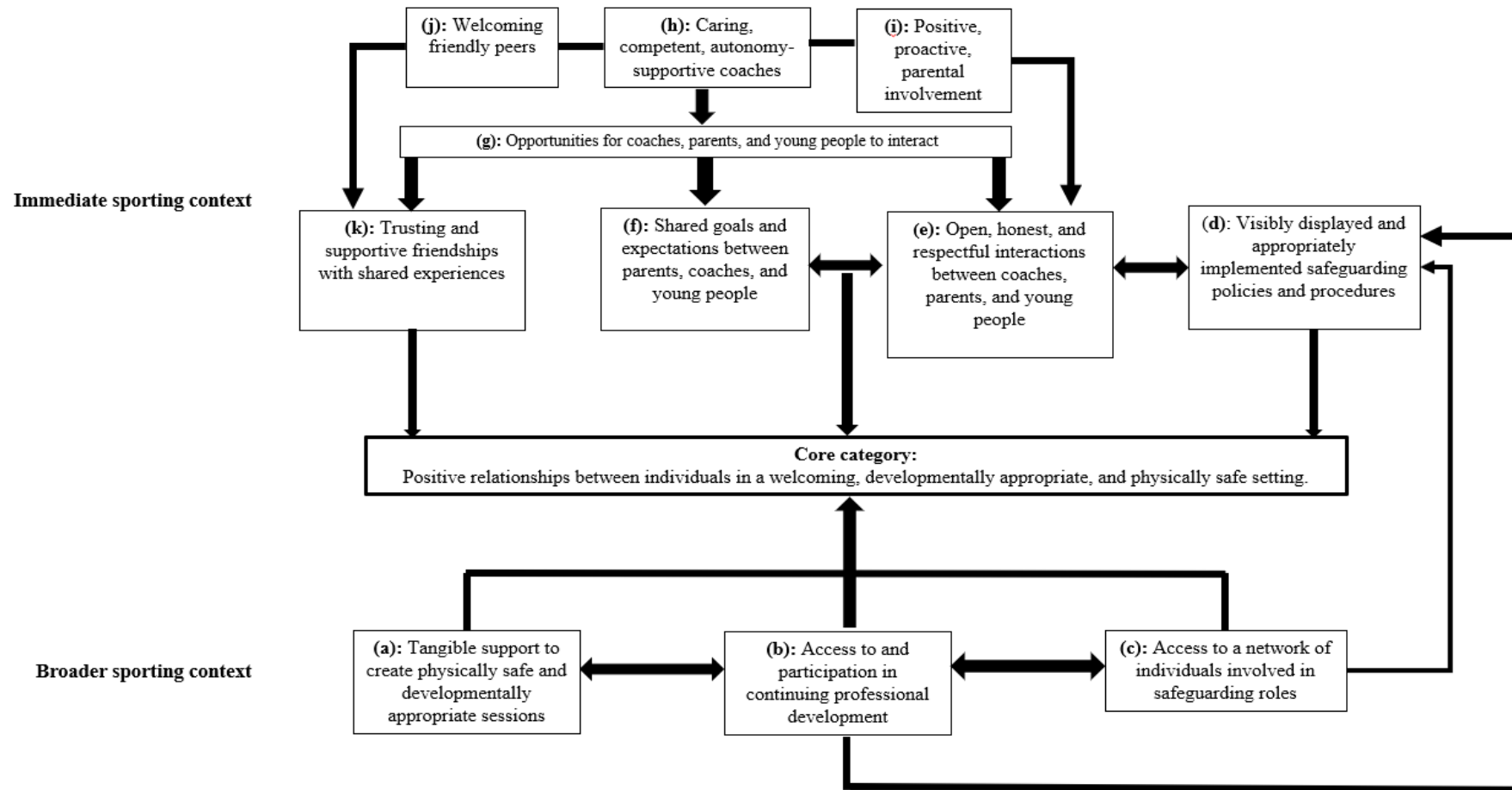
3681 In connection with developmentally appropriate activities, participants explained that
3682 it was crucial that there was a good balance between performance outcomes and enjoyment.
3683 For example, Jerome (county football coach) expressed, "You have to find a good balance
3684 between performance and enjoyment otherwise kids just won't enjoy it and probably will
3685 drop out because of the pressure." Further, Toni (Lead safeguarding officer/Head of
3686 governance) shared:

3687 I fully appreciate that especially as young people move up that performance pathway
3688 that things are hard, training is hard, that competition is very difficult, but there still
3689 needs to be that culture where young people can enjoy themselves even when training
3690 hard and competing and I think that is the adults in the club's responsibility to ensure
3691 that enjoyment is prioritised and it's not a win at all costs mindset when children are
3692 still young.

3693 Participants highlighted that if enjoyment and performance were not appropriately balanced
3694 throughout various developmental stages, this could have detrimental effects on young
3695 people's experiences.

3696 Taken together, the core category suggests that fostering positive relationships among
3697 young people and key individuals while simultaneously cultivating a welcoming, safe, and
3698 developmentally appropriate sport environment is key for optimally safe and enjoyable
3699 experiences. Specifically, the setting should be welcoming, hygienic, and have appropriate
3700 facilities, equipment, policies, and procedures in place. Additionally, it should provide
3701 children with developmentally safe and enjoyable sporting experiences, in which
3702 performance expectations are balanced with personal progress. Achievement of this core
3703 category occurs through the alignment of 12 categories. Three of these categories (a-c) relate

3704 to the broad sporting context (factors external to the immediate sporting environment
3705 including and related to the National Governing Body) which is discussed first, followed by
3706 nine that exist in the immediate sporting context (i.e., the specific club/environment in which
3707 children are training/competing) (d-1). The theory is displayed in Figure 4.2.



3708

3709 **Figure 4.2** A grounded theory of an optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience.

3710 **4.3.3 Category (a): Tangible support to create physically safe and developmentally**
3711 **appropriate sessions**

3712 Pertaining to the broader sporting context, participants expressed the importance of
3713 sports clubs receiving appropriate support from the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) to
3714 create the appropriate physical sporting setting. Specifically, they emphasised that NGBs
3715 played a crucial role in supporting clubs to provide safe spaces for young people to
3716 participate in their sport securely. Toni (Lead safeguarding officer/Head of governance)
3717 explained:

3718 I think there's eight or nine performance clubs in Wales which are governed by
3719 [NGB]. So, there's some leadership and support from [NGB] that makes sure all
3720 Welsh swimmers have access to safe facilities and that clubs are doing what they
3721 should to make sure the environment is decent and safe for kids to swim in.

3722 Unfortunately, lower-level clubs often faced financial challenges and lacked sufficient
3723 support from governing bodies to provide adequate facilities and equipment for young
3724 people. Wayne (national football coach) highlighted, "In grassroots sport, especially in
3725 Wales, there's not a lot of money floating around at that level, so facilities aren't always the
3726 best, and clubs are always in need of additional funding." Unfortunately, when clubs did not
3727 receive the necessary financial support, they were not always able to provide appropriate
3728 facilities and equipment, which in turn negatively impacted children's experiences. For
3729 instance, Jermaine (father of a regional tennis player), shared his daughter's experience at her
3730 previous club, saying, "I don't think they [club] received much funding because the facilities
3731 were a bit dilapidated, and she didn't really enjoy her experience there as much as she does
3732 now at [new tennis club]." Evidently, participants believed that NGBs played a key role in
3733 assisting clubs in securing funding to provide suitable facilities for children to safely
3734 participate in and have enjoyable experiences.

3735 **4.3.4 Category (b): Access to and participation in continuing professional development for**
3736 **safeguarding and coach development**

3737 Participants also highlighted the importance of sports organisations, with support
3738 from the NGB, providing access to continuing professional development (CPD) training for
3739 key individuals (i.e., coaches and individuals in safeguarding roles). Specifically, it was
3740 recognised that to provide enjoyable and developmentally safe and appropriate sessions,
3741 coaches needed to be competent, which required them to consistently enhance their
3742 knowledge. Gwen (Academy tennis coach) explained:

3743 I think it's important to have the right amount of training to know how to set sessions
3744 to make sure they are developmentally appropriate because it can become more
3745 challenging with bigger groups of kids, so it's important that coaches really get stuck
3746 into CPD. The LTA are pretty big on coach development, they pile tons of resources
3747 into it, so I think we're probably a little bit ahead of the game compared to some of
3748 the sports when it comes to access to CPD and stuff.

3749 CPD related to engaging young people was seen as particularly necessary. Wayne
3750 (national football coach) explained "a lot of coaches are good at technical tactical stuff and
3751 they do a shed load of planning in terms of their session, but they miss the relationship piece,
3752 the emotional bit, and how to actually connect with players." Further, participants
3753 acknowledged ongoing societal changes and recognised the importance of upskilling staff to
3754 keep them current. Specifically, participants believed that by doing so staff, particularly
3755 coaches, could better connect and engage with young people in a safer and more relatable
3756 manner. Katrina (regional tennis coach) shared:

3757 Society is changing now massively, sadly back in the day some poor practices were
3758 accepted as the norm unfortunately, you know, you see it across society these days
3759 things are changing and what used to be acceptable isn't anymore. So, it's all about
3760 getting the appropriate education, changing culture, changing people's outlooks and
3761 thoughts about what is safe and enjoyable for kids now, you know

3762 Crucially, participants recognised the need for NGBs to provide appropriate access to
3763 *safeguarding training courses and CPD*. Georgia (club welfare officer) explained, "having
3764 access to safeguarding training courses is key, otherwise, I wouldn't have a clue to be
3765 honest." It was considered essential for sports organisations to have well-trained staff who
3766 were equipped to handle and manage safeguarding concerns, as Lynda (club welfare officer)
3767 shared, "people on the ground need to be educated so they can spot problems or any concerns
3768 and know what to do." Therefore, it was important the NGB made sure all staff had access to
3769 relevant courses was key ensuring reports and concerns were handled appropriately and the
3770 welfare of young people was prioritised throughout.

3771 **4.3.5 Category (c): Access to a network of individuals involved in safeguarding roles**

3772 The final category related to the broader sporting context related to staff networks.
3773 Specifically, participants highlighted the importance of individuals involved in working with
3774 children and particularly in safeguarding capacities (i.e., coaches and welfare officers) having
3775 access to a broad *supportive professional network*. Such networks included individuals who
3776 possessed knowledge and expertise in safeguarding to support staff to effectively implement

3777 policies and practices. For example, when explaining what enabled her to fulfil her job
3778 responsibilities as a club welfare officer, Lynda (club welfare officer) said:

3779 I would say I have an average level of knowledge for a welfare officer. I wouldn't say
3780 that I am well-equipped on how to handle everything. So, the chair of our care
3781 management group is [name of person], so I rely on him a lot because often there will
3782 be something that comes to me and I have no idea how to deal with it or know the
3783 right way to deal with certain things, so if he wasn't there, I would really struggle.

3784 Within this sample, club welfare officers tended to be volunteers. Consequently, in
3785 some cases, they did not feel fully equipped to handle concerns appropriately. As such,
3786 participants highlighted the importance of cultivating supportive relationships with a broader
3787 network of individuals who existed outside the immediate sporting environment and were
3788 more knowledgeable about safeguarding. Having such relationships was seen as beneficial in
3789 enabling welfare officers to effectively fulfil their responsibilities. For example, when
3790 responding to what she believed facilitated safe and enjoyable sporting experiences, Toni
3791 (Lead safeguarding officer/Head of governance) shared:

3792 The key things that stand out to me is the need to make sure welfare offices are
3793 connected and they feel that there is a support system around them, because they're
3794 usually standalone roles...they're just that one person doing that one role on their
3795 own and they often feel quite isolated because they may have difficult situations that
3796 they may not feel confident to deal with. So, having that connection with other
3797 welfare officers and myself is important and it's been key to making improvements.

3798 Given the complex nature of safeguarding, participants highlighted that even Lead
3799 safeguarding officers working from the NGB sought assistance and support from other
3800 individuals within the broader sporting context who possessed knowledge and expertise in
3801 safeguarding.

3802 ***4.3.6 Category (d): Visibly displayed and appropriately implemented safeguarding policies*** 3803 ***and procedures***

3804 Within the immediate sporting context, participants emphasised the importance of
3805 policies and procedures. One aspect that was particularly highlighted by participants was the
3806 necessity for clubs to have a *designated welfare officer*. As expressed by Rhodri (father of an
3807 academy rugby player), "I think, in this day and age with everything with player welfare and
3808 everything clubs should have welfare officers that kids can go to with any issues." Ray (17-
3809 year-old academy football player) reiterated, "it's quite good because at the academy we have
3810 a welfare officer that we can go to if we need to talk about anything, which makes me feel at

3811 ease.” However, it was also important for clubs to ensure that young people and key
3812 individuals were *informed about the identity of the welfare officer and knew how to access*
3813 *them if needed*. Katrina (regional tennis coach) explained, “I think it’s really important that
3814 safeguarding stuff is communicated to players and parents, so they know what to do and who
3815 to go to if there is a problem or concern.” Participants highlighted the importance of welfare
3816 officers introducing themselves to increase visibility and awareness. For example, Jenny
3817 (CPSU Development officer) said:

3818 I think there are ways to make yourself visible without being at every session, so like
3819 if they have Facebook pages, or if they have WhatsApp groups for parents [...] my
3820 child’s club doesn’t have a physical notice board and there is no clubhouse...but we
3821 do have other platforms for these club welfare offices to have some access to some of
3822 these things.

3823 In fact, if participants were not aware or introduced to a welfare officer they were less likely
3824 to feel confident to report concerns as Erin (mother of a national tennis player) shared, “I
3825 have to say I would feel more resistant trying to report a concern to someone I’ve never seen
3826 or who I wasn’t really sure who they were [...] I would be more hesitant with that lack of
3827 visibility and lack of reassurance.

3828 It was also important that safeguarding policies and procedures were appropriately
3829 and consistently implemented, and incidents were *handled professionally and managed*
3830 *appropriately* in line with the club’s policies and procedures. Christian (father of country
3831 tennis player) summarised, “you would hope that if a concern was ever raised that it would be
3832 handled properly.” Specifically, participants expressed that it was important that concerns
3833 were escalated appropriately, as Lynda (club welfare officer) said:

3834 I think for me at club level case management is around how you manage poor practice
3835 issues that get reported. So, that could be bullying between young people, coach-
3836 athlete bullying or poor practice where you know, the coach is swearing and those
3837 sorts of things. Yeah, so those sorts of level issues should in theory be managed at
3838 club level and then if they continue, they are escalated to the governing body.

3839 It was also important for clubs to *take all incidents or concerns seriously and address*
3840 *them appropriately, irrespective of the nature or severity*. Toni (Lead safeguarding
3841 officer/Head of governance) explained:

3842 It’s important that if there is poor practice at a club level regardless of what it is, is
3843 addressed, and someone has a word with the individuals in question and those low-
3844 level reports are recorded. So, then if it continues to keep happening then it can be

3845 escalated to the NGB. But it's important that it's dealt with professionally and
3846 education is provided to the individuals involved to help them understand what is and
3847 isn't acceptable, so it doesn't continue.

3848 If poor practice was not addressed effectively, it created an opportunity for negative or
3849 abusive behaviour to occur, as Rob (14-year-old national swimmer) shared:

3850 When I first joined, nobody knew who I was. I was a chubby kid. I was just like a
3851 normal guy [...] and I wasn't a good swimmer. I wasn't like a prodigy or anything.
3852 The older swimmers used to make fun of my weight. I told the coaches at the time,
3853 but they didn't do anything [...] Sometimes the coaches would just look and laugh
3854 when it was happening. To be honest it never got to the point where I was seriously
3855 mentally affected in terms of, I never went into any sort of mental distress, if you get
3856 what I mean. I didn't really enjoy swimming them. I knew I was chubby, but I didn't
3857 think I was fat. And they'd have me doubting myself which can have a serious toll as
3858 well and I just had to stay strong through those two years.

3859 **4.3.7 Category (f): Open, honest, and respectful interactions between coaches, parents, and**
3860 **young people**

3861 To establish positive relationships, it is important that all individuals within the
3862 immediate sporting context interact with each other in an *open, honest, and respectful*
3863 manner. This is particularly crucial for staff and coaches, as they play a key role in fostering
3864 open communication and creating an environment where young people and parents feel
3865 comfortable sharing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. For example, Gwen (Academy
3866 tennis coach) said:

3867 I think it is important to open up conversations whether that's between coaches and
3868 players or coaches and parents. Trust is everything, so if you don't have conversations
3869 and you don't get to know each other and you don't have those opportunities to be
3870 honest and to be open, you can't build trusting relationships.

3871 Participants explained that when staff and coaches facilitated a culture of open
3872 communication among all individuals in the immediate sporting context, it made people feel
3873 comfortable. For instance, Elana (mother of a county tennis player) stated, "with my
3874 daughter's new coach the communication is just there, she's open with us and I like that, we
3875 know where we stand and Lowri [daughter] is comfortable and she enjoys it."

3876 Such open communication was particularly important from a safeguarding
3877 perspective because it helped participants feel more comfortable to report concerns if needed.
3878 Jenny (CPSU Development officer) explained, "I think it's important for children and parents

3879 to have the confidence to address things early on and have that kind of open dialogue with
3880 coaches or a welfare officer.” Similarly, Katie (18-year-old national hockey player) shared:

3881 I’ve never really felt worried about anything to be honest. My coach is pretty cool.
3882 He’s super friendly and open, if I didn’t like something or had any worries or
3883 anything, I know I could easily speak to him. So, I feel safe in that sense.

3884 Participants also expressed that *honesty* was important when it came to
3885 communication because it helped develop trust. For example, when asked what could be done
3886 to optimise safety and enjoyment Aled (17-year-old rugby player) responded:

3887 Making sure that players feel comfortable in the environment and giving them good
3888 honest advice [...] They [coaches and staff] should just pull players to the side and be
3889 honest with them. It’s better because at least you know where you stand then.

3890 Katrina (regional tennis coach) similarly emphasised the value of honesty:

3891 I think it’s important to be honest with players. I don’t think it’s beneficial to sell
3892 them a lie. You know, like, tell them, oh, you could definitely do this when there’s no
3893 chance, do you know what I mean? Instead, it’s better to be honest and we can always
3894 work around what they can do and help them get the best out of their tennis.

3895 However, although it was important for communication between all parties to be open
3896 and honest, it was equally important that interactions remained *respectful*. Kyle (county
3897 football coach) stated, “No matter how emotional someone’s feeling, there still has to be
3898 respect.” Participants explained that it was important to be respectful because this helped
3899 develop positive relationships and made people feel comfortable. For example, Aled (17-
3900 year-old rugby player) said, “I like it because although we sometimes joke about all the boys
3901 [teammates] are respectful to each other which makes me feel more comfortable you don’t
3902 feel uneasy or anything.”

3903 ***4.3.8 Category (g): Shared goals and expectations between parents, coaches, and young*** 3904 ***people***

3905 Individuals in the immediate sport setting, specifically coaches, parents, and young
3906 people, need to establish *shared goals and expectations*. When parents, coaches, and young
3907 people shared common objectives for matches/competitions and long-term development in
3908 sport, it created a sense of comfort and enabled young people to derive enjoyment from their
3909 sport. Kimi (13-year-old regional tennis player) explained, “it feels good because they [coach
3910 and parents] know my goals are and they just support me, which is nice, there’s no pressure.”
3911 Likewise, when asked what made her feel safe and enjoy swimming Rhiannon (13-year-old

3912 regional swimmer) shared, “I love it my coaches want the best for me, my parents want the
3913 best for me and there’s nothing else in between, we’re all on the same page.”

3914 For all parties to be aligned, it was important that parents, coaches, and players had
3915 *opportunities to meet and discuss goals together*. Participants emphasised that coaches
3916 played a pivotal role in facilitating these meetings and fostering effective communication.
3917 As Lynda (club welfare officer) explained, “I think where coaches and clubs fail to meet
3918 expectations is they don’t prioritise meetings with coaches, parents, and players.”

3919 Rhys (16-year-old academy rugby player) found it beneficial to meet with his coach and
3920 parents at the end of each season to openly discuss his goals:

3921 After each season, we’ll have a meeting with the coach and our parents, talk about
3922 our targets and talk about our goals and what we want to achieve. So, we have in our
3923 minds as well what we’re looking for in the coming seasons. I really like that
3924 because we’re all on the same page going into the new seasons.

3925 Including parents in these discussions was also deemed important, as Sian (14-year-old
3926 national tennis player) explained, “I feel like it’s pretty important, especially when coaches
3927 bring the parents in, so they know as well what you’re going to be looking at for the next
3928 few months, what you need to work on and if there’s anything at home you need to work
3929 on, the parents can get involved and help out.”

3930 As well as shared goals, *shared expectations* were also important. Many believed that
3931 it was crucial for coaches and other staff members to share what was expected of individuals
3932 within the sport setting. Tristian (father of a regional swimmer) discussed, “I think they
3933 [coaches] need to be clear at the start on what they will and won’t tolerate from them
3934 [swimmers].” Participants believed that if expectations were openly discussed this helped
3935 ensure that everyone behaved in accordance with the club’s accepted values and principles.
3936 For example, Katrina (regional tennis coach) said:

3937 I think it’s important that players understand boundaries, discipline and what’s
3938 expected of them, so everyone is singing off the same hymn sheet. Like it’s okay let’s
3939 have fun, but also let’s work hard whatever we do, and respect each other and behave
3940 accordingly.

3941 Similarly, Elana (mother of county tennis player) said, “I suppose there could be more
3942 awareness around expected behaviour of parents.”

3943 **4.3.9 Category (h): Opportunities for coaches, parents, and young people to interact**

3944 Participants expressed the significance of creating opportunities for players, parents,
3945 and coaches to come together either formally or informally. These interactions not only
3946 fostered open conversations and provided a platform for discussing common goals and
3947 expectations, but they also offered a chance for relationships to develop, ultimately enhancing
3948 safety and enjoyment. Brian (county rugby coach/national coach development officer) said:

3949 I think more can be done around which is what we are trying to do is to get clubs to
3950 embrace parents more because they can help pass things onto their child which can
3951 help them have a better experience. So, it's just little things if there are a few coaches
3952 setting up cones, we encourage one to go have a chat with a parent so they can build a
3953 relationship and coaches can get a better understanding of the child.

3954 Erin (mother of a national tennis player) shared similar sentiments:

3955 Her [daughter's] coach is really good, she'll make an effort and come over every now
3956 and then. Sometimes it's just a quick 10-minute chat. Sometimes if she has time we
3957 have a longer chat, but she makes an effort to interact with me regularly, which is
3958 good because it helps build trust plus it helps me support her better [daughter].

3959 Coaches also played a key role in facilitating supportive peer relationships by
3960 arranging opportunities for young people to take part in games or *socialise away from the*
3961 *immediate sport setting*. For example, when discussing what enabled him to establish
3962 supportive peer relationships, Jason (18-year-old academy football player) said:

3963 Usually at the start of the season, we usually go down the beach and we do some
3964 sessions down the beach, but it's not really a session. We're there down the beach
3965 with the coaches playing games and getting to know each other. It's a good
3966 atmosphere and just stuff like that, like the team bonding. I think that helps so much. I
3967 don't think coaches realise how much stuff like that actually benefits, like us as
3968 players. Not just like fitness-wise or things like that but understanding each other and
3969 making friends. It's unbelievable.

3970 Similarly, Katie (18-year-old national hockey player) shared, "coaches were good they
3971 introduced us to each other, and they organised a team social where we all got to know each
3972 other better."

3973 **4.3.10 Category (i): Caring, competent, autonomy-supportive coaches**

3974 The relationship between a young person and their coach was paramount in ensuring
3975 optimal safety and enjoyment. One of the key factors influencing this relationship was the
3976 coach's capacity for *caring*. Susan (Lead safeguarding officer/chairperson) explained:

3977 When I say a good coach, I don't mean somebody who knows the sport. I mean
3978 somebody who cares about them [young people], who is invested in their future, who
3979 cares about them as a whole person is trying to develop their character, not just their
3980 athletic talent. From my point of view, I think that it is important that a sports club has
3981 people instructing children with those types of values.

3982 Similarly, Rhodri (father of an academy rugby player) highlighted the importance of having
3983 coaches who demonstrated care towards young people, "I think what helps him feel
3984 comfortable and enjoy rugby is he speaks highly of his coaches, they seem to care about him
3985 as a person, not just a rugby player which I think helps." Participants consistently expressed
3986 that having a coach that cared about them as a whole person, not just an athlete, made them
3987 feel valued as, Rob (14-year-old national swimmer) explained, "it makes me feel like I am
3988 appreciated at the club like I don't know how to explain it. She actually pays attention, and
3989 she cares about me as a person, not just as a swimmer."

3990 Participants also highlighted the importance of having a coach who was *competent*
3991 and equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities. Jenny
3992 (CPSU Development officer) said, "it's important to have coaches who have been trained and
3993 know what they're doing." Most importantly, coaches need to be competent and deliver
3994 developmentally appropriate sessions, as Lloyd (BUCS hockey coach) shared, "it's important
3995 that the training is appropriate for the actual children they're coaching, it's all got to be child-
3996 centred and developmentally appropriate or else that can be potentially dangerous and
3997 negatively impact children." Recognising how important skill development was in
3998 optimising young people's safety and enjoyment Kyle (county football coach) said,
3999 "sessions are always based around learning new skills and developing those skills. But, most
4000 importantly, just making sure that they're enjoying their time, because I think them
4001 improving and having fun is what keeps them motivated to come back."

4002 Alongside being competent to develop skills, participants also emphasised the
4003 importance of having a coach that was able to *adapt sessions* and make them enjoyable. One
4004 thing Marco (13-year-old national tennis player) mentioned when asked how coaches could
4005 help enhance his safety and enjoyment "don't make everything boring." Similarly, Jacinda
4006 (17-year-old county football player) said "don't do the same drills over and over again
4007 coaches have always got to mix up with some fun drills, games and stuff like that."
4008 Participants highlighted that when sessions were purely focused on skill development without
4009 any fun games or activities this negatively influenced young people's experiences.

4010 Finally, participants also expressed the importance of coaches being *autonomy*
4011 *supportive*. Gwen (Academy tennis coach) explained:

4012 When I am coaching, I like players to make suggestions and make choices about what
4013 they want to do in training. I don't see an issue with that, it makes them feel more
4014 comfortable. I'm quite confident in my ability as a coach, but if they spot something
4015 or there is an opportunity for them to make independent decisions over their training,
4016 I encourage that. I do that with my older players especially, [...] I welcome it because
4017 I think it enhances their whole experience.

4018 Specifically, participants believed that giving young people choices over their participation
4019 helped enhance their experiences. For example, Lloyd (BUCS hockey coach) said, "I think
4020 it's important to give young people some choice over some of the drills, or the games during
4021 training. I just notice they seem to have a lot more fun." Moreover, participants emphasised
4022 that it was better when coaches considered young people's perspectives, acknowledged their
4023 feelings, and provided opportunities for choice. This approach helped minimise demands and
4024 improved their overall experiences as Rob (14-year-old national swimmer) shared:

4025 I like it because she [coach] doesn't really force you do every session, it's more based
4026 on what you feel like you want to do. If you feel like you don't want to go in the
4027 morning [train]. She's not going to tell me to pick up a morning session. Instead, we
4028 aim for a number of sessions per week, and I prefer it because I have some control
4029 over my schedule.

4030 Linked to this, participants recalled the importance of coaches providing *consistent*
4031 *and constructive feedback*. For example, when discussing what he believed was important in
4032 enhancing young people's experiences, Wayne (national football coach) said, "the dialogue
4033 between player and coach has to be consistent and the feedback has to be constructive."
4034 Young people expressed that having constructive feedback from a coach enabled them to
4035 recognise their weaknesses and make improvements as, Fabya (14-year-old national
4036 swimmer) said, "it's nice, they [coaches] critique you afterwards and give you feedback,
4037 don't get me wrong. They'll say if you messed up something, but they will also tell you how
4038 to improve it which is good." However, participants also stressed the importance of
4039 delivering feedback in a balanced manner. As such, *providing encouragement* and support
4040 were also viewed as essential aspects of effective coaching. Brian (county rugby
4041 coach/national coach development officer) shared, "it's important coaches encourage and
4042 praise effort." Young people found competing challenging and nerve-racking, so having

4043 support and encouragement from coaches helped them feel comfortable and focus on
4044 enjoying the experience.

4045 **4.3.11 Category (j): Positive, proactive, supportive parental involvement**

4046 Alongside specific coach characteristics, it was also apparent there were specific types
4047 of involvement that were desirable from parents – namely positive, proactive, support
4048 involvement. When considering what *positive* parental involvement means, participants
4049 explained that sport meant a lot to young people as such it was important that parents
4050 showed interest in their participation. Devin (14-year-old county cricket player) said, “my
4051 parents are amazing! Cricket means a lot to me, so it’s nice to have their support. My mum
4052 knows nothing about cricket, but she’s still interested like.” Similarly, Rhodri (father of an
4053 academy rugby player) explained:

4054 As parents, we show interest and just support him to help him get to as far as he wants
4055 to go really. We’ve created an environment where we talk openly about what he
4056 wants to do. So, if he wants to work hard and achieve a pro contract we will support
4057 him, if he turns around and says I want to go to university we will equally support
4058 that.

4059 Having parents who were positive and showed interest in young people’s sport made them
4060 feel comfortable and enabled them to enjoy it, as Fabya (14-year-old national swimmer)
4061 expressed her feelings about her parents’ interest and support in her sport, stating, “it’s just
4062 nice, I feel relaxed and enjoy it more.”

4063 Linked to showing interest, participants explained that having parents who were
4064 *proactive* and *made an effort* to be present during training helped young people feel
4065 comfortable and enabled them to relax and focus on enjoying their sport. Lowri (13-year-old
4066 county cricket player) said, “I feel safe when my parents watch me and like maybe if I hit a
4067 good shot, they like clap or something and they just give me encouragement to play, and I
4068 enjoy it.” Rhys (16-year-old academy rugby player) further expressed, “having my dad watch
4069 me makes me feel more comfortable and he knows how I react, and it can be helpful having
4070 him around. I tend not to worry much and just enjoy it you see.” Having parents present was
4071 particularly helpful for younger players as some felt nervous, so their parents’ presence
4072 helped them feel relaxed and focus on playing, as Mona (14-year-old county tennis player)
4073 shared “normally in a competition I feel nervous at times, so it’s nice to look over and see
4074 them [parents] it calms me down and I can just focus.”

4075 Linked to this, participants indicated that emotional *support* from parents played a key
4076 role in enhancing young people’s sporting experiences. Participants emphasised that

4077 competing was challenging, and many young people tended to be self-critical. Thus,
4078 receiving encouragement from parents helped young people feel better and helped them focus
4079 on the positives, which in turn enabled them to have more of a positive experience. Jacinda,
4080 (17-year-old county-level football player) explained:

4081 I over think things in games and when I make mistakes, I don't think of the good
4082 things I've done I always think of the bad things, and I feel shit. It just takes away the
4083 fun aspect of things you know, but it's nice to have my parents watch because they're
4084 so supportive they encourage me and focus on the positives of the game, it's uplifting.

4085 Susan (Lead safeguarding officer/chairperson) reiterated, "There has to be a point where
4086 parents understand that it's important to watch their children and it's important to encourage
4087 them and not to be over critical about their performance." To engage in this way, it was
4088 important that parents maintained control over their own emotions.

4089 Emotional support from parents was also displayed through the provision of
4090 autonomy over participation. Young people valued the freedom to participate without
4091 pressure, which enabled them to feel comfortable and have positive experiences. For
4092 example, Rob (14-year-old national swimmer) expressed:

4093 I've never been forced into doing anything, like my parents have always been like,
4094 you do what you want to do. If you want to quit, you quit. If you don't want to do it
4095 anymore, just say, we'll support you. It's good because it makes me enjoy it more and
4096 makes me want to do it for them more. It makes you want to swim, then. Whereas, if
4097 they were forcing me to do it, I might hate and rebel and say, I don't want to swim
4098 anymore.

4099 **4.3.12 Category (k): Welcoming friendly peers**

4100 Participants expressed the importance of young people creating a friendly and
4101 welcoming environment, particularly when new individuals joined. For example, when
4102 responding to what he felt could help young people have safe and enjoyable experiences,
4103 Devin (14-year-old county cricket player) said, "I think it's important to be friendly if
4104 someone new joins, you should make an effort to introduce yourself and make them feel
4105 welcome." Similarly, Katie (18-year-old national hockey player) said, "it can be quite
4106 daunting joining a new team if you don't know anyone, so I always try my best to make new
4107 people feel welcome." Creating a *welcoming* atmosphere was vital, as Jason (18-year-old
4108 academy football player) explained his experience joining the academy, "the boys
4109 [teammates] were so welcoming when I joined, they helped me a lot with settling in, I felt
4110 really comfortable, and it allowed me to crack on and play football." Likewise, Rhys (16-

4111 year-old academy rugby player) described how the welcoming attitude of his peers helped
4112 him socialise and integrate into his academy team, “some of the senior players were very
4113 welcoming, it was so helpful because it made me feel relaxed and I could just be myself.”

4114 In addition, participants highlighted the importance of peers in the environment
4115 being *friendly* and approachable. Rueben (15-year-old county cricket player) shared, “when
4116 you join a new club, you’d want there to be someone that’s friendly and approachable,
4117 someone you can get along with and have a laugh with, that’s what it’s all about, making
4118 friends and playing together.” Similarly, Fabya (14-year-old national swimmer) said,
4119 “obviously in swimming you have swimmers coming in and out all the time, that’s just the
4120 nature of the sport. But no matter what I think it’s important to be friendly to everyone.”
4121 Participants expressed that when people were friendly this made them feel comfortable and
4122 enabled strong friendships to develop leading to more enjoyable experiences.

4123 Having welcoming and friendly peers enables young people to develop meaningful
4124 trusting and supportive friendships, and participants emphasised that these relationships are
4125 fundamental to children's sporting experiences. For example, Aled (17-year-old rugby player)
4126 said “The main thing I really enjoy about rugby is making friends and playing together.”

4127 **4.3.13 (l): *Trusting and supportive friendships with shared experiences***

4128 Participants explained that through opportunities to socialise and having welcoming
4129 and friendly peers, young people were able to develop *trusting* friendships. Having trusting
4130 peer relationships helped young people *support* and better understand each other. This was
4131 particularly important when it came to banter and camaraderie. Participants explained that
4132 banter and camaraderie were a key part of peer relationships in sport, especially within team
4133 sports. Ray (17-year-old academy football player) shared, “I enjoy having a laugh with the
4134 boys, we take the piss out of each all the time, I actually think banter is healthy.” That said,
4135 participants highlighted that banter had the potential of getting out of hand. However,
4136 participants believed that having supportive peer relationships helped young people navigate
4137 banter and camaraderie. For example, Devin (14-year-old county cricket player) shared, “we
4138 have banter, but people know not to step over the line, we all know each other and if it was to
4139 get too intense, we would step in and say stop.” Moreover, having supportive peer
4140 relationships also gave young people the confidence to intervene and challenge any banter
4141 that they felt went too far. For example, Jacinda (17-year-old county-level football player)
4142 said, “I’m confident to step in if anything got out of hand, if someone was taking the piss out
4143 of someone, we all have a good relationship, so I’d feel comfortable to say something.”

4144 Also, teammates and peers having opportunities to interact was important to *facilitate*
4145 *shared experiences*. For example, when explaining how peers positively influenced his safety
4146 and enjoyment Rueben (15-year-old county cricket player), “it’s nice to play with my
4147 friends. Like everyone is in the same boat as you as well, so everyone can relate to what
4148 you can relate to.” Participants highlighted that having peers in sport were important
4149 because they provided *a sense of relatedness* through shared experiences. For instance,
4150 Marco (13-year-old national tennis player) explained, “I feel safe playing with my friends,
4151 obviously we all play tennis together like they understand stuff like my other friends don’t.”
4152 Similarly, Ray (17-year-old academy football player) shared, “everyone’s there for the same
4153 reason; everyone’s here because we love playing football.[...]. When you’re chatting and
4154 playing with friends I think it just becomes much comfortable, you train better, you play
4155 better as a team.”

4156 Sharing similar experiences enabled young people to develop trusting peer
4157 relationships and *support* and uplift one another in their sport. Wayne (national football
4158 coach) described, “being able to spend time together and having those friendships is super
4159 important because players all support each other, because they go through highs and lows
4160 together.” Participants highlighted that sport is challenging and sometimes players lost or
4161 played below their expectations. However, having peers with shared experiences helped
4162 because they were able to provide emotional support which contributed to their overall safety
4163 and enjoyment, as Dylan (17-year-old academy rugby player) explained:

4164 When we lose, it’s tough because I’m sometimes sad. But when you’ve got like the
4165 group of people with you, they’ve all gone through it as well and we’re all friends,
4166 then it’s not so bad.

4167 **4.3.14 A grounded theory of optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experiences**

4168 To create optimally safe and enjoyable experiences for young people, the fundamental
4169 requirement is that positive relationships exist between all young people and key individuals
4170 in a physically safe and developmentally safe setting (Core Category). Achieving this
4171 requires consideration of two elements: the broader sporting context and the immediate
4172 sporting context. When considering the broader sporting context, it was apparent that sports
4173 organisations/clubs must have positive relationships with and receive adequate support from
4174 their NGB. Firstly, there is a need to ensure NGBs are providing appropriate resources and
4175 tangible support to ensure that clubs and organisations can offer physically safe
4176 facilities/environments in which young people can participate in enjoyable developmentally
4177 appropriate sessions (Category A). Additionally, NGB’s should provide access to continuing

4178 professional development (CPD) training for coaches and individuals in safeguarding roles
4179 (Category B). This helps staff in the immediate sporting context to fulfil their coaching or
4180 safeguarding roles appropriately and effectively (e.g., Category D and Category H). This is
4181 also facilitated by having access to a broad network of individuals involved in safeguarding
4182 roles, who are knowledgeable and equipped regarding safeguarding (Category C). Such
4183 networks provide valuable support to staff in the immediate sporting environment to help
4184 effectively implement safeguarding policies and procedures (Category E), enabling them to
4185 make informed decisions aligned with club policies and procedures, which in turn helps
4186 optimise safety and enjoyment.

4187 In the immediate sporting context, there are three aspects to consider: policies and
4188 procedures, types of individuals within the environment and their characteristics, and the
4189 relationships and interactions that exist between individuals. Regarding policies and
4190 procedures, it is important that they are visibly displayed and appropriately implemented
4191 (Category E). The implementation of these policies is influenced by the relationships and
4192 access that individuals in the immediate environment have to a network of individuals
4193 involved in safeguarding roles (Category C) in the broader context as they help support them
4194 on best ways to enforce these policies and procedures in the immediate environment.

4195 At a more intimate level within the immediate environment, there is a requirement for
4196 certain individuals who behave in specific ways and possess specific characteristics.
4197 Particularly, there is a need for coaches who are caring, competent, and autonomy-supportive
4198 (Category I), parents who are positive, proactive and support (Category J) and that young
4199 people have welcoming and friendly peers (Category K). The presence of these individuals is
4200 paramount in optimising young people's overall experiences. However, it is not sufficient to
4201 only have these types of people present to optimise safety and enjoyment, it is also important
4202 that there are opportunities for coaches, parents, and young people to interact (Category H),
4203 with such interactions more likely to occur when individuals displaying these characteristics
4204 are present in the environment. Moreover, when having opportunities to interact, parents,
4205 coaches, and young people should engage in open, honest, and respectful interactions
4206 (Category F). Such interactions will enable the establishment of shared goals and
4207 expectations (Category G) as well as the development of trusting and supportive friendships
4208 with shared experiences (Category L). Together, these interactions and relationships underpin
4209 the creation of the positive relationships that are fundamental to optimally safe and enjoyable
4210 sporting experiences.

4211 **4.4 Discussion**

4212 The present study aimed to explore factors that contribute to an optimally safe
4213 sporting experience. In developing the proposed GT, the first objective was to understand
4214 how participants conceptualised a safe and enjoyable sporting experience. The proposed GT
4215 conceptualised a safe and enjoyable experience as one in which young people feel happy,
4216 comfortable, confident, competent, relaxed, valued, and connected with others within the
4217 environment and feel physically and emotionally safe and also perceive self-development.
4218 This conceptualisation aligns with the principles of safeguarding (Department of Education,
4219 2018) which emphasise protecting young people from abuse and maltreatment, preventing
4220 harm to their health or development, and ensuring young people receive safe and effective
4221 care all of which aim to provide young people with the best possible outcomes (Department
4222 of Education, 2018; NSPCC, 2020). Moreover, the current GT underscores the importance
4223 for research to not just focus on preventing harm in youth sport but also adopting a child-
4224 centred approach that prioritises the enhancement of young people's welfare in sport through
4225 the promotion of their human rights (Lang & Hartill, 2015). In seeking to achieve an
4226 optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience the GT theory has highlighted the intricate
4227 factors that need to be in place both within the broader and immediate sporting context to
4228 attain this outcome.

4229 Many of the factors of the proposed theory have previously been associated with
4230 safety and/or enjoyment in the sport science literature. For example, literature pertaining to
4231 safety in sport emphasises the significance of ensuring safe physical sport environments for
4232 young people to participate in (Gurgis et al., 2020) and the need for appropriate safeguarding
4233 policies and procedures (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014; Lang & Hartill, 2014; Mountjoy et al.,
4234 2015). In addition, research devoted to enhancing young people's sporting experiences has
4235 highlighted the importance of positive relationships (Flett et al., 2013), striking a balance
4236 between the emphasis on winning and enjoyment (Merkel, 2022; Smoll & Cumming, 2007),
4237 incorporating developmentally appropriate sporting activities (Bob et al., 2011; Côté et al.,
4238 2003), and ensuring that coaches have access to continuous professional development (CPD)
4239 (Lyle, 2002; Welch & Jong, 2007). Furthermore, studies focused on enjoyment in youth
4240 sports have emphasised the importance and influence of positive parental involvement
4241 (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; McCarthy et al., 2008), caring and autonomy-supportive
4242 coaches (Bartholomew et al., 2009; Tjomsland et al., 2015), and supportive peer relationships
4243 (Weiss & Allen, 2002). However, what distinguishes the current study is the unique

4244 identification of all the individual factors and the manner in which they interact and influence
4245 one another to explain how safety and enjoyment can be optimised in youth sport.

4246 The proposed GT highlighted that achieving an optimally safe sporting experience is
4247 influenced by the interaction between all the above factors (i.e., categories) within both the
4248 immediate and broader sporting contexts. Specifically, it demonstrated the dynamic and
4249 recursive interactions between factors within the immediate sporting context (i.e., policies
4250 and relationships) and the broader sporting context (i.e., NGB support and requirements and
4251 an integrated broad professional network were key influences). Recently, researchers
4252 examining maltreatment in sport have utilised Bronfenbrenner's (1997) bioecological
4253 systems theory as an overarching framework and have highlighted that various systems and
4254 contexts contribute to negative sporting experiences (Kerr et al., 2019; Kerr & Kerr, 2020). In
4255 line with previous research, the current GT demonstrated that various systems and contexts
4256 interact to influence young people's sporting experiences (Kerr et al., 2019). Specifically,
4257 when applying an ecological systems theory lens (Bronfenbrenner, 1999) to the proposed
4258 grounded theory, it shows the microsystem, the mesosystem, and the ecosystem all interact
4259 and contribute to the optimisation of young people's safety and enjoyment.

4260 For instance, concerning the microsystem, the current GT study has shown that
4261 having caring, autonomy-supportive coaches and providing opportunities for them to engage
4262 in open, honest, and respectful interactions with others in the sporting environment helps
4263 facilitate positive relationships between coaches and young people (Jowett, 2005; Lisinskiene
4264 et al., 2019). Similarly, fostering positive, proactive parental involvement and offering
4265 opportunities for them to engage in open, honest, and respectful interactions with each other
4266 facilitates opportunities for positive relationships to develop between parents and young
4267 people (Gould et al., 2007; Knight & Holt, 2014; O'Donnell et al., 2022). Additionally,
4268 promoting trusting and supportive friendships with shared experiences and opportunities to
4269 interact also plays a significant role in fostering positive relationships among young people.
4270 These factors collectively contribute to creating optimally safe and enjoyable experiences.

4271 Regarding the mesosystem, indirect interactions between parents, coaches, and young
4272 people, as well as the opportunities for all parties to interact and develop shared goals and
4273 expectations among themselves, influence the positive relationships between these groups
4274 (Gould et al., 2007; Knight & Holt, 2014; Smoll, 2011). These positive relationships, in turn,
4275 contribute to creating a safe and enjoyable sporting experience. Meanwhile, concerning the
4276 ecosystem, the current GT demonstrates that the broader sporting system and culture has a
4277 direct impact on the immediate sporting context. For example, within the broader sporting

4278 context, having tangible support for creating physically safe and developmentally appropriate
4279 sessions, along with the availability of continuing professional development (CPD) training
4280 opportunities, enables the establishment of a physically safe setting within the immediate
4281 environment and empowers coaches to deliver developmentally appropriate sessions.
4282 Moreover, having an integrated professional network that is knowledgeable and equipped
4283 regarding safeguarding supports individuals in safeguarding roles to appropriately implement
4284 safeguarding policies and procedures in the immediate sporting context, thereby optimising
4285 young people's sporting experiences.

4286 As such, in considering the proposed grounded theory, it is apparent that developing
4287 optimally safe and enjoyable experiences in youth sport is highly complex and intricate.
4288 Thus, it supports recent suggestions that safeguarding should be approached from a holistic
4289 systems perspective, recognising the various layers that influence young people's sporting
4290 experiences and how all protective measures in place interact to shape these experiences
4291 (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014; Kerr et al., 2019). Moreover, it also indicates that
4292 safeguarding, and further optimising youth sport experiences, is a shared responsibility, that
4293 requires collaborative efforts from individuals within both the broader and immediate
4294 sporting contexts to help create safe environments where young people can enjoy sport
4295 without experiencing any form of maltreatment. Thus, if we are to truly commit to optimising
4296 young people's sporting experiences researchers, practitioners, and sports organisations
4297 should focus across these layers and pay particular attention to interactions (Kerr et al., 2019;
4298 Nery et al., 2023).

4299 In relation to the broader sporting context, significant emphasis was placed on
4300 ensuring access to and participation in CPD training for coaches and individuals in
4301 safeguarding roles. Specifically, the GT highlighted the importance of sports organisations,
4302 with support from the NGB, providing access to CPD for coach development. Although
4303 research has highlighted the importance of CPD for coach development (Lyle, 2002; Welch
4304 & Jong, 2007), the current GT furthers our understanding of why CPD is so important in
4305 relation to optimising safety and enjoyment. For example, having access to CPD was
4306 perceived to enable coaches to deliver enjoyable, developmentally safe, and appropriate
4307 sessions which was a central aspect of the core category in the immediate sporting context.
4308 Specifically, the core category demonstrated that it was paramount to have developmentally
4309 appropriate activities to ensure that sessions were pitched at the right level. This approach
4310 helped foster enjoyment and self-development while also allowing young people to adapt to
4311 the physical demands of their sport without risking injury. Given the varied and diverse

4312 developmental stages of young people participating in youth sport (Cote & Hay, 2002; Fraser
4313 Thomas et al., 2005) coaches would benefit from undergoing CPD training for effective
4314 coaching across multiple age groups. Participants also highlighted that CPD was beneficial in
4315 enabling coaches to connect and engage with young people in a safer and more relatable
4316 manner. Therefore, the GT reaffirms that coach education provided by the NGB is a
4317 fundamental aspect of coach learning and that education programs play a key role in the
4318 sports coaching profession as they provide assurance of coach competency and contribute
4319 significantly to the development of coaching as a profession (Lyle, 2002).

4320 The current GT highlighted the importance of visibly displaying and appropriately
4321 implementing safeguarding policies and procedures within the immediate sporting context,
4322 which aligns with previous research (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014; Rhind & Owusu-Sekeyer,
4323 2018). However, an unexpected finding related to this category within the broader context
4324 was the emphasis placed on ensuring that key individuals (i.e., coaches and welfare officers)
4325 had access to a broad supportive professional network. Previous research examining the
4326 experiences of safeguarding lead officers at the NGB level has found that they face complex
4327 challenges, experienced feelings of isolation, and lacked confidence in specific aspects of
4328 their responsibilities (Hartill & Lang, 2014). Expanding on these findings, the proposed GT
4329 highlighted that individuals in safeguarding positions, including welfare officers and lead
4330 safeguarding officers at both club and NGB level, often feel ill-equipped and lack confidence
4331 in addressing concerns, leading many to seek external support. Therefore, having external
4332 support assisted in helping people in safeguarding roles effectively implement safeguarding
4333 policies and procedures within the immediate sporting environment. As such it is important
4334 for clubs and NGBs to facilitate opportunities for interaction and relationship building among
4335 individuals in safeguarding roles, both at the club and NGB levels.

4336 Central to the proposed grounded theory is the importance of positive relationships
4337 between young people and key individuals. Positive relationships play a key role in young
4338 people's overall development and significantly influence their performance, well-being, and
4339 long-term engagement in sport (Davis & Jowett, 2010; Smoll et al., 2011; Weiss, 2003).
4340 Thus, it is unsurprising that positive relationships were a key factor within the current theory.
4341 However, what is important in the proposed GT is the significance of relationships from all
4342 perspectives. Specifically, it was apparent that it is not only specific dyadic relationships
4343 between, for instance, the coach-young person, coach-parent, or peer-peer that matter when
4344 considering safeguarding, but rather the collective interactions and relationships across all
4345 parties. Thus, to optimise safety and enjoyment within the immediate sporting context

4346 emphasis should be placed on enhancing all relationships and recognising the negative impact
4347 that minimising or dismissing one party (typically parents) within the youth sport
4348 environment will ultimately have on the experiences of all young people in that setting.
4349 Specifically, it is apparent that tailored interventions targeting the prevention of maltreatment
4350 or enhancing sporting experiences will have limited impact if they do not consider or include
4351 all the key individuals in the sporting environment.

4352 Linked to the above, however, it is clear within the current GT that the characteristics
4353 of individuals within the environment will influence the quality of their interactions. For
4354 instance, it was important that coaches were caring, competent and autonomy supportive.
4355 This aligns with previous research which has consistently highlighted that caring, autonomy
4356 supportive coaching behaviour is associated with various positive outcomes for young people
4357 such as increased motivation, enhanced performance, enhanced self-esteem and wellbeing,
4358 positive interpersonal relationships and increased enjoyment (Bartholomew et al., 2009; Deci
4359 & Ryanm 2000; Jowett, & Ntoumanis, 2004). Similarly, parents being positive, proactive,
4360 and supportive was highlighted, which again this aligns with previous literature (e.g., Furusa
4361 et al., 2020; Knight et al., 2023). Finally, it was apparent that peers also need to be
4362 welcoming and friendly. Previous research has recognised positive peer relationships as a
4363 fundamental aspect of youth sport participation (Weiss & Stuntz, 2004) and previous studies
4364 have indicated that positive peer relationships positively influence young people’s overall
4365 sporting experiences (Weiss & Allen, 2002). Given the alignment with previous research, it
4366 was unsurprising that these characteristics of these individuals contributed to the optimisation
4367 of safety and enjoyment.

4368 However, previous literature has been limited in exploring why these characteristics,
4369 across these three parties are so important in influencing sporting experiences. The proposed
4370 GT addresses this. That is, these characteristics were seen as necessary in individuals because
4371 they enabled open, honest, and respectful communication to occur. Previous studies have
4372 found that open communication channels play a key role in building positive between
4373 parents, coaches, and young people (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008; Lavoie, 2007). It is suggested
4374 that positive coach-athlete relationships, along with effective communication between parents
4375 and coaches, can provide a healthy environment for young people to develop (Vella et al.,
4376 2010). The GT extends this point, as participants also expressed that from a safeguarding
4377 perspective, having open channels of communication that were honest and respectful made
4378 participants feel comfortable to use the implemented safeguarding policies and report
4379 concerns if needed.

4380 Research has identified various barriers to disclosing or reporting safeguarding
4381 concerns in sport (CPSU, 2022; Mountjoy et al., 2021), and parents' awareness of bullying
4382 and abuse in sport has been associated with a lack of communication with coaches.

4383 Therefore, the proposed GT emphasises that it is important not only for sports organisations
4384 to have appropriately implemented safeguarding policies and procedures but also indicates
4385 that emphasis should be placed on creating a healthy organisational culture that fosters
4386 positive interactions and communication between individuals. This will help improve
4387 relationships and increases people's confidence to utilise the available safeguarding
4388 mechanisms in place (Mounjoy et al., 2016).

4389 Building off the above, the proposed GT also emphasises the importance of coaches,
4390 parents, and young people having shared goals and expectations. Sharing goals and expectations
4391 have been highlighted in various relationship studies, particularly in relation to coach-athlete
4392 interactions or parent-athlete interactions (Gould et al., 2007; Knight & Holt, 2014; O'Donnell et
4393 al., 2022). However, more limited consideration of the need to have these across the triad of
4394 parents, young people, and coaches exists. In line with previous research, participants
4395 highlighted that when goals were not shared and communicated, this resulted in unmet
4396 expectations which often led to conflicts that negatively impacted relationships and young
4397 people's sporting experiences (Gould et al., 2016). Moreover, participants also emphasised the
4398 importance of promoting discussions of shared expectations regarding understanding their
4399 responsibilities and behavioural expectations. Research suggests that sports organisations should
4400 identify values, and standards, and discuss behavioural expectations and guidelines with key
4401 individuals in the environment to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities and
4402 expectations (Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018; O'Donnell et al., 2022; Strachan et al., 2011), but
4403 typically these are suggested in a "top-down" approach, with organisations stipulating what
4404 should be expected. However, in the current study, participants appeared to perceive that co-
4405 creating such expectations is likely to be more beneficial.

4406 However, some caution should be taken when developing these expectations and
4407 seeking to develop positive relationships, particularly between coaches and young people.
4408 For instance, issues of favouritism and preferential treatment can be problematic, and may
4409 actually contribute to maltreatment in sport. Research shows that forming social connections
4410 appears to be closely linked to the steps in the grooming process, which involves building
4411 trust and crossing boundaries with a young person and their social circle (Bisgaard & Støckel,
4412 2019). Research indicates that coaches use their success, reputation, and social capital as a
4413 shield of protection while grooming and exploiting young athletes. Therefore, while the

4414 findings of the current study indicate that positive relationships are imperative for optimising
4415 sport enjoyment and safety, precautions must be taken to protect young people and foster a
4416 culture for coaches to operate professionally without crossing personal boundaries, especially
4417 in small local clubs where everyone knows each other well (Bisgaard & Støckel, 2019).

4418 It is important to note that for parents, coaches, and young people to engage in open,
4419 honest, and respectful interactions and to develop shared goals and expectations, the proposed
4420 GT highlights the essential role coaches play in providing opportunities for these individuals
4421 to interact. Previous research has highlighted the importance of coaches facilitating
4422 opportunities for parents, coaches, and young people to meet and discuss goals and
4423 expectations (Smoll, 2011). In light of the current GT and the impact that interaction
4424 opportunities had on the relationship between coaches, parents, and young people within the
4425 immediate sporting context, sports organisations and clubs would benefit from ensuring
4426 sufficient time is included within coaches' contracts or discussions of working time to enable
4427 them to incorporate such activities within their working/volunteering hours. Given how
4428 important it is, ensuring that it is seen as a core component of work, rather than an add-on,
4429 which is typically associated with more stress (Knight et al., 2014) is necessary.

4430 Linked to the aforementioned point on positive relationships, the GT showed that
4431 trusting and supportive friendships were also vital in optimising safety and enjoyment in
4432 sports. Research suggests that affiliation with a team or group, which provides opportunities
4433 to form friendships, is a key motive for young people to participate in sport (Smith & Ullrich-
4434 French, 2020). The current GT further expands upon this, as participants expressed that
4435 coaches arranging opportunities for young people to participate in games or socialise outside
4436 of immediate sport settings facilitated the development of supportive peer relationships. From
4437 a safeguarding perspective, these relationships were particularly important because
4438 participants reported that having trusting and supportive friendships helped young people
4439 navigate banter and camaraderie. Specifically, these relationships gave young people the
4440 confidence to intervene and challenge the banter that they felt crossed the line and acted as a
4441 safeguard against bullying behaviours. Given the increase in negative peer interactions in
4442 sport, such as bullying (e.g., Vertommen et al., 2016; Hauw et al., 2021), the current GT
4443 reinforces the importance of facilitating and developing strong peer support systems to foster
4444 trusting friendships, not only to enhance young people's enjoyment but also to combat
4445 bullying and negative peer interactions in sports (Nery et al., 2019). However, the findings
4446 indicate that trusting friendships in sports are not formed automatically, instead, young
4447 people need opportunities to develop relationships with each other and to bond over their

4448 shared experiences. Therefore, it is important for parents and coaches to take active roles in
4449 facilitating opportunities that foster positive peer interactions.

4450 ***4.4.1 Applied Implications***

4451 The findings of the current study offer valuable information and applied implications
4452 for young people, parents, coaches, and sport organisations. Most importantly the current
4453 study highlighted that positive relationships are the cornerstone of optimising safety and
4454 enjoyment in sport. Pertaining to the immediate sporting context, participants expressed the
4455 importance of having positive relationships in an environment in which individuals are
4456 welcoming, friendly, approachable, and acknowledging of one another. Given their influence
4457 in influencing club culture, coaches and staff in the organisation should lead by example, and
4458 endeavour to be welcoming, friendly, and approachable, and where possible try to engage
4459 with all individuals, regardless of who they are, with a simple greeting or a smile. Sports
4460 organisations should do their best to establish clear values that are conducive to young
4461 people's human rights and support their developmental needs and overall well-being. In
4462 addition, coaches should set clear behavioural expectations for young people and all key
4463 individuals in the immediate environment that emphasise respect, inclusivity, and
4464 sportsmanship. Coaches and staff can reinforce the values through regular communication
4465 with young people and all key individuals in the environment to instil the values as part of the
4466 environmental culture.

4467 Participants also highlighted the importance of having visibly displayed and
4468 accessible policies and practices. Specifically, participants highlighted the importance of
4469 having a designated welfare officer and to ensure that young people and key individuals in
4470 the immediate environment were informed of their identity and are aware of how to access
4471 them if needed. Clearly, it is important for club welfare officers to introduce themselves to
4472 young people, and all key individuals in the sports club. Where possible welfare officers
4473 should try and attend training sessions, or competitions and make people in the club aware of
4474 who they are and explain what their role is. In addition, welfare officers should use various
4475 mediums to publicly display their contact information, either on the sports clubs' website, or
4476 social media platform so that participants can get in contact with them if needed.

4477 Given that participants in the current study highlighted the importance of individuals
4478 in safeguarding roles having access to a professional network to help them appropriately
4479 implement safeguarding policies and procedures. NGBs should try and facilitate regular
4480 online or in-person meetings with lead safeguarding officers, and welfare officers from
4481 different sports and sporting organisations. Such meetings would bring together various

4482 individuals responsible for safeguarding and provide an opportunity for a support network to
4483 develop with various individuals with different knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, given
4484 that participants also discussed the importance of having access to CPD training on
4485 safeguarding, such meetings would also enable individuals to discuss educational needs and
4486 identify and share information of safeguarding training opportunities and resources which, in
4487 turn, enable individuals to appropriately and effectively handle concerns and implement
4488 safeguarding policies and procedures.

4489 ***4.4.2 Limitations and Future Research Directions***

4490 The proposed grounded theory should be considered in light of certain limitations.
4491 First, it is important to note that the proposed theory is a substantive theory that provides
4492 insights into the perceptions of young people, parents, coaches, and individuals in
4493 safeguarding roles regarding factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience.
4494 Substantive theories are context-specific, reflecting the data collected within a particular
4495 setting (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Therefore, it is important to interpret the proposed theory
4496 considering the characteristics of the current sample and its generalisability to other
4497 individuals and their experiences within similar youth sporting contexts in Wales (Smith,
4498 2018). Young people from various sports should be able to find similarities between the
4499 proposed GT and their own experiences in terms of how these significant others influence
4500 their enjoyment and safety in sport. However, future research may benefit from using the
4501 findings from his study as a foundation for exploring similarities and nuances across various
4502 environments both within the immediate and broader sporting context.

4503 Second, it is important to consider methodological limitations, especially considering
4504 that research recommends the use of multiple data collection methods in grounded theory
4505 (GT) studies to enable methodological triangulation (Flick, 2019). Due to the COVID-19
4506 lockdown restrictions, it was only feasible to utilise semi-structured interviews in the current
4507 study. It is suggested that GT studies should be bounded to focus on concepts and categories
4508 directly related to the core category (Nathaniel, 2020). Therefore, it should be noted that, in
4509 relation to the current study, there might have been other factors influencing safety and
4510 enjoyment that could have been captured through alternative data collection methods, such as
4511 observations and triangulation of data from diverse sources (e.g., interviews and
4512 observations). Therefore, if feasible future research may consider utilising multiple data
4513 sources to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under
4514 investigation (Flick, 2019).

4515 Finally, the current study provides valuable insights into the perceptions of young
4516 people, parents, coaches, and individuals in safeguarding roles regarding factors that
4517 contribute to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience. However, it is essential to
4518 acknowledge that there are numerous other individuals involved in youth sports within the
4519 immediate and broader sporting context who potentially play a role in optimising safety and
4520 enjoyment. Therefore, future research may benefit from including a larger, more diverse
4521 sample and exploring the perspectives of individuals involved in sports in various capacities
4522 and roles, including physiotherapists, sports psychologists, team managers, performance
4523 managers, officials, and CEOs etc. By incorporating these perspectives, a more
4524 comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing safety and enjoyment in sports can be
4525 achieved. Furthermore, this may assist in stimulating the development of the current theory
4526 into a formal theory.

4527 ***4.4.3 Conclusion***

4528 The current study explored factors contributing to an optimally safe sporting
4529 experience. Using a Straussian GT methodological approach, a substantive GT was
4530 developed outlining the process leading to an optimally safe and enjoyable sporting
4531 experience. The results of the current study provide context and a detailed understanding of
4532 the process underpinning safe and enjoyable sporting experiences. In particular, the theory
4533 highlights that having positive relationships between young people and key individuals in a
4534 welcoming, environmentally safe, and developmentally appropriate setting is fundamental to
4535 optimising safety and enjoyment in youth sports. The results indicate that many factors in the
4536 immediate and broader sporting context interact to influence the optimisation of safe and
4537 enjoyable sporting experiences. Subsequently, the current study emphasises the importance of
4538 considering both the broader and immediate sporting environment when ensuring safety and
4539 enjoyment in youth sport. Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of not only
4540 focusing on protecting young people from abuse and preventing harm but also promoting
4541 their well-being and ensuring that they have enjoyable sporting experiences. The results may
4542 be used to help sport organisations and individuals design and deliver safeguarding initiatives
4543 to help enhance young people's overall sporting experiences.

4544

4545 **Chapter 5: Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating a Creative Educational**
4546 **Safeguarding Workshop**

4547 **5.1 Introduction**

4548 Given the widespread prevalence of bullying and emotional abuse in various sports
4549 and competitive levels, as well as recent media attention relating to athletes disclosing
4550 incidents of abuse (e.g., UK gymnastics, etc.), it is unsurprising that there has been increased
4551 focus on prioritising the prevention of maltreatment and safeguarding young people in sport
4552 (Mountjoy et al., 2016; Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018; Owusu-Sekyere, 2022). The findings
4553 from Chapter Three highlight that young people in Wales do not recognise emotional abuse
4554 and bullying in sport. This is concerning given the relatively high prevalence of emotional
4555 abuse and bullying witnessed and experienced. While concerning, this aligns with previous
4556 research indicating that young people often possess limited awareness of behaviours that
4557 constitute maltreatment, including bullying and emotional abuse (Mountjoy et al., 2020).
4558 Moreover, research also shows that young people are uncertain about the appropriate
4559 channels for reporting such behaviours if they were to witness or experience them (Mountjoy
4560 et al., 2022). A key suggestion made by participants in Chapter Three to help prevent cases of
4561 emotional abuse and bullying was the need for education.

4562 Recognising the need to address issues of maltreatment in sport, recommendations
4563 were made by Mountjoy et al. (2016) in the International Olympic Committee's (IOC)
4564 Consensus Statement on harassment and abuse, emphasising the need for evidence-based
4565 education as a key approach in the prevention of abuse in sport. This recommendation was
4566 further emphasised in the European Commission-funded report on gender-based violence
4567 (Mergaert et al., 2016). Although research suggests that maltreatment issues should be
4568 considered and addressed at a systemic level (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014; Kerr et al.,
4569 2019), providing ongoing evidence-based education on bullying and emotional abuse for
4570 young people, coaches, parents, and other key individuals within the sporting environment
4571 can also potentially be a catalyst for long-term transformations in sports culture (Breger et al.,
4572 2019). It is suggested that education is particularly valuable as it can help equip individuals
4573 with the knowledge to recognise, respond to, and report concerns (MacPherson et al., 2022).
4574 However, although there is a clear need to implement evidence-based educational initiatives
4575 (Mountjoy et al., 2016), aside from those conducted by a few key authors (e.g., McMahon et
4576 al., 2013; 2018; 2022; 2023; Rulofs et al., 2015) studies centred on educating individuals
4577 regarding abuse in sport are limited.

4578 The evidence generated through existing education initiatives is extremely beneficial,
4579 not least because they have highlighted both topics for consideration as well as approaches
4580 for communicating messages. However, to-date, few studies have explicitly focused on
4581 providing education to children and adolescents (i.e., below the age of 16 years old;
4582 McMahon et al., 2023). Rather, previous interventions have been conducted with coaches
4583 (McMahon et al., 2013), parents (McMahon, 2018), or young people aged between 16-22
4584 years. In fact, the only study involving young people below the age of 16 years also
4585 incorporated coaches (McMahon et al., 2023), therefore comprised mixed populations.
4586 Research, including the findings from Chapter Three, suggests that bullying and emotional
4587 abuse is prevalent during adolescence (i.e., 13-18 years) (Alexander et al., 2011; Brown et al.,
4588 2005; Finkelhor, et al., 2015). Consequently, developing and delivering early educational
4589 initiatives would be beneficial to reduce such incidences from occurring in sport (Mountjoy
4590 et al., 2020; Nery et al., 2020).

4591 Moreover, the aforementioned education initiatives have focused on sexual abuse
4592 (Rulofs et al., 2015), or emotional and physical abuse together, with an emphasis on mainly
4593 adult perpetrators (i.e., coaches or adults in positions of trust; McMahon et al., 2013; 2018;
4594 2022; 2023). As such, these studies have not included information regarding emotional abuse
4595 perpetrated by peers (i.e., bullying). Given that previous research indicates that maltreatment
4596 experienced by young people in sport is primarily perpetrated by peers (i.e., teammates or
4597 opponents) (Alexander et al., 2011; Vertommen et al., 2016: 2022), this is clearly an area that
4598 would benefit from consideration. Moreover, while education pertaining to sexual and
4599 physical abuse is clearly extremely important, given the nature of the topics they may seem
4600 more important than information relating to emotional abuse or bullying. That is, when
4601 information regarding sexual or physical abuse is provided alongside information regarding
4602 emotional abuse or bullying, there is potential that emotional abuse/bullying might seem of
4603 lesser importance in comparison. Providing education interventions focused exclusively upon
4604 emotional abuse and bullying will ensure that these two behaviours are recognised as
4605 important, and the potential is severity understood.

4606 Finally, to-date, abuse education interventions have focused only on abuse and have
4607 not included information regarding how to optimise sporting experiences. Although ensuring
4608 safety and preventing maltreatment in youth sports is paramount, recent research focusing on
4609 safety in sport highlights the importance of including and prioritising the optimisation of
4610 sporting experiences, ensuring accessibility, promoting growth, and upholding all young
4611 people's rights in sport (Gurgis et al., 2023). In fact, as argued in Chapter Four, irradiating

4612 emotional abuse and bullying will not guarantee positive sporting experiences. There is a
4613 need to remove negative behaviours while enhancing positive ones. Thus, it is important that
4614 educational initiatives not only focus on the prevention of abuse and bullying but also include
4615 information on how to enhance young people’s enjoyment and overall sporting experiences in
4616 sport. Furthermore, given the sensitive nature of bullying and emotional abuse, providing
4617 some positive content in educational initiatives may be useful to ensure young participants
4618 are not overwhelmed or excessively concerned about potential negative experiences within
4619 sport.

4620 To overcome the limitations discussed above, the purpose of the present study was to
4621 design, implement, and evaluate the feasibility of conducting a creative educational workshop
4622 with young athletes (aged under 16 years of age) regarding emotional abuse, bullying,
4623 safeguarding, and their overall enjoyment of sport. It is suggested that developing successful
4624 evidence-based interventions requires the careful selection, adaptation, and evaluation of
4625 intervention studies (Pearson et al., 2020). When making decisions on which intervention to
4626 use, it is important to consider its practicality and whether it warrants thorough,
4627 comprehensive, multilevel evaluations (Bowen et al., 2009). Research suggests that
4628 feasibility studies are useful in developing interventions as they focus on process, which
4629 involves posing questions such as, “can this realistically be carried out?” (Orsmond & Cohn,
4630 2015). As such, the current study a feasibility study sought to answer the following questions:

- 4631 1) Does a workshop on emotional abuse, bullying, and sport enjoyment enhance
4632 knowledge, awareness, and understanding of these topics among young people (aged
4633 between 13-15 years)?
- 4634 2) What are young people’s perceptions of using creative and interactive approaches
4635 in enhancing knowledge and awareness of these topics?
- 4636 3) What are suggestions for improving future educational initiatives with young
4637 people aged between 13-15 years?

4638 A creative educational workshop was selected because previous studies have
4639 highlighted the benefits of using creative research approaches, such as arts-based activities,
4640 story-completion, and story-mediated interviews to engage young people in research focused
4641 on sensitive topics (Braun et al., 2018; Gravett, 2019; Tumanyan & Huuki, 2020).
4642 Particularly, creative approaches are perceived to be beneficial in such settings because they
4643 provide an opportunity for young people to express themselves freely, reflect on their own
4644 experiences and generate new insights in response to experiences that may be difficult to
4645 vocalise (Fraser & Al Sayah, 2011).

4646 Some support for such an approach has been provided in a recent abuse education
4647 study by McMahon and colleagues (2023). McMahon et al. (2023) utilised a variety of
4648 different formats including visual, auditory, and artefacts (i.e., audio recordings of coaches'
4649 voices captured by the media, videos, and published pictures) to deliver educational content
4650 on non-sexualised types of abuse to coaches and young people aged 7-18 years. However, no
4651 previous studies have explicitly utilised creative arts-based activities and story completion
4652 interviews in educational initiatives focused on abuse in sport with young people in sport
4653 aged between 13-15 years of age.

4654 **5.2 Method**

4655 ***5.2.1 Methodology and Philosophical Underpinnings***

4656 In line with the study aims a feasibility study was developed to address the current
4657 research questions. Feasibility studies are scaled-down preliminary versions of a larger
4658 proposed study designed to mainly assess if and how components of the study can be
4659 executed effectively (Eldridge et al., 2016). These studies concentrate on the development
4660 and execution of an intervention, providing a preliminary exploration of participants'
4661 responses to the intervention (Dobkin, 2009). Unlike pilot studies which tend to be miniature
4662 versions of a main study primarily aiming to assess the compatibility and functionality of all
4663 components within the study, feasibility studies have a distinct focus. Instead of replicating
4664 the main study, feasibility studies focus on determining the viability of actually conducting
4665 the research itself (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015). Conducting a feasibility study entails a process
4666 of learning and development, allowing researchers to adapt study procedures and
4667 interventions to achieve optimal outcomes as they progress (Bowen et al., 2009). Given the
4668 significance of adaptation in feasibility studies, establishing fidelity to demonstrate the
4669 accurate implementation of intervention protocols usually occurs in the pilot phase (Orsmond
4670 & Cohn, 2015).

4671 It is suggested that there are various general areas of focus addressed by feasibility
4672 studies (Bowen et al., 2009). Drawing on methodological literature on feasibility studies in
4673 social and behavioural interventions, it is suggested that the main areas of focus of a
4674 feasibility study include, the evaluation of data collection procedures and outcome measures,
4675 evaluation of acceptability of the intervention and study procedures, and evaluation of
4676 preliminary evaluation of participant responses to the intervention (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015).
4677 First, assessing data collection procedures and outcome measures involves determining
4678 whether these methods are suitable for the intended population and research aims. Second,
4679 evaluating participant responses to the intervention involves assessing the participants'

4680 perception of the appropriateness and acceptability of the study procedures and intervention.
4681 Finally, examining participant responses to the intervention determines its potential for
4682 success with the target population (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015).

4683 Research suggests that feasibility studies are useful when there are limited studies or
4684 existing literature that utilise a specific research technique (Bowen et al., 2009). Additionally,
4685 they are useful when research indicates the need to consider the topic, methodology, or
4686 outcome with the population or target of an intervention (Bowen et al., 2009). Given that
4687 there is a dearth of studies that have utilised interactive and creative methods in maltreatment
4688 education interventions in sport, as well as calls for the development of evidence-based
4689 education on maltreatment for young people involved in sport (Mountjoy et al., 2016), it was
4690 deemed relevant to develop a feasibility study to evaluate the viability of an interactive
4691 creative educational workshop with young athletes (aged under 16 years) regarding emotional
4692 abuse, bullying, safeguarding, and their overall enjoyment of sport.

4693 The current study was conducted from an interpretivist perspective, underpinned by a
4694 relativist ontology and a constructionist epistemology. This perspective acknowledges that
4695 knowledge is subjective and influenced by an individual's interactions with the surrounding
4696 world (Morehouse, 2011). Interpretivists acknowledge that multiple truths and realities exist.
4697 Thus, the findings of a research study offer one interpretation of the data, with the researcher
4698 acknowledging the potential that other interpretations exist (Morehouse 2011; Schwandt,
4699 2003).

4700 From an epistemological perspective, this perspective assumes a transactional,
4701 subjectivist, and constructionist epistemology (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Consequently, it is
4702 important to acknowledge the researcher's role throughout the research process (i.e., research
4703 questions, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results) as the knowledge generated
4704 is viewed as a dynamic transactional process as the researcher is unable to isolate themselves
4705 from their own pre-existing knowledge (Mayan, 2009). Constructionism involves the creation
4706 of reality through social interactions and conversations individuals engage in with others in
4707 society as well as their interaction with the environment (Lincoln et al., 2018). It is through
4708 these social interactions and relationships with others and the environment that influence the
4709 construction of knowledge and how individuals understand the world (Sparkes & Smith,
4710 2014).

4711 Aligned with this approach, a creative educational workshop was designed,
4712 incorporating various interactive activities, including a story completion writing task coupled
4713 with a story mediated-interview (i.e., semi-structured interview) and a creative arts-based task

4714 (i.e., poster activity) (Gravett, 2019; McMahon et al., 2017; Punch 2002). Story completion is
4715 theoretically flexible and not constrained by any specific philosophical paradigm but it can be
4716 used effectively and appropriately from an interpretivist perspective (Coghlan & Brydon-
4717 Miller, 2014). Similarly, arts-based methods are typically associated with qualitative inquiry
4718 which is seeking to gain insights into a variety of realities and experiences (i.e., considering
4719 the world through an interpretivist lens).

4720 **5.2.2 The Setting and participants**

4721 A high-performance tennis academy was chosen as the setting for this intervention,
4722 with young people being purposefully sampled to take part. Based on the findings of study
4723 one (Chapter 3) most participants experiencing or witnessing abuse were aged between 13
4724 and 15 years old, therefore the intervention sought to target this age group. This academy was
4725 chosen because it is a high-performance setting in which young people are engaging in
4726 intense and prolonged physical training and high competition volume (Bergeron et al., 2015;
4727 Gould. et al., 2019). Within such an environment, where competition is frequent, there is a
4728 chance that coaches, parents, and young people themselves may become overly focused on
4729 winning. This can result in some coaches employing, and parents accepting, emotionally
4730 abusive tactics to encourage young people to achieve performance outcomes (Gervis, &
4731 Dunn, 2004; Kerr & Stirling, 2012). Furthermore, research shows that the increased focus on
4732 winning can result in negative behaviours such as aggression and cheating among young
4733 people in sport (Crone, 1999).

4734 Further, within individual sports, such as tennis, players typically train with
4735 individuals who are also their competitors, creating a complex social setting. For instance,
4736 players may compete against each other during the weekend and then train with and against
4737 each other on Monday. Consequently, there is potential for issues or negative feelings to
4738 transfer from competitive settings to training settings, which may make individuals
4739 vulnerable to bullying behaviours arising. Additionally, tennis is an extremely time-intensive
4740 and expensive sport, with a substantial commitment from parents and associated stressors
4741 (Harwood & Knight, 2009a, 2009b). Thus, it is a situation in which emotional abuse from
4742 parents may arise.

4743 Within this setting, four participants participated in the intervention. Specifically,
4744 three boys and one girl. The young people ranged in age from 13 to 15 years (M age =14,
4745 $SD=1.15$), had been involved in tennis between five to 12 years (M duration of sport = 7.,
4746 $SD=2.16$), trained for 5 to 10 hours per week ($M = 7.5$, $SD = 2.08$), and competed at regional
4747 level ($n = 3$) or national level ($n=1$).

4748 **5.2.3 Procedure**

4749 Following receipt of University Ethics Board approval, participant recruitment
4750 commenced. Approval was then sought from the regional safeguarding lead officer and head
4751 performance coach at a local tennis academy to deliver and evaluate a safeguarding
4752 workshop. The head performance coach then facilitated contact with parents with children
4753 fitting the participant criteria via a WhatsApp group chat, sharing the recruitment flyer and
4754 specific details of the study. These flyers invited parents to contact me if they were willing to
4755 provide consent for their child to participate. However, due to limited engagement, I also
4756 attended a group training session to talk directly to other parents regarding their child's
4757 participation and coaches shared the study information sheet with other parents during other
4758 sessions. In total six young people accepted the invitation; their parents consented for them to
4759 participate in the study and assent was obtained from young people. A Doodle poll was used
4760 to identify a date and time for the creative workshop. A link to this poll was emailed to the
4761 parents via email a month before the earliest proposed date. Once a majority date had been
4762 agreed, contact was made with parents confirming the date and time of the workshop.

4763 Given concerns about the sensitive nature of the content of the creative workshops,
4764 the regional safeguarding lead officer thought it was important that he was present during the
4765 workshop. Despite initially being available, due to unforeseen circumstances, he was
4766 subsequently unable to attend, therefore, another age group coach who had appropriate
4767 safeguarding training and was trauma-aware and trauma-informed (Quarmby et al., 2021)
4768 was present during the creative workshop. In addition, two of the initial young people who
4769 agreed to participate in the study were subsequently unavailable to attend the workshop,
4770 leaving only four participants.

4771 **5.2.4 Workshop creation, content, and duration**

4772 The content and duration of the current workshop was informed by previous research
4773 (i.e., Mountjoy et al., 2015; Stirling 2009) and findings from study one (Chapter 3) and two
4774 (Chapter 4). Specifically, findings from study one (Chapter 3), highlighted that young people
4775 were witnessing and experiencing emotional abuse and bullying in youth sport across Wales.
4776 Participants expressed a need for information focusing on the constituents and potential
4777 detrimental outcomes of emotional abuse and bullying, which was context-specific and
4778 tailored to their sport. Participants also highlighted the need for information about where to
4779 seek help and support in case of concerns, aiming to prevent and address negative
4780 experiences. Participants recommended that in-person interactive workshops would be useful
4781 to help in the prevention and intervention of bullying and emotional abuse. Participants

4782 believed that workshops around 45-60 minutes long would be sufficient and useful in
4783 facilitating discussions, enhancing engagement, and fostering effective learning.

4784 In response to these findings, the content of the interactive creative educational
4785 workshop was designed (Table 5.1). Specifically, recognising that previous research in school
4786 settings has found creative pedagogy as a useful approach in enhancing young people's
4787 knowledge and awareness of bullying among secondary school students (ages 14-16 years)
4788 (Saibon et al., 2017), consideration was given to a broad variety of creative approaches to
4789 sharing information and enhancing engagement with the topics. The final creative educational
4790 workshop included five key topics; (1) things young people enjoy about sport, (2)
4791 emotionally abusive and bullying behaviours, (3) potential detrimental outcomes of bullying
4792 and emotional abuse, (4) the role others can play in incidents of emotional abuse and
4793 bullying, and (5) what to do if you have concerns. A total of nine activities were used to share
4794 this information (see Table 5.1).

4795 **Table 5.1**

4796 Overview of Creative Educational Workshop

Activity	Aims	Content & Activities	The rationale for activity and literature used
Icebreaker activity	To build rapport with players, learn their names and understand what things they enjoy and dislike about tennis	In a circle, players were asked to throw a tennis ball around the group. Each player had to provide their name, their favourite tennis player and two things they like most about tennis. Subsequently, the player had to say their favourite player of the person they received the ball from and share things they disliked about tennis.	Warm-up activity to develop rapport and group cohesion as well as to get an idea of the group dynamics. Research suggests that developing rapport and group cohesion form the basis for cultivating a productive group (Yalom, 1995).
Transition activity	To understand what players like most about their club and what makes them feel comfortable	Each player was given two post-it notes. They had to write down on one (i) what they like most about their club, and (ii) what makes them feel comfortable in their club.	Information obtained from participants was used as the catalyst for the arts-based activity at the end of the session around sport enjoyment.
Story completion writing task	To understand participant's perceptions of a bullying scenario and to subsequently evaluate changes.	Participants were given a partial story or hypothetical scenario (i.e., a story stem) and asked to complete and expand on the hypothetical situation by writing how they believed the story unfolds. Instructions were provided.	Used to gain insights into individuals' attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about bullying in sport (Braun et al., 2019). Written answers to be used in the story-mediated interview (Gravett, 2019) to see if perceptions change after attending the workshop.
The statement game	Understand young people's perceptions and understanding of emotional abuse and bullying	The statement game (2 participants per group) – young person must pick a card from each category (i.e., who, what, to who, and where). Then they will put the statements in order (i.e., 1 - who, 2 - what, 3 - to who, and 4 - where). In groups participants were asked to discuss the following: (i) what do you think about the situation? (ii) do you think this is ok or not? and (iii) what would you do if you saw this?	Research recommends that to reduce tolerance and prevent maltreatment in sport, education for young people should be culturally tailored to the sporting context (Mountjoy et al., 2016). Therefore, the scenarios were developed based on academic and practical examples of emotional abuse and bullying (i.e., CPSU, 2019; Mountjoy et al., 2016; NSPCC, 2009; Stirling & Kerr, 2008). In addition, some scenarios were developed from bullying and emotionally abusive examples on the LTA website. Also, it is suggested

		During the task, I went between the groups and listened to the player's perspectives and prompted follow-up questions from time to time and clarified understandings.	that the facilitator and participants should engage in deep discussion to facilitate learning (McMahon et al., 2022).
Competitive relay race	Understand participant's perceptions of emotional abuse and bullying	Participants were presented with a bullying statement displayed on the laptop). In pairs, participants formed a single line. Following the whistle, they had to throw the bean bag into a hula hoop 5 metres away. Once the bean bag landed in the hoop, participants had to run to the hoop and write on a post-it note, what impact they thought this could have on John if the behaviour were to continue. Then they had to stick the post-it notes on the flip chart paper, run back and tag their teammate. The first team to reach three were declared winners. After we reviewed the responses with the wider group and discussed answers together.	Research recommends that in order to reduce tolerance and prevent maltreatment in sport, education for young people should be culturally specific to the sporting context (McMahon et al., 2022; Mountjoy et al., 2016). Therefore, the scenarios and examples were developed based on academic and practical examples of emotional abuse and bullying (i.e., CPSU, 2019; Mountjoy et al., 2016; NSPCC, 2009; Stirling & Kerr, 2008; Stirling, 2008). In addition, some scenarios were developed from bullying and emotionally abusive examples from the LTA website.
Definition and outcomes of bullying	To share information about bullying. Specifically, bullying definition, components, and potential detrimental outcomes of bullying.	Provided participants with a comprehensive definition of bullying and corresponding behaviour. Provided a list of potential detrimental outcomes of bullying. Five-minute discussion about bullying as a group. Prompted with questions in between to critically discuss responses as a group.	Research suggests it is important to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes as maltreatment in sport (Rhind & Sekeyere, 2018). In addition, it is important to educate young people on the impact of such behaviour.
Definition and outcomes of emotional abuse	To share information about emotional abuse. Specifically, emotional abuse definition, components, and potential detrimental outcomes of emotional abuse.	Provided participants with an emotional abuse scenario. As a big group participants discussed perceptions of the scenario: (i) what impact they believed this could have on Jenny if the behaviour continued, (ii) What would they do if they saw this happen (iii) If they wanted support in this situation, who would they approach? Following this I provided participants with a comprehensive definition of emotional abuse and constituents as well as a list of potential detrimental outcomes of bullying. Next, we engaged in a five-minute discussion about bullying as a group. Prompted questions in between.	Research suggests that evidence-based educational initiatives should be culturally responsive and include target-specific behaviours associated with emotional abuse and bullying occurring in the specific sport context in the current times and level (McMahon et al., 2022).

Where to report concerns	Provided participants with information regarding where they can report concerns if they were worried about something.	Provided young people with a laminated card containing a range of options for individuals to contact if they had concerns or worries in their sport. As a group, we discussed each option and how they could access assistance.	Research recommends that educational materials should include youth-friendly terminology and should emphasise mechanisms of reporting maltreatment in sport (Mountjoy et al., 2022).
Final activity	How participants can enhance enjoyment and safety in sport.	Creative arts-based task. Provided participants with a flip chart displaying all the responses given at the beginning of the workshops regarding: (i) what they liked most about their club, and (ii) what made them feel comfortable in their club. They were then provided instructions to design a poster using all the provided materials on (i) what do you think themselves and others in their club could do to help a new player have fun and feel comfortable in sport. During the activity we also discussed why enjoyment is important and how enjoyment could be enhanced in sport to help optimise overall experiences.	Research suggests that art-based activities can help facilitate discussion about sensitive topics and enable participants to share their private thoughts and feelings (Kearney & Hyle, 2004).

4797

4798 **5.2.4.1 Introduction.** The workshop began with an icebreaker activity in which
4799 participants stood in a circle and threw a tennis ball around the group to another player who
4800 had to indicate what they liked and disliked about tennis. I wrote their responses on separate
4801 post-it notes. Additionally, prior to transitioning into the main session, participants were
4802 given a few post-it notes each and asked to write down, (i) what they liked most about their
4803 tennis club, and (ii) what made them feel comfortable in their club. Participants were asked to
4804 fold the pieces of paper up and give them to me once they had finished writing and were
4805 advised that we would discuss what they wrote towards the end of the session.

4806 **5.2.4.2 Story Completion.** The first main activity involved a story completion task in
4807 which each participant was provided with a partial story (i.e., a story stem) and asked to
4808 complete the story based on instructions (Braun et al., 2019; Clarke et al., 2019).
4809 Story stems are created to provide enough information to provoke a response relevant to the
4810 subject of interest, however, they are deliberately ambiguous to allow for a multitude of
4811 possible responses (Braun et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2020). Historically this approach was
4812 used in clinical psychoanalysis and developmental psychology (Kitzinger & Powell, 1995).
4813 Recently, however, it has been used in social science research as it is useful in gaining
4814 insights into individuals' attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs (Braun et al., 2019; Clarke
4815 et al., 2019), particularly regarding sensitive or taboo topics (Walsh & Malson 2010).

4816 Given the sensitive nature of emotional abuse and safeguarding it was anticipated this
4817 approach may be useful as it would allow the research topic to be addressed indirectly. Also,
4818 it was considered a fun, creative way to engage young people and gain their perceptions of
4819 bullying (Clarke et al., 2019). The aim of using this approach was not to discover absolute
4820 truths regarding the stories, instead, the objective was to give participants a chance to reflect
4821 on the story completion task and to utilise the stories as a prompt to initiate additional
4822 discussions about their perceptions research topic.

4823 **5.2.4.3 Scenario Exploration – Emotional Abuse.** In the second main activity,
4824 participants worked in pairs to create scenarios based on provided options on post-its After
4825 arranging the post-it notes, participants were asked to join forces with the other pair, creating
4826 a larger group. They were then instructed to collectively read out their completed statements
4827 to the entire group and discuss their perceptions of each scenario. They were asked to reflect
4828 on whether they deemed it acceptable or not, and what actions they would take if they
4829 witnessed a similar situation involving another child. During this period, I listened to the
4830 player's perspectives and prompted follow-up questions from time to time to facilitate
4831 discussion.

4832 **5.2.4.4 Scenario Exploration – Bullying.** The third main activity was a competitive
4833 relay race. Participants were divided into groups and presented with a bullying statement.
4834 Upon hearing a whistle, the participants threw a bean bag into a hoop. Once the bean bag
4835 landed in the hoop, they had to run to the hoop, where there was a pen and post-it notes. On a
4836 post-it note, participants were asked to write what impact they believed the scenario would
4837 have on the individual if the behaviour were to continue. They then had to affix this post-it-
4838 note to a flip chart before returning to tag their teammate. The objective was for each team to
4839 reach three and run back to the starting line making them the winners.

4840 After the relay race, we collectively reviewed the responses. Following this
4841 discussion, participants were presented with a comprehensive definition of bullying as well as
4842 the potential detrimental outcomes of bullying. The players were then invited to share their
4843 perspectives on bullying and its potential detrimental outcomes. After a five-minute
4844 discussion on bullying, participants were presented with a scenario on emotional abuse,
4845 which was read collectively. Participants were then asked as a group what actions they would
4846 take if they witnessed a similar situation, and if they wanted to provide support, who they
4847 would approach. During these tasks, participants engaged in free-flowing conversation
4848 amongst themselves, and occasionally, I asked questions based on their responses to gain
4849 deeper insights into their perspectives.

4850 **5.2.4.5 Reporting Abuse and Bullying.** Following the previous activity, participants
4851 were already discussing who they would approach if they witnessed emotional abuse.
4852 However, participants were also given a laminated card which included options of who to
4853 contact if they were worried or had concerns about something in sport. The card included
4854 contact details for the welfare officer, the online LTA anonymous reporting mechanism,
4855 Childline and the LTA safeguarding team’s contact email and telephone contact information.
4856 I also asked participants questions about who they would feel comfortable approaching, if
4857 they were aware of who they were able to contact if they had concerns, and if so, from where
4858 they had obtained that information. I facilitated discussion about the potential reporting
4859 mechanisms and the importance of reporting any concerns they witnessed or experienced.

4860 **5.2.4.6 Review and Summary.** The final activity incorporated a creative arts-based
4861 task. Arts-based methods involve the use of artistic components within qualitative inquiry to
4862 generate, communicate, or interpret information (McMahon et al., 2017; Punch 2002). These
4863 techniques serve as a tool to collect, produce, and analyse data (McMahon et al., 2017). This
4864 activity was chosen to offer children an enjoyable way of thinking about the study topic,
4865 fostering rapport, and providing those who might be less verbally confident a chance to share

4866 their ideas (Punch, 2002). Given the sensitive nature of bullying and emotional abuse, it was
4867 believed that this approach would offer a less intimidating way for young people to express
4868 their views and has yet to be used in youth sport safeguarding and maltreatment research.

4869 Participants were divided into pairs and asked to create a poster outlining how they
4870 and others could do to help a new player feel comfortable and enjoy playing tennis at their
4871 club. They were given a flip chart displaying all the post-it notes they wrote at the beginning
4872 of the workshop, containing information about what they liked most about their club and the
4873 things that made them feel comfortable at the club, to stimulate their thinking. Participants
4874 were given crayons, marker pens, glue, scissors, painting materials and images from
4875 magazines, and given creative freedom to utilise the supplies to create their poster. During the
4876 activity participants also discussed why enjoyment is important and how enjoyment could be
4877 enhanced in sport to help optimise overall experiences. After finishing the poster activity,
4878 participants were invited to share and explain the content of their posters with the larger
4879 group, marking the conclusion of the workshop.

4880 **5.2.5 Data Collection**

4881 Data to evaluate the specific activities and overall workshop was collected in several
4882 ways.

4883 **5.2.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews.** Following the intervention, each participant
4884 took part in an interview to discuss their experiences of the intervention. On average the
4885 interviews were 47.10 minutes in length ($SD= 8.72$), ranging from 39.45.-59.05 minutes.
4886 Interview guides were used to facilitate discussions with participants and to ensure that all
4887 relevant questions were covered. All interviews began with some initial rapport-building
4888 questions, in which participants were asked demographic questions (i.e., competition level,
4889 competition frequency) and asked about what led to their participation in sport and how long
4890 they had been involved in tennis. However, given that I had already engaged with the
4891 participants in the intervention, the majority of the interview focused upon the evaluation.
4892 The first main questions centred around the story completion task. Participants were asked to
4893 comment on their experiences of the writing of the story and to discuss their interpretation of
4894 the scenario. For instance, they were asked questions such as “what were your thoughts on
4895 the written story?” “can you explain how you continued the story?” “what were your initial
4896 thoughts about the story?” “what are your thoughts about the story now you have completed
4897 the workshop.” Additionally, participants were asked to reflect on their written extracts and if
4898 they would change anything following their attendance of the workshop, (i.e., what things
4899 would you change about your story now that you have attended the workshop?). The focus on

4900 the story completion task first was to provide an opportunity to assess whether participants
4901 knowledge or considerations regarding the scenario had changed because of the intervention.
4902 Following the discussion of the story completion activity, subsequent questions examined
4903 participants' perceptions of the overall workshop. Specifically, participants were asked what
4904 they liked and disliked about the workshop, what they learned, what facilitated their learning,
4905 their perceptions of the different interactive and creative activities, and suggestions regarding
4906 how such educational initiatives could be improved.

4907 **5.2.5.2 Observations.** Throughout the workshop, I used an unstructured approach to
4908 observations (e.g., Mulhall, 2003). While the term 'unstructured' may potentially imply a
4909 lack of organisation in the recording process, it is worth noting that this term can be
4910 misleading (Mulhall, 2003). In fact, the use of unstructured observations does not imply a
4911 lack of structure in the way observations are recorded, it serves to prevent predetermined
4912 assumptions. As a researcher, it allowed me to enter the workshop without a set checklist of
4913 behaviours to monitor. Instead, during the workshop I made note of participants' behaviours,
4914 interactions, and all environmental factors deemed relevant to the research aim (e.g., social
4915 interactions, participant discussions, and engagement with the different activities). For
4916 instance, I observed how participants interacted and discussed their perspectives during the
4917 different activities. In addition, I used these observations to stimulate informal conversations,
4918 allowing me to prompt questions and gain insights into participants' perceptions throughout
4919 the workshop.

4920 **5.2.6 Data Analysis**

4921 Interview data were analysed using reflective thematic analysis (see Braun & Clarke,
4922 2019). This approach was considered appropriate because it is theoretically flexible, allowing
4923 it to be used within different theoretical frameworks to address different types of research
4924 questions (Braun & Clarke, 2016). In addition, it has previously been used by researchers
4925 who have utilised story completion (e.g., Clarke et al., 2015; Frith, 2013) as well as research
4926 aiming to gain an understanding of individuals' experiences, perspectives, meanings, and
4927 behaviours (e.g., Camiré et al., 2012).

4928 Prior to starting the analysis, the audio files from the interviews were transcribed
4929 verbatim. To ensure confidentiality, all identifiable information was removed, and
4930 participants were assigned pseudonyms. The analysis then occurred following the six phases
4931 recommended by Braun and Clarke (2019). Although each phase of the analysis develops
4932 from the previous, this process is not linear, rather it is a recursive reflective process in which
4933 I moved back and forth between the different phases until myself and the research team were

4934 satisfied themes were sufficiently developed. This process is particularly important to enable
4935 a rigorous process of data interrogation and engagement (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

4936 The first phase of analysis, familiarisation, involved reading the transcripts repeatedly
4937 and returning to audio recordings at times, searching for meanings and patterns. Specifically,
4938 transcripts from interview were read repeatedly, to highlight items of potential interest, and
4939 notes were made in the margins as memory aids and triggers to be used in the coding process.
4940 Next, I read the transcripts line by line and produced initial codes across the entirety of the
4941 data set with the objective of addressing the research questions. In preparation for the
4942 following stages of analysis, these codes were organised and purposefully succinct in nature.
4943 In addition, I reflected after reading each transcript to critically examine how the specific
4944 findings might fit in with the research aims. This was important given that an interpretivist
4945 approach seeks to understand meanings, values, and explanations from the data and
4946 recognises that establishing these meanings and experiences requires interpretation from a
4947 researcher (Morrow, 2005).

4948 Once initial codes had been produced, the third phase involved searching for and
4949 generating potential themes through examining the relationship between codes and collated
4950 data. This process involved grouping together relevant coded extracts under a 'central
4951 organising concept' that captured the main point of each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This
4952 was done by way of visual representation; all relevant codes were arranged into piles and
4953 organised into clusters on A3 paper, according to their association. Depending on their
4954 association, these codes were then rearranged into main themes and sub themes, and codes
4955 that did not seem to belong anywhere were put into a miscellaneous pile.

4956 The fourth stage involved a close review of the initial themes to ensure they
4957 accurately represented the coded extracts. During this phase, I dismantled the themes back
4958 into the raw data and checked if they were a suitable reflection of the data and any themes
4959 that lacked coherence were either split, combined, or discarded (Braun & Clarke, 2016).
4960 Subsequently, in phase five, themes were refined, and definitive and informative names were
4961 developed for each theme with titles that adequately represented the subthemes within them.
4962 Finally, the produced themes were written up and presented in a coherent manner addressing
4963 the research aims.

4964 It is important to note that the story completion narratives and the posters were not
4965 analysed in their own right, rather, they were used in conjunction with young people's
4966 interview responses to allow for deeper contextual understanding. Further, the information
4967 obtained from the observations was also used to provide further context and insights into the

4968 responses provided in the interviews. Specifically, the integration of the interview data with
4969 the observational data facilitated a comprehensive understanding of participants' perceptions
4970 and experiences of the workshop. I was able to gain a deeper understanding of how the
4971 environment influenced participants' perceptions, how they interpreted certain activities, and
4972 instances where my understanding of the same events differed from theirs.

4973 ***5.2.7 Methodological Rigour***

4974 Rather than employ a universal set of criteria for judging all qualitative research, it
4975 has been argued that the rigour of qualitative research should be assessed based on the degree
4976 to which it meets the characterising traits of the chosen methodology approach, and
4977 philosophical frameworks in which the research is conducted (Sparkes & Smith, 2009; Smith
4978 et al., 2014). Specifically, Sparkes and Smith (2009) argue that studies should be approached
4979 from a relativist perspective which appreciates that reality is multiple and that knowledge is
4980 subjective therefore, no one method can be appropriate for examining methodological rigour,
4981 instead, it should be individualised and study specific (Sparkes & Smith, 2009).

4982 A suggested alternative approach to judging qualitative research is a non-foundational
4983 approach which has also been referred to as a 'letting go' approach (Smith & Caddick, 2012,
4984 p. 70). This approach does not advocate the application of universal criteria to all research, as
4985 it would contradict the principles of subjective and constructionist epistemology (Smith &
4986 Caddick, 2012). Instead, it offers a set of criteria for assessing qualitative research that is
4987 flexible, open to adjustments, and customised to the specific research being assessed (Smith &
4988 Caddick; Smith & Deemer, 2000; Sparkes & Smith, 2009). In line with a relativist approach,
4989 appropriate steps were taken to enhance rigour in this study which aligned with the research
4990 purpose. Specifically, within this study I was interested in demonstrating a) substantive
4991 contribution: (b) width, (c) coherence, (d) resonance, (e) credibility, and (f) transparency.

4992 It is argued that a good quality research study should aim to make a substantive
4993 contribution, specifically, it should aim to contribute to understanding of social life, and the
4994 researcher should demonstrate how their perspective influenced the construction of the study
4995 (Richardson, 2000). Research shows that bullying and emotional abuse are prevalent in youth
4996 sport (Vertommen et al., 2016; Nery et al., 2020). Addressing this issue, researchers have
4997 suggested the development of educational initiatives for young people focused on maltreatment
4998 in sport (Mountjoy et al., 2016). However, limited research has focused on educational
4999 interventions in this domain or has explicitly included young people. Therefore, the current
5000 study makes a substantial contribution by developing, implementing, and evaluating a creative
5001 workshop focusing on bullying and emotional abuse, which are important topics warranting

5002 attention in youth sport. Moreover, this study not only offers insights into participants'
5003 experiences of the workshop but also transparently includes the challenges encountered in
5004 delivering such programs. It also offers recommendations for enhancing future initiatives,
5005 directly derived from the perspectives of young people, who are the target audience for these
5006 initiatives. Furthermore, an interpretivist paradigm aligns with my philosophical assumptions,
5007 suggesting that multiple and varied realities exist (Ponterotto, 2005).

5008 Aligned with the non-foundational approach, it is also suggested that research studies
5009 should demonstrate width (Richardson, 2000). Width refers to the comprehensiveness of the
5010 research presented. Specifically, it relates to the quality of interviews and observations, and
5011 thorough analysis or interpretations are explained throughout the study. It suggested that it is
5012 important for studies to include various participant quotes and demonstrate alternative
5013 participant perspectives to assist the readers in assessing the evidence and how it's interpreted
5014 in the research (Lieblich et al., 1998). The current study attempted to demonstrate width by
5015 including a range of data collection methods. Specifically, story mediated interviews, and
5016 observations were analysed thoroughly and although the story completion narratives and the
5017 posters were not analysed in their own right they were integrated with the other data to enhance
5018 contextual comprehension. Consequently, this integration was consistently reflected
5019 throughout the study, utilising diverse participant quotes and contextual information from
5020 observations to offer readers comprehensive insights derived from multiple perspectives.

5021 According to Lieblich et al. (1998) qualitative studies should demonstrate coherence.
5022 Specifically, coherence refers to how well different parts of the research study (i.e., explanation
5023 or interpretation) come together to provide a clear and meaningful overall picture. This
5024 involves ensuring that the study design, data collection, and analysis is aligned with the
5025 research purpose, as well as the espoused theories and paradigms (Lieblich et al., 1998).
5026 Furthermore, it is suggested that the overall research findings should meaningfully link with
5027 existing literature. In line with an interpretive paradigm, the current study employed various
5028 traditional and creative qualitative approaches, such as interviews, observations, story
5029 completion tasks, and arts-based activities and the results were analysed using reflective
5030 thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This approach allowed me to gain insights into both
5031 individual and collective experiences. For instance, participant interviews and story completion
5032 narratives facilitated the capture of individual experiences, while observations and the poster
5033 activity helped in capturing shared experiences. As a result, the study's objectives,
5034 methodologies, analysis, and interpretations were congruent with each other in line with an
5035 interpretive paradigm aimed at addressing coherence.

5036 Resonance pertains to the extent to which the research meaningfully impacts the
5037 audience, in a way that the reader can make a personal connection with the research findings
5038 and relate them to other areas of research or their own experiences, despite having direct
5039 interaction with research participants (Tracy, 2010). Seeking resonance, the current study
5040 offered rich descriptions and direct quotations in the results section with the intention that the
5041 nuanced realities of the participants would vividly come through allowing the audience to
5042 personally relate to the findings themselves (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

5043 Credibility relates to trustworthiness, plausibility, and persuasiveness of the
5044 participant's narratives as an illustration of reality (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). Research
5045 suggests that this is achieved through provision of detailed descriptions, diverse perspectives,
5046 and member reflections. Therefore, good quality research should provide comprehensive
5047 representation, and abundant detail and explain culturally contextualised meanings (Tracy,
5048 2010). In addition, multiple and varied perspectives should be presented within the analysis,
5049 as well as the final report, and participants should have an opportunity discuss, ask questions,
5050 or affirm the emerging findings with the researcher. Credibility was achieved through use of
5051 participant interviews, this allowed for the representation of multiple perspectives throughout
5052 the analysis and results presented. Additionally, the interactive nature of the workshop and
5053 the story mediated interview, provided an opportunity for participants to ask questions, and
5054 reflect on their written stories, providing an opportunity for member reflections. Finally,
5055 demonstrating credibility the results section includes thick description of participants'
5056 accounts enabling the reader to draw their own conclusion of the research findings.

5057 **5.3 Results**

5058 The purpose of the present study was to design, implement, and evaluate a creative
5059 and interactive educational workshop for young people (i.e., under 16 years of age) regarding
5060 emotional abuse, bullying, safeguarding, and overall enjoyment of sport. Based on the
5061 analysis of the follow-up interview, in conjunction with participants' written stories, the
5062 creative art poster, observational data, and my own personal reflections, themes were
5063 developed. These themes focus on participants' perceptions of the key learning outcomes,
5064 how knowledge was obtained, perceptions of the interactive and creative methods, and
5065 participants' recommendations for future educational initiatives.

5066 **5.3.1 Key learning outcomes**

5067 When conducting the workshop, and as apparent through the participants' initial
5068 stories, the young people had a general awareness of the concept of bullying and emotional
5069 abuse at the start of the session. For instance, within their stories and the interviews following

5070 the intervention, all the participants had recognised the situation as bullying, as Sebastian
5071 explained, “when I first read it, I thought Keiran and Rob were bullying Jamie and it was also
5072 bad sportsmanship.” Furthermore, the participants’ perceived that the main character had
5073 handled the situation poorly. Ashton shared, “I think Rob definitely shouldn’t have said, you
5074 only won because you’re a cheat. If the call really bothered him, he could have called the
5075 umpire or whoever was there organising the tournament.”

5076 Despite this initial knowledge, participants expressed that the workshop helped them
5077 *understand the subtle nature of bullying and emotional abuse*. For example, when talking
5078 about bullying Sebastian expressed:

5079 I enjoyed it [workshop] because the activities were fun, and we got to talk to each
5080 other, and it makes you realise how hidden bullying and emotional abuse can be and
5081 how you don’t know it could be going on even on the tennis court. I think everyone
5082 thinks that tennis is always fun and it’s just a competitive sport. You may win, but
5083 you could say that there is a dark side [...] and bad things happen on, but also off
5084 the court.

5085 Interestingly, participants differed in their perceptions of the behaviours, with some
5086 participants’ perceiving that bullying was more subtle than emotional abuse and vice versa.
5087 Such differences in perspective were shared during the workshop and reiterated within the
5088 interviews. For example, during the interview, Ashton felt that bullying was more subtle
5089 than emotional abuse, “I think it’s easy to spot parents shouting at kids, I was surprised that
5090 ignoring or leaving someone out of a game could be bullying if it happened a lot [...] because it’s easy to not notice that stuff.” Conversely, Rory believed emotional abuse was
5092 more subtle, “it’s hard to recognise, because sometimes you think parents are yelling to help
5093 their kids play better, but now we’ve talked about it I see it can be hurtful when they do it all
5094 the time.”

5095 Participants also indicated that the workshop was beneficial for *increasing*
5096 *understanding of the consequences of bullying*, as Roxy shared, “I think it [workshop] was
5097 good because it helped us recognise what could potentially happen from bullying if it
5098 happened to someone over and over again.” Specifically, during the workshop, many
5099 participants appeared to possess a basic understanding of some general negative emotional
5100 consequences of bullying, such as low mood, depression, and anxiety. It appeared that this
5101 may have been due to the focus on this topic at school, as Sebastian explained, “yeah most of
5102 the stuff we talked about, we’ve learned about in school.”

5103 However, their awareness of the breadth of consequences of bullying was limited and
5104 participants reflected on this after the interviews. Rory said, “like I didn’t think it [bullying]
5105 could cause someone to drop out completely, maybe join another club but not drop out totally
5106 you know.” Participants were particularly surprised that bullying could lead to delinquent
5107 behaviours such as cheating. For example, Sebastian stated, “I knew that bullying could badly
5108 affect people and make them sad, but I didn’t realise it could lead to cheating as well, that’s
5109 crazy!.” Similarly, Roxy said “I didn’t know that before.” This was a consequence that
5110 particularly attracted their attention during the workshop, with participants engaging in
5111 extensive discussion during the workshop to try and understand how this might occur. As
5112 Ashton shared:

5113 I guess that the bullying situation [...] it definitely makes sense because it could go
5114 either way, where the person either feels more miserable and just doesn’t want to play
5115 or they could go the other way where they start cheating because they want to win to
5116 avoid being bullied or abused [...] I didn’t expect that, so that definitely stood out to
5117 me.

5118 Similarly, participants also indicated that they *learnt about the range and long-term*
5119 *consequences of emotional abuse*. During the workshop it was apparent that participants were
5120 aware of some of the general negative psychological consequences linked to emotional abuse,
5121 such as mood, self-esteem, and anxiety. However, they were not aware of the full range of
5122 consequences or the longevity of these. For example, Ashton pointed out, “I learned that what
5123 coaches say to players can negatively impact how they view their body,” while Rory pointed
5124 out, “the thing that stood out was how emotional abuse can affect you long term, I didn’t
5125 know about that.” Similarly, Sebastian said, “it’s really sad to think that some grown-ups are
5126 still feeling the effects of things that happened to them when they were young athletes. I
5127 didn’t even know that. It’s something you don’t really think about.”

5128 Beyond enhancing knowledge of emotional abuse and bullying, participants
5129 highlighted that taking part in the workshop helped *increase their knowledge of how and to*
5130 *whom to report concerns*. During the workshop it was apparent that some participants knew it
5131 was important to approach an adult they trust, such as a parent or a coach, if they have any
5132 worries or concerns. As Roxy explained, “although I had never been told before, I knew that
5133 it was important to let someone know if you were being bullied and stuff.” However, it was
5134 apparent that participants were unsure of who to report concerns to, as Sebastian explained, “I
5135 wasn’t really too sure who to go to before the workshop.” Specifically, participants expressed

5136 that they had been unaware of the official channels for reporting concerns within their club
5137 prior to the workshop. Roxy, shared:

5138 So, when you mentioned that our manager Colin is the welfare officer [...] I didn't
5139 know that personally. I just knew that he was our manager of the whole tennis centre
5140 venue. I didn't know that he was responsible and could help with that stuff [...] and I
5141 don't think any of the other guys like Sebastian or Rory knew about that because
5142 we've never been told that.

5143 Similarly, when asked if he knew about where to report concerns prior to the workshop,
5144 Ashton said:

5145 Not really, well like I've seen a couple of posters around at competitions with
5146 Childline information for help and stuff like that, but I didn't know we could talk to
5147 Colin [club welfare officer] at the tennis centre, so that was helpful to learn.

5148 Additionally, Ashton reflected, "I never knew that we could call or email the LTA if we were
5149 worried about something." Others were unaware that the LTA even had an email facility, as
5150 "Rory said, "I didn't know there was an email address." However, following the workshop all
5151 participants indicated an awareness of the importance of reporting concerns and with whom
5152 they could share these concerns..

5153 Although participants indicated they had learnt information from the workshop, the
5154 extent to which they might apply this in practice was unclear. Specifically, during the follow-
5155 up interview's when participants were asked to reflect upon the story completion task they
5156 had done during the workshop, all of them indicated being satisfied with what they wrote. For
5157 instance, when asked if he would make any changes to this story, Ashton responded, "No, I
5158 am happy with what I wrote" and similarly Roxy stated, "No, I don't think so, I wouldn't
5159 change anything, I thought it was bullying when I read it first and still feel the same now."
5160 This is interesting because, although all the participants did identify the situation as bullying
5161 and perceive that it was inappropriate, they lacked a lot of information in their responses
5162 regarding how they may respond to the situation and what they should do. For instance, none
5163 of the young people included any information regarding reporting the incident or trying to
5164 enhance the victim's enjoyment and overall experience (despite being asked about this
5165 explicitly). This may suggest that, despite learning about these aspects during the workshop,
5166 participants may still struggle to apply the knowledge in practice.

5167 **5.3.2 How knowledge was obtained**

5168 Exploring the learning outcomes from the workshops, participants explored how they
5169 had been able to acquire this knowledge. Specifically, participants emphasised that the
5170 *interactive nature of the workshop* was useful because it helped facilitate group discussions
5171 allowing them to *think critically about the topic*, as Roxy explained:

5172 Yeah, it was good, because I wasn't only speaking to one person, I got to share
5173 stories and talk with other people [...] It's helpful for me when I talk to people, it
5174 kind of like expands how you think about stuff.

5175 Similarly, Sebastian said, "it was definitely useful discussing it as a group because it just
5176 showed the different points of view which helped me think differently about some of the
5177 stuff we talked about." Others felt that the nature of the workshop itself helped facilitate
5178 critical thinking as Rory shared when explaining what helped facilitate his learning, "all the
5179 things we did in the workshop really made me think about stuff in a deeper way [...] like
5180 every task made me see and think about things differently which helped."

5181 Participants also believed that they were able to obtain knowledge through *problem-*
5182 *solving activities*, as Ashton shared:

5183 Answering the questions in the examples was useful because it forced you to put
5184 yourself in the person's shoes [...] it made it feel more real, you know? And we had
5185 to figure out what we would do if we saw it happen.

5186 Some preferred the scenario-based tasks where they had to problem-solve from the victim's
5187 perspective, as Rory said, "It was useful going through those scenarios and trying to
5188 understand, work out how the person being bullied might feel." On the other hand, some
5189 preferred tasks that required them to problem-solve from their perspective as an observer.
5190 For example, when asked what facilitated his learning, Sebastian mentioned, "like working
5191 out what we would do in some of those situations really helped, like you had to think about
5192 the situation and who you would go to if you saw it happen."

5193 Participants also believed that they were able to learn through *reflection*.
5194 Specifically, some participants expressed that taking part in the workshop allowed them to
5195 *reflect on their own experiences*. Roxy explained "it [workshop] gave me a chance to think
5196 about some of the things I have seen and done when playing tennis." Similarly, Ashton
5197 stated, "because everything was about tennis, it made me think about my own experiences
5198 which made it easier to understand." It appeared that reflecting on some of their own
5199 experiences made participants realise that some behaviours they had witnessed were not
5200 acceptable. For instance, Rory explained:

5201 That scenario of the girl whose dad always shouted at her [emotional abuse] got me
5202 thinking, I've seen that a lot at tournaments and it just made me realise that that's not
5203 okay, it's actually emotional abuse and someone should stop certain parents from
5204 doing that over and over again.

5205 Roxy shared similar sentiments, "It wasn't till we were talking, I realised that I actually see
5206 emotional abuse happen a lot. I see some parents constantly having a go at their child if they
5207 play badly and it's so uncomfortable." Through their reflections participants believed that
5208 certain negative behaviours could be avoided. Ashton mentioned:

5209 It made me think about some of my friends, they've said bad things behind
5210 someone's back and called them a cheat because of bad calls [...] I know it's
5211 frustrating and you want to tell someone if you think someone is cheating all the
5212 time, but thinking about it now, maybe you should just share it with your parents
5213 instead of saying something hurtful.

5214 Additionally, some participants believed that the workshop allowed them to *reflect on*
5215 *their own behaviour* and made them consider how their behaviour could negatively impact
5216 others. For example, Ashton said:

5217 When we were doing the scenarios, it was weird because it actually made me think
5218 about how I am, like sometimes we mess about and make fun of each other, and I
5219 don't think anything of it at the time, but it just made me think how it could make
5220 someone else could feel.

5221 However, participants also explained that the workshop not only prompted them to reflect on
5222 their own behaviour and how it could negatively impact others but also helped them
5223 *empathise with victims* of negative behaviours. Rory explained:

5224 It got me thinking sometimes players do stuff that gets on your nerves, and you might
5225 call them a cheat in the moment because you're annoyed, but after reading the story
5226 it made me feel sorry for Jamie [the victim] because that can't be nice.

5227 ***5.3.3 Perceptions of the interactive and creative methods***

5228 Overall, the interactive activities appeared to be extremely beneficial in facilitating
5229 opportunities for participants to learn and engage with the material in different manners.
5230 However, I was also interested in identifying how the participants' perceived the specific
5231 creative/interactive activities. Thus, participants were asked to discuss their perceptions of the
5232 story completion task, the competitive relay race, and the arts-based poster activity.

5233 **5.3.3.1 Story-Completion.** In relation to the story completion task, while all
5234 participants engaged with the task and provided valuable reflections in the follow-up

5235 interview, it was *not an activity most participants enjoyed*. Sebastian shared, “I didn’t really
5236 like the story writing thing we did at the beginning.” It was evident when giving instructions
5237 for the story completion task that the three boys were disinterested and disengaged. When
5238 asked why they did not enjoy the task some explained that they *found it boring* and thought it
5239 could have been approached differently. Ashton expressed:

5240 it [story completion task] was a bit boring, I didn’t really enjoy it, you know having
5241 to read then write something about it. I felt like we could have read it and discussed it,
5242 instead of just writing it down.

5243 Others expressed that they found the story completion task *too formal* as Sebastian expressed,
5244 “I didn’t really like it much because it felt too much like school.” Similarly, Rory said, “I
5245 don’t know what the right word is for it. It’s not boring, exactly, but we have to write a lot in
5246 school, so I would have preferred something more active, not writing.”

5247 Conversely, one participant appeared to *enjoy it*, and when asked during the interview
5248 Roxy expressed, “I quite enjoyed the story task at the beginning.” In fact, Roxy found the
5249 story completion task enjoyable and engaging because she felt it allowed her to *critically*
5250 *reflect* on the scenario. She explained, “it was interesting having to think about each person in
5251 the situation and how things could’ve been handled differently, I thought that was good
5252 because it got me thinking about things from different perspectives.” Despite Roxy’s positive
5253 engagement and perceptions of the task, during the workshop the other three boys were
5254 visibly frustrated that they had to engage with the task and sit still as they had a lot of energy.
5255 They ended up writing very quickly and the youngest two participants spent the rest of the
5256 time trying to distract one another, despite my attempts to refocus their attention.

5257 **5.3.3.2 Competitive Relay Race.** All participants expressed a positive attitude
5258 towards this activity. Specifically, participants empathised that they enjoyed the activity and
5259 *found it engaging*. For example, Rory found the physical nature of the activity engaging,
5260 “obviously, I love playing tennis, so I found the bean bag activity more enjoyable because we
5261 were actually doing something physical.” Meanwhile, others found the competitive nature of
5262 the activity fun, as Sebastian said, “I enjoy competing, so I find tasks like that where we
5263 compete against each other way more exciting.”

5264 In addition to finding the activity engaging they believed the active nature of the task
5265 helped *facilitate their learning*. For example, Ashton expressed that he was a kinetic learner
5266 therefore he preferred the relay race to other activities, “I enjoyed it [relay race] because I
5267 actually learn better when I’m doing something active.” Whereas Roxy expressed that having
5268 the physical activity linked with questions helped facilitate her learning, “it’s just more fun,

5269 and I feel like I was understanding it better because we were competing against the other
5270 team and trying to answer the question at the same time.”

5271 **5.3.3.3 Arts-Based Activity.** Some participants found the task *enjoyable*, as
5272 expressed by Roxy, a female regional-level tennis player, who said, “I found the poster at the
5273 end quite interesting.” Specifically, some enjoyed the fact it *enabled them to think and be*
5274 *creative*, as Rory pointed out, “it was cool because we could be creative with our thoughts
5275 and use the pictures and stuff to answer the question.” Specifically, participants enjoyed the
5276 freedom to express their thoughts in this format, as Roxy explained:

5277 The poster activity was cool because we were able to think and come up with
5278 different ideas from the scenarios. I also liked that we could draw and also use
5279 pictures to show how we could make things more enjoyable and comfortable for the
5280 new person.

5281 Rory further expanded, “it’s good because a lot of people like drawing and they think
5282 they’re good so they could have fun with it, because you could just write what you think
5283 and then turn the words into a picture.”

5284 That said, others did not enjoy the poster activity as Ashton shared, “the drawing
5285 activity was also one of my least favourite activities.” For Ashton, this was because he was
5286 *not interested in artistic expression*, “it’s weird I don’t really like doing that artsy stuff.
5287 Sebastian shared similar sentiments when asked why he disliked the poster activity, “yeah, to
5288 be honest, I’m not really a fan of drawing that’s why.” Ashton and Sebastian also indicated
5289 they did not enjoy it because they believed that they *lacked artistic skills*, so they lacked the
5290 confidence to fully engage in the activity. For instance, Sebastian explained the poster was an
5291 issue for him “because I’m terrible at drawing.” Similarly, Ashton said, “I hate drawing
5292 because I am rubbish at it.”

5293 It should be noted that the arts-based poster activity was given to participants 45
5294 minutes into the 60-minute workshop. When providing instructions, I noticed participants
5295 appeared tired following all the previous activities, which also appeared to influence their
5296 engagement in this task. Nevertheless, despite the apparent learner fatigue and the number of
5297 participants not favouring the art-based activity, it still served as a useful tool in engaging
5298 participants in discussion during the interviews.

5299 **5.3.4 Recommendations for future educational initiatives**

5300 During and following the workshop, the young people were asked to provide
5301 suggestions for improvements that could be made to future educational workshops. Firstly,
5302 participants expressed their enjoyment for the activities that incorporated physical elements
5303 and suggested that future initiatives *should include more physical activity tasks*. Roxy said:

5304 I think if you were to do it again, you should include more fun activities because I
5305 really liked all of the different activities where we were moving around like the first
5306 task where we were throwing and catching the tennis ball around the group, that was
5307 fun, and everyone was hyped after that.”

5308 Specifically, some participants favoured the physical activities in the workshop because
5309 they liked moving. As Ashton explained, “it’s just more fun when you’re active I think, I
5310 like running around and doing stuff not just sitting still.” That said, others enjoyed the
5311 competitive element of the physical activities, as Sebastian shared, “you could make it better
5312 with more competitive activities, instead of the writing stuff, it’s just more fun competing
5313 against each other and I learn better when you’re having fun and learning things as a group.”

5314 Similarly, Rory explained:

5315 In the future, it would be nice to have more fun activities where we compete against
5316 each other [...] like the beanbag one you did where we had to throw it in the hula
5317 hoop. That was really cool [...] it was fun competing against each other and it was
5318 linked with a bit of work which I enjoyed, and it was easier to talk about stuff with
5319 the group.

5320 Participants explained that they were more motivated and enthusiastic to engage in activities
5321 involving a physical element as they found it more enjoyable and believed that it facilitated
5322 their learning. This was evident throughout the workshop, I observed that participants were
5323 very excited, motivated, and much more engaged during the physical tasks such as the
5324 icebreaker activity and the relay race which in turn made them more enthusiastic to engage in
5325 discussions about the topic.

5326 Participants also expressed that future initiatives would benefit from *involving*
5327 *coaches in the workshop*. Participants believed that including coaches could be beneficial as
5328 they spent significant time in the environment and could relate to some of the examples
5329 which would help them learn about it to help prevent certain negative behaviours. For
5330 instance, Sebastian said, “I think you could include coaches because they know what it’s like
5331 they come across some of the stuff we talked about, and they could also help with bullying
5332 and emotional abuse.” The importance of coaches was highlighted during the workshop, as

5333 some participants mentioned that they felt that coaches would be best positioned to intervene
5334 in cases of emotional abuse from parents and felt that they would benefit from attending as
5335 they were familiar with the environment. Similarly, I observed that participants were less
5336 inclined or hesitant to intervene or report negative behaviour involving adults, such as
5337 parents. They expressed a preference for coaches to intervene in these circumstances and
5338 articulated that having coaches attend would be beneficial in helping with the prevention and
5339 intervention of emotional abuse and bullying. Ashton explained during his interview:

5340 I think it's tough when you see parents shouting at kids to say anything that's why I
5341 think coaches should take part [in the intervention], because they can help with
5342 stopping that stuff or letting us know what we can do in those situations.

5343 Similarly, when discussing coaches attending the workshop Rory shared "it would be good,
5344 because during some of the activities we can chat with them and figure out things together
5345 and they can also help us understand what to do in some of those examples [statement game]"

5346 The final suggestion participants made was for the *provision of more educational*
5347 *workshops*. For instance, when asked how future initiatives could be improved, Roxy
5348 expressed, "I actually think we should have more of these workshops, they're fun and really
5349 helpful." Similarly, Rory expressed, "I definitely think that having more workshops
5350 throughout the year would be useful because the message did really reach me." Ashton
5351 suggested, "I would say we should have more workshops like once every half year or slightly
5352 less. I feel that would be good, so the information stays fresh on your mind." While Roxy
5353 suggested, "maybe if we had them every few months." Despite differing opinions on the
5354 frequency of workshops throughout the season, many believed it would be beneficial to have
5355 future workshop on these topics as they believed they were beneficial in increasing awareness
5356 as Sebastian expressed, "I think doing a few more of these workshops can help players know
5357 more about bullying and things like that." Despite the challenges and occasional lack of
5358 enthusiasm and engagement in some of the creative activities, overall, it appeared that the
5359 participants enjoyed taking part of the workshop. They were very grateful at the end of the
5360 session and among themselves, they expressed their enjoyment and eagerness to participate in
5361 similar activities again.

5362 **5.4 Discussion**

5363 The purpose of the present study was to design, implement, and evaluate the
5364 feasibility of conducting a creative educational workshop with young athletes (i.e., aged
5365 under 16 years of age) regarding emotional abuse, bullying, safeguarding, and sport
5366 enjoyment. Although several educational initiatives on maltreatment in sport have already
5367 been presented (e.g., McMahon et al., 2013; 2018; 2022; 2023; Rulof's et al., 2015) these
5368 have mainly focused on sexual abuse or both emotional and physical abuse in sport, mainly
5369 perpetrated by coaches or adults in positions of trust, none have included information
5370 regarding emotional abuse perpetrated by peers (i.e., bullying). The current study contributes
5371 to the growing body of work in this area by presenting an educational initiative focused on
5372 bullying (i.e., between peers) and emotional abuse in sport including other adults in positions
5373 of trust (i.e., parents). Specifically, the interactive creative workshop aimed to enhance
5374 knowledge, awareness, and understanding of these topics with young people, to examine
5375 perceptions of utilising creative and interactive approaches in enhancing knowledge and
5376 awareness, and to obtain suggestions for improving future educational initiatives with young
5377 people aged between 13-15 years.

5378 Overall, the workshop was well-received by participants, who reported experiencing
5379 various favourable outcomes because of their attendance. Specifically, they found that it
5380 improved their understanding of the subtleties of bullying and emotional abuse, along with
5381 the associated consequences, and how to report concerns. Moreover, participants believed
5382 that the interactive and creative nature of the workshop facilitated their learning by
5383 encouraging critical thinking and reflection, ultimately enhancing their overall learning
5384 experience. While some participants enjoyed the creative methods, (i.e., the story completion
5385 task and the poster activity), others did not find them as enjoyable or engaging. However, all
5386 participants expressed enjoyment pertaining to the other physical interactive activities (i.e.,
5387 relay race activity). Furthermore, participants provided several recommendations for future
5388 initiatives, including the implementation of more educational initiatives across the season, the
5389 incorporation of additional physical activity tasks, and the involvement of coaches in future
5390 educational initiatives.

5391 Previous research has indicated that young people are unaware of what constitutes
5392 harassment and abuse in sport (Mountjoy et al., 2020). In line with previous research,
5393 participants in the current study lacked information on certain aspects of emotional abuse and
5394 bullying. Participants reported that the workshop highlighted the hidden nature of emotional
5395 abuse and bullying, and they learned about the subtleties of certain abusive behaviours. The

5396 need for participants to learn about the nuance and subtlety of bullying and emotional abuse
5397 is unsurprising, considering that these behaviours tend to be normalised and accepted as
5398 common practice in youth sport settings (Stirling et al., 2011). These findings reaffirm the
5399 need for sport organisations to prioritise changing their organisational culture and recognising
5400 the potential risks associated with endorsing a culture in which negative behaviours are
5401 accepted (Brackenridge et al., 2012; Nite & Nauright, 2020; Roberts et al., 2020). When such
5402 behaviours are normalised and thus go unnoticed by young people within a sporting
5403 environment, it reflects the underlying sporting culture in which those in positions of
5404 authority are not addressing behaviours. With this in mind, there is an increasing need for
5405 key individuals within youth sporting organisations to understand how to promote and foster
5406 positive environments (Gurgis & Kerr, 2023; Lang & Hartill, 2015; Macpherson et al., 2022).
5407 In fact, they should create environments that are supportive of positive behaviours exhibited
5408 by individuals, which in turn will encourage young people and other key individuals in the
5409 environment to adopt and replicate such behaviours.

5410 Previous studies have shown that emotional abuse and bullying can lead to various
5411 physical, emotional, and psychological, consequences for victims both short-term and even
5412 long after young people retire from their sport (Moutnjoy et al., 2016; Nery et al., 2020;
5413 McMahon & McGannon et al., 2021). The current study participants found the information
5414 regarding the consequences of these behaviours useful, and many reported that it advanced
5415 their understanding. Specifically, participants were surprised to learn that bullying could lead
5416 the victim to engage in delinquent behaviours such as cheating, and many were surprised to
5417 learn that emotional abuse could have long-term effects into adulthood. Given the earlier
5418 findings from study one (Chapter 3) that young people were only likely to intervene if
5419 behaviours appeared severe, sharing information on the extent of the detrimental
5420 consequences associated with all types of bullying and emotional abuse appears pertinent.
5421 Particularly because, as the participants articulated in the current study, they are largely
5422 unaware of these. Particularly, early education on the diverse consequences of bullying and
5423 emotional abuse within the initial stages of young people's involvement in sport may foster a
5424 greater understanding, which may potentially transform young people's attitudes toward
5425 certain forms of abusive behaviour. Given that participants in the present study demonstrated
5426 empathy by reflecting on the scenario's victims, the inclusion of consequences may enhance
5427 empathy and assist in the prevention of such behaviours.

5428 Research, including that completed in the earlier chapters of this thesis, indicates that
5429 it is essential for sports organisations to have systems in place to respond to safeguarding

5430 concerns, and it is suggested that organisations should provide young people with
5431 information about their rights and to whom they can report concerns if they are worried or
5432 concerned about something in their sport (Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018). Findings from
5433 this study indicated that participants found the workshop beneficial in familiarising
5434 themselves with the identity of their club welfare officer. Specifically, participants
5435 highlighted that the workshop not only assisted in identifying the welfare officer's identity but
5436 also clarified his role and provided information on how they could contact him if they had
5437 concerns. The current study highlights that having effective policies and procedures are
5438 ineffective if participants are unable to access them. The Football Association (FA) guide to
5439 being an effective welfare officer highlights the importance for all individuals (i.e., young
5440 people, parents, and coaches) within the club to know who the welfare officer is, what their
5441 role is and how they can be contacted (FA, 2023). Considering the important role played by
5442 the club welfare officer in managing and reporting concerns regarding the safety and well-
5443 being of young people in sport (CPSU, 2019), there should also be a focus on educating
5444 young people about internal and external procedures they can follow when they have safety
5445 or well-being concerns. Empowering them with this knowledge will proactively contribute to
5446 preventing abuse in sport (Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018).

5447 Within the story completion task, the participants recognised the situation as bullying
5448 and suggested that it was wrong. However, despite reporting enhanced knowledge and
5449 understanding regarding bullying and reporting mechanisms, no participants perceived that
5450 they needed to change their story following the workshop. This is despite them lacking in
5451 detail and some of the pertinent points raised in the workshop. Specifically, the details
5452 lacking were, some of the potential consequences of being experienced by the victim and
5453 what other players (i.e., bystanders) in the environment should do in the situation (e.g., report
5454 concerns). Thus, it is apparent that despite the participants indicating that they had gained
5455 knowledge through the workshop, their lack of desire to change or reflect on their story
5456 despite having more information may indicate limited depth of learning or a lack of
5457 understanding regarding how to transfer new information into practice. To overcome this, it
5458 may be beneficial to present content over several sessions rather than one (e.g., McMahon et
5459 al., 2023), enabling young people to better understand the complexity of bullying and
5460 emotional abuse and learn how to apply the knowledge in real-life situations.

5461 Reflecting upon the evaluation of the creative educational workshop it appears that
5462 the overall creative and interactive nature of the workshop served as a valuable approach for
5463 engaging participants and an effective means of introducing the topic of bullying and

5464 emotional abuse to young individuals (aged between 13-15 years). Research suggests that
5465 active learning is beneficial with adolescent participants (Jesionkowska et al., 2020).
5466 Specifically, research has demonstrated that incorporating active learning approaches
5467 including, physically active learning (i.e., games), socially active learning (i.e., small group
5468 discussions), and intellectually active learning (i.e., problem-solving activities) are useful
5469 ways to enhance participant engagement, foster group discussions enhancing communication
5470 skills, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, confidence, and create a better overall
5471 learning environment and different learning opportunities for young people, and it can also
5472 enhance excitement and enthusiasm (Edwards, 2015). Consistent with these earlier findings,
5473 participants reported that they found the different activities enjoyable, particularly the
5474 physical activities which they reported enhanced their learning. Therefore, future educational
5475 initiatives involving young people should endeavour to utilise various activities, particularly
5476 practical ones, to cater for various learning and engagement preferences (McMahon et al.,
5477 2023). Furthermore, youth sport is typically competitive, and competing is a key factor young
5478 people find fun and enjoyable (Visek et al., 2015), as such considering the inclusion of
5479 competitive activities may be beneficial.

5480 Previous studies suggest that story completion is a creative, enjoyable, playful, and
5481 engaging approach for research participants (Clarke et al., 2019) and has previously been used
5482 with adolescent participants (Nimbley et al., 2020). However, this was not the case in this
5483 study. Of the four participants, the three younger male participants did not enjoy the writing
5484 task, while the slightly older female participants did. This may be because the boys were
5485 more interested in participating in physical activities, especially given that the workshop took
5486 place in a tennis environment which is mostly associated with physical activity. Additionally,
5487 research suggests that girls tend to perceive themselves as better writers than boys and
5488 younger pupils (Clark, 2012). This could explain why the girl enjoyed the task and provided
5489 more detail than the boys.

5490 Furthermore, previous research has shown that there can be wide variation in the
5491 richness of participants' stories, and researchers have reported as little as three-word stories
5492 (Braun et al., 2019; Clarke et al., 2019; Wood et al., 2017). Consistent with this, the stories
5493 shared in the current study were short and lacked detail. This may be due to the age of the
5494 participants or their hesitation in engaging in this topic. Or, as the participants themselves
5495 said, simply that they found the activity boring. Therefore, it is important to recognise that
5496 while this approach may be enjoyable to some and regarded as a valuable approach to engage
5497 young participants and gain rich insights (Braun et al., 2019) it is not universally favoured by

5498 all young participants and may not be useful for researchers who want to explicitly analyse
5499 the written narratives. If researchers were to employ this approach for future safeguarding
5500 initiatives, anticipating and preparing for potential differences in engagement and the wide
5501 variability in the richness of participant stories would be beneficial (Clarke et al., 2019).

5502 The variety in participants; views on the different activities, as well as their
5503 engagement with them, points to the need to engage with workshop participants ahead of
5504 delivery to gain an insight into the types of activities they may enjoy. Such co-development
5505 of interventions is particularly beneficial in situations where there may be perceived power
5506 imbalance or where the topics are of a sensitive nature, such as this one (Willson et al., 2022).
5507 Such co-development may help to overcome some of the challenges that were encountered
5508 within the delivery.

5509 Although the creative interactive workshop was valuable in engaging young people
5510 on this topic, various challenges were experienced. The overall workshop was an hour long
5511 and the creative arts-based activity was introduced 45 minutes into the workshop. Research
5512 suggests that cognitive fatigue can be triggered by prolonged cognitive activity, leading to
5513 exhaustion, which in young people manifests as challenges in sustaining cognitive attention
5514 over extended periods of time (Bess et al., 2014). Although participants did not mention it in
5515 the interviews it was evident that they became fatigued towards the end of the workshop
5516 when introducing the arts-based poster activity (McMahon et al., 2023). While some
5517 participants reported enjoying the task both groups produced limited output. Given this, it
5518 may be beneficial to deliver multiple, shorter workshops in the future. Such an approach
5519 would also allow for more constituents and potential outcomes of bullying and emotional
5520 abuse to be covered in the educational content (McMahon et al., 2023).

5521 Group dynamics are also important when engaging young people in group activities
5522 (García-Poole et al., 2018). There were meant to be six participants at the workshop,
5523 unfortunately at short notice two participants were unable to attend. This impacted the group
5524 dynamics as there was only one girl when there was meant to be three, also there were 12 and
5525 15-year-old participants and the two that did not show up were 14 years of age. The two
5526 young participants did not enjoy the creative approaches and became distracted at times
5527 which was a bit distracting to the wider group. The two older participants were a bit more
5528 mature and did not get distracted. Such dynamics are important consideration for future
5529 research – both in terms of ensuring that workshop facilitators have the skills to manage
5530 diverse groups and complex interactions and also recognising that young people have a lot of
5531 pressures on their time and their attendance at workshops cannot be guaranteed. If we want

5532 all people to have access to the information, running sessions on multiple occasions, sharing
5533 summaries of information, and distributing information in alternative creative means (e.g.,
5534 podcasts, webinars etc) may be required alongside workshops.

5535 ***5.4.1 Limitations and Future Research Directions***

5536 The findings of the study should be considered within its limitations. Firstly,
5537 researchers contend that feasibility studies should aim to evaluate recruitment capability and
5538 resulting sample characteristics (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015). Specifically, it is suggested that
5539 researchers should determine if they can recruit appropriate participants and explore potential
5540 obstacles in recruitment as a key aim of their feasibility study (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015).
5541 While feasibility studies are considered scaled-down preliminary versions of larger proposed
5542 studies, it should be noted that the current study did not evaluate recruitment capability. With
5543 only four participants included out of a potential six, and apparent challenges in recruiting
5544 participants, it would have been useful to assess recruitment capacity to gain more insights
5545 into the feasibility of conducting this study on a larger scale. Therefore, future research
5546 should consider evaluating recruitment capability and resulting sample characteristics to
5547 determine whether such creative workshops would be feasible to conduct in other sporting
5548 contexts and explore strategies to enhance participation rates before conducting a pilot
5549 educational initiative.

5550 In addition, despite explicitly asking participants to provide positive and negative
5551 feedback about the workshop and suggestions for enhancing future educational initiatives,
5552 much of the feedback received was positive. It's important to acknowledge that I delivered
5553 and evaluated the creative workshop. Research shows that individual interviews can be
5554 intimidating, especially for young people, due to the power dynamics between the researcher
5555 and the participants (Christensen, 2004). Therefore, I recognise that my dual role in
5556 delivering and evaluating the creative educational workshop via an individual semi-structured
5557 interview may have influenced participants, reducing the amount of negative feedback that
5558 was provided. It is possible that young people did not feel comfortable sharing all aspects of
5559 the workshop they disliked, possibly because of concerns about causing offence, hurting my
5560 feelings, fear of judgment, or apprehension about potential repercussions. Considering
5561 integrating an alternative person to evaluate the workshop may have enabled more insights to
5562 be gained on any issues associated with the workshop.

5563 Further, recently researchers have suggested that education initiatives should be
5564 culturally relevant and culturally responsive and should be delivered by an insider such as a
5565 coach or a young person who is of similar cultural standing (McMahon et al., 2023). I was

5566 not a cultural insider, although I had spent much time learning about this setting and had
5567 engaged with these players in other studies. Nevertheless, my lack of cultural relevance may
5568 have impacted participants' engagement with the workshop and the evaluation. Therefore,
5569 future interventions should consider including cultural insiders as it is believed that having
5570 somebody within the same sporting context and of similar standing is useful because they
5571 would possess insights and taken for granted knowledge that outsiders do not have. This may,
5572 also reduce some of the power present within the researcher-participant relationship and help
5573 facilitate informed and reciprocal discussions more easily (McMahon et al., 2023).

5574 This creative educational workshop was an introduction to the topic of bullying and
5575 emotional abuse in sport. Therefore, it only covered the foundational behaviours of emotional
5576 abuse and bullying in tennis. While this was useful for enhancing knowledge and facilitating
5577 discussions with young participants, research indicates that bullying and emotional abuse are
5578 complex issues with various corresponding behaviours, modes of occurrence, and
5579 consequences (Smith et al., 2021). As such, it has been suggested that educational initiatives
5580 should clearly define all forms of abuse and their corresponding behaviours. They should be
5581 culturally responsive to the various forms of athlete maltreatment that tend to occur in each
5582 sport, level, and country and should also address power dynamics and associated
5583 vulnerabilities that young people may experience (McMahon et al., 2023; Wilson et al.,
5584 2022). In future, research should consider enhancing the content delivered in educational
5585 initiatives to include other forms of abuse and a broader range of corresponding behaviours
5586 specific to the sporting context, perpetrated by multiple perpetrators, to highlight the nuances
5587 of different types of abuse. Additionally, these initiatives should provide information
5588 outlining the roles and responsibilities of different individuals in addressing and preventing
5589 such behaviour. Including this may help provide a more comprehensive understanding of
5590 different forms of maltreatment in sport and may assist in increasing vigilance against
5591 maltreatment and provide individuals with more options for responding to such cases of
5592 negative behaviour in sport.

5593 Research suggests that listening to young people and actively involving them in
5594 discussions regarding issues related to maltreatment, including bullying and emotional abuse,
5595 can help provide valuable insights for educational programmes and enable sport organisations
5596 to develop effective prevention strategies (Mountjoy et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2023). While
5597 the current workshop was informed by findings from chapter two the creative workshop was
5598 not informed by this specific group of participants. Most of these activities, including the
5599 story completion interview and the poster activity, were successful in engaging young people

5600 and increasing their awareness about bullying, emotional abuse, and reporting mechanisms
5601 throughout the workshop. However, not all participants enjoyed these activities. Considering
5602 this, future educational initiatives should include young people to collaboratively shape the
5603 workshops and educational approaches. This would enable participants to include a diverse
5604 range of materials, techniques, formats, and activities that appeal to them.

5605 ***5.4.2 Concluding Reflections***

5606 The purpose of the creative educational workshop was to assess the feasibility of
5607 using creative approaches, such as story completion and an arts-based poster activity, to
5608 effectively engage young people and enhance their understanding of emotional abuse,
5609 bullying, and safeguarding in youth sports. Understanding the feasibility of using these
5610 creative methods can inform future educational initiatives in youth sport, helping to ensure
5611 their effectiveness in addressing emotional abuse, bullying, and enjoyment in sport, by
5612 determining their viability for practical implementation. Overall, the creative educational
5613 workshop shows signs of promise of being successful with the intended population. Based on
5614 collaborative reflections between participants and myself, it appears that the workshop was
5615 successful in achieving the intended aims. The interactive nature of the workshop appeared to
5616 foster an enjoyable learning environment, facilitating discussions among participants,
5617 encouraging critical thinking and reflection, as well as promoting both individual and
5618 collaborative learning on the topics of bullying, emotional abuse, and safeguarding in sport.
5619 Specifically, it enabled participants to consider the underlying behaviours and potential
5620 detrimental outcomes of bullying and emotional abuse, emphasising the importance of
5621 providing safe and enjoyable sporting experiences for young people in sport and how to
5622 respond to such incidents. However, I encountered a few challenges during the delivery of the
5623 interactive workshop, including low attendance, disruptive group dynamics where the
5624 younger participants at times were distracting each other and not always fully engaging
5625 during some of the activities, as well as learner fatigue towards the end and lack of
5626 engagement and enthusiasm from most participants with the story completion and the poster
5627 activity tasks. Lack of engagement and enthusiasm with the creative tasks resulted in limited
5628 creative outputs in the story completion and arts-based poster activity.

5629 Given the limited engagement with these tasks, the current feasibility study suggests a
5630 need for further exploration to identify appropriate data collection approaches and procedures
5631 for the intended population. The story completion task and arts-based poster activity were
5632 designed to engage participants and prompt discussions during follow-up interviews, aiming
5633 to understand their perceptions of the research topic and measure the workshop's impact.

5634 Therefore, before proceeding to a pilot study, refinement based on the current findings and
5635 recommendations is necessary. Specifically, it is essential to adapt these approaches, and
5636 future research should consider collaborating with young people to shape the development of
5637 similar creative educational workshops. Offering participants a choice of different data
5638 collection methods that better align with their preferences could significantly enhance
5639 engagement and overall effectiveness. This collaborative approach is essential to ensure that
5640 the workshops are engaging and impactful for the target audience. Therefore, more work
5641 needs to be done in identifying appropriate data collection methods and outcome measures
5642 before conducting an intervention pilot study.

5643 That said, I was pleased overall with the delivery and impact of the creative
5644 educational workshop. While it did not offer participants a completely new understanding of
5645 the topic, it was still successful in helping them learn about specific aspects of bullying and
5646 emotional abuse. These aspects included the potential detrimental outcomes of emotional
5647 abuse and bullying, as well as guidance on where and how to report concerns within their
5648 club supporting the feasibility of the workshop being run on a larger scale. However, I was
5649 frustrated with the lack of attendance and the lack of enthusiasm and engagement with the
5650 specific creative approaches used. Given that some participants enjoyed engaging with the
5651 creative approaches, and the overall interactive nature of the workshop was well received,
5652 again indicating promise for successfully implementing the creative educational workshop
5653 with the intended population on a larger scale. In fact, future educational initiatives may
5654 benefit from collaborating with young people in the development of similar creative
5655 educational workshops. Giving young people autonomy to include a diverse range of
5656 materials, techniques, formats and activities that might be more conducive to the specific
5657 group of learners, enhancing engagement and attendance. Furthermore, this may encourage
5658 active participation and may resonate more with participants, ultimately fostering a more
5659 favourable learning environment.

Chapter Six: General Discussion

5660

5661 **6.1 Introduction**

5662 The overall purpose of this thesis was to gain an in-depth understanding of the
5663 experiences of young people, parents, and coaches regarding bullying, emotional abuse, and
5664 enjoyment in sport in Wales. Additionally, it aimed to explore ways to enhance safety and
5665 enjoyment in sport. To address these aims, three studies were conducted which are detailed in
5666 the previous chapters. Specifically, Study 1 (Chapter Three) utilised a two-phase mixed
5667 methods explanatory sequential design to investigate the safeguarding landscape in youth
5668 sport throughout Wales. Study 2 (Chapter Four) employed a grounded theory methodology to
5669 develop a substantive theory of the process through which an optimally safe and enjoyable
5670 sporting experience is created for young people in sport. Finally, drawing on findings from
5671 Chapters Four and Five, for Study 3 (Chapter Five) I designed, implemented, and evaluated a
5672 creative educational workshop for young athletes (aged under 16 years of age) regarding
5673 emotional abuse, bullying, safeguarding, and their overall enjoyment of sport.

5674 The objective of this final chapter is to provide a comprehensive discussion of the
5675 cumulative findings from this thesis and their contribution to the safeguarding and
5676 maltreatment literature in sport, as well as the broader sport psychology literature. The
5677 chapter begins by discussing the theoretical and methodological contributions of the thesis,
5678 followed by applied implications for sport organisations, coaches, parents, and young people.
5679 Finally, the chapter concludes with the limitations of the thesis, suggestions for future
5680 research and my personal reflections.

5681 **6.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Contributions of the Thesis**

5682 There are several conceptual and theoretical contributions of this thesis. From a
5683 conceptual viewpoint, the findings from chapter three highlight that emotional abuse and
5684 bullying is prevalent in youth sport within Wales. However, accurately estimating the exact
5685 magnitude of these behaviours based solely on the study findings presents challenges.
5686 Specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic hindered data collection efforts, which resulted in
5687 limited participation in the survey, therefore the sample size was low, which may not provide
5688 a comprehensive representation of this issue across Wales. Nevertheless, despite the
5689 relatively small sample size, it is evident that experiences of emotional abuse are too often
5690 part of the youth sport landscape. This corresponds with recent prevalence studies conducted
5691 in Belgium and Canada (Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2020; Vertommen et al., 2016) and
5692 together this collective body of literature reinforces how far we still have to go in raising

5693 awareness of emotional abuse in sport and taking steps to reduce and remove it from the
5694 experience children are having.

5695 However, more than simply identifying the prevalence of emotional abuse and
5696 bullying, the first study (and subsequently reinforced through interviews and discussions in
5697 Study 2 and 3), highlighted that parents, young people, and coaches were often unable to
5698 recognise emotional abuse or bullying when provided with a definition of these concepts.
5699 That is, when individuals were asked if they had witnessed or experienced emotional abuse or
5700 bullying based on a definition, they did not perceive that they had, despite indicating that they
5701 had encountered various behaviours that would fit within these definitions. Thus, drawing on
5702 the findings of the current thesis, and consistent with previous research, I believe there is a
5703 critical need to improve understanding of emotional abuse and bullying among young people,
5704 parents, and coaches to help them identify and report these behaviours (Kerr et al., 2019;
5705 Mountjoy et al., 2016; Nery et al., 2019). Efforts to raise awareness of bullying and emotional
5706 abuse are evident in the accessible online information provided by the CPSU. Specifically,
5707 the CPSU offers definitions for various types of maltreatment in sport, including bullying and
5708 emotional abuse along with a few examples, on their website (CPSU, 2019). However, such
5709 efforts are clearly insufficient in helping individuals understand these behaviours – either
5710 because they do not understand the definitions, or they are not being presented with the
5711 information.

5712 Additionally, as highlighted through Chapter Two, there are numerous and varied
5713 terms and definitions used within the maltreatment and safeguarding literature in sport
5714 (Mountjoy et al., 2015, 2016; Stirling, 2009; Vertommen et al., 2016). Although such terms
5715 have typically developed to provide conceptual clarity within research settings, the use of
5716 differing terms and competing definitions can cause issue when attempting to integrate
5717 findings from studies and compare prevalence across different settings. and, more applicably
5718 to the current thesis, when attempting to communicate with individuals such as parents,
5719 coaches, and young people. If different practitioners, researchers, and organisations are
5720 engaging in youth sport settings using varying definitions and explanations then it is
5721 understandable that confusion may arise. As indicated, CPSU have produced definitions that
5722 are broadly accepted among sport organisations, but this does not mean that practitioners or
5723 researchers entering different settings adopt such language. If we are to genuinely track rates
5724 of abuse in sport and take effective and efficient strides towards eradicating it from youth
5725 sport settings, I would suggest that conceptual consistency among all individuals, researchers
5726 and practitioners, working in youth sport settings would be beneficial.

5727 However, beyond improving understanding of and consistency across definitions, the
5728 current thesis suggests there may be an important decision to make regarding whether using
5729 definitions is the best way to measure prevalence of emotional abuse and bullying. Across all
5730 three studies, when discussing behaviours that may fit with these definitions, participants
5731 tended to emphasise more severe behaviours, typically not recognising some of the less
5732 obvious yet still harmful behaviours that are classified as either abuse or bullying. Many of
5733 these were behaviours that are typically "accepted" as part of sport, such as expectations of
5734 results and coaches shouting. The result being that when individuals were presented with lists
5735 of behaviours that correspond with definitions of bullying or emotional abuse, they indicated
5736 far higher prevalence of experiencing and/or witnessing negative behaviours than when
5737 presented with a definition alone. Given this, it may be suggested that rather than placing
5738 extensive efforts on helping individuals better understand definitions of these concepts,
5739 particularly with the competing definitions available, that researchers and organisations
5740 would do better to draw on lists of behaviours instead, particularly emphasising the range of
5741 behaviours that are illustrative of abuse/bullying.

5742 Particularly, it is my opinion that an emphasis on behaviours which are concrete and
5743 tangible over abstract and complex definitions would be particularly beneficial for younger
5744 children (who I would argue should be the target of much of this work to ensure early
5745 education and prevention). That said, it is also important to recognise that enhancing
5746 knowledge purely based on behaviour examples alone presents its own challenges. For
5747 example, *many* negative behaviours correspond with bullying and emotional abuse (Stirling,
5748 2009) and there are many ways these behaviours manifest themselves in different sporting
5749 contexts. Thus, if we sought to increase knowledge and awareness utilising lists of
5750 behaviours alone there is a high possibility certain behaviour may be missed out, which may
5751 limit opportunities to gain a comprehensive understanding of bullying and emotional abuse.
5752 Given this, I would suggest there is a need to use both definitions and lists of behaviours
5753 together when seeking to explore prevalence of abuse and enhance knowledge and
5754 understanding. Although, there is a need to be mindful of participant load and the potential
5755 that long surveys may be off-putting for potential participants.

5756 Even if the decision is made to draw on definitions and lists of behaviours, there is
5757 still further work to do in this regard. Particularly, consideration needs to be given to
5758 developing more child-friendly culturally relevant examples of behaviours that apply to
5759 different settings and countries to complement currently developed definitions. The inclusion
5760 of sport-specific and culturally relevant examples in study three appeared to be useful in

5761 enhancing young people’s knowledge on bullying and emotional abuse. This aligns with
5762 researchers' recommendations advocating for educational initiatives to include culturally
5763 relevant examples suitable for targeted audiences within specific sporting contexts
5764 (McMahon et al., 2023). The current thesis re-emphasises the importance of providing
5765 accessible culturally relevant examples for young adolescent participants, as it appears to be
5766 an effective approach in enhancing awareness at the early stages of their sports participation.
5767 This approach could potentially minimise the negative consequences of bullying and
5768 emotional abuse before they become defiant (Gomez, 2011).

5769 Beyond considerations of definitions and explanations of behaviours, this thesis also
5770 encourages those working in the areas of safeguarding to move beyond a focus on reducing
5771 abuse only. Specifically, while the current thesis reaffirms the primary importance of
5772 enhancing the protection of young people in sport, it also highlights that merely eradicating
5773 maltreatment from sport is insufficient. Instead, the current thesis highlights the need to
5774 prioritise enjoyment as an integral component of ongoing efforts to safeguard young people
5775 from harm in sport and optimising sporting experiences. Specifically, the findings from
5776 Chapter Four suggest that solely providing protection – through policies and appropriate
5777 practices – does not guarantee young people will have positive sporting experiences. Rather,
5778 optimal sporting experiences are achieved through addressing issues of maltreatment (thus
5779 reducing negative experiences) and enhancing enjoyment (thus generating positive
5780 experiences). In fact, it can be argued that emphasising the optimisation of enjoyment and
5781 overall sporting experiences could potentially contribute to the prevention of relational,
5782 physical, and environmental harm in sport as a by-product (Gurgis et al., 2023). Specifically,
5783 if sports organisations prioritise young people’s rights and promote an environment fostering
5784 positive relationships, ensuring activities are developmentally safe, inclusive, accessible, fair,
5785 and enjoyable, this approach could also mitigate issues of harm (Gurgis et al., 2023).

5786 Such an approach, in which an emphasis is not simply on reducing negative
5787 experiences but rather on creating positive ones, is not new. In fact, it aligns with one of the
5788 key principles of safeguarding in the UK, which emphasises “taking action to enable all
5789 children and young people to achieve the best outcomes” (see HM Government, 2018, p. 7).
5790 Somewhat understandably given the high profile and ongoing cases of abuse that are being
5791 identified, in sport, however, the focus of research and practice has typically not been on this
5792 principle of safeguarding. Rather, attention has generally and increasingly been given to the
5793 other core safeguarding principles which include, protecting young people from abuse and
5794 maltreatment, preventing harm to their health or development, and ensuring young people

5795 receive safe and effective care (see Department for Education, 2018). These are obviously
5796 extremely important areas to address, and I of course endorse and support all efforts to ensure
5797 these principles are adhered to within all youth sport settings. But, based on the current thesis,
5798 I would argue that emphasis should not *only* be placed on these factors if we want to keep
5799 children involved in sport and having an opportunity to access the range of benefits that can
5800 be associated with sport participation.

5801 With the above in mind, I would suggest that there is a need to integrate different
5802 disciplines and fields of research to complement and progress our work in this area. For
5803 instance, it could be useful to integrate research that focuses on developing positive and
5804 successful sporting environments (Henriksen et al., 2010) or on enjoyment within sport
5805 (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Visek et al., 2018) with studies of abuse or maltreatment.
5806 Given the role the environment plays in optimising safety, there is a need to explore ways in
5807 which we can draw insights from these studies that focus on optimising young people's
5808 development, enjoyment, and overall sporting experiences to help enhance research focused
5809 on the prevention of maltreatment in sport. Moreover, there are certain activities, such as
5810 weighing athletes, tracking food consumption, implementing physical training programmes,
5811 and creating psychologically challenging training sessions to develop resilience, which are
5812 key elements of sport science, but if applied incorrectly can constitute abuse. Given such
5813 activities are the core business of sport science, these are the types of behaviours that may go
5814 unquestioned or be accepted as required. In fact, such activities applied incorrectly were
5815 apparent throughout the Whyte Report and have resulted in the recent (December 2023)
5816 publication by British Gymnastics of a series of new safeguarding policies related to such
5817 areas. Despite this, to date, very few efforts have been made to integrate safeguarding
5818 research across these broad disciplines or to utilise multi-disciplinary research teams to
5819 consider and address safeguarding concerns. To really progress this field of research, this
5820 multi-disciplinary approach is one that I believe we need to consider.

5821 In fact, in line with previous research, this thesis reaffirms that to effectively
5822 safeguard young people in sport, a systems approach is required (Brackenridge & Rhind,
5823 2014). A systems approach diverges away from solely concentrating on isolated problems
5824 (such as sexual abuse, or child labour) to allow a comprehensive approach to safeguarding
5825 rather than a fragmented strategy (Rhind et al., 2017). The objective of this approach is to
5826 safeguard young people by fostering supportive mechanisms while simultaneously preventing
5827 abuse, exploitation, and violence (Rhind et al., 2017). Specifically, it focuses on developing a
5828 comprehensive and integrated system that involves various individuals across multiple

5829 aspects within an organisation to ensure young people's safety and well-being (Rhind &
5830 Owusu-Sekyere, 2018). The insights from Chapter Four specifically highlight how a complex
5831 integration of individual, interpersonal, and organisational factors have a significant impact
5832 on safety and enjoyment in sport. Paramount to this systems approach, however, was the
5833 importance of positive relationships. While safeguarding research encourages moving beyond
5834 interpersonal approaches and focusing on specific relationship dynamics (Brackenridge &
5835 Rhind, 2014), this thesis reaffirms that positive relationships are paramount in all contexts
5836 and across levels. Specifically, it was apparent that, while having appropriate policies,
5837 procedures, and mechanisms in place is necessary to ensuring young peoples' safety (Rhind
5838 & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018), it is equally important to foster positive relationships, both within
5839 the immediate and broader sporting context, to ensure their effective implementation.

5840 Particularly, research has identified that it is not only coaches, but parents, young
5841 people, and other key individuals in sport who contribute to experiences of emotional abuse
5842 and bullying in sport (Nery et al., 2021; Parent et al., 2021; Vertommen et al.,
5843 2015). Therefore, it is important that emphasis is placed on improving the triadic relationship
5844 between parents, coaches, and young people within the immediate sporting environment.
5845 While increased attention has been given to dyadic relationships in sport (i.e., the coach-
5846 young person, coach-parent, or peer-peer) (O'Donnell et al., 2022; Smith, 2007), the current
5847 thesis highlights that it is important to consider the collective interactions and relationships
5848 across all parties. Previous research studies focused on coach-athlete relationships have
5849 developed communication strategies to enhance this relationship (Davies et al., 2019; Rhind
5850 & Jowett, 2010; 2012). This thesis highlights that considerations should also be given to the
5851 processes and outcomes linked with the relationships that coaches, parents, and young people
5852 engage in as a triad (Tagliavini et al., 2023) to help establish ways to enhance these
5853 relationships, which in turn should help contribute to enhancing safety and enjoyment.

5854 Although the current thesis highlights that positive relationships between coaches,
5855 parents, and young people appear to be important, caution is warranted because research
5856 shows that positive relationships can sometimes conceal grooming, a common method of
5857 sexual harassment or abuse against young people in sport (Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005).
5858 Grooming is a strategy in which an adult in a position of trust, such as a coach, convinces or
5859 coerces a child or young person to engage in sexual activity (Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005).
5860 This process involves gradually building trust with the young person, blurring boundaries
5861 between the coach and the young person, putting the young person at risk of abuse (Bjonseth
5862 & Szabo, 2018; Brackenridge, 2001). In sport, perpetrators often groom not only young

5863 people but also their parents and others within their organisation or community (Dietz, 2018).
5864 They exploit positive relationships, including trust and friendship, to impose power and
5865 dominance and hide their abusive behaviour (Brackenridge, 2001; Brackenridge & Fasting,
5866 2005).

5867 Therefore, while positive relationships are paramount, it is important to exercise
5868 discernment and vigilance regarding the behaviours of coaches and other adults in positions
5869 of power within sport (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001). Research suggests that educating
5870 coaches, parents, young people, and staff members within sports on recognising boundary
5871 violations, power imbalances, and warning signs of abuse is important (Wurtele, 2012). In
5872 addition, to mitigate coaches' ability to violate boundaries, sports organisations where
5873 possible should consider having multiple coaches for each team, representing diverse
5874 backgrounds and genders, including those who do not conform to traditional gender roles
5875 (Prewitt-White, 2019). It is suggested that involving parents in certain aspects of coaching
5876 can also help reduce the influence of any one coach over young people (Prewitt-White,
5877 2019.), which in turn could potentially help create safer environments where young athletes
5878 can enjoy the benefits of sport without fear of abuse (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001).

5879 Beyond the parent-coach-athlete interaction, the current thesis highlights the
5880 importance of positive peer relationships in mitigating bullying in sport. Research shows that
5881 lines are blurry as it pertains to bullying and banter and in sport sometimes what is considered
5882 as banter can be perceived as or quickly escalate to bullying (Booth et al., 2023). That said,
5883 the current thesis highlights that when young people have trusting and supportive friendships
5884 this can help. In fact, young people felt more confident and inclined to intervene or challenge
5885 negative behaviours when they have stronger friendship groups. This is unsurprising given
5886 that previous studies have indicated that young people with more friendship relationships
5887 were less likely to experience bullying (Nery et al., 2019). Moreover, research within
5888 educational settings demonstrates that friends can act as deterrents to bullying and serve as
5889 defenders (Smith, 2014).

5890 Thus, while addressing inappropriate conduct among young people remains
5891 important, based on my findings and previous literature (e.g., Nery et al., 2019), I would
5892 suggest that a proactive and explicit emphasis on creating environments and developing
5893 effective strategies to promote positive peer interactions and foster trusting relationships
5894 should be prioritised. Considering the influential role coaches play in facilitating such
5895 opportunities, exploring creative approaches for coaches to facilitate positive peer
5896 relationships in sport may be particularly beneficial. Supporting the development of positive

5897 peer relationships might reduce the reliance on adult intervention in instances of bullying and
5898 empower young people to address such instances themselves, particularly in areas with
5899 limited adult supervision, such as changing rooms, where instances of bullying are most
5900 prevalent (Escury & Dudink, 2010; Evans et al., 2016; Roberts, 2008; Ventura et al., 2019).

5901 **6.3 Methodological Contributions of the Thesis**

5902 When reviewing previous literature focused on bullying and emotional abuse in sport,
5903 I highlighted several methodological gaps. The current thesis contributes to addressing some
5904 of these gaps by employing multiple methodological approaches which enabled insights into
5905 young people's, parents', and coaches' perspectives in a variety of manners. Specifically, my
5906 first study used a mixed-method approach, whereas previous studies investigating emotional
5907 abuse or bullying have predominantly employed either quantitative or qualitative methods to
5908 comprehend these phenomena (Alexander. et al., 2011; Gervis et al., 2016; Nery et al., 2019;
5909 Rios et al., 2022). While these independent approaches provide valuable insights, integrating
5910 quantitative and qualitative data within one study can be particularly beneficial. For instance,
5911 understanding regarding the prevalence of emotional abuse and bullying in sport is
5912 advancing.

5913 Recent developments include the creation of a validated instrument measuring the
5914 prevalence of all forms of maltreatment in sport (i.e., Parent et al., 2019), and studies have
5915 begun to include perspectives of young people currently involved in sport (Parent et al.,
5916 2020) instead of relying solely on retrospective accounts (i.e., Alexander et al., 2011;
5917 Vertommen et al., 2015). Although these advances have been useful, these studies are limited
5918 in their provision of contextual explanations for the prevalence rates of maltreatment. Mixed
5919 methods, particularly two-phase explanatory sequential designs such as that used in Chapter
5920 Two, can provide such insights. From a methodological perspective utilising a mixed-
5921 methods approach in the current thesis not only facilitated the acquisition of rates of
5922 emotional abuse and bullying being experienced and witnessed, but it also enabled an in-
5923 depth exploration of the quantitative results in phase one which provided a comprehensive
5924 understanding of the problem. I would suggest that future research in this field should adopt
5925 similar approaches.

5926 Additionally, studies one and two of the current thesis used multiple participant
5927 perspectives. Previous studies examining experiences of maltreatment have primarily focused
5928 on a single population group (i.e., young people, coaches) and aimed to examine whether the
5929 participants have experienced maltreatment from their perspective (Alexander et al., 2011;
5930 Vertommen et al., 2015). Research on bullying in sport has aimed to offer comprehensive

5931 insights by exploring it from different perspectives (i.e., bystander, a bully, or a victim) (Nery
5932 et al., 2019; Rios et al., 2022). However, these studies have still predominantly focused on a
5933 single population (i.e., young people). Similarly, qualitative studies exploring these topics
5934 tend to include single population groups, (Rios et al., 2022). That said, all the studies within
5935 the current thesis apart from one (i.e., Chapter five) included multiple perspectives (i.e.,
5936 young people, coaches, parents, welfare officers, lead safeguarding officers, and other key
5937 individuals within sport). Including multiple perspectives in these studies helped to provide
5938 comprehensive insights into the topic. Furthermore, the use of qualitative analysis in these
5939 studies facilitated the capture of rich insights from multiple perspectives (Sparkes & Smith,
5940 2014). It contributed to providing an understanding of both similarities and differences within
5941 and across multiple participant groups (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Miles et al., 2018). Given the
5942 complex nature of safeguarding and the fact it is considered everybody's responsibility,
5943 incorporating the voices of all individuals involved in sport may positively contribute to
5944 comprehensive endeavours aimed at safeguarding young people from harm and improving
5945 their overall sporting experiences.

5946 As research regarding safeguarding in sport has grown, recommendations regarding
5947 the integration of children (i.e., individuals under 18 years) within these studies have been
5948 made. Particularly, it has been suggested that children play dual roles as both participants and
5949 beneficiaries (Hartill & Lang, 2015) and as such, research should include children as active
5950 participants. Moreover, it is highlighted that research should be delivered to children in a
5951 format that is appropriate and suitable for their age and capabilities. In essence, it has been
5952 suggested that it is important to collaborate and actively involve individuals who are most
5953 impacted by safeguarding in sport so they can benefit from the research itself. Despite these
5954 recommendations, there are still limited examples of this occurring in research. Within the
5955 current thesis, however, children were seen as active participants across all three studies, and
5956 particularly in study three care was taken to really consider the involvement of children as
5957 participants and beneficiaries. To account for children's perspectives proactively and
5958 explicitly across all three studies a number of steps were taken. For instance, in the first study
5959 all survey questions and explanations were reviewed with children in mind and then young
5960 ambassadors were explicitly included in the final review of the survey to ensure
5961 appropriateness. Interview questions across the studies were tailored to the experiences of
5962 children, with reflections from each child interview informing the questions asked in the next
5963 one. Finally, particular methods were adopted in the intervention that had been suggested as
5964 appropriate for young people. Overall, I found the acknowledgement of children as active

5965 participants in this manner to be useful to gain buy-in and I would recommend it to future
5966 researchers. However, I also recognise that I could have integrated them more extensively as
5967 co-researchers, particularly within the intervention study.

5968 I would also encourage researchers to use more creative methods moving forwards. In
5969 study three, I used various interactive and creative approaches including arts-based activities,
5970 story-completion, and story-mediated interviews to engage young people on the topic of
5971 bullying and emotional abuse. Previous research indicates that creative approaches are useful
5972 when conducting research on sensitive topics (Braun et al., 2018; Gravett, 2019; Tumanyan
5973 & Huuki, 2020) and my work supports this. Specifically, I found that such approaches were
5974 particularly useful in engaging young participants and providing them with an opportunity to
5975 express themselves freely, reflect on their own experiences, and generate new insights (Fraser
5976 & Al Sayah, 2011). Nevertheless, although this approach offered notable benefits, it is
5977 important to acknowledge and consider the associated limitations. Particularly, I found that
5978 some methods were more enjoyable and effective than others and my learning is that even if
5979 previous research suggests an approach may work there is no guarantee it will appeal to the
5980 specific population with whom you are working. As such, I would recommend that future
5981 researchers really work collaboratively with young people to select and shape the methods to
5982 be used, particularly within education workshops. This will ensure future research approaches
5983 better cater to participants' needs and facilitate a deeper level of learning.

5984 **6.4 Applied Implications**

5985 From an organisational perspective, the current thesis highlights the importance of
5986 sporting organisations prioritising their organisational culture and the values they uphold.
5987 Specifically, the findings of this thesis highlight the need for sporting organisations to
5988 develop values centred on promoting young people's human rights and holistic development,
5989 with a focus on enhancing their overall sporting experiences (Rhind & Sekyere, 2018).
5990 Research indicates that there is a correlation between power structures, organisational norms,
5991 social values and beliefs, and maltreatment in sport (Roberts et al., 2020). Therefore,
5992 organisations should focus on fostering a culture in which safeguarding is valued and
5993 individuals working with young people understand the importance of safeguarding and
5994 recognise their responsibility to ensure that all young people have safe and enjoyable sporting
5995 experiences. Although it is imperative to make sure that appropriate mechanisms are in place
5996 to detect and address maltreatment in sport, this should be reinforced by informal social and
5997 cultural measures promoting safety and enhancing sporting experiences. For example, senior
5998 leaders within sporting organisations should lead by example and role model respectful

5999 behaviour, they should also take proactive steps as bystanders to call out inappropriate
6000 behaviours and encourage a shared responsibility in addressing and preventing maltreatment
6001 in sport (Roberts et al., 2020). If sport organisations are aiming to prevent children, parents,
6002 and key individuals in the environment from contributing to bullying and emotional abuse, it
6003 is important that senior leaders within the organisation role model positive behaviours and
6004 demonstrate zero tolerance towards bullying and emotional abuse.

6005 Further, for policies and procedures to be implemented effectively, my findings also
6006 indicate that sports organisations should provide necessary resources to coaches and key
6007 individuals responsible for young people within the sports environment. Findings from
6008 studies one and two highlight that coaches and other key individuals such as lead
6009 safeguarding officers and welfare officers play an integral role in ensuring that young people
6010 are safe and have enjoyable sporting experiences. Therefore, NGBs and sporting
6011 organisations should prioritise funding for and access to CPD and training courses for
6012 coaches and other stakeholders to develop their expertise. The provision of CPD will not only
6013 contribute to making sure that coaches are competent to deliver safe and developmentally
6014 appropriate training sessions, but it will also offer opportunities for young people to develop
6015 skills and competence in their sport. Moreover, CPD will allow coaches to establish safer and
6016 more relatable connections with young people, and provide autonomy support, essential
6017 factors in fulfilling their basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and optimising their
6018 overall sporting experiences.

6019 Additionally, given the findings from studies one and two indicate that coaches were
6020 unable to recognise emotional abuse and bullying, coupled with the lack of confidence
6021 reported by individuals in safeguarding roles regarding certain aspects of their responsibilities
6022 (Hartill & Lang, 2014), I suggest that sport organisations should create networks and social
6023 learning spaces for coaches, individuals in safeguarding roles, and other key individuals
6024 within sport (Rhind & Owusu-Sekyer, 2018). These networks should include not only
6025 individuals within the immediate sporting environment but also those in the broader sporting
6026 context (i.e., lead safeguarding lead officers, and other key individuals in the NGBs). Such
6027 networks are needed because safeguarding in sport is complex, and it requires collective
6028 attention from various individuals (Hedges 2015). Through creating networks among key
6029 individuals who possess different knowledge and expertise all individuals involved will have
6030 access to diverse experiences and insights to inform their practice. Particularly, having such
6031 networks with individuals from different backgrounds and expertise may foster discussions
6032 on educational needs, facilitate information sharing about safeguarding opportunities and

6033 resources, and promote effective handling of concerns, which in turn can help strengthen
6034 systems in place to protect young people from harm (Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018).

6035 At the coach level, this thesis demonstrates the key role parents play in optimising
6036 young people's safety and enjoyment. Thus, coaches need to recognise the significant
6037 influence parents have on young people's sporting experiences. Specifically, coaches should
6038 seek to encourage positive parental involvement by valuing parents' impact on children's
6039 experiences. Coaches should recognise the importance of developing relationships with
6040 parents as soon as a young person joins a new club (Harwood, 2011). Importantly, coaches
6041 should welcome parents into the environment and acknowledge their significance as valuable
6042 and essential members of the young person support system (Harwood & Knight, 2015).
6043 Traditionally, it has been common for coaches to avoid parents or encourage them to
6044 minimise their involvement (Knight & Gould, 2016), however, based on my findings, I
6045 believe that coaches must proactively work with parents and avoid pushing them away or
6046 perceiving them as a problem.

6047 Engaging parents is particularly important because, in line with previous research, my
6048 findings highlight that young people feel more inclined to report concerns to parents
6049 (Woessner, 2023). So, parents need to be equipped with knowledge and understanding of
6050 how they can best support their child and how and where they can report concerns (Knight et
6051 al., 2021). Coaches can play a key role in helping to upskill parents, particularly if they
6052 proactively foster open channel of communication. This would enable coaches and parents to
6053 better understand each other's perspectives, allowing both parties to actively address their
6054 queries and concerns. Moreover, it should help parents to feel valued and appreciated, which
6055 would make it easier for parents to step in or question practices or behaviours that they feel
6056 are inappropriate. However, the onus cannot only be placed on coaches. Sports organisations
6057 also play a key role in creating an environment in which parents are respected and valued
6058 (Knight & Newport, 2017). They can place an expectation on coaches to engage with parents,
6059 require clubs to have welcoming approaches to parents, and engage with parents to increase
6060 their understanding and knowledge as it pertains to safeguarding.

6061 Parents can also take a proactive approach. Specifically, based on my findings,
6062 parents need to pay attention when seeking a club for their child. Specifically, parents should
6063 make sure that sports clubs have clear appropriate policies and procedures in place and
6064 guidance on how the club manages and responds to injuries, accidents, and welfare concerns
6065 among others (CPSU, 2019). Once children have joined a club, parents should acknowledge
6066 the role they play in supporting and encouraging their child in sport. Specifically, parents

6067 should show interest in their child's participation and engage in regular open conversations
6068 with their child and understand their child's support preferences and goals (Furusa et al.,
6069 2019) to help enhance their involvement and optimise young people's overall sporting
6070 experiences. Furthermore, parents should aim to establish a rapport with their child's coach.
6071 Specifically, parents should inquire about the coach's training experiences, coaching
6072 approach, and what their expectations are for them as parents and for their child, and they
6073 should seek guidance from the coach on how to best support their child (Knight, 2019).
6074 Building a strong relationship with their child's coach will enable parents to express concerns
6075 more freely, if necessary, but it will also allow them to gain a deeper understanding of their
6076 child's sport and their specific needs. Consequently, this information will be valuable in
6077 assisting parents to optimise their involvement in their child's sport, which will hopefully
6078 enhance their child's overall sporting experiences (Knight & Holt, 2014).

6079 For young people, it is important that they know and have a clear understanding of
6080 their rights. Specifically, young people are entitled to take part in sport in a healthy and safe
6081 environment and have a right to be protected from all forms of maltreatment, abuse, and
6082 violence" (Article 19, UNCRC, 1989). Therefore, they should understand that their safety and
6083 wellbeing is paramount. Young people should take time to learn about their rights and seek
6084 advice on what to do if they have any concerns in their sport and they should learn to speak
6085 up if they see or experience anything uncomfortable in their sport. If young people are
6086 unaware of who to approach in their sports club, they should consider telling a trusted adult
6087 like a parent or a trusted friend instead of suffering in silence.

6088 Considering the significant influence peers have on young people's sporting
6089 experiences, young people should also aim to develop friendships with their peers in sport.
6090 Specifically, young people should strive to exhibit welcoming, friendly, and inclusive
6091 behaviour toward newcomers in the environment. In doing so, this provides opportunities to
6092 establish trusting friendships. Findings from the current thesis highlight the important role of
6093 trusting friendships in providing a sense of relatedness, fulfilling a fundamental psychological
6094 need (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Additionally, findings showed that trusted friendships assist
6095 young individuals in navigating banter and camaraderie. Research suggests that young people
6096 with strong friendships report experiencing less experiences of bullying victimisation (Nery
6097 et al., 2020), highlighting the importance of fostering positive connections among young
6098 people in sport. These friendships not only serve as support networks but also play a role in
6099 mitigating instances of bullying. Moreover, fostering trusting friendships enables young
6100 people to be more attentive and responsive to each other's wellbeing. For instance, if a young

6101 person is reluctant to speak up about issues or concerns, a trusted friend might be able to
6102 identify something wrong and offer support or raise a concern on their behalf.

6103 **6.5 Limitations and Future Research Directions**

6104 While highlighting the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions this
6105 thesis has made to the field of maltreatment and safeguarding in sport, it is also equally
6106 important to highlight the limitations inherent in the body of work. Given that the specific
6107 limitations pertinent to each study are detailed in the preceding chapters, this section aims to
6108 address the limitations of the entire thesis collectively.

6109 First, the purpose of this thesis was to gain an in-depth understanding of the
6110 experiences of young people, parents, and coaches regarding bullying, emotional abuse, and
6111 enjoyment in sport in Wales. Although the findings of this thesis included multiple
6112 perspectives, the number of participants across the three studies was still relatively low. This
6113 was, to some extent, due to the qualitative methods employed for studies two and three, but
6114 even accounting for this I had hoped to recruit more participants. Unfortunately, the COVID-
6115 19 pandemic heavily impacted the recruitment for studies one and two (Chapters Three and
6116 Four) because gatekeepers from multiple sporting organisations were furloughed. This
6117 limited access to several sports clubs across Wales and potential participants. Therefore,
6118 while the findings of this thesis provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic, they
6119 may not be reflective of the experiences of all individuals involved in sport across the whole
6120 of Wales. Future studies may want to consider conducting similar studies in other areas of
6121 Wales, as well as England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland to get a comprehensive
6122 understanding of the issue from participants currently involved in sport across the UK.

6123 Second, while this thesis provided valuable insights about this topic from multiple
6124 perspectives, it is important to note that since the commencement of the thesis significant
6125 developments have been made within the field of maltreatment and safeguarding in sport.
6126 Unfortunately, it was not possible to incorporate all the new insights within this thesis. For
6127 example, following the Larry Nassar case it became evident that other individuals within the
6128 sport environment can contribute to maltreatment in sport (Levinson, 2018). Moreover,
6129 researchers recognised the importance of understanding experiences of emotional abuse and
6130 bullying from young people currently participating in sport (Parent et al., 2019; Nery et al.,
6131 2020). Given this, recent research developments have included the creation of a validated
6132 instrument measuring the prevalence of all forms of maltreatment in sport (i.e., Parent et al.,
6133 2019). Unfortunately, this was published after my first study was under construction and I
6134 could not use this scale in my work. More recently, two evidence-based educational

6135 initiatives have been developed for young people and coaches and they suggested that future
6136 initiatives should include athlete survivors in education initiatives to ensure they are trauma
6137 informed (McMahon et al., 2022; 2023; Mountjoy et al., 2022). Again, these suggestions
6138 came out after my intervention had been delivered so they could not be included in my work.
6139 Thus, integrating these findings alongside the findings of my thesis will provide an even
6140 more comprehensive understanding of the issues pertaining to maltreatment and safeguarding
6141 in sport.

6142 Specifically, future research in the field might want to consider utilising and adapting
6143 the Violence Toward Athletes Questionnaire (VTAQ) (Parent et al., 2019) to capture insights
6144 of all forms of maltreatment in sport. Furthermore, while Chapter Four included perspectives
6145 of individuals in safeguarding roles, future research might benefit from including other
6146 members within the sport community such as performance directors, managers, sport
6147 psychologists, and physiotherapists to gain a comprehensive perspective from all individuals
6148 within the sporting environment. Furthermore, it was evident that coaches and parents were
6149 unable to recognise bullying and emotional abuse, thus future research should consider
6150 developing, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based education initiatives for other key
6151 individuals in sport including parents and coaches and to consider the inclusion of athlete
6152 survivors to inform such initiatives (Mountjoy et al., 2016).

6153 **6.6 Personal Reflections as a PhD Researcher Working on Safeguarding in Sport**

6154 I began my research journey in 2018, coinciding with the Larry Nassar case.
6155 Engaging sports organisations during that period proved exceptionally challenging. Despite
6156 communicating the potential benefits of their participation in this research, most perceived it
6157 as a risk to their reputation. Unfortunately, this reluctance hindered the specific analysis
6158 needed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of risk factors. Additionally, it also
6159 prevented some sports taking part in my research. As someone researching in this area it is
6160 clear that this research offers valuable insights on multiple levels. However, unfortunately,
6161 some sports organisations viewed it as a potential witch hunt. This proved challenging, as I
6162 had assumed they would be more inclined to explore how sporting experiences could be
6163 enhanced rather than adopting a defensive stance.

6164 My advice to researchers entering this field is to carefully consider how to positively
6165 frame their research. Convincing sporting organisations of the advantages of fostering a
6166 safeguarding culture and promoting a healthy environment, free from harm, is important. I
6167 believe this type of work should be seen as an opportunity for growth rather than a witch
6168 hunt. So, I suggest that creativity in presenting your research is key, while maintaining

6169 honesty, try and explore ways to highlight the positive impact the research may have on
6170 enhancing young people's overall sporting experiences, especially when engaging with
6171 coaches and parents.

6172 As someone who entered this PhD program with predominantly positive sporting
6173 experiences in childhood and pursued a master's by research on enjoyment in sport, delving
6174 into the field of maltreatment in sport proved to be a challenging transition. Particularly in the
6175 initial days when immersing myself in the research and becoming familiar with the topic of
6176 maltreatment, spending days reading about subjects such as sexual abuse in sport was
6177 emotionally taxing. Reading about the negative experiences some individuals endured in
6178 sport was difficult, and I didn't quite anticipate the impact it would have on my well-being.
6179 To comprehend the topic fully, one must delve into the entirety of it, and certain aspects are
6180 more distressing than others. I would advise future researchers entering this field, especially
6181 those unfamiliar with the content, to be mindful and take care when reading, as it can become
6182 emotionally challenging. Unfortunately, understanding the topic involves exploring areas that
6183 are darker than others. I strongly recommend taking care of your mental health while
6184 engaging with such content.

6185 When I began this research, I initially assumed that sport was a utopia, and it was only
6186 a few bad apples giving sport a bad name. However, as my knowledge in this area has
6187 developed, my perspectives have changed significantly. I have come to realise how complex
6188 issues of maltreatment are and how resolving this problem requires a collective and
6189 multidisciplinary approach I would advise anyone entering this research to adopt a holistic
6190 perspective and consider how various factors influence one another. Avoid being myopic and
6191 assuming it is just a few bad apples. The system is broken, and repairs are needed across
6192 multiple levels. When entering this field, consider adopting a holistic lens and refrain from
6193 myopic thinking, as I initially did, assuming that eliminating a few bad actors would bring
6194 about significant change. While it may be overwhelming at times, and you might feel that
6195 your contributions are not substantial, I encourage you to look at the bigger picture. Consider
6196 how you can contribute to this complex system to make sport safe and enhance young
6197 people's experiences.

6198 **6.7 Conclusion**

6199 Taken together, this thesis offers a comprehensive and in-depth insight into the
6200 experiences of young people, parents, and coaches regarding emotional abuse, bullying, and
6201 enjoyment in sports within Wales. Furthermore, the thesis has highlighted the importance of
6202 the integrations of safety and enjoyment as a unified concept and explored the underlying

6203 mechanisms contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience. Additionally, this
6204 thesis demonstrates how this knowledge can be utilised to develop a creative, evidence-based
6205 educational initiative effectively enhancing knowledge and awareness on emotional abuse,
6206 bullying, safeguarding, and enjoyment among young people aged between 13-15 years.
6207 Finally, the thesis recommends future research to build upon and further refine these findings,
6208 aiming to broaden our understanding of bullying, emotional abuse, and enjoyment in sport.
6209

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Appendix A: Rational for Survey Questions - Emotional harm definitions and questions included in the survey

Table 1

Definitions included in the survey, the sources in which my survey definitions originated from (specific aspects highlighted), the questions used in the survey, and the rationale for including the questions and definitions in the survey

Definition/Question	Rationale for my definition	Literature used
<p>Initial definition of emotional harm/abuse included in the survey: Emotional abuse is any type of deliberate non-contact (no touching) physical or verbal behaviour that could be harmful and occurs repeatedly (more than once) in an important relationship. It includes trying to scare, humiliate (put down), isolate, or ignoring someone on purpose.</p> <p>New definition of emotional harm/abuse included in the survey: Emotional abuse is when someone you know (like a teacher, coach, parent) deliberately behaves in a way that upsets you or makes you feel bad, and they do this more than once. For example, this includes non-contact (no touching) physical or verbal/non-verbal behaviour such as, trying to scare, humiliate (put down), isolate, or ignoring someone on purpose.</p> <p>Changes made: Instead of the term ‘important relationship’, I have changed it to someone you know (like a teacher, coach, parent) as suggested by Mike Hartill. This is easier for younger children to understand. It aligns more with the definition of EA, which highlights that perpetrators of are mainly adults in positions of trust. Therefore, this separates this definition from bullying, which occurs in exclusively in peer relationships.</p>	<p>My survey definitions of emotional harm/abuse and bullying have been constructed using both academic and practical definitions. The academic definitions (e.g., Mountjoy et al., 2015; Stirling, 2008; Stirling & Kerr, 2008) were used to construct my definitions because they encompass specific types of emotional harm/abuse applicable in the context of sport. In addition, the practical definitions of harm/abuse taken from NSPCC and CPSU website were used, because both these government organisations are responsible for safeguarding and child protection in the UK. As such, their definitions on harm/abuse are the specific ones available to all key stakeholders involved in sport within the local vicinity (e.g., Wales, UK).</p> <p>A combination of academic and practical definitions were used to construct my definitions in order to improve accessibility for participants and to ensure that all aspects of harm/abuse were encompassed in my definitions and questions. For example, in relation to emotional harm/abuse, the academic definitions indicate that emotional abuse is deliberate ^{2, 4, 5} and Stirling and Kerr (2008) highlight that it occurs in a critical relationship ⁴. In addition, the IOC and NSPCC highlight that it has to occur repeatedly ^{2, 3} and all definitions indicate that emotional abuse is harmful and can involve verbal behaviours, physical behaviours as well as, denial of attention or support ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5}. As such, all these specific aspects are included in my definition of emotional abuse.</p>	<p>Stirling and Kerr (2008) define emotional abuse as: A pattern of deliberate non-contact behaviours by a person within a critical relationship role that has the potential to be harmful. Acts of emotional abuse include physical behaviours, verbal behaviours, and acts of denying attention and support. These acts have the potential to be spurning, terrorizing, isolating, exploiting/corrupting, or deny emotional responsiveness, and may be harmful to an individual’s affective, behavioural, cognitive or physical wellbeing¹.</p> <p>The IOC consensus statement define emotional abuse as: Psychological abuse - A pattern of deliberate, prolonged, repeated non-contact behaviours within a power differentiated relationship. This form of abuse is at the core of all other forms. Some definitions refer to emotional or psychological abuse interchangeably. In this document, we refer to psychological abuse in recognition that the psyche consists of more than emotions. It also consists of cognitions, values and beliefs about oneself, and the world. The behaviours that constitute psychological abuse target a person’s inner life in all its profound scope.</p> <p>NSPCC define emotional abuse as: Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that includes continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It is sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional</p>

		<p>abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.</p> <p>CPSU define emotional abuse in sports settings as: Emotional abuse is the emotional maltreatment of a child, which has a severe and persistent negative effect on the child’s emotional development. In sport, emotional abuse may occur if: (a) children are subjected to repeated criticism, sarcasm, name-calling or racism, (b) child is ignored or excluded, (c) children feel pressure to perform to unrealistically high expectations, (d) children are made to feel like their value or worth is dependent on their sporting success.</p>
<p>Initial definition of Bullying included in the survey:</p> <p>Bullying is any unwanted and repeated physical, verbal, or psychological (i.e. mental) behaviour that is done on purpose by more powerful peers (e.g., other children who have status in the group) to cause another child to be upset, hurt, harmed or fearful.</p> <p>Bullying can happen online or in person and can include name calling, making threats, spreading rumours/lies about someone, hitting someone, or leaving someone out of activities on purpose.</p> <p>New definition of bullying included in the survey:</p> <p>Bullying is when a child or group of children hurt another child on purpose over and over again. This is intended to cause another child to be upset, hurt, harmed or scared and tends to happen when there is an imbalance of power (when it is hard for the person being bullied to defend themselves).</p> <p>Bullying can happen online or in person and can hurt a child on the inside or on the outside. For example, this can include name calling, making threats, spreading rumours/lies about someone, hitting, pushing, tripping</p>	<p>Similar to emotional abuse, my bullying definition included aspects from the same academic and practical definitions (e.g., CPSU, 2019; Mountjoy et al., 2015; NSPCC, 2008; Stirling, 2008; Stirling & Kerr, 2008). For example, the IOC definition indicates that bullying is unwanted, it is intentional and can involve spreading rumours or falsehoods ². In addition, Stirling and Kerr (2008) and CPSU highlight that it is based upon an imbalance of power and both practical definitions also indicate that it can occur both online or in person ^{1,2,4}. Furthermore, all definitions, indicate that bullying involves verbal behaviours causing harm to victims, however, IOC definitions expands to include physical behaviours ². All these aspects were included in our definition of bullying.</p> <p><u>New rationale:</u></p> <p>Similar to emotional abuse, my bullying definition included aspects from the same academic and practical definitions (e.g., CPSU, 2019; Mountjoy et al., 2015; NSPCC, 2008; Stirling, 2008; Stirling & Kerr, 2008). For example, the IOC definition indicates that bullying is intentional and can involve spreading rumours or falsehoods ². In addition, Stirling and Kerr (2008) and CPSU highlight that it is based upon an imbalance of power and both practical definitions also indicate that</p>	<p>Stirling (2008) define bullying as: Bullying includes physical, verbal or psychological attacks or intimidations that are intended to cause fear, distress or harm to the victim. Like abuse and harassment, bullying is based upon an imbalance of power, with a more powerful individual oppressing the less powerful one and includes an absence of provocation.</p> <p>The IOC consensus statement define bullying as: Bullying (or cyberbullying if conducted online) is unwanted, repeated and intentional, aggressive behaviour usually among peers, and can involve a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours or falsehoods, attacking someone physically or verbally and deliberately excluding someone.</p> <p>NSPCC define bullying as: Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It’s usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.</p>

<p>someone, or leaving someone out of activities on purpose.</p> <p>Changes made: Simplified language and included the peer element (child or group of children) to differentiate from emotional abuse. Also, changed wording in relation to power imbalance to make it easier to understand.</p>	<p>it can occur both online or in person ^{1,2,4}. CPSU, highlight that an individual or group of individuals can bully someone ³. Furthermore, all definitions, indicate that bullying involves verbal behaviours causing harm to victims, CPSU and NSPCC ^{1,3}, specify that this can be psychological (internal). However, IOC definitions expands to include physical behaviours ². All these aspects were included in our definition of bullying.</p>	<p>CPSU define bullying in sports settings as: Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable. It can involve people of any age and can happen anywhere, including at home, school, sports clubs or online. Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours which are often combined. It might include physical, verbal or emotional abuse, or online cyberbullying. In sport, bullying can occur based on a young person's sporting ability, body size or shape. It might include name-calling, offensive hand gestures, physical assault or exclusion from team activities</p>
<p>Have you ever seen another child experience any of the following behaviours when taking part in sport?</p> <p>List of negative behaviours</p>	<p>Then have all the examples after this question and pipe to respondent to perpetrators</p>	
<p>Question 1 - Teased, made fun of or called names because of something that happened or how you/someone looked.</p>	<p>Question 1 - This question has been included because all the academic and professional definitions highlight that emotional harm/abuse includes a form of verbal behaviour that can emotionally affect an individual's belief about themselves ^{1,2,3,4,5}. Specifically, NSPCC highlight that this can involve acts of humiliation ³.</p>	<p>¹Child protection in sport unit. (2019). Child abuse in sport in a sport setting. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/introduction-to-safeguarding/child-abuse-in-a-sports-setting/</p> <p>²Mountjoy, M., Rhind, D., Tiivas, A., & Leglise, M. (2015). Safeguarding the child athlete in sport: a review, a framework and recommendations for the IOC youth athlete development model. <i>British journal of sports medicine</i>, 49, 883-886. doi: 10.1136/bjsports-2015-094619</p>
<p>Question 2 - Had embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip spread online or in person.</p>	<p>Question 2 – This question has been included because it is a verbal behaviour which could be seen as terrorizing (e.g., Stirling & Kerr, 2008). In addition, such behaviour could target a person's inner life, as indicated in the IOC definition ². In addition, CPSU and NSPCC highlight that emotional abuse can occur in person as well as, online ^{1,3}.</p>	<p>³NSPCC. 2009. Child protection fact sheet. The definitions and signs of child abuse. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/</p>
<p>Question 3 - Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making you feel intimidated or frightened or had an object thrown at or smashed near you or other children out of anger)</p>	<p>Question 3 - This question has been included because Stirling and Kerr (2008) and NSPCC definitions, both indicate that emotional harm and abuse can be done to scare and/or cause a child to feel intimidated. This includes the verbal, non-contact aspect of intimidation ^{3,4}. Also, in Stirling and Kerr's (2008) article, they highlight that retired athletes experienced physically emotionally abusive behaviours from their coaches,</p>	<p>⁴Stirling, A., & Kerr, G. (2008). Defining and categorizing emotional abuse in sport. <i>European journal of sport science</i>, 8, 173-181.</p>

	which included acts of aggression such as hitting and throwing objects either at the athlete or in the presence of the athlete ⁴ .	⁵ Stirling, A. (2008). Definition and constituents of maltreatment in sport: establishing a conceptual framework for research practitioners. <i>British journal of sports medicine</i> , 43, 1091-1099. doi: 10.1136/bjism.2008.051433
Question 4 - Had someone break or throw an object at or near you/other children on purpose out of anger or frustration (e.g., smashed equipment out of anger when standing near you/teammates)	Question 4 - This question has been included because Stirling and Kerr (2008) and NSPCC definitions, both indicate that emotional harm and abuse can be done to scare and/or cause a child to feel intimidated. This includes the verbal, non-contact aspect of intimidation ^{3,4} . Also, in Stirling and Kerr's (2008) article, they highlight that retired athletes experienced physically emotionally abusive behaviours from their coaches, which included acts of aggression such as hitting and throwing objects either at the athlete or in the presence of the athlete ⁴ .	
Question 5 - Been ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)	Question 5 – This question is included because most of the definitions apart from IOC consensus statement ² explicitly highlight that emotional abuse can include denying attention ^{1,3,4,5} .	
Question 6 - Been shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something you have done, or how you have played or performed).	Question 6 - This question is included because all the academic and professional definitions highlight that emotional harm/abuse includes a form of verbal behaviour, which can be humiliating and/or emotionally affect an individual's belief about themselves ^{1,2,3,4,5} .	
Question 7 - Been repeatedly criticised for how you performed	Question 7 - This question has been included because Stirling and Kerr (2008) indicate that emotional abuse can include negative verbal comments such as name calling, or negative comments following an inadequate performance ⁴ . In addition, CPSU highlight emotional abuse can include repeated criticising about sporting performance and name calling ¹ .	
Question 8 - Been repeatedly criticised for how you look or because of your weight	Question 8 - This question has been included because Stirling and Kerr (2008) indicate that emotional abuse can include negative verbal comments such as name calling, or negative comments following an inadequate performance ⁴ . In addition, CPSU highlight emotional	

	abuse can include repeated criticising about sporting performance and name calling ¹ .	
Question 9 - Been made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards	Question 9 - This question was included because CPSU highlight that emotional abuse can include pressure to perform to unrealistically high expectations ¹ .	
Question 10 - Made to feel that you/another child is only important or valuable if you are successful in sport	Question 10 - This question has been included because the CPSU highlight in their definition that emotional abuse can occur if children are made to feel like their value or worth is dependent on their sporting success ¹ .	
Question 11 - Been physically hurt by someone on purpose? (i.e., not hurt caused as part of your sport like a rough tackle or punching from sparring) (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, spanked, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)	Question 11 - Stirling and Kerr (2008) suggests that examples of bullying are categorised into physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, pinching etc), emotional (e.g., name calling, teasing etc) and social behaviours (e.g., isolation, intentional exclusion from an activity) ⁴ . Therefore, this question has been included because it highlights the physical aspect of bullying.	
Question 12 - Been left out of an activity on purpose? (e.g., not had ball passed to or left out by others in activity on purpose)	Question 12 – This question is included because, the IOC suggest that bullying can take place either directly or indirectly ² . For instance, direct bullying involves open attacks on a victim and indirect bullying includes social isolation, exclusion from a group or nonelection for activities ² . Similarly, Stirling (2008) indicates that there is a social aspect to bullying which involves intentionally isolating or excluding an individual from an activity ⁵ . Therefore, this question was included to indicate in direct, social aspect of bullying.	
Question 13 - Been forced to take part in an activity you did not want to as part of an introduction into a new team (e.g., act as a personal servant, drink large amounts of alcohol, do something dangerous, naughty/illegal, embarrassed, shouted at made fun or forced to strip)	Question 13 - This definition was included because Stirling (2008) included this under bullying. Specifically, it occurs in a non-critical peer-peer relationship and tends to occur among older adolescent athletes.	

Rationale for use of definitions

- Stirling and Kerr (2008) definition is included because it derived from young athletes experiences in a sporting context.
- NSPCC and CPSU definitions are included because they are the safeguarding, child protection definitions used in the local vicinity (e.g., England & Wales). NSPCC is the largest UK charity, it lobbies the government on issues relating to child welfare in the UK. CPSU is in partnership with NSPCC and they are responsible for safeguarding and child protection in sport in England and Wales.
- The IOC consensus statement definitions are included because it is a comprehensive analysis by a panel of international scientific, clinical and policy experts who have reviewed the current body of knowledge, and to provided international recommendations for the prevention and management of non-accidental violence in sport.
- Stirling (2008) definition was included because the purpose of her paper was to propose a conceptual framework of maltreatment in sport. Therefore, her definitions were used because they are all developed to be used in the context of sport.

Appendix B: Academic Expert, CPSU Members, and Young Sport Ambassadors Feedback Sheet

Name:

Section one: Demographic questions.

These questions are simply to obtain general demographic information from the participants. For the child survey they ask directly about the child, for the parents, coaches, and safeguarding/welfare officers, they are focused on their child/children they work with. The wording of the questions below are taken from the child survey throughout (but the questions are identical for other participants just asking about children).

Question	Response options	Feedback (please leave blank if you have no comments pertaining to a specific question)
3. What Gender do you identify as?	Multiple choice: (i) male (ii) female (iii) prefer not to say (iv) prefer to self describe as (please specify)	
4. How old are you?	Dropdown: 11-18 years old	
5. What sport(s) do you regularly (i.e., at least once a week) participate in? (you can select more than one)	Checkboxes and other (please specify) if a particular sport is not included in the options	
6. How long have you been regularly (e.g., at least most weeks) playing sport?	Multiple choice: 1-10+ years	
7. What is the highest level you compete at in sport?	Multiple choice: (i) local club level (ii) county level (iii) regional level (iv) national level (v) international level	
8. How many days per week do you play sport?	Multiple choice: 1-7 days	
9. How often do you compete in sport?	Multiple choice: (i) every week (ii) every two weeks (iii) every month (iv) every few months (v) 3-4 times per year (vi) 1-2 times per year	

Section two: Sport enjoyment questions - taken from Sport enjoyment scale (Scanlan et al.,1993). Due to the recent Coronavirus outbreak we have not been able to tailor these questions to a specific season/year. Rather we have asked them in general. These questions are included to provide some balance to survey and ensure that children are not only responding to negative questions. These questions are included in the child survey and the survey for parents (with the questions tailored to asked about their perception of their child's enjoyment in sport).

Question 10. This question is provided as an overall matrix style question.

Question	Response options	Feedback
Do you enjoy playing sport?	Matrix rating scale 1- 5: (1) not at all (2) a little (3) sort of (4) pretty much (5) very much	
Are happy playing sport?	Matrix rating scale 1- 5: (1) not at all (2) a little (3) sort of (4) pretty much (5) very much	
Do you have fun playing sport?	Matrix rating scale 1- 5: (1) not at all (2) a little (3) sort of (4) pretty much (5) very much	
Do you like playing sport?	Matrix rating scale 1- 5: (1) not at all (2) a little (3) sort of (4) pretty much (5) very much	

Question	Response options	Feedback
11. What do you like about playing sport?	Comment box: open-ended response	
12. What do you dislike about playing sport?	Comment box: open-ended response	

Section three: Negative sport experiences questions

This is the main section of the survey and is focused on experiences of emotional abuse and bullying, either experienced by the child or witnessed by a child, parent, coach, or safeguarding/welfare officer. The questions start by asking about explicit experiences of emotional abuse and bullying before moving onto a series of examples of these types of behaviours. The decision to present these questions in this way was guided by a desire to understand if respondents recognised the different examples as emotional abuse or bullying (i.e., do respondents identify that they have experienced or witnessed certain behaviours, but indicate that they have not seen/experienced emotional abuse or bullying).

Question	Response options	Feedback
<p>13. Emotional abuse is any deliberate type of non-contact (no touching) physical or verbal behaviour that could be harmful and occurs repeatedly (more than once) in an important relationship. It includes trying to scare, humiliate (put down), isolate, or ignoring someone on purpose.</p> <p>Have you ever experienced emotional abuse or seen a child being emotionally abused when taking part in sport?</p>	Multiple choice: (i) yes (ii) no	
<p>14. Bullying is any unwanted and repeated physical, verbal, or psychological (i.e. mental) behaviour that is done on purpose by more powerful peers (e.g., other children who have status in the group) to cause another child to be upset, hurt, harmed or fearful.</p> <p>Bullying can happen online or in person and can include name calling, making threats, spreading rumours/lies about someone, hitting someone, or leaving someone out of activities on purpose.</p> <p>Have you ever been bullied or seen another child being bullied when taking part in sport?</p>	Multiple choice: (i) yes (ii) no	

15. Have you ever experienced or seen another child experience any of the following behaviours when taking part in sport? (This question is a matrix style question, with all the examples provided as a list to be responded to on a scale of 1-4).		
Teased, made fun of or called names because of something that happened or how you/someone looked	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	
Had embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip spread online or in person	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	
Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making you feel intimidated or frightened)	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	
Been ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	
Had someone break or throw an object at or near you/other children on purpose out of anger or frustration (e.g., smashed equipment out of anger when standing near you/teammates)	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	
Been shouted or sworn at angrily by someone because of something you have done	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	
Been shouted, sworn at angrily, or punished because of how you have played/performed	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	
Been repeatedly criticised or made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	
Made to feel that you/another child is only important or valuable if you are successful in sport	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	
Been physically hurt by someone on purpose? (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, spanked, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	
Been left out or not included in an activity on purpose? (e.g., not had ball passed to or left out by others in activity on purpose)	Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often	

If respondents indicate that they have experienced or witnessed any of the above behaviours, their responses (e.g., the behaviours they indicate witnessing or experiencing) then feed forward into another matrix style question where they are asked to indicate who carried out the behaviour – a peer/teammate, parent, coach, or other person. An example of this question is provided below:

Question	Response options	Feedback
16. Below is a list of the behaviours you said you had seen or experienced in sport. Who did these things? Teased, made fun of or called names because of something that happened or how you/someone looked	Multiple choice: (i) another child/team mate did this (ii) a parent did this (iii) a coach did this (iv) other (someone who was NOT another child, a parent, or coach did this)	

Section four: Keeping safe in sport questions

These questions are seeking to understand the extent to which participants understand who to refer concerns to and who to seek information from regarding safeguarding. We are interested in these to gain insight into the extent to which clubs and organisations are ensuring people involved in sport have access to and understand information regarding safeguarding.

Question	Response options	Feedback
17. What do you think safeguarding is?	Comment box: open-ended question.	
18. If you were worried about someone's behaviour towards you or another child in sport, would you tell someone?	Multiple choice: (i) yes (ii) no	
19. If you were worried about someone's behaviour towards you or another child in sport and wanted to tell someone, who would you tell? (you can choose more than one person)	Multiple choice: (i) your coach (ii) a different coach (iii) a physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist (e.g., psychologist, strength and conditioning trainer) (iv) your sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead (v) I wouldn't tell anyone (vi) I don't know who I would tell	
20. What might stop you from telling someone about a behaviour that you saw or experienced in sport that was worrying you?	Comment box: open-ended response	
21. If you wanted information on how to stay safe when participating in sport, where or who would you go to?	Comment box: open-ended response	

Appendix C: Example Young Person Survey for Study 1

Information sheet

You have been invited to take part in a survey as part of a PhD research project conducted by Swansea University and the Child Protection in Sport Unit. We are interested in finding out what children (aged 13-18 years), such as yourself, enjoy about sport and what you understand about keeping safe in sport. We also want to find out if you have experienced harm or witnessed anyone being harmed while taking part in sport.

You have been chosen to take part in the study because you are part of a sports club in Wales and are between the ages of 13 and 18 years old. We think that the information you share with us might help towards making sport safer for children in Wales.

This survey includes a number of short questions about your participation in sport, such as enjoyment, harm and keeping safe in sport. **It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.**

We know that answering difficult questions could make you feel uncomfortable. If you do not wish to answer any questions, you do not have to, and you can choose to stop at any time. If any questions make you feel uncomfortable or worried, please talk to your parents or there is information on each page of the survey about childline. You can contact childline if you wish to talk to them about anything private.

We will not ask for your name on the survey or the names of anyone else. All information you provide in this study will be kept private. Information from the study will be used in research publications and reports, but no one will know you took part.

If you have any questions, or are unable to understand the information above, please talk to your parents and they can then talk to us, or if you want further information on the study, then contact Maita via email: [REDACTED].

Please keep this page for your records

Parental consent

Before you begin the survey, you need your parents to read the questions below and tick (✓) the boxes to show that they agree for you to take part in the study. Please do not begin the survey until your parents have agreed and ticked the boxes below.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that my child is free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason without their medical care or legal rights being affected.

I understand that sections of any of data obtained may be looked at by responsible individuals from Swansea University research team. I give permission for these individuals to have access to these records.

I agree for my child to take part in the above study and for the information they provide to be used in research publications (including but not limited to presentations, reports, and scientific journal articles).

Child consent

Before you begin the survey, please read the questions below and tick (✓) the boxes to show that you are happy to take part in the study.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information about this study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what I will be doing if I take part.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my sport participation being affected.

I understand that sections of information obtained may be looked at by individuals from Swansea University. I give permission for these individuals to have access to these records.

I agree to take part in the above study and for the information I provide to be used in research publications (including but not limited to presentations, reports, and scientific journal articles).

Demographic Information

On this page you will be asked questions about you and your involvement in sport. Please tick (✓) the appropriate box underneath or next to the appropriate answer.

1. How old are you?

<input type="checkbox"/> 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 years old
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2. Where do you mostly take part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> East Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> North Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> South Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> West Wales
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3. Which gender do you identify as?

<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonbinary	<input type="checkbox"/> Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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Prefer to self-describe as (please specify) _____

4. Which of the following ethnic groups do you belong to? (choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

<input type="checkbox"/> White (e.g., English / Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish / British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish traveller, any other White background)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups (e.g., White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background)
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, any other Asian background)	<input type="checkbox"/> Black African/Caribbean/Black British (e.g., African, Caribbean, any other Black / African / Caribbean background)
<input type="checkbox"/> Arab	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

Other ethnic group (please specify) _____

5. What sport(s) do you regularly (i.e., at least once a week) participate in? (you can choose more than one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics	<input type="checkbox"/> Diving	<input type="checkbox"/> Netball
<input type="checkbox"/> Badminton	<input type="checkbox"/> Football	<input type="checkbox"/> Rowing
<input type="checkbox"/> Basketball	<input type="checkbox"/> Golf	<input type="checkbox"/> Rugby
<input type="checkbox"/> Boxing	<input type="checkbox"/> Gymnastics	<input type="checkbox"/> Sailing
<input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing	<input type="checkbox"/> Hockey	<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming
<input type="checkbox"/> Cricket	<input type="checkbox"/> Judo	<input type="checkbox"/> Table tennis
<input type="checkbox"/> Cycling (track, road, mountain bike)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kayaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Tennis
<input type="checkbox"/> Dance	<input type="checkbox"/> Martial arts	<input type="checkbox"/> Triathlon

Other (please specify) _____

6. How many years have you been regularly (e.g., at least most weeks) playing sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 years
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Less than a year (please tell us how many months) _____

7. How many days a week do you take part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
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8. What level(s) are you currently competing at in sport? (you can select more than one)

<input type="checkbox"/> I do not compete (recreational / non-competitive)	<input type="checkbox"/> Local club level	<input type="checkbox"/> County level	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional level	<input type="checkbox"/> National level	<input type="checkbox"/> International level
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Other e.g., academy level football/rugby etc (please write the level) _____

9. How often do you compete in your sport(s)? (select the one closest in frequency)

<input type="checkbox"/> I do not compete	<input type="checkbox"/> Every week	<input type="checkbox"/> Every two weeks	<input type="checkbox"/> Every month	<input type="checkbox"/> Every few months	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 times per year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 times per year
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Sport Enjoyment

Below you will be asked questions about whether you enjoy playing sport. These questions relate to the year (i.e., 12 months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (e.g., between March 2019 - March 2020). Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer.

10. In the year before covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 – March 2020):

	not at all	a little	sort of	pretty much	very much
Did you enjoy playing sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were you happy playing sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you have fun playing sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you like playing sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. What do you like about playing sport?

12. What do you dislike about playing sport?

Negative Sport Experiences

In this section you will be asked about whether you have ever had certain negative experiences when playing sport in the year (i.e., 12 months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., between March 2019 - March 2020). Please tick the appropriate answer.

Emotional abuse is when someone you know (like a teacher, coach, parent) deliberately behaves in a way that upsets someone or makes them feel bad, and they do this more than once. This includes trying to scare, humiliate (put down), isolate, or ignore someone on purpose.

13. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 – March 2020), did you ever see a child being emotional abused when taking part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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14. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020), were you ever emotionally abused when taking part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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Bullying is when a child or group of children hurt another child on purpose and this happens more than once. The aim is to upset, hurt, harm, or scare another child on purpose

Bullying can happen online or in person and is carried out by children who feel more powerful than others. It can hurt a child physically or mentally. Examples of bullying include name calling, making threats, spreading rumours/lies about someone, hitting, pushing, tripping someone, or leaving someone out of activities on purpose.

15. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020), did you ever see a child being bullied when taking part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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16. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020), were you ever bullied when taking part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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Negative Sport Experiences

On the page below you will be asked about specific behaviours you have seen other children experience in sport in the year (i.e., 12 months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., 12 months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., between March 2019 - March 2020).

We know that answering some of these questions may be uncomfortable or upsetting for you. It would be helpful to us if you are able to answer them but if you feel unable to do so, please move on to the next question.

17. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020), did you ever see **another child** experience any of the following behaviours when taking part in sport? Please tick the appropriate answer (you can select more than one).

	Never	Once or Twice	A few times	Regularly/often (most training sessions, matches/competitions)
Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have someone break or throw an object at or near them on purpose out of anger or frustration (e.g., smashed equipment out of anger when standing near them/team mates)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically hurt by someone on purpose when it is not part of the sport such as a rough tackle or sparring (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left out of an activity by others on purpose (e.g., not had ball passed to them, ignored or excluded from an activity on purpose)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to as part of an introduction into a new team (e.g., forced to drink alcohol, or do something embarrassing, risky, dangerous, or illegal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On the previous page you were asked about behaviours you have seen other children experience in sport. Now, we want to know who did these things. For example, if you have seen a child being teased or made fun of, was this done by a teammate, a parent, a coach or someone else?

If you indicated on the previous page that you saw **another child** experience any of the behaviours below in sport in the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020). Who did these things? (you can select more than one).

	Another child/ teammate did this	A parent did this	A coach did this	Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)
Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have someone break or throw an object at or near them on purpose out of anger or frustration (e.g., smashed equipment out of anger when standing near them/team mates)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically hurt by someone on purpose when it is not part of the sport such as a rough tackle or sparring (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left out of an activity by others on purpose (e.g., not had ball passed to them, ignored or excluded from an activity on purpose)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to as part of an introduction into a new team (e.g., forced to drink alcohol, or do something embarrassing, risky, dangerous, or illegal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On this page you will be asked about specific behaviours **you** have experienced in sport in the year (i.e., 12months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., between March 2019 - March 2020).

18. In the year (i.e., 12 months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., between March 2019 - March 2020). Did **you** ever experience any of the following behaviours when taking part in sport? Please tick the appropriate answer (you can select more than one).

	Never	Once or Twice	A few times	Regularly/often (most training sessions, matches/competitions)
Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how you looked)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip spread about you online or in person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making you feel intimidated/frightened)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had someone break or throw an object at or near you on purpose out of anger or frustration (e.g., smashed equipment out of anger when standing near you/team mates)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something you have done, or how you have played or performed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been repeatedly criticised for how you played/performed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been repeatedly criticised for how you looked or because of your weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel that you are only important or valuable if you are successful in sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been physically hurt by someone on purpose when it is not part of the sport such as a rough tackle or sparring (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been left out of an activity by others on purpose (e.g., not had ball passed to you, ignored or excluded from an activity on purpose)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been forced to take part in an activity you did not want to as part of an introduction into a new team (e.g., forced to drink alcohol, or do something embarrassing, risky, dangerous, or illegal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On the previous page you were asked about behaviours **you** had experienced in sport. Now, on this page, we want to know who did these things. For example, if you have been teased or made fun of, was this done by a teammate, a parent, a coach or someone else?

If you indicated on the page above that **you had** experienced any of the behaviours below in sport in the year prior to covid-19 (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020). Who did these things? Please tick the appropriate answer (you can select more than one).

	Another child/ teammate did this	A parent did this	A coach did this	Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)
Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how you looked)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip spread about you online or in person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making you feel intimidated/frightened)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had someone break or throw an object at or near you on purpose out of anger or frustration (e.g., smashed equipment out of anger when standing near you/team mates)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something you have done, or how you have played or performed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been repeatedly criticised for how you played/performed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been repeatedly criticised for how you looked or because of your weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel that you are only important or valuable if you are successful in sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been physically hurt by someone on purpose when it is not part of the sport such as a rough tackle or sparring (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been left out of an activity by others on purpose (e.g., not had ball passed to you, ignored or excluded from an activity on purpose)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been forced to take part in an activity you did not want to as part of an introduction into a new team (e.g., forced to drink alcohol, or do something embarrassing, risky, dangerous, or illegal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Keeping children safe in sport

Below you will be asked questions about safeguarding and keeping children safe in sport. Please tick the appropriate answer or complete the answer.

19. Have you been told anything about how to keep safe in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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20. Have you been given any information about keeping safe in sport? (e.g., posters, messages, leaflets, videos)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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21. If you were worried about how someone behaved towards **another child** in sport, would you tell someone?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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22. If you were worried about how someone behaved towards **you** in sport, would you tell someone?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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23. If you were worried about someone's behaviour towards **another child** in sport and wanted to tell someone, who would you tell? (you can choose more than one person)

<input type="checkbox"/> Another child/team mate	<input type="checkbox"/> A physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist (e.g., psychologist, strength and conditioning trainer)
<input type="checkbox"/> Your parent/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> Your sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead
<input type="checkbox"/> Someone else's parent/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know who I would tell
<input type="checkbox"/> Your coach	<input type="checkbox"/> I would not tell anyone
<input type="checkbox"/> A different coach (i.e., a coach who was not your coach)	

Other (please specify) _____

24. If you were worried about someone's behaviour towards **you** in sport and wanted to tell someone, who would you tell? (you can choose more than one person)

<input type="checkbox"/> Another child/team mate	<input type="checkbox"/> A physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist (e.g., psychologist, strength and conditioning trainer)
<input type="checkbox"/> Your parent/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> Your sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead
<input type="checkbox"/> Someone else's parent/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know who I would tell
<input type="checkbox"/> Your coach	<input type="checkbox"/> I would not tell anyone
<input type="checkbox"/> A different coach (i.e., a coach who was not your coach)	

Other (please specify) _____

25. What might stop you from telling someone about a behaviour that you saw happen to someone else in sport that was worrying you?

26. What might stop you from telling someone about a behaviour that you experienced in sport that was worrying you?

27. If you wanted information on how to stay safe when taking part in sport, who would you ask?

28. What things would be helpful if you wanted or needed to know more about keeping safe in sport?

Appendix D: Example Parent Survey for Study 1

Information sheet

You have been invited to take part in a survey as part of a PhD research project conducted by Swansea University and the Child Protection in Sport Unit. We are interested in finding out your perception of your child's enjoyment in sport and what you understand about keeping safe in sport. We also want to find out if you have seen anybody cause harm to anyone in your child's sport.

You have been chosen to take part in the study because you are a parent (including step-parent or guardian) of a child involved in youth sport in Wales, who is aged between 13 and 18 years old. We believe that the information you share with us might help towards making sport safer for children in Wales.

This survey includes a number of short questions about your child's participation in sport, such as enjoyment, harm and keeping safe in sport. **It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.**

We know that answering difficult questions could make you feel uncomfortable. If you do not wish to answer any questions, you do not have to, and you can choose to stop at any time. If any questions make you feel uncomfortable or worried, there is information on each page of the survey about Samaritans. You can contact Samaritans if you wish to talk to them about anything private.

We will not ask for your name on the survey or the names of anyone else. All information you provide in this study will be kept private. Information from the study will be used in research publications and reports, but no one will know you took part.

If you have any questions or want further information on the study, then please contact Maita via email: [REDACTED]

Please keep this page for your records

Parental consent

Before you begin the survey please read the questions below and tick (✓) the boxes to show that you are happy to take part in the study.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information about this study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what I will be doing if I take part.
I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without my medical care, legal rights or my child's sport participation being affected.

I understand that sections of information obtained may be looked at by responsible individuals from Swansea University. I give permission for these individuals to have access to these records.

I agree to take part in the above study and for the information I provide to be used in research publications (including but not limited to presentations, reports, and scientific journal articles).

Demographic Information

On this page you will be asked questions about you and your involvement in sport.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box underneath or next to the appropriate answer.

1. How old is your child?

<input type="checkbox"/> 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 years old
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2. Where does your child mostly take part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> East Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> North Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> South Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> West Wales
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Prefer to self-describe as (please specify) _____

3. Which gender do you identify as?

<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonbinary	<input type="checkbox"/> Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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Prefer to self-describe as (please specify) _____

4. Which gender does your child identify as?

<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonbinary	<input type="checkbox"/> Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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5. To which of the following ethnic groups does your child belong? (choose one option that best describes your child's ethnic group or background)

<input type="checkbox"/> White (e.g., English / Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish / British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish traveller, any other White background)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups (e.g., White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background)
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian British (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, any other Asian background)	<input type="checkbox"/> Black African/Caribbean/Black British (e.g., African, Caribbean, any other Black / African / Caribbean background)
<input type="checkbox"/> Arab	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

Other ethnic group (please specify) _____

6. What sport(s) does your child regularly (i.e., at least once a week) participate in? (you can choose more than one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics	<input type="checkbox"/> Diving	<input type="checkbox"/> Netball
<input type="checkbox"/> Badminton	<input type="checkbox"/> Football	<input type="checkbox"/> Rowing
<input type="checkbox"/> Basketball	<input type="checkbox"/> Golf	<input type="checkbox"/> Rugby
<input type="checkbox"/> Boxing	<input type="checkbox"/> Gymnastics	<input type="checkbox"/> Sailing
<input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing	<input type="checkbox"/> Hockey	<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming
<input type="checkbox"/> Cricket	<input type="checkbox"/> Judo	<input type="checkbox"/> Table tennis
<input type="checkbox"/> Cycling (track, road, mountain bike)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kayaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Tennis
<input type="checkbox"/> Dance	<input type="checkbox"/> Martial arts	<input type="checkbox"/> Triathlon

Other (please specify) _____

7. How many years has your child been regularly (e.g., at least most weeks) playing sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 years
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Less than a year (please tell us how many months)_____

8. How many days a week does your child take part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
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9. What level(s) is your child currently competing in sport? (you can select more than one)

<input type="checkbox"/> (recreational / non-competitive)	<input type="checkbox"/> Local club level	<input type="checkbox"/> County level	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional level	<input type="checkbox"/> National level	<input type="checkbox"/> International level
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Other e.g., academy level football/rugby etc (please write the level)_____

10. How often does your child compete in sport(s)? (select the one closest in frequency)

<input type="checkbox"/> They do not compete	<input type="checkbox"/> Every week	<input type="checkbox"/> Every two weeks	<input type="checkbox"/> Every month	<input type="checkbox"/> Every few months	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 times per year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 times per year
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Sport Enjoyment

Below you will be asked questions about your perception of your child's enjoyment in sport. These questions relate to the year (i.e., 12 months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., between March 2019 - March 2020). Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer.

11. In the year before covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020):

	not at all	a little	sort of	pretty much	very much
Do you think your child enjoyed playing sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you think your child was happy playing sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you think your child had fun playing sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you think your child liked playing sport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. What do you think your child likes about playing sport?

13. What you think your child dislikes about playing sport?

Negative Sport Experiences

In this section you will be asked about whether you have ever seen certain negative experiences in your child's sport in the year (i.e., 12 months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (e.g., between March 2019 - March 2020). Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer.

Emotional abuse is when someone you know (like a teacher, coach, parent) deliberately behaves in a way that upsets someone or makes them feel bad, and they do this more than once. This includes trying to scare, humiliate (put down), isolate, or ignore someone on purpose.

14. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020), did you ever see a child being emotional abused when taking part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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Bullying is when a child or group of children hurt another child on purpose and this happens more than once. The aim is to upset, hurt, harm, or scare another child on purpose

Bullying can happen online or in person and is carried out by children who feel more powerful than others. It can hurt a child physically or mentally. Examples of bullying include name calling, making threats, spreading rumours/lies about someone, hitting, pushing, tripping someone, or leaving someone out of activities on purpose.

15. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020), did you ever see a child being bullied when taking part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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Negative Sport Experiences

On the page below you will be asked about specific behaviours you have seen in your child's sport in the year (i.e., 12 months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., between March 2019 - March 2020).

We know that answering some of these questions may be uncomfortable or upsetting for you. It would be helpful to us if you are able to answer them but if you feel unable to do so, please move on to the next question.

16. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020), did you ever see a child experience any of the following behaviours when taking part in sport? Please tick the appropriate answer (you can select more than one).

	Never	Once or Twice	A few times	Regularly/often (most training sessions, matches/competitions)
Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have someone break or throw an object at or near them on purpose out of anger or frustration (e.g., smashed equipment out of anger when standing near them/team mates)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically hurt by someone on purpose when it is not part of the sport such as a rough tackle or sparring (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left out of an activity by others on purpose (e.g., not had ball passed to them, ignored or excluded from an activity on purpose)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to as part of an introduction into a new team (e.g., forced to drink alcohol, or do something embarrassing, risky, dangerous, or illegal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On the previous page you were asked about behaviours you have seen in your child's sport. Now, we want to know who did these things. For example, if you have seen a child being teased or made fun of, was this done by another child, a parent, a coach or someone else?

If you indicated on the previous page that you had seen a child experience any of the behaviours below in sport in the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020). Who did these things? (you can select more than one).

	Another child/ teammate did this	A parent did this	A coach did this	Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)
Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have someone break or throw an object at or near them on purpose out of anger or frustration (e.g., smashed equipment out of anger when standing near them/team mates)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically hurt by someone on purpose when it is not part of the sport such as a rough tackle or sparring (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left out of an activity by others on purpose (e.g., not had ball passed to them, ignored or excluded from an activity on purpose)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to as part of an introduction into a new team (e.g., forced to drink alcohol, or do something embarrassing, risky, dangerous, or illegal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Keeping children safe in sport

Below you will be asked questions about safeguarding and keeping children safe in sport. Please tick the appropriate answer or complete the answer.

17. Have you been told anything about how to keep safe in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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18. Have you been given any information about keeping safe in sport? (e.g., posters, messages, leaflets, videos)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

19. If you were worried about how someone behaved towards a child in sport, would you tell someone?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

20. If you were worried about someone's behaviour towards a child in sport and wanted to tell someone, who would you tell? (you can choose more than one person)

<input type="checkbox"/> Another child/team mate	<input type="checkbox"/> A physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist (e.g., psychologist, strength and conditioning trainer)
<input type="checkbox"/> The child's parent/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> Your sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead
<input type="checkbox"/> Another parent/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know who I would tell
<input type="checkbox"/> Your child's coach	<input type="checkbox"/> I would not tell anyone
<input type="checkbox"/> A different coach (i.e., a coach who was not your child's coach)	

Other (please specify) _____

21. What might stop you from telling someone about a behaviour that you saw happen to someone else in your child's sport that was worrying you?

22. If you wanted information on keeping your child safe in sport, who would you ask?

21. What things would be helpful if you wanted or needed to know more about keeping your child safe in sport?

Appendix E: Example Coach Survey for Study 1

Information sheet

You have been invited to take part in a survey as part of a PhD research project conducted by Swansea University and the Child Protection in Sport Unit. We are interested in finding out your perception of your child's enjoyment in sport and what you understand about keeping safe in sport. We also want to find out if you have seen anybody cause harm to anyone in your child's sport.

You have been chosen to take part in the study because you are a coach of a child involved in youth sport in Wales, who is aged between 13 and 18 years old. We believe that the information you share with us might help towards making sport safer for children in Wales.

This survey includes a number of short questions about your child's participation in sport, such as enjoyment, harm and keeping safe in sport. **It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.**

We know that answering difficult questions could make you feel uncomfortable. If you do not wish to answer any questions, you do not have to, and you can choose to stop at any time. If any questions make you feel uncomfortable or worried, there is information on each page of the survey about Samaritans. You can contact Samaritans if you wish to talk to them about anything private.

We will not ask for your name on the survey or the names of anyone else. All information you provide in this study will be kept private. Information from the study will be used in research publications and reports, but no one will know you took part.

If you have any questions or want further information on the study, then please contact Maita via email: [REDACTED].

Please keep this page for your records

Coach consent

Before you begin the survey please read the questions below and tick (✓) the boxes to show that you are happy to take part in the study.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information about this study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what I will be doing if I take part.
I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without my medical care, legal rights or my child's sport participation being affected.

I understand that sections of information obtained may be looked at by responsible individuals from Swansea University. I give permission for these individuals to have access to these records.

I agree to take part in the above study and for the information I provide to be used in research publications (including but not limited to presentations, reports, and scientific journal articles).

Demographic Information

On this page you will be asked questions about you and your involvement in sport.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box underneath or next to the appropriate answer.

1. Where do you predominantly coach?

<input type="checkbox"/> East Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> North Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> South Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> West Wales
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Prefer to self-describe as (please specify) _____

2. What age are the children you most regularly coach?

<input type="checkbox"/> 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 years old
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2. Which gender do you identify as?

<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonbinary	<input type="checkbox"/> Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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Prefer to self-describe as (please specify) _____

3. Which gender are the children you most regularly coach?

<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonbinary	<input type="checkbox"/> Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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4. How many days a week do you coach?

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
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5. Which sport(s) do you predominantly coach? (you can choose more than one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics	<input type="checkbox"/> Diving	<input type="checkbox"/> Netball
<input type="checkbox"/> Badminton	<input type="checkbox"/> Football	<input type="checkbox"/> Rowing
<input type="checkbox"/> Basketball	<input type="checkbox"/> Golf	<input type="checkbox"/> Rugby
<input type="checkbox"/> Boxing	<input type="checkbox"/> Gymnastics	<input type="checkbox"/> Sailing
<input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing	<input type="checkbox"/> Hockey	<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming
<input type="checkbox"/> Cricket	<input type="checkbox"/> Judo	<input type="checkbox"/> Table tennis
<input type="checkbox"/> Cycling (track, road, mountain bike)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kayaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Tennis
<input type="checkbox"/> Dance	<input type="checkbox"/> Martial arts	<input type="checkbox"/> Triathlon

Other (please specify) _____

6. How many years have you been regularly coaching (e.g., at least most weeks) playing sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 years
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Less than a year (please tell us how many months) _____

7. How many days a week do you coach?

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
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8. At what level(s) are you coaching? (you can select more than one)

<input type="checkbox"/> (recreational / non-competitive)	<input type="checkbox"/> Local club level	<input type="checkbox"/> County level	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional level	<input type="checkbox"/> National level	<input type="checkbox"/> International level
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Other e.g., academy level football/rugby etc (please write the level) _____

9. How often do the children you most regularly (e.g., most weeks) coach compete in sport(s)? (select the one closest in frequency)

<input type="checkbox"/> They do not compete	<input type="checkbox"/> Every week	<input type="checkbox"/> Every two weeks	<input type="checkbox"/> Every month	<input type="checkbox"/> Every few months	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 times per year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 times per year
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Negative Sport Experiences

In this section you will be asked about whether you have ever seen certain negative experiences in your sport in the year (i.e., 12 months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (e.g., between March 2019 - March 2020). Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer.

Emotional abuse is when someone you know (like a teacher, coach, parent) deliberately behaves in a way that upsets someone or makes them feel bad, and they do this more than once. This includes trying to scare, humiliate (put down), isolate, or ignore someone on purpose.

10. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020), did you ever see a child being emotional abused when taking part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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Bullying is when a child or group of children hurt another child on purpose and this happens more than once. The aim is to upset, hurt, harm, or scare another child on purpose

Bullying can happen online or in person and is carried out by children who feel more powerful than others. It can hurt a child physically or mentally. Examples of bullying include name calling, making threats, spreading rumours/lies about someone, hitting, pushing, tripping someone, or leaving someone out of activities on purpose.

11. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020), did you ever see a child being bullied when taking part in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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Negative Sport Experiences

On the page below you will be asked about specific behaviours you have seen in your sport in the year (i.e., 12 months) prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., between March 2019 - March 2020).

We know that answering some of these questions may be uncomfortable or upsetting for you. It would be helpful to us if you are able to answer them but if you feel unable to do so, please move on to the next question.

12. In the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020), did you ever see a child experience any of the following behaviours when taking part in sport? Please tick the appropriate answer (you can select more than one).

	Never	Once or Twice	A few times	Regularly/often (most training sessions, matches/competitions)
Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have someone break or throw an object at or near them on purpose out of anger or frustration (e.g., smashed equipment out of anger when standing near them/team mates)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically hurt by someone on purpose when it is not part of the sport such as a rough tackle or sparring (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left out of an activity by others on purpose (e.g., not had ball passed to them, ignored or excluded from an activity on purpose)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to as part of an introduction into a new team (e.g., forced to drink alcohol, or do something embarrassing, risky, dangerous, or illegal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On the previous page you were asked about behaviours you have seen in your sport. Now, we want to know who did these things. For example, if you have seen a child being teased or made fun of, was this done by another child, a parent, a coach or someone else?

If you indicated on the previous page that you had seen a child experience any of the behaviours below in sport in the year prior to covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020). Who did these things? (you can select more than one).

	Another child/ teammate did this	A parent did this	A coach did this	Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)
Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have someone break or throw an object at or near them on purpose out of anger or frustration (e.g., smashed equipment out of anger when standing near them/team mates)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically hurt by someone on purpose when it is not part of the sport such as a rough tackle or sparring (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left out of an activity by others on purpose (e.g., not had ball passed to them, ignored or excluded from an activity on purpose)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to as part of an introduction into a new team (e.g., forced to drink alcohol, or do something embarrassing, risky, dangerous, or illegal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Keeping children safe in sport

Below you will be asked questions about safeguarding and keeping children safe in sport. Please tick the appropriate answer or complete the answer.

13. Have you been told anything about how to keep safe in sport?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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14. Have you been given any information about keeping safe in sport? (e.g., posters, messages, leaflets, videos)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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15. If you were worried about how someone behaved towards a child in sport, would you tell someone?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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16. If you were worried about someone's behaviour towards a child in sport and wanted to tell someone, who would you tell? (you can choose more than one person)

<input type="checkbox"/> Another child/team mate	<input type="checkbox"/> A physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist (e.g., psychologist, strength and conditioning trainer)
<input type="checkbox"/> The child's parent/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> Your sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead
<input type="checkbox"/> Another parent/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know who I would tell
<input type="checkbox"/> Your child's coach	<input type="checkbox"/> I would not tell anyone
<input type="checkbox"/> A different coach (i.e., a coach who was not your child's coach)	

Other (please specify) _____

16. What might stop you from telling someone about a behaviour that you saw happen to someone else in your child's sport that was worrying you?

17. If you wanted information on keeping your child safe in sport, who would you ask?

18. What things would be helpful if you wanted or needed to know more about keeping your child safe in sport?

Appendix F: Example Interview Guides for Study 1: Phase 2

Young Person Interview Guide	
Introductory Questions	<p>Tell me a bit about your experience in sport so far.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What sport do you take part in? (i.e., sport, competitive level, training, and competition frequency) - When did you start taking part in sport? - What is it you enjoy most about your sport? - What do you find hard or challenging about taking part in sport?
Main Questions	<p>In your own words, what does bullying and emotional abuse mean to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Types of behaviours? - What impact does it have? <p>Have you been given any information about bullying, emotional abuse, or keeping safe (safeguarding) in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If so, what type of information have you been given? - Who gave you this information? - How was this information given to you? - Did you find the information useful, if so, what was it you found useful about it? <p>Based on findings from phase one What do you think enables these behaviours to occur in sport?</p> <p>Why do you think some people fail to recognise certain behaviours as bullying or emotional abuse?</p> <p>What do you think would prevent or stop such behaviours from happening in sport?</p> <p>If you were worried about how someone behaved towards another child or yourself in sport, would you tell someone?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What would make you feel comfortable to tell this person? - What would you want/expect them to do? <p>Would anything prevent you from intervening or telling someone about someone's behaviour towards another child or yourself in sport?</p> <p>What things would be helpful if you wanted or needed to know more about keeping safe in sport?</p>
Closing questions	<p>Overall, what can be done to make sure that young people and others know more about bullying, emotional abuse, and keeping safe in sport?</p>

Parent Interview Guide	
Introductory Questions	<p>Tell me a bit about yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What sport does your child take part in? (i.e., sport, competitive level, training, and competition frequency) - When did your child start taking part in sport? - What's it like having a child involved in sport? - What are the challenges and demands associated with being a sport parent?
Main Questions	<p>In your own words, what does bullying and emotional abuse mean to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Types of behaviours? - What impact does it have? <p>Have you been given any information about bullying, emotional abuse, or keeping safe (safeguarding) in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If so, what type of information have you been given? - Who gave you this information? - How was this information given to you? - Did you find the information useful, if so, what was it you found useful about it? <p>Based on findings from phase one What do you think enables these behaviours to occur in sport?</p> <p>Why do you think some people fail to recognise certain behaviours as bullying or emotional abuse?</p> <p>What do you think would prevent or stop such behaviours from happening in sport?</p> <p>If you were worried about how someone behaved towards another child or your child in sport, would you tell someone?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What would make you feel comfortable to tell this person? - What would you want/expect them to do? <p>Would anything prevent you from intervening or telling someone about someone's behaviour towards another child or your child in sport?</p> <p>What things would be helpful if you wanted or needed to know more about keeping safe in sport?</p>
Closing questions	<p>Overall, what can be done to make sure that young people and others know more about bullying, emotional abuse, and keeping safe in sport?</p> <p>Anything else to add?</p>

Coach Interview Guide	
Introductory Questions	<p>Tell me a bit about your role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How long have you been coaching for? - What age groups/gender/competitive levels do you coach? - What does a typical week in your role look like? (i.e., competitive level, training, competition frequency, and responsibilities) - What's it like being a coach? - What are the challenges and demands associated with coaching in your sport?
Main Questions	<p>In your own words, what does bullying and emotional abuse mean to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Types of behaviours? - What impact does it have? <p>Have you been given any information about bullying, emotional abuse, or keeping safe (safeguarding) in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If so, what type of information have you been given? - Who gave you this information? - How was this information given to you? - Did you find the information useful, if so, what was it you found useful about it? <p>Based on findings from phase one What do you think enables these behaviours to occur in sport?</p> <p>Why do you think some people fail to recognise certain behaviours as bullying or emotional abuse?</p> <p>What do you think would prevent or stop such behaviours from happening in sport?</p> <p>If you were worried about how someone behaved towards another child or your child in sport, would you tell someone?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What would make you feel comfortable to tell this person? - What would you want/expect them to do? <p>Would anything prevent you from intervening or telling someone about someone's behaviour towards another child or your child in sport?</p> <p>What things would be helpful if you wanted or needed to know more about keeping safe in sport?</p>
Closing questions	<p>Overall, what can be done to make sure that young people and others know more about bullying, emotional abuse, and keeping safe in sport?</p> <p>Anything else to add?</p>

Appendix G: Example Interview Guides for Study 2

Safeguarding Lead Officer Interview Guide (Version 1)	
(26th August 2020)	
Introductory Questions	<p>Tell me a bit about your role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your current role in sport? - What are your responsibilities? - How long have you been working in your role? - What does a typical week in your role look like? - How long have you been in your role for?
Main Questions	<p>When you think of safety and enjoyment in sport what comes to mind?</p> <p>What does safety and enjoyment mean to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does a safe and enjoyable sporting experience mean to you? - What factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport? - What about these factors influence safety and enjoyment? <p>What do you think can be done to enhance children’s enjoyment and safety in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can be done? - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment? - Which individuals do you think can help enhance safety and enjoyment in sport? - What support can be given to you or others to help you enhance children’s enjoyment in sport and why? - What can you do in your role to make sure young people have safe and enjoyable sport experiences? <p>What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment? - What can be done to prevent this? <p>What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is it about these factors that are important? - What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?
Closing questions	<p>Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you’d like to mention?</p> <p>Any other questions or comments? Thank you for your time today!</p>

Safeguarding Lead Officer Interview guide (Version 2) (3rd September 2021)	
Introductory Questions	<p>Tell me a bit about your role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your current role in sport? - What are your responsibilities? - How long have you been working in your role? - What does a typical week in your role look like? - How long have you been in your role for?
<p>Main Questions</p> <p>Ask how these factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</p>	<p>As mentioned, I wanted to talk to you about what I've found so far and see how it does or doesn't match with your perceptions and experiences.</p> <p>Coach competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you think coaches can influence safety and enjoyment in sport? - What role do you think their expertise or competence plays in enhancing safety and enjoyment in sport? - How do you think coaches can negatively influence safety and enjoyment? <p>Developmentally appropriate training sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important do you think it is that coaches ensure that training sessions are developmentally appropriate? - What impact do you think this has on safety and enjoyment in sport? (i.e., positive and negative) - How do you think coaches can ensure that all participants are safe and enjoy themselves during activities? <p>Designated welfare officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important is a welfare officer in relation to safety and enjoyment? - What role do they play in enhancing safety and enjoyment? - How do you think welfare officers can help enhance safety and enjoyment? <p>What do you think can be done to enhance children's enjoyment and safety in sport?</p> <p>What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment? - What can be done to prevent this? <p>What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is it about these factors that are important? - What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?
Closing Questions	<p>Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you'd like to mention?</p> <p>Any other questions or comments? Thank you for your time today!</p>

Young Person Interview Guide (Version 1) (27th October 2020)	
Introductory Questions	<p>Tell me a bit about your experience in sport so far.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What sport do you take part in? (i.e., sport, competitive level, training, and competition frequency) - When did you start taking part in sport? - What is it you enjoy most about your sport? - What do you find hard or challenging about taking part in sport?
Main Questions Ask how these factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?	<p>When you think of safety and enjoyment in sport what comes to mind?</p> <p>What does safety and enjoyment mean to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does a safe and enjoyable sporting experience mean to you? - What things help you feel safe and enjoy your sport? - What about these factors help you feel safe and enjoy your sport more? - <p>As mentioned, I wanted to talk to you about what I've found so far and see how it does or doesn't match with your thoughts and experiences.</p> <p>Positive peer relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important are friends in your overall sporting experience? - Does having friends help you feel safe and enjoy sport? - What do your friends do to help you feel safe and enjoy your sport more? - Is there anything your friends can do that would make you not feel safe and enjoy your sport? <p>Welcoming environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you talk a bit about your sport club? - How does it feel to be part of your club? (i.e., positives and negatives) - How do the people make you feel at your club? - Do the people in your club help you feel safe and enjoy your sport? - What do they do to enhance your safety and enjoyment? - What things could they do to not make you feel safe and enjoy your sport? - Is it important that people are welcoming? - What things can they do to make you feel welcome? <p>What do you think can be done to help you feel safe and enjoy your sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do these factors influence your safety and enjoyment? - Which individuals do you think can help enhance safety and enjoyment in sport? <p>What things would make you not feel safe and enjoy your sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What about these things would make you not feel safe and prevent you from enjoying your sport? - What can be done to prevent this? <p>What are the most important things that can be done to help you feel more safe and enjoy your sport more?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is it about these factors that are important? - What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?
Closing questions	<p>Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you'd like to mention?</p> <p>Any other questions or comments?</p> <p>Thank you for your time today!</p>

Young Person Interview Guide (Version 2) (16th September 2021)	
Introductory Questions	<p>Tell me a bit about your experience in sport so far.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What sport do you take part in? (i.e., sport, competitive level, training, and competition frequency) - When did you start taking part in sport? - What is it you enjoy most about your sport? - What do you find hard or challenging about taking part in sport?
Main Questions Ask how these factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?	<p>When you think of safety and enjoyment in sport what comes to mind?</p> <p>What does safety and enjoyment mean to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does a safe and enjoyable sporting experience mean to you? - What factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport? - What about these factors influence safety and enjoyment? <p>As mentioned, I wanted to talk to you about what I've found so far and see how it does or doesn't match with your thoughts and experiences.</p> <p>Parental involvement</p> <p>What do you like about your parent's involvement in your sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do your parents do to help you in your sport? - Is there anything you don't like or would like them to do differently? - How important are parents when it comes to your safety and enjoyment in sport? - Can your parents help you feel safe and enjoy your sport more? - What things can they do to make you feel safe and enjoy your sport more? - Is there anything parents do that could make you not feel safe and prevent you from enjoying your sport? <p>What do you think can be done to enhance children's enjoyment and safety in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can be done? - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment? - Which individuals do you think can help enhance safety and enjoyment in sport? - What support can be given to you or others to help you enhance children's enjoyment in sport and why? - What can you do in your role to make sure young people have safe and enjoyable sport experiences? <p>What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment? - What can be done to prevent this? <p>What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is it about these factors that are important? - What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?
Closing questions	<p>Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you'd like to mention?</p> <p>Any other questions or comments?</p> <p>Thank you for your time today!</p>

Parent Interview Guide (Version 1) (2nd December 2020)	
Introductory Questions	<p>Tell me a bit about yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What sport does your child take part in? (i.e., sport, competitive level, training, and competition frequency) - When did your child start taking part in sport? - What's it like having a child involved in sport? - What are the challenges and demands associated with being a sport parent?
<p>Main Questions</p> <p>Ask how these factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</p>	<p>When you think of safety and enjoyment in sport what comes to mind?</p> <p>What does safety and enjoyment mean to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does a safe and enjoyable sporting experience mean to you? - What factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport? - What about these factors influence safety and enjoyment? <p>What do you think can be done to enhance children's enjoyment and safety in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can be done? - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment? - Which individuals do you think can help enhance safety and enjoyment in sport? - What support can be given to you or others to help you enhance children's enjoyment in sport and why? - What can you do as a parent to make sure young people have safe and enjoyable sport experiences? <p>What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment? - What can be done to prevent this? <p>What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is it about these factors that are important? - What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?
Closing questions	<p>Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you'd like to mention?</p> <p>Any other questions or comments?</p> <p>Thank you for your time today!</p>

Parent Interview Guide (Version 2) (16th September 2021)	
Introductory Questions	<p>Tell me a bit about yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What sport does your child take part in? (i.e., sport, competitive level, training, and competition frequency) - When did your child start taking part in sport? - What's it like having a child involved in sport? - What are the challenges and demands associated with being a sport parent?
<p>Main Questions</p> <p>Ask how these factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</p>	<p>When you think of safety and enjoyment in sport what comes to mind?</p> <p>What does safety and enjoyment mean to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does a safe and enjoyable sporting experience mean to you? - What factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport? - What about these factors influence safety and enjoyment? <p>Coach competence</p> <p>What are your expectations in your child's coach?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important is for the coach to be good at their job? - What are your thoughts in relation to a coaches expertise? - What impact do you think a coaches expertise has on children's sporting experience? - Do you think a coaches expertise can impact your childs safety and enjoyment in sport? <p>What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment? - What can be done to prevent this? <p>What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is it about these factors that are important? - What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?
Closing questions	<p>Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you'd like to mention?</p> <p>Any other questions or comments?</p> <p>Thank you for your time today!</p>

Coaches Interview Guide (Version 1) (30th January 2021)	
Introductory Questions	<p>Tell me a bit about your role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How long have you been coaching for? - What age groups/gender/competitive levels do you coach? - What does a typical week in your role look like? (i.e., competitive level, training, competition frequency, and responsibilities) - What are the challenges and demands associated with role?
<p>Main Questions</p> <p>Ask how these factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</p>	<p>Parental involvement What are your thoughts on parental involvement in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What role do you think parents play young people’s sporting experiences? - What things do you think parents can do to enhance young people’s experiences? - What things do you think parents can do to enhance enjoyment and safety? - How can parents negatively impact enjoyment and safety? - What impact does this have on young people and others? <p>Open communication How important is open communication with individuals in your sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who do you think is responsible for ensuring effective open communication? - Who should open communication exist between in sport? - What impact does communication have on these individuals? - What impact does communication have on safety and enjoyment? - Have you had any instances when open communication has been lacking if so, what impact did that have? - How can open communication be optimised to enhance safety and enjoyment? <p>What do you think can be done to enhance children’s enjoyment and safety in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can be done? - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment? - Which individuals do you think can help enhance safety and enjoyment in sport? - What support can be given to you or others to help you enhance children’s enjoyment in sport and why? - What can you do in your role to make sure young people have safe and enjoyable sport experiences? <p>What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment? - What can be done to prevent this? <p>What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is it about these factors that are important? - What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?
Closing questions	<p>Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you’d like to mention?</p> <p>Any other questions or comments?</p> <p>Thank you for your time today!</p>

Appendix H: Example Interview Guides for Study 3

Young player Interview guide (Version 1)	
Introductory Questions	<p>What is it like being involved in tennis?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When did you start playing? - What level do you play at - How often do you compete? <p>What do you enjoy or like about tennis?</p> <p>What do you find hard or challenging about tennis?</p>
Main Questions	<p>What were your thoughts on the written story?</p> <p>Can you explain how you continued the story?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What were your initial thoughts about the story? - What are your thoughts about the story now you have completed the workshop? - What things would you change about your story now that you have attended the workshop? - <p>How did you find the workshop?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was good about the workshop / not so good? <p>What was the most interesting thing you learned from the workshop?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was interesting about this? <p>Do you think workshops are helpful? If so, what did you find helpful, or not?</p> <p>Was there anything you did not know before taking part in the workshop?</p> <p>Do you think the workshops is a good way of giving information about enjoyment and safety in sport?</p> <p>What would you change about the workshop/ this way of learning if anything?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you feel this way?
Closing Questions	<p>What things do you think can be done to help young people know more about bullying, emotional abuse, keeping safe, and enjoyment?</p> <p>Is there anything else you'd like to mention?</p> <p>Thank you for talking to me today!</p>