Promoting safe and enjoyable sporting experiences for children in Wales

Maita G. Furusa MSc, BSc (Hons)

Submitted to Swansea University in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2023

Copyright: The Author, Maita G. Furusa, 2023
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

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.

Signed

Date 20/12/2023

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.

Signed

Date 20/12/2023
Publications

Articles (peer reviewed)


Book Chapters


Conference Presentations (Peer Reviewed)


Practitioner/Organisation Presentations


Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Youth sport ................................................. 19
  2.1.1 Outcomes of youth sport participation ................. 20
  2.2.1 Historical context of child maltreatment ................ 21
  2.2.2 Defining maltreatment ................................ 23
  2.3. Maltreatment in sport .................................. 24
    2.3.1 High profile cases of maltreatment in sport .......... 24
    2.3.2 Defining maltreatment ................................ 26
    2.3.3 Relational maltreatment in sport ..................... 29
    2.3.4 Non-relational maltreatment .......................... 31
  2.4. Prevalence of maltreatment in sport .................... 32
    2.4.1 Abuse prevalence .................................. 32
    2.4.2 Bullying prevalence ................................ 35
  2.5 Research on maltreatment in sport ...................... 36
    2.5.1. Emotional abuse in sport ........................... 37
    2.5.2. Bullying in sport ................................ 42
  2.6 Approaches to protecting children from maltreatment in sport ................................................ 45
    2.6.1 Safeguarding in the UK .............................. 45
    2.6.1.2 The Child Protection in Sport Unit ................ 46
    2.6.2 Recommendations for enhancing the protection of children in sport .................................. 48
  2.7 Optimising sporting experiences ......................... 49
  2.8 Current state of research ................................ 52
  2.9 Thesis aims .............................................. 56

Chapter 3: Understanding and experiences of emotional abuse, bullying, and safeguarding within youth sport in Wales ........................................ 57

3.1 Introduction .............................................. 57
4.2.3 Participants ........................................................................................................... 114
4.2.4 Data collection .................................................................................................... 114
4.2.5 Data analysis ....................................................................................................... 115
4.2.6 Methodological rigour ....................................................................................... 118

4.3 Results .................................................................................................................... 120
4.3.1. Optimally safe and enjoyable sport experiences ............................................. 120
4.3.2 Core Category: Positive relationships between individuals in a welcoming, developmentally appropriate, and physically safe setting ......................................................... 121
4.3.3 Category (a): Tangible support to create physically safe and developmentally appropriate sessions ............................................................................................................. 126
4.3.4 Category (b): Access to and participation in continuing professional development for safeguarding and coach development ........................................................................... 126
4.3.5 Category (c): Access to a network of individuals involved in safeguarding roles 127
4.3.6 Category (d): Visibly displayed and appropriately implemented safeguarding policies and procedures ................................................................................................. 128
4.3.7 Category (f): Open, honest, and respectful interactions between coaches, parents, and young people ........................................................................................................ 130
4.3.8 Category (g): Shared goals and expectations between parents, coaches, and young people ........................................................................................................................... 131
4.3.9 Category (h): Opportunities for coaches, parents, and young people to interact 133
4.3.10 Category (i): Caring, competent, autonomy-supportive coaches .................... 133
4.3.11 Category (j): Positive, proactive, supportive parental involvement ................ 136
4.3.12 Category (k): Welcoming friendly peers ......................................................... 137
4.3.13 (l): Trusting and supportive friendships with shared experiences ................ 138

4.4 Discussion ............................................................................................................... 141
4.4.1 Applied implications ......................................................................................... 148
4.4.2 Limitations and future research directions ....................................................... 149
4.4.3 Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 150

5.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................ 151
5.2 Method ................................................................................................................... 154
5.2.1 Methodology and philosophical underpinnings ............................................. 154
5.2.2 The Setting and participants .......................................................................... 156
5.2.3 Procedure .......................................................................................................... 157
5.2.4 Workshop creation, content, and duration ..................................................... 157
5.2.5 Data collection .................................................................................................. 164
Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Camilla Knight. Thank you for all your patience, support, encouragement and guidance throughout my post-graduate journey. Completing this thesis would not have been possible without you. You have been a great mentor, your knowledge and passion for research and motivation to enhance the field is inspiring. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had a supervisor as wise, caring, and thoughtful as you. Thank you!

I also thank my second supervisor, Dr Tom Love, for all your support. In particular, thank you for providing an alternative perspective to the research. Your insight and suggestions have challenged my thinking and pushed me to develop as a researcher.

I would also like to thank Laura Whapham from NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) for collaborating with us on this research and putting me in touch with the various sporting organisations. I am also very grateful to everyone who sacrificed their time to share their invaluable insights and experiences. Without their participation, the completion of this study would not have been possible.

Thank you to everyone I have met through the Sport Psychology lab group (Emily, Rachael, Katie, Max, Olivier, Georgia, Rob, Reuben, Kirsten, Lewis, Kurtis, and Brad), thank you for your support, encouragement, and friendship through this journey, you have made this PhD experience so enjoyable and memorable.

I would also like to give a special thank you to all my family, Maiguru, Babamukuru, Fadzi, and Tsitsi. Thank you for your continued love, support, and encouragement. Most importantly, I would like to thank my mum (Mubaiwa!) for your unconditional love, and support. Thank you for being my biggest cheerleader and for being a constant source of strength, guidance, love, joy, and inspiration. You have always found a way to give me peace of mind and for that, I am eternally grateful.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to my fiancé, Chiedza. Your unwavering support throughout this PhD journey has been invaluable. Thank you for standing by me through the highs and lows, and for patiently listening to me discuss my research at all times of the day. Thank you for celebrating the small milestones with me and encouraging me when I doubted my own abilities. Thank you for encouraging me to think big and reminding me of the importance of this research and its potential impact on improving young people’s everyday sporting experiences. I am truly grateful.
List of Figures

Figure 2.1  Stirling's Framework of Child Maltreatment in Sport (2009) ..................................................33

Figure 3.1  Overview of steps taken to develop survey .................................................................71

Figure 4.1  Theoretical sampling process ..................................................................................97

Figure 4.2  A grounded theory of an optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience .................98
List of Tables

Table 2.1
Theoretical definitions of maltreatment in sport.................................................................20

Table 3.1
Demographic and sports participation characteristics for young people.......................21

Table 3.2
Demographic and sports participation characteristics for parent respondents ..............22

Table 3.3
Components of Psychological Wellbeing........................................................................23

Table 3.4
Reported rates of emotional abuse and bullying experienced by young people ..........23

Table 3.5
Operational Definitions of Flourishing............................................................................25

Table 3.6
Perpetrators of negative behaviours experienced in sport according to young people....27

Table 3.7
Reported rates of emotional abuse and bullying from all participants .......................100

Table 3.8
Frequency of negative behaviours witnessed .................................................................100

Table 3.9
Young people, parents, and coaches’ responses of perpetrators of negative behaviours witnessed in sport.................................................................100

Table 3.10
Young people, parents, and coaches’ responses of who they would tell if they were worried about someone’s behaviour towards them or another child.................................100
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
safety, trust, and fulfilment of needs (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007; Stirling, 2009). Additionally, non-relational maltreatment comprises various types of harassment and bullying occurring outside of the context of a critical relationship (Stirling, 2009).

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

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

Alongside emotional abuse, it is also important to address non-relational maltreatment, such as bullying. Bullying is characterised as intentional and repetitive aggressive behaviour, with an imbalance of power between perpetrator and victim and can occur online and in person (Olweus, 1993, Wang et al., 2009). Research exploring bullying in sport indicates varying prevalence rates between 9% and 48% (Jewett et al., 2019; Ventura et al., 2019), with young people themselves identified as perpetrators, victims, and bystanders.
(Mishna et al., 2019; Nery et al., 2019; Rios et al., 2021). Although research in bullying is growing there is still a need to explore perceptions of bullying from other individuals’ perspectives such as coaches and parents.

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

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

The Current Thesis

Given the aforementioned limitations with extent literature the purpose of the current thesis was two-fold; firstly, 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 and; secondly, to explore ways to enhance safety and enjoyment in sport. To address these aims, numerous steps were taken detailed across five subsequent chapters. Following this chapter, chapter two provides a critical review of existing literature pertaining to maltreatment in sport. Specifically, it begins with a brief overview of the broader literature on maltreatment, followed by an in-depth examination of sport related literature. Chapter three details the use of a two-phase mixed methods explanatory sequential design study which investigated the safeguarding landscape in youth sport throughout Wales. Chapter four subsequently provides a substantive theory of the process through which an optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience is created for young people in sport. Chapter five describes the development, implementation, and evaluation of a creative educational workshop for young athletes (aged under 16 years of age) regarding emotional abuse, bullying, safeguarding, and their overall enjoyment of sport. The final chapter, Chapter six, brings together the findings from across the previous chapters, highlighting their conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and applied contributions to the field of safeguarding in sport. Furthermore, the final chapter addresses limitations, suggests future research directions, and includes personal reflections and key insights gained from researching emotional abuse and bullying with young people and other key individuals in sport. The reflections aim to offer support and guidance to others who plan to embark on research in this area.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

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

2.1 Youth sport

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

However, participation in structured and unstructured youth sport has become increasingly popular. In fact, it is one of the most common extracurricular activities among children and adolescents worldwide (Hulteen et al., 2016). Within the United Kingdom, data indicates that, on a monthly basis, 86% of children participate in sport (Department of Digital culture, Media and Sport, 2018). In Wales, 39% of young people take part in extracurricular or club sport on three or more occasions per week (Sport Wales, 2022). Clearly, youth sport
holds great popularity, which is positive given that it is recognised as a significant avenue through which the health and physical development of young people can be influenced (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005).

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

2.1.1 Outcomes of youth sport participation

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

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

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

2.2.1 Historical context of child maltreatment

In developed Western nations, the 1870s served as a critical period when public awareness and acknowledgement of maltreatment significantly increased. Even though issues of maltreatment existed long before this time, the 1870s signified a notable shift in societal recognition of such concerns (Radford et al., 2011). Specifically, public attention increased in 1874 following a case in the United States in which Mary Ellen who was subjected to severe physical abuse, neglect, and starvation from her adoptive mother (Radford et al., 2011). This resulted in the establishment of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children which was the first organisation dedicated to combating cruelty against children.

The late 19th century also witnessed growing concern about child maltreatment in the UK. Subsequently, in 1889, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) was founded in England. This occurred concurrently with the introduction of the first UK law specifically addressing the protection of children from maltreatment through the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act, commonly known as the 'Children's Charter' (Radford et al., 2011)

Legal and social attitudes towards children shifted considerably at the end of the 19th century, and in the UK for the first time, the state was granted permission by the Children’s Charter to intervene in parent-child interactions and criminalised acts of child maltreatment (Hendrick, 1994). During the period between 1890 and 1900, new legislation was enacted while the NSPCC underwent significant expansion in authority and size (NSPCC, 2006). For instance, The Children’s Charter in 1894 expanded its definitions of maltreatment to include ‘mental cruelty.’ Additionally, NSPCC inspectors were given authorisation through the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act (1904) to remove children from homes where abuse or neglect occurred. That said, during the war years (1914-1918 and 1939-1945) the concern surrounding child maltreatment dwindled. Even though significant changes were made to child protection laws in 1932, 1933, and 1948 (Children and Young Persons Act, 1933;
Attention on child maltreatment did not regain prominence until the 1960s (Kempe, 1962).

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

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

2.2.2 Defining maltreatment

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

Based on this, maltreatment is considered a comprehensive term encompassing a range of behaviours that may lead to physical or psychological harm of a child. This is articulated in the definition of child maltreatment provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1999). Specifically, they define child maltreatment as an umbrella term including “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 Organisation, 1999, p.19). Of note, within the WHO definition, the term child refers to any individual under the age of 18 years. Providing more specificity, the term young people is sometimes used. Within the UK, the Child and Young Persons Act 1933 stipulates that a young person is any human being who has reached the age of 14 years but is below the age of 18 years. Within this thesis, the term young person is used to define children aged between 13-18 years.

Maltreatment can occur in various settings, including family, institutional, or community contexts including sport (UK Department for Education, 2013). It can be perpetrated by a range of individuals including family members, parents, caregivers, acquaintances, peers, as well as strangers, resulting in actual harm or potential for harm (UK
Department for Education, 2013). Harm is characterised by any immediate disruption resulting from actual or threatened acts of commission or commission to a child's cognitive, physical, and emotional development (Leeb et al., 2008). Within The Children Act in the UK, emphasis is placed on maltreatment that causes significant harm, whereby significant harm is “…the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children, and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm” (UK Department for Education, 2010, p.36).

2.3 Maltreatment in sport

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

2.3.1 High profile cases of maltreatment in sport

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

Shortly after this, in 1996, Sheldon Kennedy brought forward accusations against celebrated National Hockey League (NHL) coach Graham James. Kennedy reported James to the police, explaining he had been sexually abused by James for a period spanning over 10 years (Staff, 2015). After pleading guilty to over 350 counts of abuse, James was sentenced to 3 and half years in prison for cases relating to Kennedy and another NHL player. He was given a lifetime ban from coaching in the Canadian Hockey Association (Kennedy & Grainger, 2006). Following this, several other athletes including NHL player Theoren Fleury...
also came forward disclosing sexual abuse carried out by James. Subsequently, James was
sentenced to a further two years in prison in 2012 (Fleury & McLelland Day, 2009).

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

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

More recently, reports of non-sexual maltreatment incidents in sport have emerged. For
example, in the UK in 2020, an independent review co-commissioned by UK Sport and Sport
England described systemic accounts of physical and emotional abuse and neglect of young
gymnasts (Whyte 2022). Reports included reoccurring issues of belittling, bullying, extreme
weight management, use of excessive physical force, training on serious injuries, regular 
overstretching, gaslighting, excessive controlling behaviour and suppression of athletes’ 
opinions and emotions (Whyte 2022). Other cases of non-sexual maltreatment in the UK 
have also been identified in cycling, canoeing, swimming, and cricket, among others (Adams 
& Kavanagh, 2020; BBC, 2023; Phelps et al., 2017).

2.3.2 Defining maltreatment in sport

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

Table 2.1

Theoretical definitions of maltreatment in sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terminology and Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maltreatment (Crooks &amp; Wolfe, 2007)</td>
<td>Volitional acts that result in or have the potential to result in physical injuries and/or psychological harm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilised by Stirling (2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maltreatment</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early work on sexual abuse, drew upon a continuum which classified harm into sexual abuse, harassment, and discrimination based on differing levels of severity (Brackenridge et al., 2001). As work has progressed, there is increased recognition that each of these situations can have equally detrimental effects and thus a continuum is not necessarily the best representation. Nevertheless, this framework has been fundamental in highlighting the various ways in which sexual harm can be encountered by young people in sport (Brackenridge et al., 2001).

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

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

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

2.3.3 Relational maltreatment in sport

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

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

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

Despite challenges with defining it, sexual harassment is classed as unwanted sexual attention on the basis of sex (e.g., crude remarks, pinching, stalking touching or caressing, and sexual jokes) (Brackenridge, 2001). Sexual harassment usually involves a misuse of power between the perpetrator and the victim (Brackenridge, 2001). Differentiating sexual harassment and abuse can be challenging as they are both discriminatory and involve a
misuse of power. However, the main difference lies in the extent to which the individual being harassed is coerced to comply with perpetrators’ sexual advances (Brackenridge & Fasting; 2005; Brackenridge et al., 2008; Volkwein-Caplan & Sankaran 2002). Sexual harassment has the potential to lead to more severe sexual misconduct and is considered more widespread than sexual abuse.

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

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

2.3.3.1.3 Emotional abuse. Despite the increased focus on sexual abuse, emotional abuse is the most common form of maltreatment in sport. According to Stirling (2009) emotional abuse (synonymously referred to as psychological abuse) is a pattern of deliberate noncontact behaviours by a person within a critical relationship role, that has the potential to be harmful. Emotional abuse in sport is characterised by behaviours such as, shouting, belittling, criticism, degrading comments, insulting, denial of support and attention, humiliation, scapegoating, threatening, isolation, discriminating against an individual or
group based on identity variability, throwing objects out of anger or frustration (without striking another individual), as well as ignoring or denial of attention and support (Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Stirling, 2009; Stirling & Kerr, 2007, 2008, 2014).

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

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

2.3.4 Non-relational maltreatment

Non-relational maltreatment refers to all types of maltreatment that occur outside of a critical relationship context (Stirling, 2009). While non-relational maltreatment can be broadly understood at an institutional level, it is important to recognise that it can be perpetrated by coaches, teammates, or other individuals in sport who hold a position of authority who are not personally acquainted with an athlete or are influential in fulfilling an athlete’s needs (Stirling, 2009). Stirling’s framework highlights six forms of non-relational maltreatment, including abuse or assault (non-critical relationship), institutional maltreatment, corruption/ exploitation, child labour, harassment, and bullying (Stirling,
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).
Overall, the reported prevalence of sexual abuse varies widely, and rates tend to differ based on variables such as sport, level of competition, victim's gender, and geographical location. Studies suggest that the prevalence of sexual abuse ranges between 2% and 49% (Mountjoy et al., 2016). For example, Vertommen et al. (2015) conducted a study in the Netherlands and Belgium investigating the prevalence of sexual exploitation against children in sport. Using a retrospective online survey, results indicated prevalence estimates of 14% before the age of 18 years, highlighting a statistically significant higher presence of female victims than males. The variability in prevalence rates is usually a result of variations in definitions of sexual abuse, sampling, dimensions measured, perpetrators of abuse included in the study response rate, and trustworthiness (Fasting, 2005; Parent et al., 2016; Parent & Fortier, 2017). Consequently, the varying methodologies employed in different studies make it difficult to compare results (Ohlert et al., 2021).

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

A similar retrospective study was conducted in the Netherlands and Flanders by Vertommen and colleagues (2016). Specifically, 4000 Belgian and Dutch adults were surveyed about their experiences of interpersonal violence in sport before the age of 18 years. Results showed that 44% of participants reported experiencing at least one type of interpersonal violence (i.e., sexual, physical, or psychological) in sport. Consistent with
findings from the study conducted by Alexander and her colleagues (2011), results showed that psychological violence (38%) was most prevalent, followed by sexual (14%), and physical violence (11%). Findings also showed that male athletes reported experiencing higher rates of psychological (39%) and physical violence (14%) compared to their female counterparts (36% psychological abuse; 9% physical abuse). However, results showed that sexual violence was more prevalent among female athletes (17%) compared to males (11%). The findings did not provide information regarding perpetrators of violence experienced and findings showed no significant differences between violence experienced by Dutch and Flemish participants, despite slightly higher rates of reported violence in the Flanders region.

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

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

Facilitating future prevalence studies, Parent and colleagues (2019) developed the first validated questionnaire, the Violence Towards Athletes Questionnaire (VTAQ) to measure the prevalence of interpersonal violence towards young athletes in sport. The VTAQ measures various forms of mistreatment including neglect/psychological, physical, and
sexual violence perpetrated by coaches, peers, and parents. Employing this questionnaire, Parent and Vaillancourt-Morel (2020) investigated the prevalence of interpersonal violence among 1,055 youth athletes in Québec, Canada aged between 14 and 17 years, who were currently competing in sport. Results indicated that psychological violence as the most experienced form of violence (79.2%). This was followed by physical violence 40%, neglect 36%, and sexual violence at 28.2%. The results indicated a relationship between female gender, increased age, early sport specialisation, and increased weekly training hours with psychological violence or neglect. Additionally, male gender, increased age, non-heterosexual orientation, increased weekly training hours, involvement in team sports, and interregional and provincial competition level were associated with increased reports of physical violence. Notably, some items considered as psychological violence in this study/scale were previously categorised as physical abuse/violence and neglect in other prevalence studies (Alexander et al., 2011; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2021). Such differences in classifications, as well as measures used, make comparisons across prevalence studies challenging.

2.4.2 Bullying prevalence

Research on bullying has highlighted harmful peer-to-peer interactions within sport. For example, Mishna et al. (2019) conducted a study with 122 Canadian university athletes examining the prevalence of bullying and cyberbullying in sport, results showed that 48% of athletes had been victims of bullying, 31% reported being a bully, and 62% claimed they had witnessed bullying behaviour in sport. When it came to cyberbullying, 7% reported being a victim, 9% reported being a perpetrator of bullying, and 15% reported witnessing cyberbullying. In 2018, Nery and colleagues conducted a study with 1458 adolescent male athletes in Portugal. Of participants, 10% reported being a victim of bullying, 11% reported perpetrating bullying episodes as a bully, and 35% reported witnessing bullying. Findings showed that 10% of victims reported experiencing repeated episodes of bullying, and 90% reported experiencing bullying occasionally. When it came to perpetrating bullying 12% reported repeated participation in bullying and 88% reported occasional participation. Furthermore, 35% of bystanders reported that they usually defended victims of during instances of bullying, while 27% reported that they observed without interfering and 33% reported multiple reactions. Meanwhile in Spain, Ventura and colleagues (2019) conducted a study with male (82.2%) and female athletes aged between 8-13 years on bullying in football. Results showed that 8.9% of participants reported being a victim of bullying, of those, 0.2% reported
experiencing bullying very often, 1.4% sometimes, and 7.4% sometimes. Findings also showed that 34.7% of participants reported witnessing bullying, and 14.8% reported that they had perpetrated bullying in sport. There were also notable differences between boys and girls, specifically, 15.5% of boys reported being bullies compared to 9% of girls, moreover, 36.4% of boys reported being bystanders to bullying compared to 21.9% of girls.

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

2.5 Research on Maltreatment in Sport

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

Examinations of the impact of sexual abuse that occurs in the sporting domain has also been conducted. Overall, such findings have shown that sexual abuse that occurs within
sport has long-term consequences, including anxiety, depression, feelings of guilt, emotional
distress, diminished self-esteem, and increased susceptibility to eating disorders, and post-
traumatic stress (Brackenridge, 1997; Parent et al., 2021; Wekerle et al., 2017). Furthermore,
in non-sporting populations, instances of sexual abuse serve as an indicator for non-suicidal
self-injury/self-harm and suicide attempts, showing an escalating trend with the frequency of
a person’s exposure to sexual abuse (Joiner et al., 2007). As such, addressing issues of sexual
abuse must be a priority for all.

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

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

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

2.5.1 Emotional abuse in sport

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

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

Reflecting on when they started participating in their sport and experiencing emotional abuse, many reported being socialised to believe that abusive coaching behaviours were normal. More recently body shaming has been acknowledged as a form of emotional abuse with various detrimental consequences and growing attention has been given to understanding it sport. Willson and Kerr (2022) conducted a qualitative study involving eight female national team athletes aged between 24-29 years exploring the experiences of body shaming as a form of emotional abuse from coaches. Athletes reported experiencing body
monitoring, negative verbal comments from their coaches about their bodies, public criticisms, forced restrictions of food and water, about their body, and punishment if body related standards were unmet. Participants reported various negative consequences including, disordered eating, performance decline, and decreased enjoyment. Similarly, McMahon and Colleagues (2022) conducted a study with three female swimmers exploring their experiences of body shaming as a form of psychological abuse and the role the athlete entourage (i.e., people associated with the athlete) played in body shaming. The findings showed that the athletes experienced psychological abuse through acts of body shaming from members of the athlete entourage (i.e., coach, team manager, partner, and mother) when their physique failed to meet socio-cultural norms (i.e., too fat, ‘slim to win’). Athletes reported being ridiculed, yelled at, and spoken to in a demeaning manner. Additionally, they reported being subjected to punishment including severe calorie restriction, and excessive running to manage weight/body shape.

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

Research focusing on emotional abuse has often been qualitative in nature and typically focused on coach-athlete relationships (Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Stirling & Kerr, 2013). This focus is likely due to coaches often being reported as the most frequent perpetrators of emotional abuse (Willson et al., 2021). Particularly, research has shown that as young people advance to higher participation levels coaches increasing become a prevalent source of emotional abuse (Parent & Fortier, 2017; Stafford et al., 2015; Vertommen et al., 2017; Willson et al., 2021). Notably even when coaches are not directly involved as perpetrators of emotional abuse, research has highlighted their indirect involvement. For instance, according to Alexander et al. (2011) roughly a third of participants who reported emotional harm reported it being related to coaches, either through direct participation or indirectly by fostering an environment where such behaviours were endorsed or left unaddressed (i.e., emotional abuse was accepted).
Despite the prevalence of coaches as perpetrators of abuse, recent research has shown that peers are among the most common perpetrators of emotional harm reported in sport. For example, Vertommen et al. (2017) found that peers or other athletes were the most common perpetrators of psychological violence (82%), with males identified as perpetrating at higher rates than females. Similarly, Stafford et al. (2015) reported that peers or teammates were the most common perpetrators of emotional abuse (81% main sport and 79% secondary sport). Conversely, Willson et al. (2021) reported peers as the second most common perpetrator of psychological harm. It should be noted that these studies conceptualised emotional abuse as psychological violence or emotional harm, which encompasses peers as perpetrators. Therefore, the differences regarding individuals responsible for emotional abuse may be attributed to the use of diverse participant samples, variations in definitions and assessment tools used to measure emotional abuse. In addition, the first two studies were retrospective, while the last study involved participants currently involved in sport. Thus, the differences may be generational (i.e., a change in perpetrators with time or perceived acceptability of behaviours) or arising due to difficulties with recall in retrospective studies.

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

Moreover, research on maltreatment in sport has highlighted that parents, like young people, are heavily reliant on coaches guidance, as a result can become complicit in relation to harmful practices (McMahon et al., 2018). For example, studies examining parents’ perspectives regarding their child's experiences with emotional abuse show that that parents tend to be silent bystanders, despite acknowledging certain behaviours as being potentially
problematic because parents rely on the coach’s expertise and tended to normalise abusive coaching practices (Kerr & Stirling, 2012; Smits et al., 2017). Moreover, because of accepting the behaviours presented by coaches and more broadly within the elite sport environment, parents may actually start to adopt behaviours aligned with abuse. For instance, a study of parents within elite swimming demonstrated how the slim to win culture in which dieting, excessive training, and weight loss were highly valued and rewarded, parents started to reinforce detrimental behaviours associated with this (McMahon & Penny, 2015).

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

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

Researchers have also explored the consequences of emotional abuse. Specifically, studies have shown that emotional abuse has various short-term and long-term detrimental consequences (Kerr et al., 2020; Stirling & Kerr, 2007, 2008, 2014; Yabe et al., 2019. Considering how emotional abuse impacts young people in their athletic career, Stirling and Kerr (2013) conducted a retrospective study with fourteen male and female elite athletes examining the perceived effects of experiences of emotional abuse in the coach-athlete relationship. Specifically, the study focused on how athletes responded to emotional abuse.
from their coach. Three overarching categories were developed to highlight the perceived impacts of emotional abuse within the coach-athlete relationship: (1) psychological effects (low mood, low self-esteem, anger, anxiety, low self-efficacy, sense of accomplishment), (2) training effects (increased motivation, impaired focus, decreased motivation, difficulty with skill acquisition, reduced enjoyment,) and (3) performance effects (performance decrements, enhanced performance). Findings showed that some participants perceived a few positive outcomes as a result of experiences such as a sense of accomplishment, increased motivation, and performance improvements. Given participants achieved high levels of success in their sport, it is plausible that participants rationalised and normalised abusive coaching practices, considering them as essential ingredients for achieving greater performance. Given that the participants possibly believed that the abusive coaching techniques were effective given that they had achieved performance success (Stirling & Kerr, 2013).

Emotional abuse has also been linked to other short-term and long-term consequences including, anger, maladaptive eating disorders, anxiety, depression, social withdrawal and decreased motivation and enjoyment for the sport (Kerr et al., 2020; Stirling & Kerr, 2007, 2008, 2014; Yabe et al., 2019). To understand the long-term consequences of emotionally abusive coaching, Kerr et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study with eight retired female Canadian National Team athletes from three different team and individual sports. The study explored the experiences and effects of emotional abuse. Findings showed that athletes reported experiencing depression, increased nervousness and fear, decreased self-confidence, eating disorders, anxiety, and symptoms resembling post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of experiences of emotionally abusive coaching behaviours. Additionally, all participants in the study sought professional mental health assistance after retiring (Kerr et al., 2020).

Despite the negative consequences of emotional abuse, defining and recognising it poses a challenge because, as alluded to above, these behaviours tend to be normalised within youth sport culture (McMahon et al., 2018; Smits et al., 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2010). Unlike sexual or physical abuse, emotional abusive behaviours are more subtle and lack visible indications of harm such as bruises or scars. As such, research has found that emotionally abusive behaviours have been accepted by coaches, athletes, and parents as normal practice (Stirling & Kerr, 2010).

2.5.2 Bullying in sport

While initial studies on bullying primarily concentrated on bullying within school settings, research shows that bullying extends to various settings including sport (Monks & Coyne, 2011; Nery et al., 2021). In fact, recognising the increase in harmful interactions
among peers in sport, increased attention has been given to examining bullying within youth sport. Despite increased research attention, bullying research in sport is still limited, unfortunately, bullying is commonly regarded as a taboo topic or alternatively categorised as normal sport-related aggression (Kirby & Wintrump, 2002). Research examining bullying in sport has mainly been descriptive, offering insights into various aspects, such as the prevalence of bullying, the various types of bullying, risk factors, reasons for bullying occurrences, and consequences of bullying (Jewett et al., 2020; Nery et al., 2021).

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

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

Exploring some of these ideas further, Nery and Colleagues (2020) examined coaches and young athletes’ perceptions of what motivated young people to bully. Results were categorised into three themes: Fundamental reasons, peer pressure, and individual
characteristics indicating reasons for bullying. Fundamental reasons included abuse of perceived power (e.g., belittling victim to increase social status), hierarchy (e.g., older or higher status players targeting newcomers or younger athletes), envy (e.g., bullying based on envy of perpetrators), and rivalry (e.g., bullying based on peer supportive rivalry). Peer pressure includes divergence from standards (e.g., Bullying is rooted in the victim's perceived divergence from the accepted standards of the peer group) and imitation (e.g., bullies mimic bullying behaviour to gain acceptance and recognition from other bullies who are teammates and have high status). Finally, individual characteristics included low sport performance (e.g., perpetrators target athletes with low physical ability), body (e.g., bullied because of differing physical appearances such as being overweight) and personality (e.g., bullied for thinking and behaving differently from teammates).

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

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

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

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

2.6 Approaches to Protecting Children from Maltreatment in Sport

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

2.6.1 Safeguarding in the UK

According to Lang and Hartill (2015), safeguarding is the benchmark for preventing maltreatment against children in sport, emphasising a child-focused approach that places significant importance on promoting human rights to enhance children's welfare. In the UK,
all individuals working with children bear a legal responsibility to ensure the children's safety. As outlined in the UK Department of Education's (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children guide, safeguarding consists of four key components:

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

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

In the UK, the term safeguarding signified a transition from a reactive child protection approach to a more child-centred perspective on child welfare (Lang & Hartill, 2015). Although safeguarding and child protection have often been used interchangeably, they represent distinct concepts (Lang & Hartill, 2015). Particularly this change in terminology demonstrates a fundamental change that prioritises preventive efforts aimed at proactively safeguarding the rights and well-being of athletes, children, and vulnerable individuals.

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

### 2.6.1.2 The Child Protection in Sport Unit

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

Consequently, the UK became one of the first countries to establish a state-funded organisation responsible for overseeing safeguarding and child protection in sport (Rhind et al., 2017). The CPSU is now a collaboration between four agencies: Sport England, Sport Wales, Sport Northern Ireland, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

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

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

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

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

2.6.2 Recommendations for enhancing the protection of children in sport

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

Focusing on coaches, McMahon (2013) conducted an education initiative with ten swimming coaches using narrative stories. Utilising narrative pedagogy, coaches were presented with athletes' stories highlighting the consequences of emotionally abusive coaching practices, with the aim of providing an alternate perspective to challenge their coaching practices, both in the present and long term. Results indicated that the workshop proved valuable in encouraging self-reflection, enhancing empathy, and advocating for a more comprehensive and athlete-centred coaching approach (McMahon, 2013).
Subsequently, McMahon et al. (2018) conducted an educational intervention employing narrative pedagogy with 14 parents from gymnastics and swimming. Participants were presented with three athlete stories representing instances of physical and emotional abuse. They were subsequently asked to share their perspectives about each story and then provided with academic literature focusing on emotional and physical abuse (i.e., constituents and consequences of abuse). Finally, participants revisited the stories and were questioned about their perceptions of each narrative. The findings indicated that parents viewed the coaching practices as unacceptable, yet they believed they were necessary for performance. In addition, many parents normalised and accepted the abusive behaviour, as they believed the coach knew best (McMahon et al., 2018).

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

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

2.7 Optimising Sporting Experiences

Unfortunately, despite the efforts employed in existing safeguarding work globally, which include ongoing and upcoming education, research, and policies (Kerr et al., 2020; Mountjoy et al., 2016; Rhind & Owusu-Sekereye, 2018) instances of maltreatment persist.
Addressing earlier concerns regarding sport solely valuing performance outcomes (Kavanagh et al., 2020), researchers have highlighted the need for change. Specifically, it has been suggested that there is a need for a shift towards a values-based culture that emphasises rights-based strategies needed to successfully prevent harm via the above efforts (Gurgis et al., 2021, 2022; Kerr et al., 2019; Stirling, 2009). In fact, recent research focusing on safeguarding emphasises the importance of not only preventing maltreatment in sport but also prioritising the optimisation of sporting experiences. Specifically, researchers contend that when sporting organisations focus on optimising experiences it offers protection from relational, physical, and environmental harm in sport (i.e., positive, inclusive, healthy, growth-enhancing, and respectful of human rights for all individuals) (Gurgis et al., 2023). Particularly, aligned with the approach of the CPSU, enhancing enjoyment should be considered another of the key approaches to optimise overall sporting experiences (Scanlan et al., 1986).

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

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

The intrinsic factors of the model emphasise that enjoyment can arise from individual perceptions of competence and control, such as mastery and perceived ability (i.e., Achievement-Intrinsic) (Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Tjomsland et al. 2015; Visek et al. 2015).
The non-achievement intrinsic aspect also emphasises that enjoyment can derive from intrinsic factors, such as movement sensations, tension release, a sense of exhilaration, and engagement in action, as well as the excitement experienced in competitive scenarios (McCarthy & Jones, 2007; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986). The extrinsic factors incorporated in the model suggest that enjoyment can be derived from extrinsic-achievement, which relates to perceptions of success or mastery resulting from external factors, such as outperforming others or receiving acknowledgment from others for involvement in sports (Nicholls, 1989; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Wankel & Kreisel, 1985). Meanwhile, the nonachievement-extrinsic, highlights that enjoyment can be derived from non-performance aspects of sports, such as affiliating with peers and engaging in positive interactions with adults (e.g., coaches and parents) revolving around the shared sport experience (Babkes & Weiss; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Tjomsland et al., 2015).

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

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

2.8 Current State of Research

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

Secondly, although noticeable advances have been made in understanding the prevalence of maltreatment in sport, the majority of studies have adopted a retrospective
approach, relying on adults to reflect on past experiences of maltreatment in sport. This is an issue because it relies on participants remembering previous experiences years later which may not truly represent their past experiences. Recognising the limitations of asking adults to reflect on past experiences, recent studies focusing on the prevalence of maltreatment in sport have shifted focus to examine experiences of maltreatment among young participants currently participating in sport. Nevertheless, limited studies exist on young people currently participating in sport, which restricts our understanding of the extent of maltreatment being experienced by young people currently participating in sport. Additionally, while evidence highlights that young people experience maltreatment by various individuals including adults in positions of authority, most research has focused on maltreatment perpetrated by coaches. Therefore, the nature of maltreatment young people may experience from other adults such as parents in relation to their involvement in sport remains unclear.

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

As well as the limited research on relational maltreatment (i.e., emotional abuse, physical abuse, and neglect), there has been even more limited attention given to non-relational forms of maltreatment, notably bullying. This is surprising given the increased prevalence of harmful peer interactions in sport. Like prevalence studies on other forms of maltreatment in sport, research on bullying highlights varying prevalence rates, making it challenging to understand the full extent of the problem within sport (Nery et al., 2021). However, research on bullying, unlike research into emotional abuse, has provided...
information of young people’s bullying experiences as perpetrators, victims, and bystanders (Mishna et al., 2019; Nery et al., 2019; Rios et al., 2022). Specifically, it has highlighted the connection between various types of bullying and responses and perceptions of bullying (Nery et al., 2019). However, limited research has focused on the role adults in positions of trust such as parents and coaches play in bullying. Given that parents and coaches are in positions of trust and have a significant influence on the prevention and intervention among young people (Nery et al., 2019) it seems relevant for research to focus on their experiences of bullying.

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

Fifth, despite calls for the development and provision of evidence-based education initiatives aimed at various stakeholders including parents, coaches, and young people (Mergaert et al., 2016; Mountjoy et al., 2016), limited research studies exist in this area (e.g., McMahon et al., 2013; 2018; 2022; 2023; Rulofs et al., 2015). Of the few studies that do exist, most have reported achieving success in some capacity. One study, however, did not explicitly outline what educational theory underpinned the initiative, the process in which the initiative was evaluated, the educational outcomes, the evaluation process, or practical implications for organisational integration of the initiative (Rulofs et al., 2015). Other studies did not provide an overview of the design considerations, or the practical implications upon integration into educational initiatives within sport (McMahon et al., 2013; 2018; Rulofs et al., 2015).
A very recent study conducted by McMahon et al. (2023) attempted to address the limitations with intervention studies. However, this initiative was conducted online with mixed populations (i.e., young people and coaches; McMahon et al., 2023), which is an issue because findings may not translate across to in-person initiatives and the results reflect outcomes pertaining to mixed populations and does not provide explicit information on how young people responded to the initiative. Additionally, most interventions have focused on sexual or emotional abuse together, primarily perpetrated by adults in positions of trust (McMahon et al., 2013; 2018; 2022; 2023). None of the studies focused on harmful interactions enacted by peers/and or teammates (i.e., bullying) which seems relevant considering the prevalence of bullying and harmful interactions in sport. Thus, while progress has been made in the development of educational initiatives, there is a dearth of studies explicitly targeting young people aged between 13-18 years (McMahon et al., 2023). This seems imperative given that research shows that they have limited awareness of behaviours constituting maltreatment, including bullying and emotional abuse (Mountjoy et al., 2020).

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

In summary, research shows that young people are experiencing various forms of maltreatment across a range of sports, levels, and countries. Despite increased awareness of maltreatment in sport, most of the research focused on sexual abuse. While research on other forms of maltreatment is advancing, there is still limited research focusing on emotional abuse and bullying in sport. Particularly, little is understood about young peoples’, parents’, and coaches’ understanding or experiences of bullying and emotional abuse. Furthermore, recognising the issue of maltreatment in sport, increased attention has focused on preventing maltreatment in sport, but this has typically occurred without consideration of the factors that may help enhance children’s sporting experiences. Finally, suggestions have been made for increased evidence-based education for young people, parents, and coaches in sport. That said, only a few studies have been conducted in this area. To this end, the purpose of the current thesis was two-fold; firstly, 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 and secondly, to explore ways to enhance safety and enjoyment in sport.
Chapter 3: Understanding and experiences of emotional abuse, bullying, and safeguarding within youth sport in Wales

3.1 Introduction

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

Maltreatment is an umbrella term defining, “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 Organisation, 1999, p.19). There are two main types of maltreatment: Relational and non-relational, and they are categorised depending on the nature of the relationship in which the inappropriate behaviour occurs (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007). Both types of maltreatment are present within relationships where differences in power exist. However, it is the critical nature of the relationship in which the inappropriate behaviour occurs which differentiates relational and non-relational maltreatment in sport (Stirling, 2009).

Relational maltreatment takes place within a critical relationship, which is one 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). This type of maltreatment consists of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, as well as neglect (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007; Stirling, 2009). In response to the rising high-profile cases around the world, relational maltreatment in sport has started to receive a great deal of academic and practical (i.e., organisational and policy) attention (Lang & Hartill, 2015; Mountjoy et al., 2016; Parent & Fortier, 2018). Specifically, a large proportion of studies have examined sexual abuse occurring in the coach-athlete relationship (Brackenridge, 1997; Kirby & Greaves, 1997; Toftegaard Nielsen, 2010). However, it is increasingly recognised that other forms of relational maltreatment, such as emotional abuse, are also pervasive (Wilson et al., 2022).
Emotional abuse (synonymously referred to as psychological abuse) is defined as, a pattern of deliberate noncontact behaviours by a person within a critical relationship role, that has the potential to be harmful (Stirling & Kerr, 2008). Emotionally abusive behaviours include humiliation, insulting, criticising, shouting, rejection, scapegoating, threatening, isolation, throwing objects out of anger or frustration (without striking another individual), as well as, ignoring or denial of attention and support (Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Stirling, 2009; Stirling & Kerr, 2008, 2014). Such behaviours can negatively affect young people in several ways including lowered self-esteem, increases in depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and decreased motivation and enjoyment in their sport (Kerr et al., 2020; Stirling & Kerr, 2014; Yabe et al., 2019). Given such a detrimental impact, it is critical that steps are taken to address emotional abuse in youth sport.

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

There is also a need to consider non-relational maltreatment within youth sport. Non-relational maltreatment may include harassment, exploitation, child labour, corruption, abuse, or assault within a non-critical relationship, institutional maltreatment, and bullying (Stirling,
It may still involve power differentials, however non-relational maltreatment does not occur within 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). Recent studies indicate that maltreatment is increasingly occurring outside a critical relationship context, with peers (i.e., teammates or opponents) being reported as the main perpetrators (Vertommen et al., 2016; Marsollier et al., 2021). However, to date our understanding of how peers are involved in experiences of maltreatment within youth sport contexts remains limited.

Specifically, within youth sport, there is a need to explore experiences of bullying (Nery et al., 2019). Bullying is a non-relational form of maltreatment that can occur between peers (Nery et al., 2020; Stirling, 2009). It is characterised as intentional and repetitive aggressive behaviour, with an imbalance of power between perpetrator and victim and can occur online and in person (Olweus, 1993). There are four main types of bullying: 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, 2010). Like other forms of maltreatment bullying can have severe personal and social consequences for young people’s health and wellbeing. For example, effects include depression, social anxiety, poor relationships, and in severe cases, suicide ideation (Evans et al., 2015; Wolke & Lereya, 2015). The extent to which young people are experiencing bullying in sport is currently unknown, although it is speculated that rates may be high given that most incidents are generally covert and tend to be minimised due to the competitive nature of sport (Kerr et al. 2016; Mishna et al. 2019).

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

If individuals do witness abuse or bullying in sport, whether they understand how to report it or feel comfortable doing so, will influence whether it can be appropriately managed.
Despite regulations requiring sporting organisations (in the UK and across other countries) to provide young people and stakeholders involved in sport with equitable access to safeguarding information and reporting mechanisms (CPSU, 2018; Rhind & Owusu-Sekeyere, 2018), it is apparent that challenges still exist when it comes to recognising, reporting, and discussing experiences of maltreatment (CPSU, 2022; Mountjoy et al., 2022). In fact, research suggests that some young people and parents remain unaware where to report concerns and lack understanding of the concept of maltreatment (CPSU, 2022; Mountjoy et al., 2022). This is a matter of concern because lack of clarity concerning definitions, constituents of maltreatment, and reporting mechanisms can increase young people’s vulnerability to negative experiences in sport (Brackenridge, 1997; Mountjoy et al., 2018).

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

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

### 3.2 Method

#### 3.2.1 Methodology

The current study utilised a two-phase mixed methods explanatory sequential design to examine the safeguarding landscape in youth sport across Wales. This design occurs in two distinct interaction phases in which the quantitative phase is conducted first followed by a subsequent qualitative phase (Cresswell, 2003). Specifically, the current study utilised a follow-up explanations variant of an explanatory sequential design in which quantitative data is collected and analysed in the first phase, then based on the need to further understand the results, a qualitative phase is conducted to explain the initial quantitative findings in more depth (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018).
Given the aims of this study, the explanatory sequential design approach was useful because the first phase enabled the use of a cross-sectional survey which provided an opportunity to obtain information from many people involved in a range of different sports across a wide geographical area (Rowley, 2014). Particularly, it enabled investigation of frequencies and perpetrators of emotional abuse and bullying across Wales and provided an opportunity to explore associations between risk factors such as gender and age against emotional abuse and bullying experienced and/or witnessed. Using semi-structured interviews, the second phase permitted the expansion on the initial findings such as, what types of negative behaviours were being witnessed or being experienced. It also provided an opportunity to explore why participants were not recognising negative behaviours as bullying or emotional abuse and what factors enabled or prevented people from intervening in or reporting cases of negative experience in sport.

3.2.2 Philosophical Underpinnings

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

This dialectical perspective informed the current study. In this regard, I was guided by both post-positivist and interpretivist paradigms. Post-positivism contends that reality and truth are conditional and can be understood in various ways (Greene & Caracelli, 1997, 2003). Post-positivists consider certainty with caution and acknowledge that human limitations exist and individual characteristics must be accounted for when making truth claims (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Post-positivists are typically concerned with determining and investigating cause and effect relationships between variables and use quantitative methods to do this. Given that the study aimed to examine the safeguarding landscape in youth sport across Wales, a post-positive perspective aligned with phase one of the study.
However, there was also a desire within the current study to elicit meanings from participants and gain a deeper understanding of individual experiences, beyond that which could be provided by the survey results in phase one. As such, the second phase was guided by an interpretivist perspective, which proposes that reality is subjective and constructed by the individual (Lather, 2006). This perspective accepts that multiple realities exist and tend to differ between individuals, due to people’s past experiences, personalities, social interactions, and environment (Ponterotto, 2005). Furthermore, interpretivism acknowledges that the researcher and the object of inquiry both influence one another to shape the construction of the research outcomes (Morrow, 2005).

### 3.2.3 Phase 1: Procedure

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

**Figure 3.1**

Overview of steps taken to develop survey

- **Step one:** Review of the literature
- **Step two:** Development of draft survey
- **Step three:** Reviewed by research team and external partner from CPSU
- **Step four:** Reviewed by members of the CPSU
- **Step five:** Reviewed by academic experts
- **Step six:** Reviewed by young sport ambassadors
- **Step seven:** The final survey
3.2.3.1 **Step one: Review of the literature.** The first step involved reviewing the literature on maltreatment in sport to identify what research had been conducted and what approaches had been used to assess young people’s experiences of maltreatment in sport. The literature provided a clear insight into the types of behaviours that constituted emotional abuse and bullying, as well as a variety of definitions of these two concepts.

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

3.2.3.3 **Step three: Review by research team and an external partner from the CPSU.** After the initial survey was developed, it was then reviewed by the supervisory team and an external partner at the CPSU who shared feedback from National Governing Bodies from across Wales. During this stage many ethical considerations were discussed. Specifically, it was understood that exploring issues regarding abuse raised complex ethical issues and participants’ welfare was our main priority. The main concerns raised were regarding questioning children (under 18 years old), who were classified as vulnerable, about their negative experiences. The primary concern was that asking children to answer such questions could cause discomfort, distress, and traumatised them again. That said, previous abuse related research has suggested that emotional distress among child participants is unusual (Finkelhor et al., 2014) and that some participants may gain value from participating (Chu, DePrince, & Weinzierl, 2008). Addressing these concerns, it was ensured that participants did not have to complete all questions (allowing them to skip any they found uncomfortable).
Another ethical consideration raised pertained to sport reputation and expectations regarding addressing issues. Specifically, some sport governing bodies voiced concerns about their reputation if it was identified that a lot of children experienced negative experiences in their sport. Consequently, they said they were more likely to endorse participation only if sports were unidentifiable. Additionally, they were unsure of what would be expected of them with regards to addressing issues that were raised confidentially and with limited detail but appeared to occur in their sport. To manage these concerns, participants were not asked to specify in which sport they had experienced negative behaviours, but rather to initially list all the sports in which they participated. The consequence was that it was not possible to identify in which sports negative experiences were occurring, which had been an initial interest. However, gaining sport buy-in to help was deemed to be of greater importance.

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

3.2.3.5 Step five: Review by Academic Experts. After modifications were made to the survey based on the feedback from CPSU, it was then emailed to ten international academic safeguarding subject experts. These individuals completed a feedback form providing comments on the content, relevance, accuracy, language, length, and layout of the survey (see Appendix B). The academic safeguarding subject experts had various suggestions. One of their main concerns was the wording for the definitions of bullying and emotional abuse. The academic experts believed it was still too complex for an 11-year-old and recommended the use of more child friendly language and provision of explicit examples.
within the definitions. Additionally, it was decided to change the youngest age for
participants from 11 years to 13 years of age. Consequently, further changes to the definitions
of emotional abuse and bullying were made to increase clarity and accessibility (see
Appendix A). Other suggestions related to the wording of specific negative behaviour
questions. For example, it was suggested that questions such as “been repeatedly criticised or
made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards,” should be separated
into two separate items because the concepts were different – this change was made. They
also advised clarity was required for questions relating to physical bullying to enable
participants to differentiate between physical harm that is a normal part of sport and physical
bullying behaviours.

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

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

The young people understood the content of the survey and none of them reported any
feelings of discomfort when answering any of the questions. However, they recommended
that changes be made to some questions to ensure clarity. For example, two questions in the
initial survey provided respondents with the definition of emotional abuse or bullying and
asked participants to answer if they had experienced or witnessed it. Following their feedback
these questions were separated onto separate pages. Similarly, changes were made to the
question regarding frequency, the response “Regularly” was changed to “Regularly/often
Following written feedback from the young ambassadors, final revisions were made to the survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted with three participants (2 boys and 1 girl) aged 13 years to discuss the survey further. This process, referred to as ‘cognitive interviewing,’ aimed to identify any issues with the survey questions to improve formulation of questions, and to reduce any discrepancies between the intent and the respondent’s interpretation (Willis, 2017). Following the interview, the font size of the information on professional support organisations on each page of the survey was increased to make it stand out more in case participants wished to seek support regarding any concerns arising from participating in the survey.

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

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

The main section of the survey comprised negative sport experience questions, which focused on emotional abuse and bullying, experienced by the child and witnessed by a child, parent, coach. The questions started by providing participants with a definition of emotional abuse and then bullying, with participants being asked to respond either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to
whether they had experienced (children only) or witnessed either within sport in the
preceding year (which was the year prior to the first national lockdown; i.e., March 2019 -
March 2020).

This was then followed by questions pertaining to specific behaviours associated with
emotional abuse and bullying. Participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which
they had experienced and/or witnessed the behaviours in the preceding year. Participants
were provided with four options on a matrix rating scale 1-4; (i.e., (1) never (2) once or twice
(3) a few times (4) regularly/often [most training sessions/matches/competitions]). If
respondents indicated they experienced or witnessed any of the specific behaviours, they
were then asked to indicate who carried out the specific behaviour (i.e., (i) another
child/teammate 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). Participants were given the option to
select more than one perpetrator for each negative behaviour. Based on practical and
academic literature the first ten behaviours on the list were deemed as emotional abuse and
the last three behaviours were deemed as bullying. However, during the survey development
it was recognised that most of behaviours overlapped and could be considered as bullying or
emotional abuse. As such, it was decided that the specific behaviours were less important,
instead it was agreed that it would be the perpetrator that dictated whether something was
considered emotional abuse or bullying given that the continuum of behaviours for both were
extensive (e.g., CPSU, 2019; Mountjoy et al., 2015; NSPCC, 2019; Stirling, 2009; Stirling &
Kerr, 2008). Consequently, a decision was made that if a behaviour was perpetrated by
another child it was bullying, and any behaviours perpetrated by any other person (i.e.,
parent, coach, or other) was considered emotional abuse.

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

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

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

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

Next, electronic recruitment flyers were shared directly with local sports clubs/organisations in Wales. The recruitment flyers were shared on their social media platforms (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) to increase access to the survey amongst their
members. Finally, the electronic recruitment flyers were shared via the researcher’s personal twitter profile. Interested participants were asked to click on the hyperlinks provided to access the anonymous online survey and indicate their consent/assent at the outset of the survey. The young person survey included information for both parents and children at the start of the survey and required parental consent followed by assent from the child before they could begin the survey.

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

3.2.5 Data Analysis

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

3.2.6 Phase 2: Procedure

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

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

3.2.8 Data Collection

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

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

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

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

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

The final flow of analysis was drawing and verifying conclusions. This stage involved stopping to acknowledge and consider the meaning of the analysed data and assessing its implication for the research question. Furthermore, data had to be checked for plausibility,
their sturdiness, their confirmability, that is, its validity. According to Miles et al., (2014) checking representativeness is a tactic for verifying or confirming data validation. Although participation in the study was voluntary, attempts were made to ensure that the sample of participants that were selected provided a comprehensive representation of children, parents, and coaches across sports and levels to maximise opportunities to identify commonalities and differences in preferences/experiences. In addition, during analysis importance was placed on looking purposively in the data for contrasting cases to provide representation.

3.2.10 Methodological Rigour

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

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

Second, both quantitative and qualitative data and results should be intentionally integrated, which occurred in the current study. Specifically, this involved connecting quantitative results from the first phase to help plan and develop questions for the qualitative data collection phase (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Further, following the analysis of the qualitative results, another analysis was conducted to answer the mixed methods question. Consequently, both quantitative and qualitative data were connected and presented together
throughout the results section and integrated conclusions were made which represented how phase two results expanded phase one results (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

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

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

3.3 Results

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1</th>
<th>Total Sample: N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66 (78.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>1 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred not to say</td>
<td>1 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>20 (23.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>25 (29.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>17 (20.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>6 (7.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>11 (13.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>78 (91.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4 (5.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed race</td>
<td>1 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competitive Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy Level</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sport Participation Frequency (Days per week)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11 (12.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13 (15.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23 (27.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14 (16.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12 (14.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9 (10.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competition Frequency</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every week</td>
<td>64 (75.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every two weeks</td>
<td>7 (8.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every month</td>
<td>8 (9.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every few months</td>
<td>3 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 times per year</td>
<td>3 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2
Demographic and sports participation characteristics for parent respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample: N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45 (35.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79 (62.7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>97 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28 (22.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Age (years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>37 (29.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>37 (29.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>36 (28.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12 (9.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>3 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>123 (97.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1 (.08%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed race</td>
<td>2 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of years child’s been involved in sport</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7 (5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7 (5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12 (9.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>24 (19.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>15 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>37 (29.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Competitive Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Sport Participation Frequency (Days per week)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20 (15.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30 (23.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30 (23.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>18 (14.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15 (11.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Competition Frequency</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-competitive</td>
<td>4 (3.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every week</td>
<td>87 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every two weeks</td>
<td>11 (8.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every month</td>
<td>14 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every few months</td>
<td>8 (6.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 times per year</td>
<td>2 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3
Demographic and sports participation characteristics for coach respondents

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

3.3.1 Young People’s Experiences of Emotional Abuse and Bullying

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

Reported rates of emotional abuse and bullying experienced by young people

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

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

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

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

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

3.3.1.1 Behaviours Experienced by Young People. The three most commonly experienced behaviours by young people were being, ‘teased, made fun of, or called names’ (26.9%, n=26), ‘ignored on purpose’ (19%, n=15), and ‘made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards’ (13.9%, n=11) (see Table 3.5). When behaviours were experienced, they were mostly experienced once or twice. Few behaviours were
experienced regularly/often\(^1\), with only seven instances of regularly experienced behaviours reported.

**Table 3.5**

Frequency of negative behaviour experienced by young people

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

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

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

**3.3.1.2 Perpetrators of Abuse and Bullying.** The most common perpetrator of 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.
called names’, followed by parents (n=26) who primarily made children ‘feel under pressure
to perform to unrealistically high standards’, then coaches (n=16) who tended to ‘ignore
children on purpose’ and finally others (n=5) who were indicated to behave similarly to
parents (see Table 3.6).

### Table 3.6

Perpetrators of negative behaviours experienced in sport according to young people

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

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

### 3.3.2 All Participants Experiences of Witnessing Abuse

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

When presented with the behaviours which constituted emotional abuse or bullying,
participants indicating they had witnessed at least one of these behaviours increased.
Specifically, behaviour that accounted for emotional abuse was witnessed by 41.8% of the
sample (n=104) and bullying by 65.9% (n=164). Witnessing emotional abuse increased to
36.9% (n=31) for the 84 young people, 39.7% (n=50) for parents, and 59% (n=23) for
coaches and for bullying to 69% (n=58) of athletes, 62.7% (n=79) of parents, and 69.2% (n=27) of coaches (Table 3.7).

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

### Table 3.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All participants</th>
<th>Young people</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Coaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Witnessed emotional abuse by definition</td>
<td>51/247 (20.6%)</td>
<td>16/83 (19.3%)</td>
<td>26/125 (20.8%)</td>
<td>9/39 (23.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnessed bullying by definition</td>
<td>50/247 (20.2%)</td>
<td>13/84 (15.5%)</td>
<td>27/125 (21.6%)</td>
<td>10/38 (26.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnessed emotional abuse from list of behaviours</td>
<td>104/249 (41.8%)</td>
<td>31/84 (36.9%)</td>
<td>50/126 (39.7%)</td>
<td>23/39 (59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnessed bullying from list of behaviours</td>
<td>164/249 (65.9%)</td>
<td>58/84 (69%)</td>
<td>79/126 (62.7%)</td>
<td>27/39 (69.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Interview participants also expressed that the terms bullying and emotional abuse tend to be associated with extreme overt behaviours or outcomes. They believed that this might be
the reason why participants did not recognise it when asked explicitly. For example, Rhodri (male county and regional level hockey coach) said:

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

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

I also think there's that kind of education awareness. When they people think of the word abuse everybody will assume it has to be physical violence, or sexual abuse.

When you know it might be stuff further down the spectrum that you need to be aware of.

### 3.3.2.1 Behaviours Witnessed

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

Frequency of negative behaviours witnessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Behaviour</th>
<th>1-2 times N (%)</th>
<th>A few times N (%)</th>
<th>Regularly N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young Person</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teased, made fun of or called names</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored on purpose</td>
<td>(34.5%)</td>
<td>(27.8%)</td>
<td>(38.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel under pressure to perform</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(22.6%)</td>
<td>(15.9%)</td>
<td>(12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared without being physically</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attacked</td>
<td>(16.7%)</td>
<td>(15.2%)</td>
<td>(12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they had to</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>played/played</td>
<td>(13.1%)</td>
<td>(11.1%)</td>
<td>(12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left out of an activity by others on purpose</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(29.8%)</td>
<td>(11.1%)</td>
<td>(23.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically hurt by someone on purpose</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(31%)</td>
<td>(27.8%)</td>
<td>(33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(28.9%)</td>
<td>(21.4%)</td>
<td>(26.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassing/upsetting stories spread online</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or in person</td>
<td>(10.7%)</td>
<td>(11.1%)</td>
<td>(12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they looked</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because of weight</td>
<td>(26.2%)</td>
<td>(11.1%)</td>
<td>(38.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced to take part in an activity they did</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not want to do</td>
<td>(10.7%)</td>
<td>(13.5%)</td>
<td>(30.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared without being physically</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attacked</td>
<td>(16.7%)</td>
<td>(19%)</td>
<td>(25.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have someone break/throw an object</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out of anger/anger</td>
<td>(21.4%)</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
<td>(23.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel only important if you were</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>successful</td>
<td>(8.4%)</td>
<td>(1.6%)</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Across all the participant groups, the most witnessed behaviours were all ‘witnessed once or twice’. Behaviours witnessed ‘regularly’ were considerably lower, with ‘being teased, made fun of or called names’ reported as a regular occurrence for 4.0% (n=10) of 249 of all participants, followed by ‘being shouted or sworn at angrily by someone’ reported by 4.0% (n=10) out of 249, and ‘repeatedly criticised for how they played/ performed’ reported by 3.2% (n=8) out of 247 (see Table 3.8). When considering behaviours that were witnessed regularly by young people they were the same three as listed above (witnessed by 7.1%, 6%, and 3.6% respectively) and were all bullying behaviours. Similarly, all the behaviours parents witnessed ‘regularly’ were bullying, including being ‘shouted or sworn at angrily by someone’ (3.2%) which ranked second and ‘repeatedly criticised for how they played/ performed’ which ranked joint first with ‘being left out of an activity on purpose’ (4.0%). Behaviours most witnessed by coaches regularly were ‘made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards’ (5.1%) and ‘made to feel that you are important or valuable if you are successful in sport’ (5.1%).

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

### 3.3.3 Perpetrator of abuse

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Behaviour</th>
<th>YP</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>YP</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>YP</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>YP</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teased, made fun of or called names</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored on purpose</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel under pressure to perform</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left out of an activity by others on purpose</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically hurt by someone on purpose</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassing/upsetting stories spread online or in person</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they looked/because of weight</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced to take part in an activity they did not want to do</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared without being physically attacked</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have someone break/throw an object out of anger/frustration</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel only important if successful</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In seeking to explain why different population groups may be engaging in bullying or abusive behaviours, participants felt that generational differences were a contributing factor. Although they did not specify which behaviours parents and coaches perpetrated, many expressed a perception that adults tended to be abrasive in their communication towards young people in sport and that this resulted in certain behaviours being viewed as accepted and going unchallenged. Darren (father of an academy level football player) said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.3.4.2 Reporting Negative Behaviours. With regards to reporting negative behaviours, 80.8% (n= 59/73) of young people indicated that they would tell someone if they were worried about how someone behaved towards them, while 86.5% (n= 64/86) reported they would tell someone if they were worried about behaviours directed towards another child in sport. Numbers were slightly higher for parents (98.3%, n=118/120) and coaches...
(100%, n=39), with the majority indicating they would tell someone if they were worried about how someone behaved towards another child.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Young Person Experienced N (%)</th>
<th>Young Person Witnessed N (%)</th>
<th>Parent N (%)</th>
<th>Coach N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Another child/teammate</td>
<td>11 (1)</td>
<td>7 (9)</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your parent/guardian</td>
<td>38 (52)</td>
<td>32 (42)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child’s parent/guardian</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
<td>42 (64)</td>
<td>13 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else’s/Another parent/guardian</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>26 (34)</td>
<td>10 (15)</td>
<td>4 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your coach/ The child’s coach</td>
<td>12 (17)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
<td>91 (140)</td>
<td>14 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A different coach (i.e., a coach who was not your coach)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>21 (32)</td>
<td>9 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>4 (5)</td>
<td>4 (6)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your sport or club’s child welfare officer or safeguarding lead</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>4 (5)</td>
<td>86 (130)</td>
<td>37 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know who I would tell</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>4 (6)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not tell anyone</td>
<td>4 (5)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend and question if it was me or should I take it further</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would punch him</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police if criminal matter</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team manger</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to social services if behaviour was deemed beyond our general remit as a club to handle</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team manger</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeguarding team for federation</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak to the person whose behaviour it was</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (Numbers of responses)</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
<td><strong>263</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Furthermore, young people also believed their parents were better positioned to know how best to respond to concerns as Angharad (female regional level hockey player) shared, “I’d probably go to my mom and dad because, I think my dad knows everything at this stage, so I’m sure he would know what to do.”
3.3.4.3 Barriers to Intervening. Within the survey and the interviews, participants were asked to explain (qualitatively) what would prevent them from intervening if they were worried about how someone behaved towards them or another child in sport. Firstly, it was suggested that confidence might have an impact. With regards to confidence in reporting, young person participant 6 answered in the survey, “Nothing [would stop me reporting], I would always question things to see if they were suspicious and then take them further if needed.” Similarly, parent participant 111 wrote, “Nothing would stop me saying something.” During the interview when asked if anything would prevent her from intervening or reporting concerns Rachel (mother of a regional level hockey player) said, “absolutely nothing, but that’s just how I am though, I’m not afraid to speak up.” Likewise, Jacob (male national level hockey player) expressed “I am a very confident person I don’t care what people think about me. So, if I saw something wrong going on I would go tell the coach or go to the manager.”

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

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

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

One parent also explained they were a PE teacher, so she was more vigilant and able to recognise concerning behaviours, therefore she felt more confident to intervene or report concerns, “you need to be aware of your duty of care to the child, but then again, I suppose,
I’m a PE teacher, so it’s second nature to me I know how people should be behaving.”

Similarly, young people expressed that their ability to intervene or report concerns was a result of the knowledge they had received within school, as Angharad (female regional level hockey player) shared, “we learn a lot about bullying in school, so I know what is and isn’t okay.”

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

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

Various contextual factors also influenced participants’ ability to intervene or report concerns. In fact, how participants responded was contingent on the context of the situation. For example, when asked what would prevent them from intervening, parent participant 60 wrote, “it would depend on the situation and who was involved.” Most participants mentioned that it was dependent on the nature of the situation they had observed, as Steffan
(male club level football player) said “it really depends on the severity of it [incident], I guess if it looks really bad and like it shouldn't be happening, then I would try to do something.”

Similarly, young person participant 80 reported, “If the behaviour was minor, I might pass it off as a one off and not report it, unless it was really serious, and I saw it repeated or worsened.”

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

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

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

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

Participants also highlighted that intervening was also contingent on the individuals involved an incident (e.g., perpetrators and/or victims). Most reported that they would respond differently depending on whether a child or an adult was the perpetrator. Young people were less likely intervene or report concerns if a parent was involved as a perpetrator.

For example, Owain (male academy level rugby player) said, “I think if it was a parent, I would be even less likely to do something about it, because to me that person as a stranger and honestly I might not see them again.” Overall, young people felt less confident to intervene when adults were involved, they appeared to believe that it was either the coaches or other adults in the environments responsibility to recognise and challenge negative
behaviours perpetrated by adults. In addition, some coaches also found it difficult to intervene if a parent was involved, as coach participant 13 expressed, “if it is the parent of the child, it can be hard to ‘interfere’ as they may just take the child away from the sport.”

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

Finally, participants explained that they would not intervene or report concerns, due to fear of repercussions. Many participants feared that it would negatively impact relationships with staff and other personnel within their sports organisation. For example, when responding to what would prevent her from intervening or reporting concerns, Angela (mother of a club level football player) shared, “it’s tough because I feel I would be viewed as interfering and its none of my business, therefore I could be seen as a troublemaker for highlighting an issue by others.” In addition, some participants believed it could impact their child regardless of whether they were involved in the incident or not, as parent participant 48 responded in the survey, “fear that the coaches would see me as ‘a troublemaker’ and this would influence how they would treat my son.” Many young people expressed similar sentiments, for instance, young person participant 25 in the survey said, “fear of backlash from others” would prevent them from intervening, similarly young person participant 80 answered, “scared that something would happen to me maybe.” Like parents, most young people feared it would negatively impact them directly or the relationships they had with people involved in the incident, including staff or personnel in their sport, as Owain (male academy level rugby player) said “one thing that would stop me is the negativity I would receive from the coach in return, if I called something out they would be like, well I’m [coach] not going to be nice to you now.”
3.3.4.4 Further Information Required. Participants were asked what they believed would be helpful in the prevention and intervention in cases of emotional abuse and bullying in sport. All participant groups unanimously expressed the need for education on emotional abuse, bullying, and keeping safe in sport as Gemma (female academy level football player) expressed, “I think education which will raise awareness, is obviously key.” Specifically, participants explained that information would help increase knowledge and awareness which would assist in the intervention in cases of emotional abuse and bullying. James (male county level rugby player) explained, “the main things is, education to raise awareness and for people to know what to do and know where the support is.” Participants specified that it was important that information was accessible for everybody, as coach participant 12 expressed, “Information available in the club for all people to access.” Parent participant 3 and young person participant 18 shared similar sentiments, “available information for all.”

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

Other desired information was regarding constituents of emotional abuse and bullying and the consequences of such behaviours. Given that many believed there was a lack of knowledge regarding what constitutes emotional abuse and bullying, such information would help increase knowledge. Dafydd (male academy level football coach) shared: Well, for one, I think your definition and examples of abuse and bullying is very, very good, and I think something like that would be useful for people to actually physically understand what constitutes each element of it. It makes you aware of when it happens, and hopefully when you're doing something you'll think well hang on a minute, now that is that which constitutes this. So, if there's a greater understanding of it then then yeah people are less likely to do it.
In addition, participants also felt that many people were unaware of the consequences of emotional abuse and bullying and did not recognise how damaging it could be. Therefore, they believed such information would potentially encourage people to reflect on their own behaviour as well as that of others. Owain (male academy level rugby player) expressed:

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

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

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

Others expressed a preference for online information; young participant 26 suggested, “more online resources would help,” and parent participant 45 suggested, “an email with links to online information.” Participants preference for accessing online resources, including information and online videos, was because they believed it was more easily accessible and convenient for individuals to seek out information. For instance, Dafydd (male academy level football coach) shared, “I like the idea of team’s or zoom presentation is great, for me personally it is a lot more amenable media than to physically be somewhere.” On the other
hand, some participants thought that utilising online resources would be challenging and they perceived it as being somewhat disconnected from their own personal experiences as, Liam (male county level rugby coach), “If it was just like PowerPoint slides online, or a video of what somebody else has done, there isn't that personal connection there, I don’t think people would learn much, I think having a talk would be better.”

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

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

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

Let’s say you’ve got them both in the same room [parents and children] and you’re talking about, you know the behaviour we don’t want to see is parents shouting at children all the time. In that room there could be a child who knows their parent always shouts at them. Maybe one, or two, there will be that, so maybe you want to
think, if we separated them would we be able to have a really honest conversation with the kids.

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

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

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

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

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

The purpose of the present study was to explore understanding and experiences of emotional abuse, bullying, and safeguarding within youth sport in Wales. Overall, in line with previous research, findings from the current study indicated that young people experienced emotional abuse and bullying in sport (Alexander et al., 2011; Nery et al., 2019; Parent & Vaillancourt-Morel, 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2022). In relation to bullying, 6% of young people in this study reported experiencing bullying when presented with a definition of bullying. These results are slightly lower than those found in other studies, which yielded results between 9-10% (e.g., Nery et al., 2019; Ventura et al., 2019).

However, it is important to note that, when presented with a list of behaviours which constituted bullying, 45.2% of participants indicated that they had experienced bullying behaviours at least once or twice. This is substantially higher than those reported in other studies involving young athletes of similar ages (i.e., 13-18 years) (Collot D’Escury & Dudink, 2010; Evans et al., 201). Similar differences were identified in relation to experiences of emotional abuse – with more limited numbers of respondents indicating abuse when provided with a definition (i.e., 10.7%) than a list of behaviours (i.e., 17.9%).

When considering young people, parents, and coaches witnessing emotional abuse and bullying in sport, again there was some alignment with previous research, as well as some differences. Findings indicated that 20.6% of all participants reported witnessing bullying in sport when presented with a definition, this number increased to 65.9% when participants were presented with a list of behaviours constituting as bullying. Coaches reported witnessed the most bullying in sport (26.3%), followed by parents (21.6%) then young people (15.5%). These results showed that 36.9% of young people in this study reported witnessing (at least once or twice in the preceding year) behaviours that constitute bullying. This is consistent with bystander rates reported by young people in other studies focusing on bullying (Nery et al., 2019; Rios et al., 2022; Vveinhardt et al., 2018).

Comparisons cannot be made regarding parents’ and coaches’ observations of bullying as previous studies reporting bystander experiences have not included these perspectives. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that bullying is commonplace in youth sport context, and it is being witnessed by multiple stakeholders.

Compared to bullying, emotional abuse was witnessed by fewer participants, with 20.6% of all participants reporting witnessing emotional abuse when presented with a definition which rose to 41.8% when participants were presented with a list of behaviours constituting as emotional abuse. Similar to bullying, coaches reported witnessing it the most
Given the increased focus and coverage of emotional abuse both within and outside sport in the media and the increased debate of such topics in the sport context and in general society, it could be suggested that young people, coaches, and parents now possess greater awareness of emotionally abusive behaviours perpetrated by adults in positions of power. This heightened awareness may potentially enable them to more readily identify, acknowledge, and report such negative behaviours, which might explain why the rates were lower than bullying (Vertommen et al., 2022). However, the difference in identification based on definitions and behaviours point to a continuing need to further enhance understanding. Particularly, it highlights an important methodological consideration when seeking to identify the prevalence of these behaviours in sport and also compare across different settings. Specifically, it is necessary to understand how prevalence information was sought (based on behaviours or definitions) in previous studies and also consider which approach should be adopted moving forwards. That is, would it be most appropriate to focus on behaviours or on definitions? Definitions provide the option of enabling individuals to consider a broader range of behaviours than perhaps a list would, but the lack of understanding of definitions is clearly a limitation.

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

The lack of understanding of bullying and abuse demonstrated in the current study was also likely influenced by the specific behaviours that were most frequently recalled. In line with previous research (e.g., Gervis & Dunn, 2004; Nery et al., 2019; Rios et al., 2021), the most witnessed negative behaviours across participants in the current study were, being teased, made fun of, or called names, followed by being shouted or sworn at angrily by someone, and then being repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed. The presence of regulations governing more overt forms of abusive behaviours within sporting contexts and the wider society may explain the reason why being teased was most common abusive
behaviour witnessed and experienced. For example, teasing can be disguised as banter, which is considered normal and socially acceptable in some sporting contexts (Newman et al., 2021; 2022). Banter is generally considered acceptable when there is a well-established relationship between the parties involved. However, banter should be evaluated on an individual basis, considering the existing relationships and knowledge of learned behaviour (Booth et al., 2023). Therefore, parties involved, or bystanders, should not automatically assume that something is banter, as banter can sometimes escalate into bullying (Booth et al., 2023) and being a victim of abusive behaviour is a subjective experience and dependent on the individual on the receiving end interprets the negative behaviours (Collot D’Escury & Dudink, 2010; Kirby & Wintrump, 2002).

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

Further, the varied perspectives on bullying and emotional abuse also reaffirm the need to consider culture when it comes to safeguarding young people in sport (Owusu-Sekereye et al., 2022). As participants suggested, the reason why behaviours occurred and were not recognised, is due to the immediate and broader sporting culture in which participants are located, which did not acknowledge or recognise certain behaviours as abusive. Research suggests that different cultural factors can make it easier for abuse to occur, difficult for people to recognise, and more challenging to respond in youth-serving organisations (Palmer & Feldman, 2017). The results of this study underscore the important need to address organisational culture within the youth sport (Knight et al., 2017; Mountjoy
et al., 2015). In fact, by actively trying to transform negative cultures into healthy ones with positive norms and behaviours, this could help provide young people and key individuals within the environment role models of standards that can effectively reduce the prevalence and acceptance of negative behaviours such as bullying and emotional abuse.

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

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

Over the last decade, research pertaining to parental involvement in sport has grown exponentially (Knight, 2019). Through this research much attention has been given to both the positive and negative influences parents might have on children’s experiences (see Knight et al., 2017, 2023 for summaries). However, to date, limited attention has been given to examining parents’ role and influence as perpetrators of maltreatment in sport (Parent &
Fortier, 2017). The data from the current study is amongst some of the few (Pankowiak et al., 2023; Vertommen et al., 2016, 2022; Willson et al., 2021) to explicitly demonstrate abusive behaviours perpetrated by parents in sport. Participants reported that the most commonly experienced or witnessed abusive behaviours perpetrated by parents included, being made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards, being shouted at or sworn at angrily, and being criticised for how they played or performed. These results are unsurprising as research in the youth sport parenting context has recognised that parents can be involved in negative ways and exhibit some of the negative behaviours mentioned above (Leff & Hoyle, 1995). Such findings point to the need for future research to better understand the nature and influence of all significant others within the context of sport (Willson et al., 2022) to gain a better understanding of how they contribute to maltreatment. Particularly, the current findings highlight the need for researchers to consider research beyond the abuse and maltreatment literature such as that on youth sport parenting to help improve efforts of preventing abusive behaviours perpetrated by parents.

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

These findings reinforce recommendations that sporting organisations should endeavour to share information regarding all forms of maltreatment, especially bullying and emotional abuse, in a publicly accessible way to help parents better recognise and be empowered to challenge the socialisation and normalisation of poor practices (Johnson et al., 2020; Kerr, 2020). Moreover, prevention initiatives aiming to address the issue of abuse
perpetrated by parents would benefit from drawing on youth sport parenting educational initiatives (see Burke et al., 2021 for review). These evidence-based educational programs have considered the influence of parental involvement, factors influencing it, and strategies to enhance parental engagement in sport (Dorsch et al., 2017). Therefore, integrating some of this literature could contribute to a better understanding of how abusive parental behaviours may occur and inform future initiatives aimed at preventing abusive behaviours by parents in sport. In addressing issues of parents as perpetrators as abuse, consideration of them as important individuals to whom young people can report concerns should also be considered.

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

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

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

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

Moreover, beyond interventions with young people, the current findings reinforce the
need for evidence-based educational initiatives which focus on bystanders’ attitudes towards
emotional abuse and bullying, in order to promote more frequent defence of people experiencing bullying and emotional abuse (Corboz et al., 2018; Nery., 2019; Verhelle et al., 2022). However, such interventions should go beyond merely changing bystander attitudes toward bullying. Instead, they should actively involve bystanders in the situation, clarify how their actions can influence abusive incidents such as bullying and emotional abuse, and equip them with the necessary confidence and skills to intervene effectively (Nery et al., 2020). Research shows that bystanders tend to perceive that they are not involved in abusive behaviours especially bullying (Nery et al., 2020). Nonetheless, their tolerance or condemnation of abuse and bullying has an impact on the prevalence of such behaviours. Therefore, it is essential to work with bystanders to help motivate them to reject negative behaviours and advocate more frequently for victims. It is believed that bystander initiatives that encourage individuals to proactively intervene can be useful in addressing abusive behaviours (Nery et al., 2020).

3.4.1 Practical implications

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

Next, it was clear that contextual and environmental factors influenced experiences/observations of abuse as well as the likelihood of reporting. Therefore, coaches and sports organisations should strive to create safe and enjoyable environments that prioritise children’s human rights, developmental needs, and overall enjoyment and well-being. Specifically, coaches and sports clubs should work with children, parents, and other key individuals in sport to develop a clear philosophy to promote children’s safety and welfare in sports. This philosophy should outline the responsibilities of children and other key individuals in preventing and addressing abusive behaviours. In addition, it should include...
acceptable behaviours and should be communicated effectively to young people, parents, and other key individuals within the sporting environment.

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

3.4.2 Limitations

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

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

Another limitation, driven by ethical considerations to avoid causing harm to participants, was the non-compulsory nature of the survey questions. Participants were not obliged to answer every question. Consequently, many participants opted not to respond to all questions, which, in some instances, resulted in a limited number of responses. This limitation made it challenging to obtain an accurate and representative understanding of the
landscape, particularly regarding the frequency of abusive behaviours witnessed and experienced, as well as the identification of perpetrators. Therefore, the results are limited in their ability in truly reflecting the overall landscape.

### 3.4.3 Future Directions

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

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

While there has been a growing body of research on maltreatment in sport, many studies have been cross-sectional. Although such research has provided valuable insights into maltreatment in sport. Future research should endeavour to utilise longitudinal designs which focus on experiences throughout a season or multiple seasons to help enhance understanding of midterm and long-lasting experiences and consequences of maltreatment, and how young people who are targeted might cope with such negative experiences. Moreover, there is paucity of studies that have utilise a mixed methods approach to examine maltreatment in sport. Further research would benefit from mixed methods study designs that utilises a
validated psychometrically sound instrument to explore a range of different abuse in order to help enhance comprehensive understanding of maltreatment in sport. Although there has been an increased focus on preventing maltreatment in sport, solely focusing on preventing maltreatment does not necessarily ensure that young people will have enjoyable experiences. Recognising the important role of enjoyment in motivating young people to initiate and sustain their involvement in sport, future research should consider integrating these two concepts. Specifically, researchers should explore the relationship between safety and enjoyment to establish ways to optimise young people's overall sporting experiences, potentially leading to increased participation and commitment in sport.

3.4.4 Conclusion

Overall, the current study highlighted that young people, parents, and coaches are experiencing and witnessing bullying and emotional abuse in sport. Participants believed that these negative behaviours were occurring due to various individual and cultural and environmental factors. Further, the study illustrated that young people, parents, and coaches do not appear to recognise emotional abuse and bullying behaviours in sport and various challenges exist when it comes to intervening in cases of such negative behaviours. Taken together, findings from this study highlight the importance in developing evidence-based education initiatives to help educate young people, parents and other key individuals about abuse behaviours and safeguarding in sport.
Chapter 4: Developing optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience

4.1 Introduction

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

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

Recognising the rights of young people in sport has led to the emergence of various strategies to protect young people from different types of harm including emotional abuse and bullying (Rhind & Sekeyere, 2018). The most notable approach is safeguarding, which is a comprehensive and proactive approach to keeping children (i.e., 18 years and under) and vulnerable adults safe from harm or abuse (Department of Education, 2018). Safeguarding includes “protecting children from abuse and maltreatment; preventing harm to children’s health or development; ensuring provision of safe and effective care; enabling young people to have the best outcomes” (HM Government, 2018, p. 7). Safeguarding was formally
introduced in the UK sport context in 2001 with the formation of the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) and the publication of National Standards for Safeguarding Children in Sport (CPSU, 2003).

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

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

However, while the focus on ensuring children have safe sporting experiences is an extremely important one, recent research emphasises the importance of not only preventing harm in sport but also optimising sporting experiences (Gurgis & Kerr, 2022; Lang & Hartill, 2015). In fact, such an approach aligns with the view of the CPSU which is to ensure that all children have access to safe and enjoyable sporting experiences. Sport enjoyment is “a positive affective response to the sport experience that reflects generalised feelings such as pleasure, liking, and fun” (Scanlan et al., 1993, p. 6). Among the various motives for youth sport participation, enjoyment is commonly identified as one of, if not the, main reason...
children participate in sport (Salguero et al., 2004). Previous research has found enjoyment to be the primary motive and key predictor influencing commitment to organised youth sport programmes (Scanlan et al., 1993). When there is a lack of enjoyment (especially if combined with pressure to excel), research suggests that young people often lose interest and drop out of sports entirely or pursue other activities they find more enjoyable (Gardner et al., 2016).

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

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Methodological Approach and Philosophical Underpinnings

The current study utilised a Grounded theory (GT) methodology. Grounded theory is a group of methodologies that are concerned with generating theory of a phenomena that is grounded within empirical data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Weed, 2017). It is suggested that GT is beneficial when exploring novel areas of investigation with limited existing theories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Moreover, research suggests that GT is useful in investigating research topics that focus on social processes (i.e., causes, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions) present in human interaction specifically in the environments in which they take place (Glaser, 1978; Stern et al., 1982). Specifically, GT is suited to research questions which focus on ways in which individuals and groups interact, adjust, readjust, and establish relationships and patterns of behaviour which are modified through social interactions (e.g., ‘process’) (Glaser, 1996; Stern et al. 1982). Given that the current study
sought to explore the process leading to optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experiences, GT was deemed a suitable approach to employ. Furthermore, although there has been a recent increased emphasis on preventing maltreatment in sport and optimising young people’s sporting experiences (Gurgis et al., 2023; Owusu-Sekyere et al., 2021), to the best of my knowledge there are no existing theories on this topic. Therefore, GT was considered a useful approach to utilise.

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

4.2.2 Sampling

Following receipt of University Ethics Board approval, participant recruitment commenced. A combination of purposive and theoretical sampling strategies were employed for this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Patton, 2002) (see Figure 4.1 for an overview of sampling process). In GT methodology, initial participants are sampled based on their ability to best address the research aims (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Given that sport organisations in Wales have a responsibility for protecting and promoting children’s safety and wellbeing in sport (CPSU, 2018), lead safeguarding officers and/or club welfare officers were recruited first because they have a fundamental responsibility to safeguard children in sport. These participants were recruited first because it was anticipated that due to the nature of their roles, they would possess relevant knowledge of policies and procedures related to safeguarding and the protection of young people in sport. Furthermore, it was also thought that these individuals would have had access and interactions with different individuals at various levels in sport. Therefore, they were approached to provide a comprehensive overview and detailed insights into the research topic (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).
Subsequent recruitment of participants involved theoretical sampling, which enables researchers to explore leads in the data by sampling participants or other material that provide...
relevant information relating to concepts developed in preceding stages of data collection and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Paramount to GT methodology is the iterative process of data collection, sampling, and analysis throughout the research process to develop a substantive or formal theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Specifically, GT focuses on theory development, with data collection and analysis occurring concurrently, allowing for subsequent data collection to be informed by the emerging theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This continual interplay between data collection, sampling, and analysis is directed by theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). As concepts and explanations develop through rounds of data analysis, researchers may identify new interview questions, additional participants, or different data collection sites/settings to enhance the understanding of the emerging theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The process is guided by the requirements of the emergent theory and cannot be predetermined.

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

Finally, as the process of theoretical sampling advanced, additional concepts continued to be developed pertaining to ‘coach competence,’ ‘developmentally appropriate training sessions,’ ‘designated and accessible welfare officer,’ among others. As a result, additional parents, coaches, safeguarding lead officers and welfare officers were sampled to explore these ideas. Then, in the final phases of data collection additional young people, coaches, safeguarding lead officers, welfare officers, and parents were recruited based on the
emerging concepts. Sampling concluded once the processes of constant comparison no longer generated new concepts, theoretical insights or interpretations between concepts, and the researcher felt that the theory was sufficiently developed (i.e., theoretical saturation; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). At this point, theoretical saturation was reached, in which the theory had achieved a satisfactory level of development as such data collection concluded (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

4.2.3 Participants

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

4.2.4 Data Collection

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

Separate interview guides were developed for young people, parents, coaches, and individuals in safeguarding roles. Across all participants, each interview began with introductory questions, followed by main questions, before concluding with summary questions (see Appendix G for examples) (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The introductory questions aimed to establish rapport while collecting demographic information (i.e., sport, competitive level, competition frequency) and understanding participants’ involvement in sport. For example, young people were asked, what led to their participation in sport and how long they
had been involved in their sport; parents were asked about their experiences, and; coaches and those in safeguarding roles were asked about their roles within sport. The main questions examined perceptions of enjoyment and safety within sport. For example, young people were asked what they enjoyed and disliked about taking part in sport. In addition, they were asked what made them feel safe or unsafe in sport. All other participants were asked about what they believed young people enjoyed and disliked about sport, and what they believed it meant to feel safe or unsafe in sport.

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

4.2.5 Data Analysis

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

Next, axial coding was conducted. This involved reconstructing fractured data by making connections between the various categories and subcategories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Specifically, data were reviewed and coded again to identify connections between
concepts that were identified during the initial coding process. For example, “welcoming environment helps increase enjoyment and safety”, and “making sure training drills are developmentally appropriate” are some of the axial codes used. The final stage, known as theoretical saturation, occurred once all concepts were fully developed in terms of properties and dimensions and careful consideration was given to the context and process, and relationships between categories had been identified (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Specifically, theoretical saturation involved identifying and organising concepts around the core category (the category representing the primary focus of the research).

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

Furthermore, the flip-flop technique was used in which questions were asked of the data to obtain different perspectives. For example, when participants explained that having shared goals and expectations helped optimise their safety and enjoyment, follow-up questions were asked to subsequent participants exploring situations where goals and expectations were not shared, and the consequences of such instances. This process facilitated the exploration of variations and the identification of significant properties within the concept of “shared goals and expectations.” Further, so what questions were asked of the data, for example, when participants expressed the importance of having a “coach that cared,” questions were asked, so what if a coach is caring, what does it mean to have a coach that cares, what does having a caring coach mean in the grand scheme of enjoyment and safety in sport, what does it matter.
In addition to coding for concepts, properties, and dimensions, the analysis process also included coding for context and process. According to Straussian GT, a context pertains to a set of conditions that shape the nature of situations, or problems, to which individuals respond to by way of action/interaction/emotions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Process refers to, ongoing responses to problems or circumstances that arise out of the context (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Including context and process is a fundamental component to GT studies, as it plays a key role in making sure concepts are grounded in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Within the current study, the concept of having appropriate ‘safe and hygienic sports facilities’ highlights the context and the importance of situating young people within a safe and clean environment to enhance their overall experiences. Similarly, the concept, ‘engage in honest communication’ refers to the process through which individuals in the environment interact, and the way communication takes place can either positively or negatively impact young people’s enjoyment and safety in sport.

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

4.2.5.2 Memos. Throughout data collection and analysis, memos were also created. These memos, along with diagrams, were used to facilitate the identification of properties and dimensions of concepts, as well as understanding the relationships between them. Moreover, these memos served as an audit trail documenting thought processes and decision-making throughout the study. In total, 43 memos were created varying in length, some a paragraph long and others almost two pages in length. Most memos from the initial interviews were shorter in length and were based on interesting information/topics that emerged during the interview which warranted further exploration in either the follow-up interviews, or by reading relevant literature, or both. As the study progressed towards the later stages of data collection and analysis, the memos became longer and served to assist in considering the potential connections between different concepts. These memos drew upon previous memos, interview data, and existing literature to inform my reasoning. They also played an important role in highlighting concepts and categories that were not fully developed, indicating the need for further exploration.
4.2.5.3 The Use of Literature. Straussian GT encourages a basic review of the literature as it can be useful in providing context to the phenomenon being studied and assist in developing a strong rationale for the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Moreover, it is acknowledged that integrating pertinent literature at appropriate stages throughout the data collection, analysis, and theory generation process can increase theoretical sensitivity and avoid duplicating existing knowledge (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2020). In the current study, a literature review was conducted prior to commencement to gain a comprehensive understanding of safeguarding and enjoyment in sport. Subsequently, following the initial stages of data collection and analysis, existing literature was used to further explore the concepts that had been developed. This helped inform questions asked to subsequent participants and ensure that each concept was fully developed in terms of its properties and dimensions. For example, initial interviews highlighted that having positive peer relationships influenced young people’s safety and enjoyment in sport.

4.2.6 Methodological Rigour

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

First, the authors suggest that epistemological and ontological perspectives and the research questions should align with the variant of GT employed in the study. Consistent with these suggestions, the current study employed a Straussian GT approach which aligned with the researcher’s ontological and epistemological perspective (i.e., interpretivism). Following the selection of the Straussian GT approach all subsequent research decisions were informed and in line with this approach. For example, prior to data collection and analysis, a review of the literature was conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon understudy. Moreover, analytic tools such as the flip flop technique, and asking so what, which are specific to Straussian GT were employed to enhance theoretical sensitivity (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Furthermore, other key features of this approach such as axial coding were utilised to identify connections between concepts and/or categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).
Secondly, Holt and Tamminen (2010b) suggest that researchers consider participant sampling and sample size. Unique to grounded theory GT studies is the concept of theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation, which are critical in determining the suitability of participants and decisions regarding the conclusion of data collection (e.g., Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Thus, purposive sampling and theoretical sampling were utilised in the current study. For example, initially safeguarding lead officers were purposively sampled given that have a responsibility over young people’s safety and wellbeing in sport. However, as data collection and analysis progressed theoretical sampling included the recruitment of young people, parents, and coaches. This process facilitated the development and refinement of emerging concepts such as ‘shared goals and expectations’ by identifying properties and dimensions. This process helped identify connections between different concepts.

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

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

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

4.3.1 Optimally safe and enjoyable sport experiences

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

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

Taken together, within the context of this grounded theory, an optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience is one in which young people feel happy, comfortable, confident, competent, relaxed, and connected with others in the environment. It is an...
environment in which young people feel valued, that things feel familiar, they have a sense of
security (free from anticipation of any harm both emotionally or physically), and they
experience and perceive self-development.

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

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

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

For such relationships to exist, participants consistently expressed that it was essential
for people in the immediate sporting environment to be welcoming, friendly, approachable,
and acknowledge one another. For instance, when explaining how positive relationships
could be developed Katie (18-year-old national hockey player) shared, “it’s as simple as
everyone saying hi and if someone new joins, make the effort to introduce yourself, that
obviously makes new players feel comfortable, you know just say hi and involve them in the
group.” Aligned with this, Iona (BUCS basketball coach), highlighted her responsibility as a
coach was to make players and parents feel comfortable and valued, stating, “I guess as a
coach it’s my responsibility to make players and parents feel comfortable and let them know
they can approach me, because I really value them and want them to feel comfortable.”

Importantly, as indicated, such sentiments extended beyond young people and it was
recognised that it was important for parents in the environment to feel valued as, Toni (Lead
safeguarding officer/Head of governance) expressed, “You know, it’s not just about making
children feel safe, coaches also need to make parents feel that the children are safe.”
Beyond relationships and interactions within the immediate environment, participants also placed emphasis on the physical environment. Specifically, participants expressed that the sport setting should be safe for young people to participate in as Jermaine, (father of a regional tennis player), mentioned, “I guess the facilities are important. As a parent, you’re always looking for a club with the right facilities. It should be hygienic and safe for her to be in.” Participants believed that it was important for the sport setting to be clean, hygienic, and equipped with appropriate sport-specific equipment for young people to participate safely. Jerome, a county football coach, stated, “In a grass root environment, I have to always think about the physical space, is it safe? Have they got the correct equipment? That’s really important to make sure things are ok before kids even start kicking a ball.” Meanwhile, Jason (18-year-old academy football player) expressed this sentiment when talking about his old club, “the aesthetics of the place weren’t great. It was very rundown, and it wasn’t a pleasant environment. The facilities were poor, so I didn’t really enjoy playing there.”

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

I think the academy has a duty to create a safe environment for the players and have processes and systems in place so that whatever is happening follows strict guidelines. Children should be at the centre of it, and their safety should be paramount.

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

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

Tag rugby is for under 7’s and under 8’s, then around under 9’s and under 11’s that’s when players learn to tackle and have contact. So, when you’re teaching things, you
know, you need to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate, and players understand. Especially tackling, that’s a massive thing for kids going from pulling tags off someone to tackling someone, you know it’s a step-by-step approach. Age-appropriate sessions enabled young people to adapt to the demands and physical aspects of their sport without risking injury. Furthermore, it appeared crucial that sessions were pitched at the right level to ensure that children are both enjoying themselves and learning new skills. By doing so, their confidence increased, in turn enhancing their overall enjoyment. For example, Mona (14-year-old county tennis player) shared:

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

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

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

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

Taken together, the core category suggests that fostering positive relationships among young people and key individuals while simultaneously cultivating a welcoming, safe, and developmentally appropriate sport environment is key for optimally safe and enjoyable experiences. Specifically, the setting should be welcoming, hygienic, and have appropriate facilities, equipment, policies, and procedures in place. Additionally, it should provide children with developmentally safe and enjoyable sporting experiences, in which performance expectations are balanced with personal progress. Achievement of this core category occurs through the alignment of 12 categories. Three of these categories (a-c) relate
to the broad sporting context (factors external to the immediate sporting environment
including and related to the National Governing Body) which is discussed first, followed by
nine that exist in the immediate sporting context (i.e., the specific club/environment in which
children are training/competing) (d-l). The theory is displayed in Figure 4.2.
Figure 4.2 A grounded theory of an optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience.
4.3.3 Category (a): Tangible support to create physically safe and developmentally appropriate sessions

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

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

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

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

Participants also highlighted the importance of sports organisations, with support from the NGB, providing access to continuing professional development (CPD) training for key individuals (i.e., coaches and individuals in safeguarding roles). Specifically, it was recognised that to provide enjoyable and developmentally safe and appropriate sessions, coaches needed to be competent, which required them to consistently enhance their knowledge. Gwen (Academy tennis coach) explained:
I think it’s important to have the right amount of training to know how to set sessions to make sure they are developmentally appropriate because it can become more challenging with bigger groups of kids, so it’s important that coaches really get stuck into CPD. The LTA are pretty big on coach development, they pile tons of resources into it, so I think we’re probably a little bit ahead of the game compared to some of the sports when it comes to access to CPD and stuff.

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

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

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

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

The final category related to the broader sporting context related to staff networks. Specifically, participants highlighted the importance of individuals involved in working with children and particularly in safeguarding capacities (i.e., coaches and welfare officers) having access to a broad supportive professional network. Such networks included individuals who possessed knowledge and expertise in safeguarding to support staff to effectively implement
policies and practices. For example, when explaining what enabled her to fulfil her job responsibilities as a club welfare officer, Lynda (club welfare officer) said:

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

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

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

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

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

Within the immediate sporting context, participants emphasised the importance of policies and procedures. One aspect that was particularly highlighted by participants was the necessity for clubs to have a designated welfare officer. As expressed by Rhodri (father of an academy rugby player), “I think, in this day and age with everything with player welfare and everything clubs should have welfare officers that kids can go to with any issues.” Ray (17-year-old academy football player) reiterated, “it’s quite good because at the academy we have a welfare officer that we can go to if we need to talk about anything, which makes me feel at
ease.” However, it was also important for clubs to ensure that young people and key individuals were informed about the identity of the welfare officer and knew how to access them if needed. Katrina (regional tennis coach) explained, “I think it’s really important that safeguarding stuff is communicated to players and parents, so they know what to do and who to go to if there is a problem or concern.” Participants highlighted the importance of welfare officers introducing themselves to increase visibility and awareness. For example, Jenny (CPSU Development officer) said:

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

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

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

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

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

It’s important that if there is poor practice at a club level regardless of what it is, is addressed, and someone has a word with the individuals in question and those low-level reports are recorded. So, then if it continues to keep happening then it can be
escalated to the NGB. But it’s important that it’s dealt with professionally and education is provided to the individuals involved to help them understand what is and isn’t acceptable, so it doesn’t continue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Such open communication was particularly important from a safeguarding perspective because it helped participants feel more comfortable to report concerns if needed. Jenny (CPSU Development officer) explained, “I think it’s important for children and parents
to have the confidence to address things early on and have that kind of open dialogue with coaches or a welfare officer.” Similarly, Katie (18-year-old national hockey player) shared:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Individuals in the immediate sport setting, specifically coaches, parents, and young people, need to establish shared goals and expectations. When parents, coaches, and young people shared common objectives for matches/competitions and long-term development in sport, it created a sense of comfort and enabled young people to derive enjoyment from their sport. Kimi (13-year-old regional tennis player) explained, “it feels good because they [coach and parents] know my goals are and they just support me, which is nice, there’s no pressure.”

Likewise, when asked what made her feel safe and enjoy swimming Rhiannon (13-year-old
regional swimmer) shared, “I love it my coaches want the best for me, my parents want the best for me and there’s nothing else in between, we’re all on the same page.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

Similarly, Elana (mother of county tennis player) said, “I suppose there could be more awareness around expected behaviour of parents.”
Participants expressed the significance of creating opportunities for players, parents, and coaches to come together either formally or informally. These interactions not only fostered open conversations and provided a platform for discussing common goals and expectations, but they also offered a chance for relationships to develop, ultimately enhancing safety and enjoyment. Brian (county rugby coach/national coach development officer) said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The relationship between a young person and their coach was paramount in ensuring optimal safety and enjoyment. One of the key factors influencing this relationship was the coach’s capacity for caring. Susan (Lead safeguarding officer/chairperson) explained:
When I say a good coach, I don’t mean somebody who knows the sport. I mean somebody who cares about them [young people], who is invested in their future, who cares about them as a whole person is trying to develop their character, not just their athletic talent. From my point of view, I think that it is important that a sports club has people instructing children with those types of values.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Linked to this, participants indicated that emotional support from parents played a key role in enhancing young people’s sporting experiences. Participants emphasised that...
competing was challenging, and many young people tended to be self-critical. Thus, receiving encouragement from parents helped young people feel better and helped them focus on the positives, which in turn enabled them to have more of a positive experience. Jacinda, (17-year-old county-level football player) explained:

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

Susan (Lead safeguarding officer/chairperson) reiterated, “There has to be a point where parents understand that it’s important to watch their children and it’s important to encourage them and not to be over critical about their performance.” To engage in this way, it was important that parents maintained control over their own emotions. Emotional support from parents was also displayed through the provision of autonomy over participation. Young people valued the freedom to participate without pressure, which enabled them to feel comfortable and have positive experiences. For example, Rob (14-year-old national swimmer) expressed:

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

4.3.12 Category (k): Welcoming friendly peers

Participants expressed the importance of young people creating a friendly and welcoming environment, particularly when new individuals joined. For example, when responding to what he felt could help young people have safe and enjoyable experiences, Devin (14-year-old county cricket player) said, “I think it’s important to be friendly if someone new joins, you should make an effort to introduce yourself and make them feel welcome.” Similarly, Katie (18-year-old national hockey player) said, “it can be quite daunting joining a new team if you don’t know anyone, so I always try my best to make new people feel welcome.” Creating a welcoming atmosphere was vital, as Jason (18-year-old academy football player) explained his experience joining the academy, “the boys [teammates] were so welcoming when I joined, they helped me a lot with settling in, I felt really comfortable, and it allowed me to crack on and play football.” Likewise, Rhys (16-
year-old academy rugby player) described how the welcoming attitude of his peers helped him socialise and integrate into his academy team, “some of the senior players were very welcoming, it was so helpful because it made me feel relaxed and I could just be myself.”

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

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

4.3.13 (I): Trusting and supportive friendships with shared experiences

Participants explained that through opportunities to socialise and having welcoming and friendly peers, young people were able to develop trusting friendships. Having trusting peer relationships helped young people support and better understand each other. This was particularly important when it came to banter and camaraderie. Participants explained that banter and camaraderie were a key part of peer relationships in sport, especially within team sports. Ray (17-year-old academy football player) shared, “I enjoy having a laugh with the boys, we take the piss out of each all the time, I actually think banter is healthy.” That said, participants highlighted that banter had the potential of getting out of hand. However, participants believed that having supportive peer relationships helped young people navigate banter and camaraderie. For example, Devin (14-year-old county cricket player) shared, “we have banter, but people know not to step over the line, we all know each other and if it was to get too intense, we would step in and say stop.” Moreover, having supportive peer relationships also gave young people the confidence to intervene and challenge any banter that they felt went too far. For example, Jacinda (17-year-old county-level football player) said, “I’m confident to step in if anything got out of hand, if someone was taking the piss out of someone, we all have a good relationship, so I’d feel comfortable to say something.”
Also, teammates and peers having opportunities to interact was important to facilitate shared experiences. For example, when explaining how peers positively influenced his safety and enjoyment Rueben (15-year-old county cricket player), “it’s nice to play with my friends. Like everyone is in the same boat as you as well, so everyone can relate to what you can relate to.” Participants highlighted that having peers in sport were important because they provided a sense of relatedness through shared experiences. For instance, Marco (13-year-old national tennis player) explained, “I feel safe playing with my friends, obviously we all play tennis together like they understand stuff like my other friends don’t.” Similarly, Ray (17-year-old academy football player) shared, “everyone’s there for the same reason; everyone’s here because we love playing football[…] When you’re chatting and playing with friends I think it just becomes much comfortable, you train better, you play better as a team.”

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

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

4.3.14 A grounded theory of optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experiences

To create optimally safe and enjoyable experiences for young people, the fundamental requirement is that positive relationships exist between all young people and key individuals in a physically safe and developmentally safe setting (Core Category). Achieving this requires consideration of two elements: the broader sporting context and the immediate sporting context. When considering the broader sporting context, it was apparent that sports organisations/clubs must have positive relationships with and receive adequate support from their NGB. Firstly, there is a need to ensure NGBs are providing appropriate resources and tangible support to ensure that clubs and organisations can offer physically safe facilities/environments in which young people can participate in enjoyable developmentally appropriate sessions (Category A). Additionally, NGB’s should provide access to continuing
professional development (CPD) training for coaches and individuals in safeguarding roles (Category B). This helps staff in the immediate sporting context to fulfil their coaching or safeguarding roles appropriately and effectively (e.g., Category D and Category H). This is also facilitated by having access to a broad network of individuals involved in safeguarding roles, who are knowledgeable and equipped regarding safeguarding (Category C). Such networks provide valuable support to staff in the immediate sporting environment to help effectively implement safeguarding policies and procedures (Category E), enabling them to make informed decisions aligned with club policies and procedures, which in turn helps optimise safety and enjoyment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regarding the mesosystem, indirect interactions between parents, coaches, and young people, as well as the opportunities for all parties to interact and develop shared goals and expectations among themselves, influence the positive relationships between these groups (Gould et al., 2007; Knight & Holt, 2014; Smoll, 2011). These positive relationships, in turn, contribute to creating a safe and enjoyable sporting experience. Meanwhile, concerning the ecosystem, the current GT demonstrates that the broader sporting system and culture has a direct impact on the immediate sporting context. For example, within the broader sporting...
context, having tangible support for creating physically safe and developmentally appropriate sessions, along with the availability of continuing professional development (CPD) training opportunities, enables the establishment of a physically safe setting within the immediate environment and empowers coaches to deliver developmentally appropriate sessions. Moreover, having an integrated professional network that is knowledgeable and equipped regarding safeguarding supports individuals in safeguarding roles to appropriately implement safeguarding policies and procedures in the immediate sporting context, thereby optimising young people’s sporting experiences.

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

In relation to the broader sporting context, significant emphasis was placed on ensuring access to and participation in CPD training for coaches and individuals in safeguarding roles. Specifically, the GT highlighted the importance of sports organisations, with support from the NGB, providing access to CPD for coach development. Although research has highlighted the importance of CPD for coach development (Lyle, 2002; Welch & Jong, 2007), the current GT furthers our understanding of why CPD is so important in relation to optimising safety and enjoyment. For example, having access to CPD was perceived to enable coaches to deliver enjoyable, developmentally safe, and appropriate sessions which was a central aspect of the core category in the immediate sporting context. Specifically, the core category demonstrated that it was paramount to have developmentally appropriate activities to ensure that sessions were pitched at the right level. This approach helped foster enjoyment and self-development while also allowing young people to adapt to the physical demands of their sport without risking injury. Given the varied and diverse
developmental stages of young people participating in youth sport (Cote & Hay, 2002; Fraser Thomas et al., 2005) coaches would benefit from undergoing CPD training for effective coaching across multiple age groups. Participants also highlighted that CPD was beneficial in enabling coaches to connect and engage with young people in a safer and more relatable manner. Therefore, the GT reaffirms that coach education provided by the NGB is a fundamental aspect of coach learning and that education programs play a key role in the sports coaching profession as they provide assurance of coach competency and contribute significantly to the development of coaching as a profession (Lyle, 2002).

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

Central to the proposed grounded theory is the importance of positive relationships between young people and key individuals. Positive relationships play a key role in young people’s overall development and significantly influence their performance, well-being, and long-term engagement in sport (Davis & Jowett, 2010; Smoll et al., 2011; Weiss, 2003). Thus, it is unsurprising that positive relationships were a key factor within the current theory. However, what is important in the proposed GT is the significance of relationships from all perspectives. Specifically, it was apparent that it is not only specific dyadic relationships between, for instance, the coach-young person, coach-parent, or peer-peer that matter when considering safeguarding, but rather the collective interactions and relationships across all parties. Thus, to optimise safety and enjoyment within the immediate sporting context...
emphasis should be placed on enhancing all relationships and recognising the negative impact that minimising or dismissing one party (typically parents) within the youth sport environment will ultimately have on the experiences of all young people in that setting. Specifically, it is apparent that tailored interventions targeting the prevention of maltreatment or enhancing sporting experiences will have limited impact if they do not consider or include all the key individuals in the sporting environment.

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

However, previous literature has been limited in exploring why these characteristics, across these three parties are so important in influencing sporting experiences. The proposed GT addresses this. That is, these characteristics were seen as necessary in individuals because they enabled open, honest, and respectful communication to occur. Previous studies have found that open communication channels play a key role in building positive between parents, coaches, and young people (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008; Lavoi, 2007). It is suggested that positive coach-athlete relationships, along with effective communication between parents and coaches, can provide a healthy environment for young people to develop (Vella et al., 2010). The GT extends this point, as participants also expressed that from a safeguarding perspective, having open channels of communication that were honest and respectful made participants feel comfortable to use the implemented safeguarding policies and report concerns if needed.
Research has identified various barriers to disclosing or reporting safeguarding concerns in sport (CPSU, 2022; Mountjoy et al., 2021), and parents’ awareness of bullying and abuse in sport has been associated with a lack of communication with coaches. Therefore, the proposed GT emphasises that it is important not only for sports organisations to have appropriately implemented safeguarding policies and procedures but also indicates that emphasis should be placed on creating a healthy organisational culture that fosters positive interactions and communication between individuals. This will help improve relationships and increases people’s confidence to utilise the available safeguarding mechanisms in place (Mountjoy et al., 2016).

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

However, some caution should be taken when developing these expectations and seeking to develop positive relationships, particularly between coaches and young people. For instance, issues of favouritism and preferential treatment can be problematic, and may actually contribute to maltreatment in sport. Research shows that forming social connections appears to be closely linked to the steps in the grooming process, which involves building trust and crossing boundaries with a young person and their social circle (Bisgaard & Støckel, 2019). Research indicates that coaches use their success, reputation, and social capital as a shield of protection while grooming and exploiting young athletes. Therefore, while the
findings of the current study indicate that positive relationships are imperative for optimising sport enjoyment and safety, precautions must be taken to protect young people and foster a culture for coaches to operate professionally without crossing personal boundaries, especially in small local clubs where everyone knows each other well (Bisgaard & Støckel, 2019).

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

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

4.4.1 Applied Implications

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

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

Given that participants in the current study highlighted the importance of individuals in safeguarding roles having access to a professional network to help them appropriately implement safeguarding policies and procedures. NGBs should try and facilitate regular online or in-person meetings with lead safeguarding officers, and welfare officers from different sports and sporting organisations. Such meetings would bring together various
individuals responsible for safeguarding and provide an opportunity for a support network to
develop with various individuals with different knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, given
that participants also discussed the importance of having access to CPD training on
safeguarding, such meetings would also enable individuals to discuss educational needs and
identify and share information of safeguarding training opportunities and resources which, in
turn, enable individuals to appropriately and effectively handle concerns and implement
safeguarding policies and procedures.

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

Second, it is important to consider methodological limitations, especially considering
that research recommends the use of multiple data collection methods in grounded theory
(GT) studies to enable methodological triangulation (Flick, 2019). Due to the COVID-19
lockdown restrictions, it was only feasible to utilise semi-structured interviews in the current
study. It is suggested that GT studies should be bounded to focus on concepts and categories
directly related to the core category (Nathaniel, 2020). Therefore, it should be noted that, in
relation to the current study, there might have been other factors influencing safety and
enjoyment that could have been captured through alternative data collection methods, such as
observations and triangulation of data from diverse sources (e.g., interviews and
observations). Therefore, if feasible future research may consider utilising multiple data
sources to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under
investigation (Flick, 2019).
Finally, the current study provides valuable insights into the perceptions of young people, parents, coaches, and individuals in safeguarding roles regarding factors that contribute to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience. However, it is essential to acknowledge that there are numerous other individuals involved in youth sports within the immediate and broader sporting context who potentially play a role in optimising safety and enjoyment. Therefore, future research may benefit from including a larger, more diverse sample and exploring the perspectives of individuals involved in sports in various capacities and roles, including physiotherapists, sports psychologists, team managers, performance managers, officials, and CEOs etc. By incorporating these perspectives, a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing safety and enjoyment in sports can be achieved. Furthermore, this may assist in stimulating the development of the current theory into a formal theory.

**4.4.3 Conclusion**

The current study explored factors contributing to an optimally safe sporting experience. Using a Straussian GT methodological approach, a substantive GT was developed outlining the process leading to an optimally safe and enjoyable sporting experience. The results of the current study provide context and a detailed understanding of the process underpinning safe and enjoyable sporting experiences. In particular, the theory highlights that having positive relationships between young people and key individuals in a welcoming, environmentally safe, and developmentally appropriate setting is fundamental to optimising safety and enjoyment in youth sports. The results indicate that many factors in the immediate and broader sporting context interact to influence the optimisation of safe and enjoyable sporting experiences. Subsequently, the current study emphasises the importance of considering both the broader and immediate sporting environment when ensuring safety and enjoyment in youth sport. Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of not only focusing on protecting young people from abuse and preventing harm but also promoting their well-being and ensuring that they have enjoyable sporting experiences. The results may be used to help sport organisations and individuals design and deliver safeguarding initiatives to help enhance young people's overall sporting experiences.
Chapter 5: Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating a Creative Educational Safeguarding Workshop

5.1 Introduction

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

Recognising the need to address issues of maltreatment in sport, recommendations were made by Mountjoy et al. (2016) in the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) Consensus Statement on harassment and abuse, emphasising the need for evidence-based education as a key approach in the prevention of abuse in sport. This recommendation was further emphasised in the European Commission-funded report on gender-based violence (Mergaert et al., 2016). Although research suggests that maltreatment issues should be considered and addressed at a systemic level (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014; Kerr et al., 2019), providing ongoing evidence-based education on bullying and emotional abuse for young people, coaches, parents, and other key individuals within the sporting environment can also potentially be a catalyst for long-term transformations in sports culture (Breger et al., 2019). It is suggested that education is particularly valuable as it can help equip individuals with the knowledge to recognise, respond to, and report concerns (MacPherson et al., 2022). However, although there is a clear need to implement evidence-based educational initiatives (Mountjoy et al., 2016), aside from those conducted by a few key authors (e.g., McMahon et al., 2013; 2018; 2022; 2023; Rulofs et al., 2015) studies centred on educating individuals regarding abuse in sport are limited.
The evidence generated through existing education initiatives is extremely beneficial, not least because they have highlighted both topics for consideration as well as approaches for communicating messages. However, to-date, few studies have explicitly focused on providing education to children and adolescents (i.e., below the age of 16 years old; McMahon et al., 2023). Rather, previous interventions have been conducted with coaches (McMahon et al., 2013), parents (McMahon, 2018), or young people aged between 16-22 years. In fact, the only study involving young people below the age of 16 years also incorporated coaches (McMahon et al., 2023), therefore comprised mixed populations.

Research, including the findings from Chapter Three, suggests that bullying and emotional abuse is prevalent during adolescence (i.e., 13-18 years) (Alexander et al., 2011; Brown et al., 2005; Finkelhor, et al., 2015). Consequently, developing and delivering early educational initiatives would be beneficial to reduce such incidences from occurring in sport (Mountjoy et al., 2020; Nery et al., 2020).

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

Finally, to-date, abuse education interventions have focused only on abuse and have not included information regarding how to optimise sporting experiences. Although ensuring safety and preventing maltreatment in youth sports is paramount, recent research focusing on safety in sport highlights the importance of including and prioritising the optimisation of sporting experiences, ensuring accessibility, promoting growth, and upholding all young people’s rights in sport (Gurgis et al., 2023). In fact, as argued in Chapter Four, irradicating
emotional abuse and bullying will not guarantee positive sporting experiences. There is a need to remove negative behaviours while enhancing positive ones. Thus, it is important that educational initiatives not only focus on the prevention of abuse and bullying but also include information on how to enhance young people’s enjoyment and overall sporting experiences in sport. Furthermore, given the sensitive nature of bullying and emotional abuse, providing some positive content in educational initiatives may be useful to ensure young participants are not overwhelmed or excessively concerned about potential negative experiences within sport.

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

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

A creative educational workshop was selected because previous studies have highlighted the benefits of using creative research approaches, such as arts-based activities, story-completion, and story-mediated interviews to engage young people in research focused on sensitive topics (Braun et al., 2018; Gravett, 2019; Tumanyan & Huuki, 2020). Particularly, creative approaches are perceived to be beneficial in such settings because they provide an opportunity for young people to express themselves freely, reflect on their own experiences and generate new insights in response to experiences that may be difficult to vocalise (Fraser & Al Sayah, 2011).
Some support for such an approach has been provided in a recent abuse education study by McMahon and colleagues (2023). McMahon et al. (2023) utilised a variety of different formats including visual, auditory, and artefacts (i.e., audio recordings of coaches’ voices captured by the media, videos, and published pictures) to deliver educational content on non-sexualised types of abuse to coaches and young people aged 7-18 years. However, no previous studies have explicitly utilised creative arts-based activities and story completion interviews in educational initiatives focused on abuse in sport with young people in sport aged between 13-15 years of age.

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Methodology and Philosophical Underpinnings

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

It is suggested that there are various general areas of focus addressed by feasibility studies (Bowen et al., 2009). Drawing on methodological literature on feasibility studies in social and behavioural interventions, it is suggested that the main areas of focus of a feasibility study include, the evaluation of data collection procedures and outcome measures, evaluation of acceptability of the intervention and study procedures, and evaluation of preliminary evaluation of participant responses to the intervention (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015). First, assessing data collection procedures and outcome measures involves determining whether these methods are suitable for the intended population and research aims. Second, evaluating participant responses to the intervention involves assessing the participants’
perception of the appropriateness and acceptability of the study procedures and intervention. Finally, examining participant responses to the intervention determines its potential for success with the target population (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015).

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

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

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

Aligned with this approach, a creative educational workshop was designed, incorporating various interactive activities, including a story completion writing task coupled with a story mediated-interview (i.e., semi-structured interview) and a creative arts-based task
Story completion is theoretically flexible and not constrained by any specific philosophical paradigm but it can be used effectively and appropriately from an interpretivist perspective (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Similarly, arts-based methods are typically associated with qualitative inquiry which is seeking to gain insights into a variety of realities and experiences (i.e., considering the world through an interpretivist lens).

5.2.2 The Setting and participants

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.4 Workshop creation, content, and duration

The content and duration of the current workshop was informed by previous research (i.e., Mountjoy et al., 2015; Stirling 2009) and findings from study one (Chapter 3) and two (Chapter 4). Specifically, findings from study one (Chapter 3), highlighted that young people were witnessing and experiencing emotional abuse and bullying in youth sport across Wales. Participants expressed a need for information focusing on the constituents and potential detrimental outcomes of emotional abuse and bullying, which was context-specific and tailored to their sport. Participants also highlighted the need for information about where to seek help and support in case of concerns, aiming to prevent and address negative experiences. Participants recommended that in-person interactive workshops would be useful to help in the prevention and intervention of bullying and emotional abuse. Participants
believed that workshops around 45-60 minutes long would be sufficient and useful in facilitating discussions, enhancing engagement, and fostering effective learning.

In response to these findings, the content of the interactive creative educational workshop was designed (Table 5.1). Specifically, recognising that previous research in school settings has found creative pedagogy as a useful approach in enhancing young people’s knowledge and awareness of bullying among secondary school students (ages 14-16 years) (Saibon et al., 2017), consideration was given to a broad variety of creative approaches to sharing information and enhancing engagement with the topics. The final creative educational workshop included five key topics; (1) things young people enjoy about sport, (2) emotionally abusive and bullying behaviours, (3) potential detrimental outcomes of bullying and emotional abuse, (4) the role others can play in incidents of emotional abuse and bullying, and (5) what to do if you have concerns. A total of nine activities were used to share this information (see Table 5.1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Content &amp; Activities</th>
<th>The rationale for activity and literature used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Icebreaker activity</td>
<td>To build rapport with players, learn their names and understand what things they enjoy and dislike about tennis</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition activity</td>
<td>To understand what players like most about their club and what makes them feel comfortable</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Information obtained from participants was used as the catalyst for the arts-based activity at the end of the session around sport enjoyment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story completion writing task</td>
<td>To understand participant’s perceptions of a bullying scenario and to subsequently evaluate changes.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The statement game</td>
<td>Understand young people’s perceptions and understanding of emotional abuse and bullying</td>
<td>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?</td>
<td>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 &amp; Kerr, 2008). In addition, some scenarios were developed from bullying and emotionally abusive examples on the LTA website. Also, it is suggested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Navigation &amp; Interactions</th>
<th>Understand participant’s perceptions of emotional abuse and bullying</th>
<th>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.</th>
<th>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 &amp; Kerr, 2008; Stirling, 2008). In addition, some scenarios were developed from bullying and emotionally abusive examples from the LTA website.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition and outcomes of bullying</td>
<td>To share information about bullying. Specifically, bullying definition, components, and potential detrimental outcomes of bullying.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Research suggests it is important to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes as maltreatment in sport (Rhind &amp; Sekeyere, 2018). In addition, it is important to educate young people on the impact of such behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition and outcomes of emotional abuse</td>
<td>To share information about emotional abuse. Specifically, emotional abuse definition, components, and potential detrimental outcomes of emotional abuse.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where to report concerns</td>
<td>Provided participants with information regarding where they can report concerns if they were worried about something.</td>
<td>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 the could access assistance.</td>
<td>Research recommends that educational materials should include youth-friendly terminology and should emphasise mechanisms of reporting maltreatment in sport (Mountjoy et al., 2022).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final activity</td>
<td>How participants can enhance enjoyment and safety in sport.</td>
<td>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 thought 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.</td>
<td>Research suggests that art-based activities can help facilitate discussion about sensitive topics and enable participants to share their private thoughts and feelings (Kearney &amp; Hyle, 2004).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.4.1 Introduction. The workshop began with an icebreaker activity in which participants stood in a circle and threw a tennis ball around the group to another player who had to indicate what they liked and disliked about tennis. I wrote their responses on separate post-it notes. Additionally, prior to transitioning into the main session, participants were given a few post-it notes each and asked to write down, (i) what they liked most about their tennis club, and (ii) what made them feel comfortable in their club. Participants were asked to fold the pieces of paper up and give them to me once they had finished writing and were advised that we would discuss what they wrote towards the end of the session.

5.2.4.2 Story Completion. The first main activity involved a story completion task in which each participant was provided with a partial story (i.e., a story stem) and asked to complete the story based on instructions (Braun et al., 2019; Clarke et al., 2019). Story stems are created to provide enough information to provoke a response relevant to the subject of interest, however, they are deliberately ambiguous to allow for a multitude of possible responses (Braun et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2020). Historically this approach was used in clinical psychoanalysis and developmental psychology (Kitzinger & Powell, 1995). Recently, however, it has been used in social science research as it is useful in gaining insights into individuals’ attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs (Braun et al., 2019; Clarke et al., 2019), particularly regarding sensitive or taboo topics (Walsh & Malson 2010). Given the sensitive nature of emotional abuse and safeguarding it was anticipated this approach may be useful as it would allow the research topic to be addressed indirectly. Also, it was considered a fun, creative way to engage young people and gain their perceptions of bullying (Clarke et al., 2019). The aim of using this approach was not to discover absolute truths regarding the stories, instead, the objective was to give participants a chance to reflect on the story completion task and to utilise the stories as a prompt to initiate additional discussions about their perceptions research topic.

5.2.4.3 Scenario Exploration – Emotional Abuse. In the second main activity, participants worked in pairs to create scenarios based on provided options on post-its. After arranging the post-it notes, participants were asked to join forces with the other pair, creating a larger group. They were then instructed to collectively read out their completed statements to the entire group and discuss their perceptions of each scenario. They were asked to reflect on whether they deemed it acceptable or not, and what actions they would take if they witnessed a similar situation involving another child. During this period, I listened to the player’s perspectives and prompted follow-up questions from time to time to facilitate discussion.
5.2.4.4 **Scenario Exploration – Bullying.** The third main activity was a competitive relay race. Participants were divided into groups and presented with a bullying statement. Upon hearing a whistle, the participants threw a bean bag into a hoop. Once the bean bag landed in the hoop, they had to run to the hoop, where there was a pen and post-it notes. On a post-it note, participants were asked to write what impact they believed the scenario would have on the individual if the behaviour were to continue. They then had to affix this post-it-note to a flip chart before returning to tag their teammate. The objective was for each team to reach three and run back to the starting line making them the winners.

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

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

5.2.4.6 **Review and Summary.** The final activity incorporated a creative arts-based task. Arts-based methods involve the use of artistic components within qualitative inquiry to generate, communicate, or interpret information (McMahon et al., 2017; Punch 2002). These techniques serve as a tool to collect, produce, and analyse data (McMahon et al., 2017). This activity was chosen to offer children an enjoyable way of thinking about the study topic, fostering rapport, and providing those who might be less verbally confident a chance to share
their ideas (Punch, 2002). Given the sensitive nature of bullying and emotional abuse, it was believed that this approach would offer a less intimidating way for young people to express their views and has yet to be used in youth sport safeguarding and maltreatment research.

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

5.2.5 Data Collection

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

5.2.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews. Following the intervention, each participant took part in an interview to discuss their experiences of the intervention. On average the interviews were 47.10 minutes in length (SD= 8.72), ranging from 39.45.-59.05 minutes. Interview guides were used to facilitate discussions with participants and to ensure that all relevant questions were covered. All interviews began with some initial rapport-building questions, in which participants were asked demographic questions (i.e., competition level, competition frequency) and asked about what led to their participation in sport and how long they had been involved in tennis. However, given that I had already engaged with the participants in the intervention, the majority of the interview focused upon the evaluation. The first main questions centred around the story completion task. Participants were asked to comment on their experiences of the writing of the story and to discuss their interpretation of the scenario. For instance, they were asked questions such as “what were your thoughts on the written story?” “can you explain how you continued the story?” “what were your initial thoughts about the story” “what are your thoughts about the story now you have completed the workshop.” Additionally, participants were asked to reflect on their written extracts and if they would change anything following their attendance of the workshop, (i.e., what things would you change about your story now that you have attended the workshop?). The focus on
the story completion task first was to provide an opportunity to assess whether participants
knowledge or considerations regarding the scenario had changed because of the intervention.
Following the discussion of the story completion activity, subsequent questions examined
participants’ perceptions of the overall workshop. Specifically, participants were asked what
they liked and disliked about the workshop, what they learned, what facilitated their learning,
their perceptions of the different interactive and creative activities, and suggestions regarding
how such educational initiatives could be improved.

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

5.2.6 Data Analysis

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

Prior to starting the analysis, the audio files from the interviews were transcribed
verbatim. To ensure confidentiality, all identifiable information was removed, and
participants were assigned pseudonyms. The analysis then occurred following the six phases
recommended by Braun and Clarke (2019). Although each phase of the analysis develops
from the previous, this process is not linear, rather it is a recursive reflective process in which
I moved back and forth between the different phases until myself and the research team were
satisfied themes were sufficiently developed. This process is particularly important to enable a rigorous process of data interrogation and engagement (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

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

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

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

It is important to note that the story completion narratives and the posters were not analysed in their own right, rather, they were used in conjunction with young people’s interview responses to allow for deeper contextual understanding. Further, the information obtained from the observations was also used to provide further context and insights into the
responses provided in the interviews. Specifically, the integration of the interview data with
the observational data facilitated a comprehensive understanding of participants’ perceptions
and experiences of the workshop. I was able to gain a deeper understanding of how the
environment influenced participants’ perceptions, how they interpreted certain activities, and
instances where my understanding of the same events differed from theirs.

5.2.7 Methodological Rigour

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

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

It is argued that a good quality research study should aim to make a substantive
contribution, specifically, it should aim to contribute to understanding of social life, and the
researcher should demonstrate how their perspective influenced the construction of the study
(Richardson, 2000). Research shows that bullying and emotional abuse are prevalent in youth
sport (Vertommen et al., 2016; Nery et al., 2020). Addressing this issue, researchers have
suggested the development of educational initiatives for young people focused on maltreatment
in sport (Mountjoy et al., 2016). However, limited research has focused on educational
interventions in this domain or has explicitly included young people. Therefore, the current
study makes a substantial contribution by developing, implementing, and evaluating a creative
workshop focusing on bullying and emotional abuse, which are important topics warranting
attention in youth sport. Moreover, this study not only offers insights into participants’
experiences of the workshop but also transparently includes the challenges encountered in
delivering such programs. It also offers recommendations for enhancing future initiatives,
directly derived from the perspectives of young people, who are the target audience for these
initiatives. Furthermore, an interpretivist paradigm aligns with my philosophical assumptions,
suggesting that multiple and varied realities exist (Ponterotto, 2005).

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

According to Lieblich et al. (1998) qualitative studies should demonstrate coherence.
Specifically, coherence refers to how well different parts of the research study (i.e., explanation
or interpretation) come together to provide a clear and meaningful overall picture. This
involves ensuring that the study design, data collection, and analysis is aligned with the
research purpose, as well as the espoused theories and paradigms (Lieblich et al., 1998).
Furthermore, it is suggested that the overall research findings should meaningfully link with
existing literature. In line with an interpretive paradigm, the current study employed various
traditional and creative qualitative approaches, such as interviews, observations, story
completion tasks, and arts-based activities and the results were analysed using reflective
thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This approach allowed me to gain insights into both
individual and collective experiences. For instance, participant interviews and story completion
narratives facilitated the capture of individual experiences, while observations and the poster
activity helped in capturing shared experiences. As a result, the study’s objectives,
methodologies, analysis, and interpretations were congruent with each other in line with an
interpretive paradigm aimed at addressing coherence.
Resonance pertains to the extent to which the research meaningfully impacts the audience, in a way that the reader can make a personal connection with the research findings and relate them to other areas of research or their own experiences, despite having direct interaction with research participants (Tracy, 2010). Seeking resonance, the current study offered rich descriptions and direct quotations in the results section with the intention that the nuanced realities of the participants would vividly come through allowing the audience to personally relate to the findings themselves (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

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

5.3 Results

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

5.3.1 Key learning outcomes

When conducting the workshop, and as apparent through the participants’ initial stories, the young people had a general awareness of the concept of bullying and emotional abuse at the start of the session. For instance, within their stories and the interviews following
the intervention, all the participants had recognised the situation as bullying, as Sebastian explained, “when I first read it, I thought Keiran and Rob were bullying Jamie and it was also bad sportsmanship.” Furthermore, the participants’ perceived that the main character had handled the situation poorly. Ashton shared, “I think Rob definitely shouldn’t have said, you only won because you’re a cheat. If the call really bothered him, he could have called the umpire or whoever was there organising the tournament.”

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

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

Interestingly, participants differed in their perceptions of the behaviours, with some participants’ perceiving that bullying was more subtle than emotional abuse and vice versa. Such differences in perspective were shared during the workshop and reiterated within the interviews. For example, during the interview, Ashton felt that bullying was more subtle than emotional abuse, “I think it's easy to spot parents shouting at kids, I was surprised that 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 more subtle, “it’s hard to recognise, because sometimes you think parents are yelling to help their kids play better, but now we've talked about it I see it can be hurtful when they do it all the time.”

Participants also indicated that the workshop was beneficial for increasing understanding of the consequences of bullying, as Roxy shared, “I think it [workshop] was good because it helped us recognise what could potentially happen from bullying if it happened to someone over and over again.” Specifically, during the workshop, many participants appeared to possess a basic understanding of some general negative emotional consequences of bullying, such as low mood, depression, and anxiety. It appeared that this may have been due to the focus on this topic at school, as Sebastian explained, “yeah most of the stuff we talked about, we’ve learned about in school.”
However, their awareness of the breadth of consequences of bullying was limited and participants reflected on this after the interviews. Rory said, “like I didn’t think it [bullying] could cause someone to drop out completely, maybe join another club but not drop out totally you know.” Participants were particularly surprised that bullying could lead to delinquent behaviours such as cheating. For example, Sebastian stated, “I knew that bullying could badly affect people and make them sad, but I didn’t realise it could lead to cheating as well, that’s crazy!” Similarly, Roxy said “I didn’t know that before.” This was a consequence that particularly attracted their attention during the workshop, with participants engaging in extensive discussion during the workshop to try and understand how this might occur. As Ashton shared:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Although participants indicated they had learnt information from the workshop, the extent to which they might apply this in practice was unclear. Specifically, during the follow-up interview’s when participants were asked to reflect upon the story completion task they had done during the workshop, all of them indicated being satisfied with what they wrote. For instance, when asked if he would make any changes to this story, Ashton responded, “No, I am happy with what I wrote” and similarly Roxy stated, “No, I don’t think so, I wouldn’t change anything, I thought it was bullying when I read it first and still feel the same now.”

This is interesting because, although all the participants did identify the situation as bullying and perceive that it was inappropriate, they lacked a lot of information in their responses regarding how they may respond to the situation and what they should do. For instance, none of the young people included any information regarding reporting the incident or trying to enhance the victim's enjoyment and overall experience (despite being asked about this explicitly). This may suggest that, despite learning about these aspects during the workshop, participants may still struggle to apply the knowledge in practice.
5.3.2 How knowledge was obtained

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

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

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

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

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

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

Participants also believed that they were able to learn through reflection. Specifically, some participants expressed that taking part in the workshop allowed them to reflect on their own experiences. Roxy explained “it [workshop] gave me a chance to think about some of the things I have seen and done when playing tennis.” Similarly, Ashton stated, “because everything was about tennis, it made me think about my own experiences which made it easier to understand.” It appeared that reflecting on some of their own experiences made participants realise that some behaviours they had witnessed were not acceptable. For instance, Rory explained:
That scenario of the girl whose dad always shouted at her [emotional abuse] got me thinking, I’ve seen that a lot at tournaments and it just made me realise that that’s not okay, it’s actually emotional abuse and someone should stop certain parents from doing that over and over again.

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.3.3 Perceptions of the interactive and creative methods

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

5.3.3.1 Story-Completion. In relation to the story completion task, while all participants engaged with the task and provided valuable reflections in the follow-up
interview, it was not an activity most participants enjoyed. Sebastian shared, “I didn’t really like the story writing thing we did at the beginning.” It was evident when giving instructions for the story completion task that the three boys were disinterested and disengaged. When asked why they did not enjoy the task some explained that they found it boring and thought it could have been approached differently. Ashton expressed:

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

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

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

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

In addition to finding the activity engaging they believed the active nature of the task helped facilitate their learning. For example, Ashton expressed that he was a kinetic learner therefore he preferred the relay race to other activities, “I enjoyed it [relay race] because I actually learn better when I’m doing something active.” Whereas Roxy expressed that having the physical activity linked with questions helped facilitate her learning, “it’s just more fun,
and I feel like I was understanding it better because we were competing against the other team and trying to answer the question at the same time.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Similarly, Rory explained:

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

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

Participants also expressed that future initiatives would benefit from involving coaches in the workshop. Participants believed that including coaches could be beneficial as they spent significant time in the environment and could relate to some of the examples which would help them learn about it to help prevent certain negative behaviours. For instance, Sebastian said, “I think you could include coaches because they know what it’s like they come across some of the stuff we talked about, and they could also help with bullying and emotional abuse.” The importance of coaches was highlighted during the workshop, as
some participants mentioned that they felt that coaches would be best positioned to intervene in cases of emotional abuse from parents and felt that they would benefit from attending as they were familiar with the environment. Similarly, I observed that participants were less inclined or hesitant to intervene or report negative behaviour involving adults, such as parents. They expressed a preference for coaches to intervene in these circumstances and articulated that having coaches attend would be beneficial in helping with the prevention and intervention of emotional abuse and bullying. Ashton explained during his interview:

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

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

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

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

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

Previous research has indicated that young people are unaware of what constitutes harassment and abuse in sport (Mountjoy et al., 2020). In line with previous research, participants in the current study lacked information on certain aspects of emotional abuse and bullying. Participants reported that the workshop highlighted the hidden nature of emotional abuse and bullying, and they learned about the subtleties of certain abusive behaviours. The
need for participants to learn about the nuance and subtlety of bullying and emotional abuse is unsurprising, considering that these behaviours tend to be normalised and accepted as common practice in youth sport settings (Stirling et al., 2011). These findings reaffirm the need for sport organisations to prioritise changing their organisational culture and recognising the potential risks associated with endorsing a culture in which negative behaviours are accepted (Brackenridge et al., 2012; Nite & Nauright, 2020; Roberts et al., 2020). When such behaviours are normalised and thus go unnoticed by young people within a sporting environment, it reflects the underlying sporting culture in which those in positions of authority are not addressing behaviours. With this in mind, there is an increasing need for key individuals within youth sporting organisations to understand how to promote and foster positive environments (Gurgis & Kerr, 2023; Lang & Hartill, 2015; Macpherson et al., 2022). In fact, they should create environments that are supportive of positive behaviours exhibited by individuals, which in turn will encourage young people and other key individuals in the environment to adopt and replicate such behaviours.

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

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

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

Reflecting upon the evaluation of the creative educational workshop it appears that the overall creative and interactive nature of the workshop served as a valuable approach for engaging participants and an effective means of introducing the topic of bullying and
emotional abuse to young individuals (aged between 13-15 years). Research suggests that active learning is beneficial with adolescent participants (Jesionkowska et al., 2020). Specifically, research has demonstrated that incorporating active learning approaches including, physically active learning (i.e., games), socially active learning (i.e., small group discussions), and intellectually active learning (i.e., problem-solving activities) are useful ways to enhance participant engagement, foster group discussions enhancing communication skills, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, confidence, and create a better overall learning environment and different learning opportunities for young people, and it can also enhance excitement and enthusiasm (Edwards, 2015). Consistent with these earlier findings, participants reported that they found the different activities enjoyable, particularly the physical activities which they reported enhanced their learning. Therefore, future educational initiatives involving young people should endeavour to utilise various activities, particularly practical ones, to cater for various learning and engagement preferences (McMahon et al., 2023). Furthermore, youth sport is typically competitive, and competing is a key factor young people find fun and enjoyable (Visek et al., 2015), as such considering the inclusion of competitive activities may be beneficial.

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

Furthermore, previous research has shown that there can be wide variation in the richness of participants’ stories, and researchers have reported as little as three-word stories (Braun et al., 2019; Clarke et al., 2019; Wood et al., 2017). Consistent with this, the stories shared in the current study were short and lacked detail. This may be due to the age of the participants or their hesitation in engaging in this topic. Or, as the participants themselves said, simply that they found the activity boring. Therefore, it is important to recognise that while this approach may be enjoyable to some and regarded as a valuable approach to engage young participants and gain rich insights (Braun et al., 2019) it is not universally favoured by
all young participants and may not be useful for researchers who want to explicitly analyse
the written narratives. If researchers were to employ this approach for future safeguarding
initiatives, anticipating and preparing for potential differences in engagement and the wide
variability in the richness of participant stories would be beneficial (Clarke et al., 2019).

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

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

Group dynamics are also important when engaging young people in group activities
(García-Poole et al., 2018). There were meant to be six participants at the workshop,
unfortunately at short notice two participants were unable to attend. This impacted the group
dynamics as there was only one girl when there was meant to be three, also there were 12 and
15-year-old participants and the two that did not show up were 14 years of age. The two
young participants did not enjoy the creative approaches and became distracted at times
which was a bit distracting to the wider group. The two older participants were a bit more
mature and did not get distracted. Such dynamics are important consideration for future
research – both in terms of ensuring that workshop facilitators have the skills to manage
diverse groups and complex interactions and also recognising that young people have a lot of
pressures on their time and their attendance at workshops cannot be guaranteed. If we want
all people to have access to the information, running sessions on multiple occasions, sharing summaries of information, and distributing information in alternative creative means (e.g., podcasts, webinars etc) may be required alongside workshops.

5.4.1 Limitations and Future Research Directions

The findings of the study should be considered within its limitations. Firstly, researchers contend that feasibility studies should aim to evaluate recruitment capability and resulting sample characteristics (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015). Specifically, it is suggested that researchers should determine if they can recruit appropriate participants and explore potential obstacles in recruitment as a key aim of their feasibility study (Orsmond & Cohn, 2015).

While feasibility studies are considered scaled-down preliminary versions of larger proposed studies, it should be noted that the current study did not evaluate recruitment capability. With only four participants included out of a potential six, and apparent challenges in recruiting participants, it would have been useful to assess recruitment capacity to gain more insights into the feasibility of conducting this study on a larger scale. Therefore, future research should consider evaluating recruitment capability and resulting sample characteristics to determine whether such creative workshops would be feasible to conduct in other sporting contexts and explore strategies to enhance participation rates before conducting a pilot educational initiative.

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

Further, recently researchers have suggested that education initiatives should be culturally relevant and culturally responsive and should be delivered by an insider such as a coach or a young person who is of similar cultural standing (McMahon et al., 2023). I was
not a cultural insider, although I had spent much time learning about this setting and had engaged with these players in other studies. Nevertheless, my lack of cultural relevance may have impacted participants’ engagement with the workshop and the evaluation. Therefore, future interventions should consider including cultural insiders as it is believed that having somebody within the same sporting context and of similar standing is useful because they would possess insights and taken for granted knowledge that outsiders do not have. This may, also reduce some of the power present within the researcher-participant relationship and help facilitate informed and reciprocal discussions more easily (McMahon et al., 2023).

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

Research suggests that listening to young people and actively involving them in discussions regarding issues related to maltreatment, including bullying and emotional abuse, can help provide valuable insights for educational programmes and enable sport organisations to develop effective prevention strategies (Mountjoy et al., 2016; Willson et al., 2023). While the current workshop was informed by findings from chapter two the creative workshop was not informed by this specific group of participants. Most of these activities, including the story completion interview and the poster activity, were successful in engaging young people
and increasing their awareness about bullying, emotional abuse, and reporting mechanisms throughout the workshop. However, not all participants enjoyed these activities. Considering this, future educational initiatives should include young people to collaboratively shape the workshops and educational approaches. This would enable participants to include a diverse range of materials, techniques, formats, and activities that appeal to them.

5.4.2 Concluding Reflections

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

Given the limited engagement with these tasks, the current feasibility study suggests a need for further exploration to identify appropriate data collection approaches and procedures for the intended population. The story completion task and arts-based poster activity were designed to engage participants and prompt discussions during follow-up interviews, aiming to understand their perceptions of the research topic and measure the workshop’s impact.
Therefore, before proceeding to a pilot study, refinement based on the current findings and recommendations is necessary. Specifically, it is essential to adapt these approaches, and future research should consider collaborating with young people to shape the development of similar creative educational workshops. Offering participants a choice of different data collection methods that better align with their preferences could significantly enhance engagement and overall effectiveness. This collaborative approach is essential to ensure that the workshops are engaging and impactful for the target audience. Therefore, more work needs to be done in identifying appropriate data collection methods and outcome measures before conducting an intervention pilot study.

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

6.1 Introduction

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. To address these aims, three studies were conducted which are detailed in the previous chapters. Specifically, Study 1 (Chapter Three) utilised a two-phase mixed methods explanatory sequential design to investigate the safeguarding landscape in youth sport throughout Wales. Study 2 (Chapter Four) employed 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. Finally, drawing on findings from Chapters Four and Five, for Study 3 (Chapter Five) I designed, implemented, and evaluated a creative educational workshop for young athletes (aged under 16 years of age) regarding emotional abuse, bullying, safeguarding, and their overall enjoyment of sport.

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

6.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Contributions of the Thesis

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

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

Additionally, as highlighted through Chapter Two, there are numerous and varied terms and definitions used within the maltreatment and safeguarding literature in sport (Mountjoy et al., 2015, 2016; Stirling, 2009; Vertommen et al., 2016). Although such terms have typically developed to provide conceptual clarity within research settings, the used of differing terms and competing definitions can cause issue when attempting to integrate findings from studies and compare prevalence across different settings. and, more applicably to the current thesis, when attempting to communicate with individuals such as parents, coaches, and young people. If different practitioners, researchers, and organisations are engaging in youth sport settings using varying definitions and explanations then it is understandable that confusion may arise. As indicated, CPSU have produced definitions that are broadly accepted among sport organisations, but this does not mean that practitioners or researchers entering different settings adopt such language. If we are to genuinely track rates of abuse in sport and take effective and efficient strides towards eradicating it from youth sport settings, I would suggest that conceptual consistency among all individuals, researchers and practitioners, working in youth sport settings would be beneficial.
However, beyond improving understanding of and consistency across definitions, the current thesis suggests there may be an important decision to make regarding whether using definitions is the best way to measure prevalence of emotional abuse and bullying. Across all three studies, when discussing behaviours that may fit with these definitions, participants tended to emphasise more severe behaviours, typically not recognising some of the less obvious yet still harmful behaviours that are classified as either abuse or bullying. Many of these were behaviours that are typically "accepted" as part of sport, such as expectations of results and coaches shouting. The result being that when individuals were presented with lists of behaviours that correspond with definitions of bullying or emotional abuse, they indicated far higher prevalence of experiencing and/or witnessing negative behaviours than when presented with a definition alone. Given this, it may be suggested that rather than placing extensive efforts on helping individuals better understand definitions of these concepts, particularly with the competing definitions available, that researchers and organisations would do better to draw on lists of behaviours instead, particularly emphasising the range of behaviours that are illustrative of abuse/bullying.

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

Even if the decision is made to draw on definitions and lists of behaviours, there is still further work to do in this regard. Particularly, consideration needs to be given to developing more child-friendly culturally relevant examples of behaviours that apply to different settings and countries to complement currently developed definitions. The inclusion of sport-specific and culturally relevant examples in study three appeared to be useful in
enhancing young people’s knowledge on bullying and emotional abuse. This aligns with researchers' recommendations advocating for educational initiatives to include culturally relevant examples suitable for targeted audiences within specific sporting contexts (McMahon et al., 2023). The current thesis re-emphasises the importance of providing accessible culturally relevant examples for young adolescent participants, as it appears to be an effective approach in enhancing awareness at the early stages of their sports participation. This approach could potentially minimise the negative consequences of bullying and emotional abuse before they become defiant (Gomez, 2011).

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

Such an approach, in which an emphasis is not simply on reducing negative experiences but rather on creating positive ones, is not new. In fact, it aligns with one of the key principles of safeguarding in the UK, which emphasises “taking action to enable all children and young people to achieve the best outcomes” (see HM Government, 2018, p. 7). Somewhat understandably given the high profile and ongoing cases of abuse that are being identified, in sport, however, the focus of research and practice has typically not been on this principle of safeguarding. Rather, attention has generally and increasingly been given to the other core safeguarding principles which include, protecting young people from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to their health or development, and ensuring young people
receive safe and effective care (see Department for Education, 2018). These are obviously extremely important areas to address, and I of course endorse and support all efforts to ensure these principles are adhered to within all youth sport settings. But, based on the current thesis, I would argue that emphasis should not only be placed on these factors if we want to keep children involved in sport and having an opportunity to access the range of benefits that can be associated with sport participation.

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

In fact, in line with previous research, this thesis reaffirms that to effectively safeguard young people in sport, a systems approach is required (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014). A systems approach diverges away from solely concentrating on isolated problems (such as sexual abuse, or child labour) to allow a comprehensive approach to safeguarding rather than a fragmented strategy (Rhind et al., 2017). The objective of this approach is to safeguard young people by fostering supportive mechanisms while simultaneously preventing abuse, exploitation, and violence (Rhind et al., 2017). Specifically, it focuses on developing a comprehensive and integrated system that involves various individuals across multiple...
aspects within an organisation to ensure young people’s safety and well-being (Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018). The insights from Chapter Four specifically highlight how a complex integration of individual, interpersonal, and organisational factors have a significant impact on safety and enjoyment in sport. Paramount to this systems approach, however, was the importance of positive relationships. While safeguarding research encourages moving beyond interpersonal approaches and focusing on specific relationship dynamics (Brackenridge & Rhind, 2014), this thesis reaffirms that positive relationships are paramount in all contexts and across levels. Specifically, it was apparent that, while having appropriate policies, procedures, and mechanisms in place is necessary to ensuring young people’s safety (Rhind & Owusu-Sekyere, 2018), it is equally important to foster positive relationships, both within the immediate and broader sporting context, to ensure their effective implementation.

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

Although the current thesis highlights that positive relationships between coaches, parents, and young people appear to be important, caution is warranted because research shows that positive relationships can sometimes conceal grooming, a common method of sexual harassment or abuse against young people in sport (Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005). Grooming is a strategy in which an adult in a position of trust, such as a coach, convinces or coerces a child or young person to engage in sexual activity (Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005). This process involves gradually building trust with the young person, blurring boundaries between the coach and the young person, putting the young person at risk of abuse (Bjonseth & Szabo, 2018; Brackenridge, 2001). In sport, perpetrators often groom not only young
people but also their parents and others within their organisation or community (Dietz, 2018). They exploit positive relationships, including trust and friendship, to impose power and dominance and hide their abusive behaviour (Brackenridge, 2001; Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005).

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

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

Thus, while addressing inappropriate conduct among young people remains important, based on my findings and previous literature (e.g., Nery et al., 2019), I would suggest that a proactive and explicit emphasis on creating environments and developing effective strategies to promote positive peer interactions and foster trusting relationships should be prioritised. Considering the influential role coaches play in facilitating such opportunities, exploring creative approaches for coaches to facilitate positive peer relationships in sport may be particularly beneficial. Supporting the development of positive
peer relationships might reduce the reliance on adult intervention in instances of bullying and
empower young people to address such instances themselves, particularly in areas with
limited adult supervision, such as changing rooms, where instances of bullying are most
prevalent (Escure & Dudink, 2010; Evans et al., 2016; Roberts, 2008; Ventura et al., 2019).

6.3 Methodological Contributions of the Thesis

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

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

Additionally, studies one and two of the current thesis used multiple participant
perspectives. Previous studies examining experiences of maltreatment have primarily focused
on a single population group (i.e., young people, coaches) and aimed to examine whether the
participants have experienced maltreatment from their perspective (Alexander et al., 2011;
Vertommen et al., 2015). Research on bullying in sport has aimed to offer comprehensive
insights by exploring it from different perspectives (i.e., bystander, a bully, or a victim) (Nery et al., 2019; Rios et al., 2022). However, these studies have still predominantly focused on a single population (i.e., young people). Similarly, qualitative studies exploring these topics tend to include single population groups, (Rios et al., 2022). That said, all the studies within the current thesis apart from one (i.e., Chapter five) included multiple perspectives (i.e., young people, coaches, parents, welfare officers, lead safeguarding officers, and other key individuals within sport). Including multiple perspectives in these studies helped to provide comprehensive insights into the topic. Furthermore, the use of qualitative analysis in these studies facilitated the capture of rich insights from multiple perspectives (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). It contributed to providing an understanding of both similarities and differences within and across multiple participant groups (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Miles et al., 2018). Given the complex nature of safeguarding and the fact it is considered everybody’s responsibility, incorporating the voices of all individuals involved in sport may positively contribute to comprehensive endeavours aimed at safeguarding young people from harm and improving their overall sporting experiences.

As research regarding safeguarding in sport has grown, recommendations regarding the integration of children (i.e., individuals under 18 years) within these studies have been made. Particularly, it has been suggested that children play dual roles as both participants and beneficiaries (Hartill & Lang, 2015) and as such, research should include children as active participants. Moreover, it is highlighted that research should be delivered to children in a format that is appropriate and suitable for their age and capabilities. In essence, it has been suggested that it is important to collaborate and actively involve individuals who are most impacted by safeguarding in sport so they can benefit from the research itself. Despite these recommendations, there are still limited examples of this occurring in research. Within the current thesis, however, children were seen as active participants across all three studies, and particularly in study three care was taken to really consider the involvement of children as participants and beneficiaries. To account for children’s perspectives proactively and explicitly across all three studies a number of steps were taken. For instance, in the first study all survey questions and explanations were reviewed with children in mind and then young ambassadors were explicitly included in the final review of the survey to ensure appropriateness. Interview questions across the studies were tailored to the experiences of children, with reflections from each child interview informing the questions asked in the next one. Finally, particular methods were adopted in the intervention that had been suggested as appropriate for young people. Overall, I found the acknowledgement of children as active...
participants in this manner to be useful to gain buy-in and I would recommend it to future researchers. However, I also recognise that I could have integrated them more extensively as co-researchers, particularly within the intervention study.

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

6.4 Applied Implications

From an organisational perspective, the current thesis highlights the importance of sporting organisations prioritising their organisational culture and the values they uphold. Specifically, the findings of this thesis highlight the need for sporting organisations to develop values centred on promoting young people’s human rights and holistic development, with a focus on enhancing their overall sporting experiences (Rhind & Sekyere, 2018). Research indicates that there is a correlation between power structures, organisational norms, social values and beliefs, and maltreatment in sport (Roberts et al., 2020). Therefore, organisations should focus on fostering a culture in which safeguarding is valued and individuals working with young people understand the importance of safeguarding and recognise their responsibility to ensure that all young people have safe and enjoyable sporting experiences. Although it is imperative to make sure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to detect and address maltreatment in sport, this should be reinforced by informal social and cultural measures promoting safety and enhancing sporting experiences. For example, senior leaders within sporting organisations should lead by example and role model respectful
behaviour, they should also take proactive steps as bystanders to call out inappropriate
behaviours and encourage a shared responsibility in addressing and preventing maltreatment
in sport (Roberts et al., 2020). If sport organisations are aiming to prevent children, parents,
and key individuals in the environment from contributing to bullying and emotional abuse, it
is important that senior leaders within the organisation role model positive behaviours and
demonstrate zero tolerance towards bullying and emotional abuse.

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

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

At the coach level, this thesis demonstrates the key role parents play in optimising young people’s safety and enjoyment. Thus, coaches need to recognise the significant influence parents have on young people’s sporting experiences. Specifically, coaches should seek to encourage positive parental involvement by valuing parents' impact on children’s experiences. Coaches should recognise the importance of developing relationships with parents as soon as a young person joins a new club (Harwood, 2011). Importantly, coaches should welcome parents into the environment and acknowledge their significance as valuable and essential members of the young person support system (Harwood & Knight, 2015).

Traditionally, it has been common for coaches to avoid parents or encourage them to minimise their involvement (Knight & Gould, 2016), however, based on my findings, I believe that coaches must proactively work with parents and avoid pushing them away or perceiving them as a problem.

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

Parents can also take a proactive approach. Specifically, based on my findings, parents need to pay attention when seeking a club for their child. Specifically, parents should make sure that sports clubs have clear appropriate policies and procedures in place and guidance on how the club manages and responds to injuries, accidents, and welfare concerns among others (CPSU, 2019). Once children have joined a club, parents should acknowledge the role they play in supporting and encouraging their child in sport. Specifically, parents...
should show interest in their child’s participation and engage in regular open conversations with their child and understand their child's support preferences and goals (Furusa et al., 2019) to help enhance their involvement and optimise young people's overall sporting experiences. Furthermore, parents should aim to establish a rapport with their child’s coach. Specifically, parents should inquire about the coach's training experiences, coaching approach, and what their expectations are for them as parents and for their child, and they should seek guidance from the coach on how to best support their child (Knight, 2019). Building a strong relationship with their child's coach will enable parents to express concerns more freely, if necessary, but it will also allow them to gain a deeper understanding of their child’s sport and their specific needs. Consequently, this information will be valuable in assisting parents to optimise their involvement in their child's sport, which will hopefully enhance their child’s overall sporting experiences (Knight & Holt, 2014).

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

Considering the significant influence peers have on young people’s sporting experiences, young people should also aim to develop friendships with their peers in sport. Specifically, young people should strive to exhibit welcoming, friendly, and inclusive behaviour toward newcomers in the environment. In doing so, this provides opportunities to establish trusting friendships. Findings from the current thesis highlight the important role of trusting friendships in providing a sense of relatedness, fulfilling a fundamental psychological need (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Additionally, findings showed that trusted friendships assist young individuals in navigating banter and camaraderie. Research suggests that young people with strong friendships report experiencing less experiences of bullying victimisation (Nery et al., 2020), highlighting the importance of fostering positive connections among young people in sport. These friendships not only serve as support networks but also play a role in mitigating instances of bullying. Moreover, fostering trusting friendships enables young people to be more attentive and responsive to each other’s wellbeing. For instance, if a young
person is reluctant to speak up about issues or concerns, a trusted friend might be able to
identify something wrong and offer support or raise a concern on their behalf.

6.5 Limitations and Future Research Directions

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

First, the 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. Although the findings of this thesis included multiple
perspectives, the number of participants across the three studies was still relatively low. This
was, to some extent, due to the qualitative methods employed for studies two and three, but
even accounting for this I had hoped to recruit more participants. Unfortunately, the COVID-
19 pandemic heavily impacted the recruitment for studies one and two (Chapters Three and
Four) because gatekeepers from multiple sporting organisations were furloughed. This
limited access to several sports clubs across Wales and potential participants. Therefore,
while the findings of this thesis provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic, they
may not be reflective of the experiences of all individuals involved in sport across the whole
of Wales. Future studies may want to consider conducting similar studies in other areas of
Wales, as well as England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland to get a comprehensive
understanding of the issue from participants currently involved in sport across the UK.

Second, while this thesis provided valuable insights about this topic from multiple
perspectives, it is important to note that since the commencement of the thesis significant
developments have been made within the field of maltreatment and safeguarding in sport.
Unfortunately, it was not possible to incorporate all the new insights within this thesis. For
example, following the Larry Nassar case it became evident that other individuals within the
sport environment can contribute to maltreatment in sport (Levinson, 2018). Moreover,
researchers recognised the importance of understanding experiences of emotional abuse and
bullying from young people currently participating in sport (Parent et al., 2019; Nery et al.,
2020). Given this, recent research developments have included the creation of a validated
instrument measuring the prevalence of all forms of maltreatment in sport (i.e., Parent et al.,
2019). Unfortunately, this was published after my first study was under construction and I
could not use this scale in my work. More recently, two evidence-based educational
initiatives have been developed for young people and coaches and they suggested that future initiatives should include athlete survivors in education initiatives to ensure they are trauma informed (McMahon et al., 2022; 2023; Mountjoy et al., 2022). Again, these suggestions came out after my intervention had been delivered so they could not be included in my work. Thus, integrating these findings alongside the findings of my thesis will provide an even more comprehensive understanding of the issues pertaining to maltreatment and safeguarding in sport.

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

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

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

My advice to researchers entering this field is to carefully consider how to positively frame their research. Convincing sporting organisations of the advantages of fostering a safeguarding culture and promoting a healthy environment, free from harm, is important. I believe this type of work should be seen as an opportunity for growth rather than a witch hunt. So, I suggest that creativity in presenting your research is key, while maintaining
honesty, try and explore ways to highlight the positive impact the research may have on enhancing young people's overall sporting experiences, especially when engaging with coaches and parents.

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

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

6.7 Conclusion

Taken together, this thesis offers a comprehensive and in-depth insight into the experiences of young people, parents, and coaches regarding emotional abuse, bullying, and enjoyment in sports within Wales. Furthermore, the thesis has highlighted the importance of the integrations of safety and enjoyment as a unified concept and explored the underlying
mechanisms contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience. Additionally, this thesis demonstrates how this knowledge can be utilised to develop a creative, evidence-based educational initiative effectively enhancing knowledge and awareness on emotional abuse, bullying, safeguarding, and enjoyment among young people aged between 13-15 years. Finally, the thesis recommends future research to build upon and further refine these findings, aiming to broaden our understanding of bullying, emotional abuse, and enjoyment in sport.
References


Stafford, A, Alexander, K, & Deborah Fry. (2015). ‘There was something that wasn’t right because that was the only place I ever got treated like that’: Children and young people’s experiences of emotional harm in sport. Childhood, 22(1).
https://doi.org/10.1177/090756821350562

https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2008.9671879


https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109343625

https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2018.1489325

https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.23.1.83


Bergeron, M. F., Mountjoy, M., Armstrong, N., Chia, M., Côté, J., Emery, C. A.,


Hayfield, N., Moller, N., & Tischner, I. (n.d.). *IQY, UK Email: [REDACTED]*


https://doi.org/10.1177/1747954120952069


https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2021.1891214

https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2021.1891214


Research with Children. (n.d.). https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568202009003005


229


Smith, B. (2018). Generalizability in qualitative research: Misunderstandings, opportunities and recommendations for the sport and exercise sciences. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 10*(1), 137–149. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2017.1393221


Tuakli-Wosornu, Y. A., Goutos, D., Ramia, I., Galea, N. R., Mountjoy, M. L., Grimm, K., Wu, Y., & Bekker, S. (2022). ‘Knowing we have these rights does not always mean we feel free to use them’: Athletes’ perceptions of their human rights in sport. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine, 8*(3), e001406. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjsem-2022-001406


https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690297032003005


https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353509350759


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition/Question</th>
<th>Rationale for my definition</th>
<th>Literature used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial definition of emotional harm/abuse included in the survey:</strong> 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.</td>
<td>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 &amp; 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).</td>
<td>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 wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New definition of emotional harm/abuse included in the survey:</strong> 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.</td>
<td>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 and Stirling and Kerr (2008) highlight that it occurs in a critical relationship. In addition, the IOC and NSPCC highlight that it has to occur repeatedly and all definitions indicate that emotional abuse is harmful and can involve verbal behaviours, physical behaviours as well as, denial of attention or support. As such, all these specific aspects are included in my definition of emotional abuse.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes made:</strong> 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.</td>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 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 wellbeing.

2. 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.

3. 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
Initial definition of Bullying included in the survey:

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.

New definition of bullying included in the survey:

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).

New rationale:

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. 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.

Furthermore, all definitions indicate that bullying involves verbal behaviours causing harm to victims, however, IOC definitions expands to include physical behaviours. All these aspects were included in our definition of bullying.

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.

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.

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.
someone, or leaving someone out of activities on purpose.

**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.

it can occur both online or in person. CPSU and NSPCC specify that this can be psychological (internal). However, IOC definitions expand to include physical behaviours. All these aspects were included in our definition of bullying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPSU define bullying in sports settings as:</th>
<th>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</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever seen another child experience any of the following behaviours when taking part in sport?</td>
<td>Then have all the examples after this question and pipe to respondent to perpetrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>List of negative behaviours</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question 1</strong> - Teased, made fun of or called names because of something that happened or how you/someone looked.</td>
<td><strong>Question 1</strong> - 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. Specifically, NSPCC highlight that this can involve acts of humiliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question 2</strong> - Had embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip spread online or in person.</td>
<td><strong>Question 2</strong> – This question has been included because it is a verbal behaviour which could be seen as terrorizing (e.g., Stirling &amp; Kerr, 2008). In addition, such behaviour could target a person’s inner life, as indicated in the IOC definition. In addition, CPSU and NSPCC highlight that emotional abuse can occur in person as well as, online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question 3</strong> - 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)</td>
<td><strong>Question 3</strong> - 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. Also, in Stirling and Kerr’s (2008) article, they highlight that retired athletes experienced physically emotionally abusive behaviours from their coaches.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

which included acts of aggression such as hitting and throwing objects either at the athlete or in the presence of the athlete.\(^4\)

**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 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...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 9 - Been made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards</th>
<th>abuse can include repeated criticising about sporting performance and name calling.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 9 - This question was included because CPSU highlight that emotional abuse can include pressure to perform to unrealistically high expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 10 - Made to feel that you/another child is only important or valuable if you are successful in sport</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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, scratched, or hit with an object)</td>
<td>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). Therefore, this question has been included because it highlights the physical aspect of bullying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>Question 12 - This question is included because, the IOC suggest that bullying can take place either directly or indirectly. For instance, direct bullying involves open attacks on a victim and indirect bullying includes social isolation, exclusion from a group or nonelection for activities. Similarly, Stirling (2008) indicates that there is a social aspect to bullying which involves intentionally isolating or excluding an individual from an activity. Therefore, this question was included to indicate in direct, social aspect of bullying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>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 occurs among older adolescent athletes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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).

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

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response options</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. What do you like about playing sport?</td>
<td>Comment box: open-ended response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What do you dislike about playing sport?</td>
<td>Comment box: open-ended response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response options</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>13. Emotional abuse</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Multiple choice: (i) yes (ii) no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever experienced emotional abuse or seen a child being emotionally abused when taking part in sport?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14. Bullying</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Multiple choice: (i) yes (ii) no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever been bullied or seen another child being bullied when taking part in sport?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Matrix rating scale 1-4: (1) never (2) once or twice (3) a few times (4) regularly/often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teased, made fun of or called names because of something that happened or how you/someone looked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip spread online or in person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making you feel intimidated or frightened)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been shouted or sworn at angrily by someone because of something you have done</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been shouted, sworn at angrily, or punished because of how you have played/performed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been repeatedly criticised or made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel that you/another child is only important or valuable if you are successful in sport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response options</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response options</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. What do you think safeguarding is?</td>
<td>Comment box: open-ended question.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. If you were worried about someone's behaviour towards you or another child in sport, would you tell someone?</td>
<td>Multiple choice: (i) yes (ii) no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. What might stop you from telling someone about a behaviour that you saw or experienced in sport that was worrying you?</td>
<td>Comment box: open-ended response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. If you wanted information on how to stay safe when participating in sport, where or who would you go to?</td>
<td>Comment box: open-ended response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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: [email protected].

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?

☐ 13 years old
☐ 14 years old
☐ 15 years old
☐ 16 years old
☐ 17 years old
☐ 18 years old

2. Where do you mostly take part in sport?

☐ East Wales
☐ Mid Wales
☐ North Wales
☐ South Wales
☐ West Wales

3. Which gender do you identify as?

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Nonbinary
☐ Transgender
☐ Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe as (please specify) _________________________________________

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

☐ White (e.g., English / Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish / British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish traveller, any other White background)
☐ Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups (e.g., White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background)
☐ Asian/Asian British (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, any other Asian background)
☐ Black African/Caribbean/Black British (e.g., African, Caribbean, any other Black / African / Caribbean background)
☐ Arab
☐ 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)

☐ Athletics
☐ Diving
☐ Netball
☐ Badminton
☐ Football
☐ Rowing
☐ Basketball
☐ Golf
☐ Rugby
☐ Boxing
☐ Gymnastics
☐ Sailing
☐ Canoeing
☐ Hockey
☐ Swimming
☐ Cricket
☐ Judo
☐ Table tennis
☐ Cycling (track, road, mountain bike)
☐ Kayaking
☐ Tennis
☐ Dance
☐ Martial arts
☐ Triathlon

Other (please specify)________________________________________________________________

6. How many years have you been regularly (e.g., at least most weeks) playing sport?

☐ 1 year
☐ 2 years
☐ 3 years
☐ 4 years
☐ 5 years
☐ 6 years
☐ 7 years
☐ 8 years
☐ 9 years
☐ 10 years

Less than a year (please tell us how many months)__________________________________

250
7. How many days a week do you take part in sport?

[ ] 1  [ ] 2  [ ] 3  [ ] 4  [ ] 5  [ ] 6  [ ] 7

8. What level(s) are you currently competing at in sport? (you can select more than one)

[ ] I do not compete (recreational / non-competitive)  [ ] Local club level  [ ] County level  [ ] Regional level  [ ] National level  [ ] International level

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)

[ ] I do not compete  [ ] Every week  [ ] Every two weeks  [ ] Every month  [ ] Every few months  [ ] 3-4 times per year  [ ] 1-2 times per year

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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you enjoy playing sport?</th>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>a little</th>
<th>sort of</th>
<th>pretty much</th>
<th>very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Were you happy playing sport?</th>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>a little</th>
<th>sort of</th>
<th>pretty much</th>
<th>very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you have fun playing sport?</th>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>a little</th>
<th>sort of</th>
<th>pretty much</th>
<th>very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you like playing sport?</th>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>a little</th>
<th>sort of</th>
<th>pretty much</th>
<th>very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?

☐ Yes ☐ No

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?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**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?

☐ Yes ☐ No

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?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>A few times</th>
<th>Regularly/often (most training sessions, matches/competitions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they played/Performed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically hurt by someone on purpose when it is not part of the sport such as a rough tackle or sparing (e.g., hit, kicked, slapped, punched, beaten up, shaken, slapped, pinched, whacked, scratched, or hit with an object)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they played/played</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On this page you will be asked about specific behaviours you have experienced in sport in the year (i.e., 12 months) 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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>A few times</th>
<th>Regularly/often (most training sessions, matches/competitions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how you looked)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip spread about you online or in person</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making you feel intimidated/frightened)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something you have done, or how you have played or performed)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been repeatedly criticised for how you played/performed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been repeatedly criticised for how you looked or because of your weight</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel that you are only important or valuable if you are successful in sport</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how you looked)</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Had embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip spread about you online or in person</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making you feel intimidated/frightened)</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>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)</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Been ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Been shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something you have done, or how you have played or performed)</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Been repeatedly criticised for how you played/performed</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Been repeatedly criticised for how you looked or because of your weight</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Been made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Made to feel that you are only important or valuable if you are successful in sport</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>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)</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>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)</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>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)</strong></th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?
☐ Yes ☐ No

20. Have you been given any information about keeping safe in sport? (e.g., posters, messages, leaflets, videos)
☐ Yes ☐ No

21. If you were worried about how someone behaved towards another child in sport, would you tell someone?
☐ Yes ☐ No

22. If you were worried about how someone behaved towards you in sport, would you tell someone?
☐ Yes ☐ No

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)

☐ Another child/team mate ☐ A physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist (e.g., psychologist, strength and conditioning trainer)
☐ Your parent/guardian ☐ Your sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead
☐ Someone else's parent/guardian ☐ I don't know who I would tell
☐ Your coach ☐ I would not tell anyone
☐ 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)

☐ Another child/team mate ☐ A physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist (e.g., psychologist, strength and conditioning trainer)
☐ Your parent/guardian ☐ Your sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead
☐ Someone else's parent/guardian ☐ I don't know who I would tell
☐ Your coach ☐ I would not tell anyone
☐ 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: [email protected]

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?
   - [ ] 13 years old
   - [ ] 14 years old
   - [ ] 15 years old
   - [ ] 16 years old
   - [ ] 17 years old
   - [ ] 18 years old

2. Where does your child mostly take part in sport?
   - [ ] East Wales
   - [ ] Mid Wales
   - [ ] North Wales
   - [ ] South Wales
   - [ ] West Wales
   Prefer to self-describe as (please specify) ______________________________________________

3. Which gender do you identify as?
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female
   - [ ] Nonbinary
   - [ ] Transgender
   - [ ] Prefer not to say
   Prefer to self-describe as (please specify) ______________________________________________

4. Which gender does your child identify as?
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female
   - [ ] Nonbinary
   - [ ] Transgender
   - [ ] Prefer not to say

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)
   - [ ] **White** (e.g., English / Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish / British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish traveller, any other White background)
   - [ ] **Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups** (e.g., White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background)
   - [ ] **Asian/Asian British** (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, any other Asian background)
   - [ ] **Black African/Caribbean/Black British** (e.g., African, Caribbean, any other Black / African / Caribbean background)
   - [ ] **Arab**
   - [ ] 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)
   - [ ] Athletics
   - [ ] Diving
   - [ ] Netball
   - [ ] Badminton
   - [ ] Football
   - [ ] Rowing
   - [ ] Basketball
   - [ ] Golf
   - [ ] Rugby
   - [ ] Boxing
   - [ ] Gymnastics
   - [ ] Sailing
   - [ ] Canoeing
   - [ ] Hockey
   - [ ] Swimming
   - [ ] Cricket
   - [ ] Judo
   - [ ] Table tennis
   - [ ] Cycling (track, road, mountain bike)
   - [ ] Kayaking
   - [ ] Tennis
   - [ ] Dance
   - [ ] Martial arts
   - [ ] Triathlon

   Other (please specify) ____________________________________________________________________________________________
7. How many years has your child been regularly (e.g., at least most weeks) playing sport?

☐ 1 year  ☐ 2 years  ☐ 3 years  ☐ 4 years  ☐ 5 years  ☐ 6 years  ☐ 7 years  ☐ 8 years  ☐ 9 years  ☐ 10 years  

Less than a year (please tell us how many months)__________________________________

8. How many days a week does your child take part in sport?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

9. What level(s) is your child currently competing in sport? (you can select more than one)

☐ (recreational / non-competitive) ☐ Local club level ☐ County level ☐ Regional level ☐ National level ☐ International level

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)

☐ They do not compete ☐ Every week ☐ Every two weeks ☐ Every month ☐ Every few months ☐ 3-4 times per year ☐ 1-2 times per year

11. In the year before covid-19 and the first national lockdown (i.e., March 2019 - March 2020):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>a little</th>
<th>sort of</th>
<th>pretty much</th>
<th>very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think your child enjoyed playing sport?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think your child was happy playing sport?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think your child had fun playing sport?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think your child liked playing sport?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

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?

☐ Yes  ☐ No
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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>A few times</th>
<th>Regularly/often (most training sessions, matches/competitions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they played/Performed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

18. Have you been given any information about keeping safe in sport? (e.g., posters, messages, leaflets, videos)
☐ Yes  ☐ No

19. If you were worried about how someone behaved towards a child in sport, would you tell someone?
☐ Yes  ☐ 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)
☐ Another child/team mate  ☐ A physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist (e.g., psychologist, strength and conditioning trainer)
☐ The child's parent/guardian  ☐ Your sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead
☐ Another parent/guardian  ☐ I don't know who I would tell
☐ Your child's coach  ☐ I would not tell anyone
☐ 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?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

266
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: [email protected]

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?
☐ East Wales ☐ Mid Wales ☐ North Wales ☐ South Wales ☐ West Wales

Prefer to self-describe as (please specify) ________________________________________

2. What age are the children you most regularly coach?
☐ 13 years old ☐ 14 years old ☐ 15 years old ☐ 16 years old ☐ 17 years old ☐ 18 years old

2. Which gender do you identify as?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Nonbinary ☐ Transgender ☐ Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe as (please specify) ________________________________________

3. Which gender are the children you most regularly coach?
☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Nonbinary ☐ Transgender ☐ Prefer not to say

4. How many days a week do you coach?
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

5. Which sport(s) do you predominantly coach? (you can choose more than one)
☐ Athletics ☐ Diving ☐ Netball
☐ Badminton ☐ Football ☐ Rowing
☐ Basketball ☐ Golf ☐ Rugby
☐ Boxing ☐ Gymnastics ☐ Sailing
☐ Canoeing ☐ Hockey ☐ Swimming
☐ Cricket ☐ Judo ☐ Table tennis
☐ Cycling (track, road, mountain bike) ☐ Kayaking ☐ Tennis
☐ Dance ☐ Martial arts ☐ Triathlon

Other (please specify) __________________________________________________________

6. How many years have you been regularly coaching (e.g., at least most weeks) playing sport?
☐ 1 year ☐ 2 years ☐ 3 years ☐ 4 years ☐ 5 years ☐ 6 years ☐ 7 years ☐ 8 years ☐ 9 years ☐ 10 years

Less than a year (please tell us how many months)__________________________________
7. How many days a week do you coach?

| ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 | ☐ 6 | ☐ 7 |

8. At what level(s) are you coaching? (you can select more than one)

| ☐ (recreational / non-competitive) | ☐ Local club level | ☐ County level | ☐ Regional level | ☐ National level | ☐ International level |

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)

| ☐ They do not compete | ☐ Every week | ☐ Every two weeks | ☐ Every month | ☐ Every few months | ☐ 3-4 times per year | ☐ 1-2 times per year |

**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?

| ☐ Yes | ☐ No |

**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?

| ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
**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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>A few times</th>
<th>Regularly/often (most training sessions, matches/competitions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they played/Performed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Another child/teammate did this</th>
<th>A parent did this</th>
<th>A coach did this</th>
<th>Other (someone who was NOT child, a parent, or a coach did this)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being teased, made fun of or called names (e.g., teased because of something that happened or how they looked)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have embarrassing or upsetting stories or gossip about them spread online or in person</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel scared or threatened without being physically attacked (e.g., put down or shouted at angrily making them feel intimidated/frightened)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored on purpose (e.g., not given any attention during training, matches, tournaments, and/or competitions)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouted or sworn at angrily by someone (e.g., shouted at for something they have done, or how they have played or performed)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they played/performing</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatedly criticised for how they looked or because of their weight</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel under pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made to feel that they are only important or valuable if they are successful in sport</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☒</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?
☐ Yes ☐ No

14. Have you been given any information about keeping safe in sport? (e.g., posters, messages, leaflets, videos)
☐ Yes ☐ No

15. If you were worried about how someone behaved towards a child in sport, would you tell someone?
☐ Yes ☐ No

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)
☐ Another child/team mate
☐ A physiotherapist, team doctor/medic or sport scientist (e.g., psychologist, strength and conditioning trainer)
☐ The child's parent/guardian
☐ Your sport or club's child welfare officer or safeguarding lead
☐ Another parent/guardian
☐ I don't know who I would tell
☐ Your child's coach
☐ I would not tell anyone
☐ 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young Person Interview Guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Tell me a bit about your experience in sport so far.  
  - 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**  |
| In your own words, what does bullying and emotional abuse mean to you?  
  - Types of behaviours?  
  - What impact does it have?  
  Have you been given any information about bullying, emotional abuse, or keeping safe (safeguarding) in sport?  
  - 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? |
| Based on findings from phase one  
What do you think enables these behaviours to occur in sport?  
Why do you think some people fail to recognise certain behaviours as bullying or emotional abuse?  
What do you think would prevent or stop such behaviours from happening in sport?  
If you were worried about how someone behaved towards another child or yourself in sport, would you tell someone?  
  - What would make you feel comfortable to tell this person?  
  - What would you want/expect them to do?  
Would anything prevent you from intervening or telling someone about someone's behaviour towards another child or yourself in sport?  
What things would be helpful if you wanted or needed to know more about keeping safe in sport? |
<p>| <strong>Closing questions</strong>  |
| 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>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Parent Interview Guide</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me a bit about yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What sport does your child take part in? (i.e., sport, competitive level, training, and competition frequency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When did your child start taking part in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What’s it like having a child involved in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are the challenges and demands associated with being a sport parent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your own words, what does bullying and emotional abuse mean to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Types of behaviours?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What impact does it have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been given any information about bullying, emotional abuse, or keeping safe (safeguarding) in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If so, what type of information have you been given?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who gave you this information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How was this information given to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Did you find the information useful, if so, what was it you found useful about it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on findings from phase one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think enables these behaviours to occur in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think some people fail to recognise certain behaviours as bullying or emotional abuse?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think would prevent or stop such behaviours from happening in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were worried about how someone behaved towards another child or your child in sport, would you tell someone?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What would make you feel comfortable to tell this person?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What would you want/expect them to do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would anything prevent you from intervening or telling someone about someone's behaviour towards another child or your child in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What things would be helpful if you wanted or needed to know more about keeping safe in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, what can be done to make sure that young people and others know more about bullying, emotional abuse, and keeping safe in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anything else to add?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Coach Interview Guide

### Introductory Questions
- Tell me a bit about your role.
  - 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
- In your own words, what does bullying and emotional abuse mean to you?
  - Types of behaviours?
  - What impact does it have?
- Have you been given any information about bullying, emotional abuse, or keeping safe (safeguarding) in sport?
  - 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?

Based on findings from phase one
- What do you think enables these behaviours to occur in sport?
- Why do you think some people fail to recognise certain behaviours as bullying or emotional abuse?
- What do you think would prevent or stop such behaviours from happening in sport?
- If you were worried about how someone behaved towards another child or your child in sport, would you tell someone?
  - What would make you feel comfortable to tell this person?
  - What would you want/expect them to do?
- Would anything prevent you from intervening or telling someone about someone's behaviour towards another child or your child in sport?
- What things would be helpful if you wanted or needed to know more about keeping safe in sport?

### Closing questions
- Overall, what can be done to make sure that young people and others know more about bullying, emotional abuse, and keeping safe in sport?
- Anything else to add?
## Safeguarding Lead Officer Interview Guide (Version 1)

**(26th August 2020)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introductory Questions</th>
<th>Tell me a bit about your role.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is your current role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What are your responsibilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How long have you been working in your role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What does a typical week in your role look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How long have you been in your role for?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Questions</th>
<th>When you think of safety and enjoyment in sport what comes to mind?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What does safety and enjoyment mean to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What does a safe and enjoyable sporting experience mean to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What about these factors influence safety and enjoyment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you think can be done to enhance children’s enjoyment and safety in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What can be done?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Which individuals do you think can help enhance safety and enjoyment in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What support can be given to you or others to help you enhance children’s enjoyment in sport and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What can you do in your role to make sure young people have safe and enjoyable sport experiences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What can be done to prevent this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What is it about these factors that are important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing questions</th>
<th>Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you’d like to mention?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any other questions or comments? Thank you for your time today!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Safeguarding Lead Officer Interview guide (Version 2)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(3rd September 2021)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Introductory Questions** | Tell me a bit about your role.  
- 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** | 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.  
**Coach competence**  
- 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?  
**Developmentally appropriate training sessions**  
- 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?  
**Designated welfare officer**  
- 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?  
What do you think can be done to enhance children’s enjoyment and safety in sport?  
What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?  
- How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment?  
- What can be done to prevent this?  
What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?  
- What is it about these factors that are important?  
- What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment? |
| **Closing Questions** | Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you’d like to mention?  
Any other questions or comments? Thank you for your time today! |
| Young Person Interview Guide (Version 1)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(27th October 2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Tell me a bit about your experience in sport so far.  
- 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 |
| When you think of safety and enjoyment in sport what comes to mind?  
- What does safety and enjoyment mean to you?  
- 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?  
- 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.  |
| Ask how these factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?  
- Positive peer relationships  
  - 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?  |
| Welcoming environment  
- 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?  |
| What do you think can be done to help you feel safe and enjoy your sport?  
- How do these factors influence your safety and enjoyment?  
- Which individuals do you think can help enhance safety and enjoyment in sport?  |
| What things would make you not feel safe and enjoy your sport?  
- What about these things would make you not feel safe and prevent you from enjoying your sport?  
- What can be done to prevent this?  |
| What are the most important things that can be done to help you feel more safe and enjoy your sport more?  
- What is it about these factors that are important?  
- What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?  |
| Closing questions |
| Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you’d like to mention?  
- Any other questions or comments?  
- Thank you for your time today! |
| Introductory Questions | Tell me a bit about your experience in sport so far.  
- 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?**  
- What does safety and enjoyment mean to you?  
  - 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?  
- When you think of safety and enjoyment in sport what comes to mind?  
  - What safety and enjoyment means to you  
  - What factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?  
  - What about these factors influence safety and enjoyment?  
- 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.  
- **Parental involvement**  
  - What do you like about your parent’s involvement in your sport?  
    - 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?  
  - What do you think can be done to enhance children’s enjoyment and safety in sport?  
    - 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?  
  - What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?  
    - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment?  
    - What can be done to prevent this?  
  - What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?  
    - What is it about these factors that are important?  
    - What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?  |
| Closing questions | Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you’d like to mention?  
- Any other questions or comments?  
- Thank you for your time today! |
| Parent Interview Guide (Version 1)  
(2nd December 2020) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me a bit about yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What sport does your child take part in? (i.e., sport, competitive level, training, and competition frequency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When did your child start taking part in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What’s it like having a child involved in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are the challenges and demands associated with being a sport parent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask how these factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you think of safety and enjoyment in sport what comes to mind?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does safety and enjoyment mean to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What does a safe and enjoyable sporting experience mean to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What factors influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What about these factors influence safety and enjoyment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think can be done to enhance children’s enjoyment and safety in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What can be done?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Which individuals do you think can help enhance safety and enjoyment in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What support can be given to you or others to help you enhance children’s enjoyment in sport and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What can you do as a parent to make sure young people have safe and enjoyable sport experiences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What can be done to prevent this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is it about these factors that are important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you’d like to mention?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other questions or comments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for your time today!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Parent Interview Guide (Version 2)**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>(16th September 2021)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Introductory Questions** | Tell me a bit about yourself.  
- 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** | When you think of safety and enjoyment in sport what comes to mind?  
What does safety and enjoyment mean to you?  
- 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? |
| **Coach competence** | What are your expectations in your child’s coach?  
- 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?  
What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?  
- How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment?  
- What can be done to prevent this?  
What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?  
- What is it about these factors that are important?  
- What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment? |
| **Closing questions** | Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you’d like to mention?  
Any other questions or comments?  
Thank you for your time today! |
| Coaches Interview Guide (Version 1)  
| (30th January 2021) |
| Introductory Questions | Tell me a bit about your role.  
| | - 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? |
| Main Questions | Parental involvement  
| | What are your thoughts on parental involvement in sport?  
| | - 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?  
| | Open communication  
| | How important is open communication with individuals in your sport?  
| | - 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?  
| | What do you think can be done to enhance children’s enjoyment and safety in sport?  
| | - 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?  
| | What do you think can negatively influence safety and enjoyment in sport?  
| | - How do these factors influence safety and enjoyment?  
| | - What can be done to prevent this?  
| | What do you perceive to be the most important factors contributing to a safe and enjoyable sporting experience?  
| | - What is it about these factors that are important?  
| | - What influence do they have on safety and enjoyment?  
| Closing questions | Are there any other factors that you feel affect safety and enjoyment in sport that you’d like to mention?  
| | Any other questions or comments?  
| | Thank you for your time today! |
## Appendix H: Example Interview Guides for Study 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young player Interview guide (Version 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is it like being involved in tennis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When did you start playing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What level do you play at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How often do you compete?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you enjoy or like about tennis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you find hard or challenging about tennis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were your thoughts on the written story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you explain how you continued the story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What were your initial thoughts about the story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are your thoughts about the story now you have completed the workshop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What things would you change about your story now that you have attended the workshop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you find the workshop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What was good about the workshop / not so good?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the most interesting thing you learned from the workshop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What was interesting about this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think workshops are helpful? If so, what did you find helpful, or not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was there anything you did not know before taking part in the workshop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the workshops is a good way of giving information about enjoyment and safety in sport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you change about the workshop/ this way of learning if anything?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Why do you feel this way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What things do you think can be done to help young people know more about bullying, emotional abuse, keeping safe, and enjoyment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything else you’d like to mention?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for talking to me today!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>