Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

Sport and Exercise Sciences
Gwyddorau Chwaraeon ac Ymarfer Corff

An Exploration into Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Sport as a Tool to Address Youth Crime and a pan-Wales Comparison of the Sports-Based Programmes Funded by the Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales

Cleo Fish (LLB)

Submitted to Swansea University in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science by Research

Swansea University

2022

kess2

Ysgoloriaethau Sgiliau Economi Gwybodaeth
Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships

UNDEB EWROPEAIDD
EUROPEAN UNION

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Cronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop
European Social Fund**

Abstract

Youth crime is a social phenomenon that persists in society. It refers to the criminal acts committed by young people aged 10 to 17 years old. Youth crime has received a lot of attention from researchers, arguably, because preventing and desisting young people from engaging in crime and anti-social behaviour can reduce the number of reoffending adults. A variety of approaches to address this social issue have been implemented, including the use of prevention and diversion programmes. This thesis aims to contribute to the literature which considers the role of sports-based programmes in the reduction of youth crime. With particular focus on the programmes funded by the Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners in Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales, and South Wales, this thesis adds to literature regarding the Welsh context. Qualitive methodology, in the form of semi-structured interviews with 13 participants, was conducted to explore the perceptions that those involved in the funding and delivery of sports-based programmes, commissioned by the Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales, have of the effectiveness of sport as a tool to address youth crime. Additionally, a pan-Wales comparison of the sports-based programmes was carried out to provide examples of best practise. The interviews were analysed using reflexive inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The findings suggest that although sport in general is seen as effective in aiding the prevention and diversion of young people from committing crime, it is best placed within a suite of different activities since sport is not effective for everybody. Further, the findings highlight the perceived importance of case studies in demonstrating the effectiveness of sports-based programmes, as well as highlighting the impacts external factors such as COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis have on delivery.

Declaration and Statements

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 09/12/2022

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.
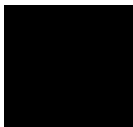
Signed

Date 09/12/2022

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.
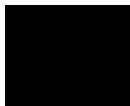
Signed

Date 09/12/2022

The University's ethical procedures have been followed and, where appropriate, that ethical approval has been granted.

Signed

Date 09/12/2022

Acknowledgements

This piece of research has single-handedly been my most challenging yet proudest achievement to date. However, I question how much of this would have been achievable without the support of those closest to me.

The first person I would like to express my gratitude to is my supervisor, Professor Joanne Hudson. Without your unwavering support, guidance, and kindness, this thesis would not have been the best version it could be. You have kept me on track, replied to my endless emails, and afforded me the freedom to take the project in my own direction. Thank you for everything.

Second, I would like to thank my family. I feel so blessed to have such an amazing, supportive, and loving family. Thank you for checking in on my progress and wellbeing, and for believing in me when I doubt myself. You are always there for me, and I appreciate you all. I hope this thesis makes you proud.

Third, I would like to thank my partner, Dan. From standing in the cold every Sunday to watch me play rugby to offering support during the times I have felt overwhelmed, you have been my greatest cheerleader this year. Thank you for being there for me in my endeavours.

Fourth, I would like to thank my second supervisor, Katherine Cullen. Thank you for providing feedback on my work and for offering a second perspective. This has been incredibly helpful in developing my thesis.

Fifth, this work is part-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the European Union's Convergence programme administered by the Welsh Government. I would like to

Contents Page

Glossary

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Score: The frequency of the ten experiences to which a young person has been exposed.

Adolescence: The stage of development between childhood and adulthood.

Adolescent-Limited: Those who commit crime only during adolescence.

Adolescent: A young person who is developing from a child into an adult, typically aged thirteen to eighteen years old.

Adverse Childhood Experience: Childhood experiences which cause harm or distress and subsequently impact physical or psychological development. Literature points to there being ten types of adverse childhood experiences.

Anti-Social Behaviour: Behaviour that is contrary to the laws and customs of society, in a way that causes annoyance and disapproval in others.

Crime Prevention Tool: A method used with the aim of preventing criminal behaviour.

Criminal Career: When an individual commits a sequence of crimes over a long period of time.

Dark Figure of Crime: The amount of crime that is unknown to the authorities.

Delinquency: Minor crime, especially that committed by young people.

Desister: A person who stops committing crime.

Diversion Programme: Programmes which divert young people with less serious offences from reoffending.

First-time Entrant: A person who has become involved in the Criminal Justice System for the first-time. This includes a reprimand, warning, caution, or conviction.

Life-Course Persistent: Those who commit crime throughout the life course, not just during adolescence.

Maturity Gap: The gap between biological and social maturity.

Peer: Someone at the same level as oneself.

Persister: Someone who continues to commit crime.

Physical Activity: People moving, acting, and performing within culturally specific spaces and contexts, and influenced by a unique array of interests, emotions, ideas, instructions and relationships.

Prevention Programmes: Programmes which prevent young people from committing crime and entering the Criminal Justice System.

Prosocial: Behaviour that is positive and promotes social inclusivity.

Reoffending: Refers to when an individual commits another offence after receiving their first caution or conviction

Self-Efficacy: The personal belief in one's own abilities and powers to achieve goals.

Social Bonds: The bonds an individual has to society e.g., with friends, family members or authority figures.

Sport: An activity involving physical exertion and skill, especially one regulated by set rules or customs in which an individual or team competes against another or others.

Sport-Based Programme: Programmes which engage with children through the use of sport, exercise, or physical activity.

Young Offender: A person aged ten to seventeen years old who has committed an offence.

Youth Crime: Crime committed by a young person, aged ten to seventeen years old.

List of Abbreviations

ACC = Age-Crime Curve

ACEs = Adverse Childhood Experiences

AL = Adolescent Limited Offender

ASB = Anti-social Behaviour

CJS = Criminal Justice System

LCP = Life Course Persistent Offender

PCC = Police and Crime Commissioner

OPCC = Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

PCSO = Police Community Support Officer

YJS = Youth Justice Service

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Figures

1. Introduction

1.1 Background Information

Youth crime is a long-standing issue in society. Violence exhibited and delinquency committed by adolescents are social problems (Jonkman et al., 2008). Local communities can be directly impacted by youth crime, for instance, if property is stolen or damaged. Taxpayers are impacted as their money contributes towards the cost of imprisonment. For the year 2019 to 2020, the cost per prisoner averaged £42,670 (Ministry of Justice, 2020). This increased to £48,409 for the year 2020 to 2021 (Ministry of Justice, 2022), thereby highlighting the rising costs of imprisonment. Subsequently, programmes aimed at diverting and preventing young people from committing criminal acts have emerged since Police-led diversion programmes have been proven as able to reduce recidivism rates (Lucas & Staines, 2022). In the UK, crime prevention programmes are used to prevent adolescents from being involved in crime (Gov.UK, n.d.). These programmes usually are based on an activity and can take place in group or more individual formats. Young people can be referred onto these programmes by the Police, the Youth Justice Service (hereafter YJS), a teacher, their parents, or by a social worker (Gov.UK, n.d.). Diversion programmes, although similar to prevention, are aimed more at individuals already involved in the Criminal Justice System (hereafter CJS) and attempt to aid their desistance from crime. Diversion programmes can be based on court-ordered or voluntary participation (Wong et al., 2016). Notably, programmes often incorporate both prevention and diversion in their objectives and work.

In Wales there are four Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners (hereafter OPCCs) located in the regions of Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales, and South Wales. In accordance with section 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, Police and Crime Commissioners (hereafter PCC) must issue a Police and Crime Plan, which as section 7 states, outlines the police and crime objectives. The current Police and Crime plans for the Welsh OPCCs all refer to youth crime as an area in need of addressing. Accordingly, this study will explore the perceived effectiveness of diversion and prevention programmes aimed at young people in Wales.

This research is concerned with exploring perceptions of the effectiveness sports-based programmes have in preventing first-time entrants into the CJS and diverting those already involved in the CJS from reoffending. First-time entrants are those who receive their first caution or conviction. In the year ending March 2021, 8,800 first-time entrants aged 10 to 17 entered the Youth Justice System in England and Wales. This equates to 11% of the total of first-time entrants into the Criminal Justice System (Youth Justice Board, 2022). Moreover, reoffending refers to when an individual commits another offence after receiving their first caution or conviction. In the year ending March 2020, the 10 to 17 age group had the highest reoffending rate compared to the 18 to 20 and 21 and over cohorts. The reoffending rates were 34.2%, 24.0%, and 25.2%, respectively (Youth Justice Board, 2022). This therefore re-emphasises the importance of programmes effectively targeting youth crime.

Prevention and diversion programmes can be based around a variety of different leisure activities. Appropriate pastimes to base a programme around include sports, music, art, and community service (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Leisure pursuits such as backpacking, social walking, and cycling can also be used as tools to engage with adolescents (Lawson, 2005). Sport is the activity of interest in this study as it has the potential for health and wellbeing benefits as well as personal development benefits such as teamwork and overcoming adversity. Further, all four of the OPCCs, in some form, commission sports-based programmes. Therefore, this allows for comparison of the OPCC sports-based funded programmes targeted at diversion and prevention of youth crime in Wales.

The relationship between general sports participation and the reduction in youth crime is a well-researched topic. American studies identify a correlation between crime decreasing when sport and recreational prevention programme sessions are taking place. For instance, Hartmann and Depro's (2006) study of midnight basketball in American cities found that the sessions were linked to a reduction in property crime. The studies also highlight the development of a positive identity, one which has changed from being an offender to a more prosocial identity, as being fundamental in the desistance process (Sweeten & Khade, 2018). On the other hand, Canadian examples suggest that feeling part of a community is a

protective factor which sports-based programmes can help young people to feel (Afifi et al., 2022). Likewise, English studies, such as Kelly's (2011), have found that sports-based programmes aid social inclusion as they create opportunities for young people to engage with education or employment. Arguably, the variety of studies currently available identify the different ways in which sports participation prevents and diverts young people from committing crime. However, further research is necessary to explore how these benefits of sport can be measured and how desistance can be attributed directly to the work of the programmes. Barriers to participation and delivery as well as the downsides to using sport as a tool to address youth crime could also be researched further.

1.2 Study Purpose and Aims
Overall, the purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of the sports-based programmes funded by the OPCCs in Wales which are aimed at addressing youth crime and anti-social behaviour prevention. The primary aim of the study is to explore the use of sport as a crime prevention tool and its perceived effectiveness. Some of the literature around sport as a tool implies that it is most effective when used in a broader approach whereby sports programmes are connected to other organisations which can address underlying causes of crime (Coalter, 2005). Thus, the present study will explore this point further to understand the role sports-based programmes have in diverting and preventing young people from committing crime and anti-social behaviour (hereafter ASB). The subsidiary aims of the study comprise of exploring methods of measuring the outcomes of the programmes, recognising the barriers and facilitators to running an effective programme, understanding how the referral pathways operate, identifying causes of disinvestment, and highlighting examples of best practise.

1.3 Study Approach
The study involves semi-structured interviews to explore the perceptions of those involved with the commissioning and delivery of the sports-based programmes in Wales. Semi-structured interviews are a suitable research method for this study since the focus is on perceptions. This method facilitates an opportunity for open discussion and for opinions of the participants to be voiced and explored in depth. A variety of closed and open-ended

questions with follow-up why and how questions will allow the discussions to flow between the relevant topics surrounding the commissioning and delivery of these programmes (Adams, 2015). The interview topics aim to gain an understanding of how sport is perceived as a tool to address youth crime, the delivery methods implemented to facilitate the effectiveness of the sports-based programmes, and the outcome measures utilised to evaluate their effectiveness. The sample group criteria will include individuals involved with the commissioning or delivery of the sports-based programmes funded by the OPCCs of Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales, and South Wales. Hence, target participants will be those working in the OPCCs, the programme staff, or those involved in referring onto the programme. This is a novel contribution to existing literature which tends to focus on interviewing programme participants, their parents, and coaches. It is important to incorporate the perceptions of individuals in these different roles in the study to understand how the effectiveness of sports-based programmes can be measured and their perceived position within the approach to youth crime prevention. This also facilitates a comparison between the views of deliverers and funders to determine if they complement or conflict with one another which is important since people will be looking at the sports programmes from different perspectives and have different experiences and responsibilities attached to their role. Thus, a comparison will allow for exploration into whether perspectives, targets, and desired outcomes for the sports programmes align between deliverers and funders or whether more communication between is needed. The attention is being placed on OPCCs in Wales since most of the existing literature reflects programmes taking place in other countries such as England and the United States of America. Thus, studying the Welsh context will offer a novel contribution to the literature.

1.4 Thesis Overview

Chapter 1 has introduced the focus of this study by providing contextual information and outlining the aims that it is setting out to achieve. Chapter 2 reviews the existing body of literature which surrounds the topic of youth crime, and the role sport has in addressing the issue. Chapter 3 explains the research paradigm underpinning the study, with reference to interpretivism. Chapter 4 outlines the methods used in the study to obtain data. It also addresses the trustworthiness of the research. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study and identifies the themes which have been interpreted by the researcher as being key themes

from the interview data. Chapter 6 discusses the implications and contributions the current study has on the existing literature. Strengths and limitations of the study, along with recommendations for future research, are also outlined in this chapter. Chapter 7 offers the main conclusions and take away points that are presented within the thesis.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Youth Crime

Youth crime is a social phenomenon. It encompasses all behaviour, committed by ten- to seventeen-year-old individuals, which contravenes the law (Gov.UK, n.d.). Statistics highlight that the prevalence of youth crime is diminishing. The number of cautions and sentences appointed to young people has plummeted by 82% in the last 10 years (Youth Justice Board, 2021). As outlined in the Youth Justice Statistics (Youth Justice Board, 2022) for the period April 2020 to March 2021, the number of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System has decreased by 81% since March 2011. Similarly, reoffending has reached its lowest level (Youth Justice Board, 2022). Youth crime is arguably a small proportion of the overall crime committed in England and Wales. According to the Office of National Statistics (2022) the Telephone-Operated Crime Survey for England and Wales for the year ending March 2022 identified 11.3 million offences as being committed by people over the age of 18 years old. Moreover, there were 759,300 court sentencing occasions in the year ending March 2021, of which 2% involved children (Youth Justice Board, 2022). Nonetheless, the frequency rate between April 2020 to March 2021 was 3.65 reoffences per child reoffender; this is an increase of 18% on the rate 10 years ago (Youth Justice Board, 2022). Notably, as highlighted by the Youth Justice Board (2022) themselves, fluctuations in crime statistics can be attributed to the effects of COVID-19: there has been a delay from the date of offence to completion of the case, which could account for the decreases in crime rates. Unreported crime is also not included within these government statistics. One explanation for this could stem from "police-recorded crime data largely [depending] on residents' willingness to report crimes to police" (Buil-Gil et al., 2021b, p. 20). The dark figure of crime, the amount of crime that is unknown by authorities, also varies geographically (Buil-Gil et al., 2021a), which could affect the rigour of this statistical data as different counties experience different levels of crime reporting and crime types. Therefore, statistical averages may not be reflective of all counties. Additionally, as identified by the Ministry of Justice (2022, para. 2), "around 80 percent of prolific adult offenders begin committing crimes as children". This stresses the need for early intervention and further research into childhood and adolescent offending. Overall, the statistics available depict a decline in young people offending but a concern around reoffending. Therefore, the figures suggest that more crimes are being committed by a

smaller minority of young offenders. It is arguable that despite official statistics providing data on youth crime, the true extent of the problem of youth crime remains unknown and cannot be entirely represented by these statistics. Therefore, it can be suggested that notwithstanding the evident decline in youth crime over recent years, youth crime is a persistent phenomenon, thereby signifying that further research in this area of study is warranted.

The age-crime curve (hereafter ACC), first discussed by Quetelet in 1831, is a well-established finding within criminological research. Since then, it has been explored by a plethora of sociologists and criminologists. Among them are Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983, p. 564) who label the age distribution of crime a "brute fact". They assert that "age is everywhere correlated with crime" (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983, p. 581), which could suggest why the ACC is consistent between different contexts since a surge in anti-social and criminal involvement during adolescence is a phenomenon experienced by different countries despite different cultures and approaches to addressing youth delinquency. The ACC, as the name suggests, evinces the relationship between age and crime. The curve represents the increase in offending in the early years of an offender's life, which accumulates to the peak stage, and then gradually decreases as the offender enters adulthood and later life. It delineates that adolescence is the peak stage in an individual's life for offending: Sampson and Laub (2005) state that this is fifteen years of age. Overall, the ACC evidently implies that researching the relationship between adolescence and delinquency and crime is key to understanding a criminal career. Thus, supporting the argument that whilst statistical data implies that it is decreasing, youth crime remains a focal point for research, and presents itself as a societal issue in need of addressing.

Arguably, attention is placed on youth crime since adolescence is marked as a tumultuous transitional period into adulthood. Young people have been depicted as falling "between the extremities of menace and desire, threat and renewal" (Mizen, 2004, p. xiii), and their involvement in crime as part of the process of personal development. Youth crime is feasibly part of a health transition from childhood to adulthood (Chamberlain, 2013), which usually

ceases once an individual reaches adulthood, and the maturity gap closes. Moffitt (1993, p. 687) defines the maturity gap as "a time warp between biological age and social age". It refers to the gap between yearning for adult status with all its desirability, and the societal blocks placed on adolescents preventing them from attaining this status. Moffitt's (1993) dual taxonomy suggests that there are two types of offenders, namely life-course-persistent (hereafter LCP) and adolescent-limited (hereafter AL) offenders. According to this taxonomy, ALs fall into the pathway of crime once they begin to experience the difficulties caused by the maturity gap and begin to realise that their LCP peers who commit crime and ASB do not. Hence, delinquency becomes functional as a form of social mimicry, whereby an LCP's antisocial lifestyle appears attractive and a means to close the gap, and consequently AL delinquents start to imitate their LCP peers and exhibit ASB (Moffitt, 1993). Once ALs are afforded adult status, the need to commit ASB recedes as they no longer experience the difficulties associated with the maturity gap and can achieve their desired status through legitimate pathways. This taxonomy highlights adolescence as a development stage in life permeated with delinquency and emphasises youth involvement in crime as a key area of study.

2.2 Adverse Childhood Experiences

A widely accepted cause of young people committing delinquency is an accumulation of adverse childhood experiences (hereafter ACEs). Research identifies that ACEs, or rather how many a child has encountered, affect the likelihood of offending (Baglivio et al., 2014). At present, no consensus definition of ACEs exists. Nevertheless, some researchers have proposed their own definitions. For instance, Kalmakis and Chandler (2014, p. 1495) define ACEs as childhood events "occurring within a child's family or social environment that cause harm or distress, thereby disrupting the child's physical or psychological health or development". Baglivio et al. (2015) go further. They list the following as ACEs: emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, domestic violence towards youth's mother, household substance abuse, household mental illness, divorce, and household member's imprisonment. Similarly, The Prisoner ACE Survey, which interviewed 468 adults, categorised ACEs as including verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, parental separation, mental illness, domestic violence, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and incarceration (Ford et al., 2019).

Felitti et al. (1998) introduced the notion of an ACE score: the sum of how many of the ten experiences a young person has been exposed to. The higher a youth's ACE score, the higher the expectance that they will offend, since it increases the risk of problematic behaviours developing, such as heavy drinking and smoking (Bellis et al., 2014). It is anticipated that if adolescents experience four or more ACEs, they are more likely to exhibit deviancy (Gomis Pomares & Villanueva, 2020). In Baglivio et al.'s (2017) sample of young offenders, the mean number of ACEs identified was 3.61. Likewise, in Ford et al.'s (2019) survey, 91.2% of those who had been in a Youth Offenders' Institute had at least one ACE, and 60% had at least four. With reference to the likelihood of reoffending, they found that those who had been exposed to four or more ACEs were three times more likely, in comparison to those who had experienced no ACEs, to be prolific offenders (Ford et al., 2019, p. 13). Fox et al.'s (2015) study on ACEs found that each ACE augmented the risk of a young person becoming a chronic offender by more than 35%. Indeed, research in this field suggests that in order to address youth crime, it is paramount to understand the role ACEs have as a causal factor, especially when considering the significance an accumulation of ACEs has on propensity to offend.

However, the ACE score has been subject to criticism. Folk et al. (2021) argue that it does not consider the timing of an ACE or the protective factors that can mitigate the impact of the ACE. Similarly, Anda et al. (2020) warn that the ACE score should not be used as a standardized measure as it does not account for the intensity, frequency, or chronicity of each ACE. Thus, it is important to consider both the number of ACEs experienced by a young person as well as when these ACEs occurred, the extent of the child's exposure to these ACEs, the protective factors in place to support the young person after an ACE exposure, and how frequent exposures are or have been.

2.3 Mitigating the Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences

There is an identifiable relationship between experiencing ACEs and partaking in sports. For example, while Noel-London et al. (2021) found that experiencing ACEs reduced sports involvement in young people, research indicates that participation in a sports-based

programme assists the development of protective factors to lessen the impacts ACEs have on a young person in later life. In their study involving adolescents aged 14 to 17 from Canada, Afifi et al. (2022) identified a feeling of community and belonging as protective factors. Engagement in sport and physical activity provides an environment which could facilitate the development of both feelings, especially if one is participating in a team sport. Taking part in sports has also been found to improve the mental health of participants who have experienced ACEs (Easterlin et al., 2019). In their study, Mazzer and Rickwood (2015) interviewed community sport coaches who acknowledged that they were able to identify when a young person has a mental health issue and could support them in seeking help. Moreover, Swann et al. (2018) found that adolescents felt that sport was a more engaging vehicle for learning about mental health compared to other avenues such as school. Additionally, sport has the potential to be used as a tool to mitigate the impact of ACEs because it is associated with the growth of resilience which acts as a protective factor against adversity (Norris & Norris, 2021). Implicitly, since ACEs increase the likelihood of a young person offending, sports participation could reduce this likelihood as these studies show that it can be used to help the development of protective factors thereby limiting the negative impacts ACEs have on people.

2.4 Sport and Physical Activity

The Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) defines sport as "an activity involving physical exertion and skill, especially one regulated by set rules or customs in which an individual or team competes against another or others". Additionally, Piggin (2020, p. 1) defines physical activity as involving "people moving, acting and performing within culturally specific spaces and contexts, and influenced by a unique array of interests, emotions, ideas, instructions and relationships". In this thesis, greater attention will be placed on sport programmes than physical activities because the organisations funded by the OPCC's are mostly sports orientated.

Since an attractive by-product of using sports programmes is curtailment of youth crime (Cameron & MacDougall, 2000), they have been implemented as a panacea to the social issue

of youth involvement in crime and delinquency. Sport and physical activity have a dual positive impact on youth involvement in such behaviours: programmes can be used as a crime diversion tool or as a hook leading into engagement in further diversionary activities (McMahon & Belur, 2013).

2.5 Sport as a Crime Prevention Tool

Sport is perceived as an effective tool to avert young people from offending for the first-time and from reoffending. According to Hodge (2009) sport could be used in addressing risk factors leading to youth crime, including unwise use of recreation time. Unstructured socializing can be a predictor of delinquency (Giordano et al., 2003). For example, boredom and risky behaviour are both attributable downsides to leisure (Caldwell & Smith, 2006). With delinquency and crime being perceived as resulting from inactivity or poor use of leisure time, sport schemes thus provide a possible solution or can contribute to the solution in combination with other prevention tools. They proffer an "antidote to boredom" (Morgan et al., 2020, p. 924), by providing youth with a means of constructively spending their leisure time. The simplest way that sports programmes reduce crime is by displacing adolescents from opportunities to commit ASB or crime. As Hirschi (2002, p. 187) articulates "the child playing ping-pong, swimming in the community pool, or doing homework is not committing delinquent acts". Irrefutably, if leisure time is filled with sporting activities, it cannot be filled with deviancy (Caldwell & Smith, 2006). By engaging and putting time and effort into alternative constructive activities, opportunity to engage in delinquency is reduced. Furthermore, providing a structured activity within their weekly routine serves to divert young people from offending out of boredom (Nichols, 2004). This is especially effective when the activity takes place "at times and in contexts that trigger delinquency" (Jugl et al., 2021, p. 3). Hartmann and Depro's (2006) study on the relationship between midnight basketball and urban crime rates investigated the idea of whether providing adolescents with a constructive activity to fill their leisure time would result in a curtailment of youth crime. They found that a city that adopted a basketball programme, which operated during typically high crime times, experienced a greater decrease in crime rates; the cities with the basketball programmes enjoyed a five percent higher decline than the cities without the basketball programmes (Hartmann & Depro, 2006). The findings of this study strengthen the argument

that sports-based interventions can reduce youth crime by providing a constructive use of leisure time and limiting the opportunity for youth crime to derive from boredom. Meaningful activities such as sport which take place on a frequent basis afford young people with an alternative way to socialize without falling into delinquent involvement.

However, for sports programmes to have a long-lasting effect in preventing criminal careers, they must have greater impacts than simply "filling time" and temporarily removing the individual from criminogenic opportunities for short periods of time. Research points to the importance of peer socialisation to address this shortfall since such socialisation launches "trajectories of offending" (Matsueda et al., 2020, p. 240). Hirschi (2002) discusses the role social bonds have in reducing delinquency, describing four elements of a bond, namely attachment, commitment, involvement, and attachment to peers. Attachment to others and being concerned over the opinions that others have about one's behaviour acts as a deterrent to committing delinquency as it binds an individual to societal norms. Strong attachments prevent young people from freely being able to deviate from these norms (Hirschi, 2002). Commitment requires one to reflect on the costs, such as losing their investment in conventional behaviour, associated with perpetrating delinquent acts (Hirschi, 2002). Involvement with prosocial activities restricts engagement in crime since it keeps the individual too occupied and busy to commit crime or ASB (Hirschi, 2002). A young person's attachment to peers has the ability to influence their behaviour whether it be antisocial or prosocial. For instance, teammates who exhibit antisocial behaviour could negatively affect others for instance by increasing their anger (Kavussanu & Al-Yaaribi, 2021). Akin to how criminality can be learned from peers, desistance from reoffending can be encouraged by one's friendship groups. Monahan and Booth-LaForce's (2016, p. 13) results support this suggestion: they found that a high-quality friendship could be "a powerful impetus for promoting prosocial behaviour". Copp et al's (2020) findings highlight that decreased contact with delinquent others correlates with decreased self-reported crime. Warr (1998) also argued that disassociation from antisocial peers leads to desistance from crime. Desisters have been identified as socializing with fewer antisocial friends than persisters (Sweeten & Khade, 2018). Indeed, it has been noted that young people with fewer delinquent peers age out of violent delinquency far more often than their counterparts with more delinquent peers

(Bekbolatkyzy et al., 2019). This is because adolescents are vulnerable to influence from peers, their peers' behaviour, and perceptions of peers' responses to the behaviour they display (Farrell et al., 2017). Therefore, the less time they spend around anti-social peers, the more likely they are to cease engaging in delinquent behaviour because the peers gradually become less influential: as denoted by Sweeten and Khade (2018, p. 384) experiencing "less anti-social peer pressure" is an aid in the desistance process.

Sport programmes facilitate healthy social interactions. They establish a platform for participants to learn how to work together in team settings thereby introducing them to the notion of interdependency (Moreau et al., 2018). This exposes participants to feelings of responsibility to others as well as encouraging social bonds between them to develop and strengthen. As Hirschi asserts an absence of bonds with others correlates with association with delinquents, which he describes as those "similarly lacking in attachment" (Hirschi, 2002, p. 140). Hence, strong bonds with prosocial peers positively impacts the likelihood of an adolescent withdrawing from delinquency. As these bonds strengthen, desistance increases because they will become more invested in the friendship and will be less likely to want to tarnish the bond by committing crime.

Moreover, the development of positive attachments to authority figures is "the first line of social control" (Hirschi, 2002, p. 127). Control theory stipulates that an individual who lacks this type of connection is more likely to commit crime because this deficit can lead to normative rules being denied legitimacy. With a lack of attachment to conventional norms and institutional figures, delinquency can be committed without consequences. In contrast, if an individual forms strong bonds with institutional figures and prosocial peers, if they take time to engage in an activity which develops "a reputation for virtue", they are less likely to commit delinquency for fear of the consequences that it would have on the investment they have made to conventionality (Hirschi, 2002, p.20). To surmise, the stronger the bond one has to others and to conventional activities, the less likely one is to deviate from prosocial behaviour because committing deviancy compromises their status and future choices available to them. Thus, it can be argued that sport and physical activity programmes are

effective crime prevention tools in addressing the issue of youth crime as sports coaches often act as a positive role model to young people.

The impact a sport coach has on participants can be long-lasting; Leaw et al. (2015) found that an individual's social network can impact their life course outcome. As a role model, coaches can encourage involvement and retention in the sport programme (Chamberlain, 2013), which in turn can result in a young person benefitting more from the positive impacts, such as the health benefits and volunteering or employment opportunities, that may arise from physical activity and sport participation. Similarly, evidence gathered by Jump (2017) implied that it is the combination of the sport activity and staff that is crucial in promoting desistance. Without an efficacious coach, the desired outcomes of the scheme could be compromised. On the other hand, the presence of a coach, who is competent in understanding the needs of the adolescents and who is a positive role model that leads by example, can ameliorate the outcomes. Programme leaders who understand the challenges and backgrounds of the participants can develop positive interpersonal relationships with participants to help them reduce and eventually stop their involvement in criminal activity (Morgan et al., 2020).

Coaches can be authority figures for young people (Chamberlain, 2013) which is particularly important when positive role models are unavailable at home (Berdychevsky et al., 2019). For example, as Nichols (2007) explains, coaches are effective positive role models because they can transmit prosocial norms to young participants. The results from Bandura's (1965) Bobo Doll experiment highlighted that a person's behaviour can be influenced from observing a model's example. Social learning theory upholds the view that behaviour displayed by role models can be intentionally or unintentionally learned by those witnessing it (Bandura, 1971). As a result of participating on a sports-based programme, young people can develop life skills (Chamberlain, 2013). Positive role models can help adolescents to develop these skills by modelling behaviours. Bandura's (1973) theory explains that people continue to engage in criminal conduct because they have not been exposed to alternative behaviours and methods of dealing with difficult situations. Mentors or coaches within sport programmes can introduce young people to new ways of managing aggression and handling difficult situations.

Sports-based programmes can provide a safe space where these new methods can be tried and tested on multiple occasions, and where positive behaviour can be acknowledged and rewarded. Bandura concludes that "given adequate demonstration, guided practice, and success experiences, this method is almost certain to produce favourable results" (Bandura, 1973, p. 253). Indeed, sport leaders play an important role in reducing reoffending in young people: they provide young people with a positive role model and an example on which to model behaviour. Arguably the evidence implies that the beneficial impacts of sport on youth crime reduction would be hindered by the absence of a positive role model.

2.6 Desistance from Youth Crime

Desistance is a "gradual process" (Jump & Smithson, 2020), which results in an offender stopping involvement in crime or ASB. Desistance from crime takes place because of two factors: the internal and the external changes in an offender's life. Whilst a cognitive transformation is an example of how desistance happens due to an internal change, external changes in an offender's life include the influence of prosocial others and hooks for change.

Giordano et al. (2002) propose that cognitive transformations include four phases: being open to change, exposure to hooks, envisioning an alternative self, and change in views of deviant behaviour. Paternoster and Bushway (2009) imply that desistance can begin once an individual abandons their criminal identity and replaces it with a prosocial identity. Forney and Ward (2019, p. 109) suggest that an identity is an "awareness about personal strengths and weaknesses…and knowing what one's priorities and values are". A prosocial identity encourages individuals to engage in conventional institutions and surround oneself with prosocial others (Na & Paternoster, 2019). By immersing oneself into a sports programme, an individual can adopt the identity of an athlete, all whilst shredding their former identity of a young offender. Desistance is successful through the development of "identity and cognitive processing" (Abeling-Judge, 2021, p. 288). As cognitive transformations take place, the young person can begin to visualise an alternative self and become open to the idea of changing. Once an alternative prosocial identity appears to be attainable, the process of desistance is catalysed. Thus emphasising the importance of identity in the desistance process. For

example, based on data collected in the Pathways to Desistance study which included a sample of 1,354 young people aged 14 to 17 in the United States of America, Sweeten and Khade (2018) identified that those who desist from crime display positive identity changes. Sampson and Laub (2005) suggest that these new senses of self and adoptions of new identities may be that of a desister, family man, or hard worker. A more empowered sense of self, the view one has of oneself, is crucial in the process of desistance. This was stressed by Forney and Ward's (2019) findings which suggest a correlation between those with a firm sense of self and those who are more able to resist peer influence. A sense of self, for instance as a desister, may be strengthened by rejection from negative peer as it reaffirms the new identity the person has embraced.

Comparably, Vella et al. (2011) highlight character outcomes, which they define as relating to the development of moral and prosocial behaviours such as honesty and self-control, as an easily identifiable outcome from engagement in a diversionary sport programme. Development of these behaviours is arguably beneficial to the desistance process as self-control for example could help individuals resist the temptation of returning to ASB or criminal activity. Participation in sport can also facilitate the development of personal characteristics such as self-efficacy (Reverdito et al., 2017). Bandura (1977) points to the importance of efficacy expectations, which refer to people's perceptions of their own abilities. Since efficacy expectations can impact how much time and effort an individual will exert to achieve a goal, "the stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the more active the efforts" (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). From this perspective, it can be suggested that helping young people to develop stronger expectations of themselves could prevent them from becoming involved in criminal activities by increasing their self-belief and aspirations.

In summary, evidence highlights the crucial role cognitive transformations have in deterring offenders from reoffending. The steps taken, including perceiving change as being a possibility, visualising what this change could look like, and taking steps to embody a new identity, are pivotal to the desistance process. As a person's belief in themselves and their abilities to change strengthens, the more exposed to hooks for change they become, the more

likely they are to set ambitious goals for themselves and spend more time and effort in making the change fruition.

With reference to prior discussions on social bonds and coaches as role models, sports-based programmes facilitate external changes as they expose young people to the influence of prosocial others. Prosocial others can include friends, romantic partners, family members, teachers, and coaches. Associating with prosocial others benefits an individual as it facilitates the enhancement of "one's own identity as a respectable person" (Giordano et al., 2003, p. 311). It can also introduce an individual to prosocial behaviour patterns, which they can incorporate into their own life. Bandura (1971) documented that via observing others, a concept of new behaviour patterns and how they should be performed is formed. Hence, sport programmes also operate as hooks for change. For example, Kelly (2011), who conducted an empirical study consisting of four programmes in England, found that they can provide pathways to educational and employment opportunities. These opportunities can reinforce and strengthen the learnt behaviour patterns such as being on time, having accountability and responsibility for tasks, and being an active team member. Reintroduction with educational institutions can increase a feeling of social inclusion and ability to engage with the labour market (Kelly, 2011). This is constructive for AL offenders because employment provides access to an adult role thereby mitigating the discomfort of the maturity gap. Once prosocial behaviour and choices become more rewarding it becomes easier for ALs to abandon ASB (Moffitt, 1993). Plausibly, steering young people, who are susceptible to committing crime, towards these more prosocial pathways leads to greater success in desistance because it provides a more positive alternative than pursuing a criminal career. An individual with different options available to them "will be less likely to revert to illegitimate activities than if he is unemployable except for menial jobs" (Bandura, 1973, p. 316). The longer an individual is exposed to these pathways, the more susceptible they are to the connected rewards, and the less appealing illegitimate pathways will be to them.

Forney and Ward (2019, p. 109) infer that both internal and external factors are likely to have "direct and indirect effects on offending". Similarly, Bandura (1973) suggests that a change in

behaviour brings with it a change in attitude: by acquiring new skills and capabilities, a person's self-evaluation will improve. Once the internal changes begin taking place within an individual, they are likely to start engaging with more conventional institutions such as education and with others who hold similar views and values to mainstream society. Likewise, the more one surrounds oneself with more prosocial others or is engaged with diversionary programmes which offer hooks for change, the more likely the individual will start to believe in their ability to divert from ASB and crime.

2.7 Benefits of Utilising Sport as a Crime Prevention Tool

The benefits of utilising sport as a crime prevention tool can be separated into two different areas: personal benefits to the participant, including health benefits and a sense of inclusion in mainstream society, and indirect benefits to society arising because of the individual's participation.

Literature points to both mental and physical benefits resulting from physical activity or involvement in sport (Shores et al., 2015). Young people who partake in sport are more likely to have better overall wellbeing than those who do not. Wilson et al's (2022) results showed a 66% increase in the odds of a young person having better wellbeing if they participate in sport. Similarly, Rodriguez-bravo et al. (2020) concluded in their study that young people who choose to engage in physical-sports activities have higher wellbeing scores compared to those who are not involved in any physical-sports activity. A study by Berzonsky and Cieciuch (2016) suggested that adolescents involved in sport have higher wellbeing scores because their participation in sport encourages them to reflect on their goals, values, and long-term impacts. With reference to physical health benefits, sports-based programmes are beneficial as they provide a platform for young people to stay active, learn about nutrition, and develop healthy habits. Lee et al. (2016) surmised that youth sport can improve people's health as they age because it encourages them to remain active. This can reduce the risk of obesity or poor bone health (Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010). Ribeiro et al. (2022) found that resistance training in particular can ameliorate muscle strength, cardiorespiratory fitness, as well as reducing body fat and Body Mass Index. Thus, it is evident that sports-based programmes are

valuable due to the health benefits they can have for young people. Notably, the literature which links health benefits to participation in sports or physical activity is largely based on cross-sectional studies. Caution should be taken since these types of studies only capture evidence at one point in time and are unable to identify causality between variables. Longitudinal studies which follow change over time would be more useful in identifying causality and mediating variables in the relationships shown between these variables.

Furthermore, sport is an effective crime prevention tool as it can facilitate social inclusion. For example, participation in sport can help adolescents' development by supporting them to be more focused and hopeful about their future (Morgan & Parker, 2017). The bonds that young people can build also facilitate social inclusion as through participation in the programme they may meet people that they would not otherwise have met. In Morgan et al.'s (2020) study, the programme assisted the building of relationships between local businesses and young people. Their results exemplified how interacting with those partaking in the programme led to a positive shift in attitudes that the employers held of the young people, thereby breaking down social barriers. Elkholm (2019) similarly found that sports-based programmes provide a platform for young people from different social contexts to interact with one another. They also highlighted that formative role models can reach out to young people and guide them towards social integration. The literature suggests that sports-based programmes are effective crime prevention tools since they encourage integration between different groups within society which improves the social inclusion of young people on the programme.

Diverting young people away from being complicit in crime or ASB is beneficial to the community they live in as it reduces the likelihood of victimisation. With reference to previous discussion on desistance from youth crime, the strengthening of a young person's social bonds is beneficial to wider society as they are more likely to contribute back to their communities or re-engage with institutions such as education or find employment if they feel a sense of inclusion (Kelly, 2011).

Overall, general sport is a beneficial crime prevention tool as it has the effect of reintegrating young people back into society as well as having health benefits which other tools may not be able to offer. The impact the programme has on a young person subsequently benefits wider society as it encourages reintegration into education or the labour market, and it reduces the amount of youth crime and ASB happening in the community.

2.8 Limitations of Utilising Sport as a Crime Prevention Tool

Although sport programmes are merited as an effective crime prevention tool to address youth crime, there are disadvantages associated with utilising sport in this way. First, sport programmes may face the challenge of retention of 'at risk' young people. For instance, Kelly (2012) studied three projects in England and interviewed young people, project managers, operational staff, and partners. She discovered that some young offenders are unlikely to voluntarily participate in these programmes. In practice, this makes it difficult for projects to engage with adolescents to the extent which is required for them to experience the benefits that preventative or diversionary sport programmes may initiate. In her earlier study, Kelly (2011) also highlighted limitations to the delivery of sports-based programmes which hinder the effectiveness they have for young people. These limitations include having time sensitive and insecure resources, reliance on partnerships with specialist agencies to address complex issues, sport being a divisive tool, and tensions between ensuring that the programme is open to all as well as the environment being safe and welcoming for all. Given the limitations on effectiveness discussed by Kelly (2011) regarding programmes based in England, it is pertinent to determine if similar limitations are perceived as influencing effectiveness in relations to sports-based programmes in Wales.

Second, labelling theory, introduced by Becker, suggests being labelled as a deviant harms an individual's "social participation and self-image" (Becker, 2018, p. 33). Becker explains that a label can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby the labelled person embodies their label. This is a consequence of the deviant being treated in accordance with their label which propagates deviance since their label "denies them ordinary means of carrying on the routines of everyday life…the deviant must of necessity develop illegitimate routines" (Becker, 2018, p. 36). Sport programmes aimed specifically at young people who have been

tarnished as deviants could perpetuate the self-fulfilling prophecy as they emphasise that these young people are a cohort of deviant or 'at risk' youths. Referring to the previous discussion on changes in identity and self-efficacy, arguably, participation in a programme targeted at delinquents could hinder the young person's views on their capacity and ability to change. This could be detrimental to the desistance process as it makes it more difficult for the young person to take the steps to embrace a more prosocial identity if they are still being labelled as delinquent or anti-social. However, sports-based programmes can also be used in a way in which this cohort is reintegrated into their community. When used effectively and whilst ensuring all safeguarding measures are in place, both those 'at risk' and not 'at risk' of developing a criminal lifestyle can take part in the same sessions and be on the same team. Thereby weakening the development of a self-fulfilling prophecy and erasing the labels of 'deviant' and 'non-deviant'. Further, the careful selection of the name of programmes could be crucial in ensuring that these labels and self-fulfilling prophecies are not perpetuated by the programmes. Thereby creating a space and opportunity for young people to adopt new identities and take the steps to change.

Third, there is a lack of robust evidence to correlate general sport participation to offending (Chamberlain, 2013). It is an arduous task to ascertain whether an adolescent would desist from crime without engaging in a diversionary programme. In parallel, it is difficult to prove that desistance took place solely because of involvement in a sports-based programme. This difficulty in attributing desistance to sport programmes could give rise to criticism over sport as a crime prevention tool.

2.9 Barriers to Participation

A significant barrier to participation is lack of financial resource. In Eyre et al.'s (2022) study, parents cited financial constraints as a barrier to attending afterschool clubs. Although this study looked at after-school clubs, instead of sports-based crime diversion or prevention programmes, the findings illustrate how the costs of extra-curricular activities could disincentivise participation. Inadequate transport and not being close to facilities could also be barriers to participation for young people wanting to join the sports-based programmes

(Nichols, 2007). As such, hosting the programme in an accessible location could address this barrier and help to facilitate participation. Moreover, it is important for the programme to embed itself in the community to encourage participation from the local adolescents because ineffective community outreach can result in a lack of participation from young people (Schneider, 2000). It can be suggested that the expense of participation, the inaccessibility of facilities, and the lack of outreach to the community could hamper the effectiveness of sports-based programmes as they create barriers to young people joining and sustaining participation in the programme.

2.10 Measuring Diversion and Prevention

Measuring diversion is difficult because there could be many factors relevant in a young person's life which ultimately prevent them from entering the CJS. Likewise, prevention is difficult to measure because there may be several reasons why a person desists from offending as opposed to there being one singular catalyst of change. Cognitive and external factors operate in an interactive process making it difficult to pinpoint the order in which they influenced an individual to desist (LeBel et al., 2008). Further, to link change directly to involvement in a programme could be an onerous task because the changes may not become apparent until years later. Greenwood (2008), nevertheless, suggests that a cost-benefit analysis could be made to measure the effectiveness of programmes since the prevention of crime causes a reduction of costs related to arrests, court processes and imprisonment. By interpretating Greenwood's suggestion, a programme can be proven to be effective if the benefits such as savings to public money outweigh the cost of running the programmes. However, more research is needed to support this point and to further explore the other ways in which the effectiveness of crime diversionary and prevention programmes can be measured.

2.11 Conclusion

To conclude, the relationship between adolescence, ASB and crime is well-established. Research in this area is warranted due to it being a long-standing issue, which has received a lot of attention in attempts to address it. This literature review highlights that here is a wealth of evidence to support the use of sports-based programmes in addressing the societal

phenomenon of youth crime. Despite there being some criticism about the effectiveness of sport as a crime prevention tool, the evidence implies that sport can be used as an impetus for desistance from crime. Sports-based programmes can facilitate the growth of social bonds, the development of self-belief, and be a hook for change including reintegration into education or access to training and employability opportunities.

2.12 Gaps Within Current Research

Arguably, the quantity of studies which evaluate the extent to which sports-based programmes are successful in reducing crime committed by young people is limited especially when researching in the Welsh context. Furthermore, these studies tend to be small-scale studies analysing low numbers of sports programmes. Most studies do not investigate the perspective of the programme funders. Therefore, the study designs are limited to only representing the opinions of participants and coaches. Some however do also include interviews with parents to ascertain their perceptions of the benefits of the sport programme. The evidence that states sport can reduce youth crime largely originates from studies which lack strong evaluation designs (O'Connor & Waddell, 2015). Studies may overstate the impact that sport has or have conflicting findings. Current findings on the correlation between involvement in sport and deviancy are ambiguous (Brosnan, 2020) since it is difficult to prove that without involvement in the sports-based programme that a young person would inevitably enter into a life of crime. Other factors such as parental support, the aid of a social worker or teacher, could also contribute to the young person diverting from anti-social or criminal behaviour. This manifests into a concern over distinguishing between whether sport projects work because of the benefits of sport in reducing crime or due to other factors at play. As Nichols and Crow (2004, p. 268) highlight, it is crucial "to have clearly defined and measurable outcome criteria" so that the changes catalysed by the sports programmes can be attributed to the programmes and not to other factors. This will reduce ambiguity from the results and enable sport to be isolated as the reason sports programmes 'work' in lowering youth offending. The hierarchy of evidence outlines what the most robust and strongest form of evidence is and how to obtain this evidence. Randomised controlled trials are at the top of the hierarchy (Murad et al., 2016). Therefore, this would be the best kind of study for generating evidence to determine the effectiveness of a programme as randomised

controlled trials reduce bias and the comparison of two groups allows the researcher "to examine the cause-effect relationships between an intervention and outcome" (Hariton & Locascio, 2018, p. 1716). Second on the hierarchy are cohort studies. Cohort studies, a type of longitudinal study, would also be effective in attributing outcomes to a programme as they are a "robust method of establishing cause and effect" (Barrett & Noble, 2019, p. 95).

Furthermore, within the literature surrounding the topic of sport and youth crime, it is evident that there are gaps in knowledge and understanding. Firstly, the sample groups are clustered by adolescent offender cohorts. There is a lack of comparison between offending and non-offending cohorts, as well as a lack of sample groups representing programme funders. Secondly, there is little systematic knowledge about the effectiveness of sports programmes implemented as measures of crime prevention. Studies take place over a fairly short space of time and there are few follow-ups to evaluate the long-term impacts these programmes have. With the exception of the suggestion of a cost-benefit analysis (Greenwood, 2008), there are few suggestions on how the effectiveness of programmes can be measured. Thirdly, studies are often based on one country. Thus, it is difficult to generalise the findings to Welsh-based sports programmes. There is a need for larger, more geographically diverse samples within studies investigating the relationship between sport and youth crime.

Whilst this single piece of research cannot fill all the gaps within the current literature, it aims to address a few. Baglivio et al. (2017) state that future endeavours should examine whether intervention programmes can mitigate the effects of ACEs on negative outcomes. This research project will explore the perceptions of those involved in the funding and delivery of sports programmes regarding the effectiveness sport may have as a tool to mitigate the impacts of ACEs on a young person, and it will gauge how much ACEs are considered and influence the delivery of the schemes. Jugl et al. (2021) carried out a systematic review of 24 studies and used 13 of these in their meta-analysis. They looked at crime-related outcomes and psycho-social factors that programmes have considered and they concluded that whilst sports-based programmes are effective in addressing the issue of youth crime, future research must consider aspects of the roles that peers and coaches on the programme have

in helping a young person to desist. This research will aim to address these aspects when referring to how sport can be utilised as a crime prevention tool. Additionally, by researching programmes in Wales specifically, this study addresses the geographical gaps left by current studies since most studies in this area focus on American or English examples. Including the perceptions of funders and deliverers will be a novel contribution as it will provide insight into both what the overarching aims and outcomes expected from the programmes are, as well as the practicalities of delivering the programme and achieving those aims. Exploring the perceptions of funders will be valuable especially for understanding how the outcome of these programmes could be measured and in understanding how those in a position to commission view sport as a tool to address youth crime. It is important to obtain an understanding of the perceptions the programme deliverers have on the barriers and facilitating factors of an effective programme as they interact with the participants and have a first-hand experience of the challenges and practicalities that may be encountered when running a diversionary or preventionary programme. It will be insightful to compare the views of those delivering and funding the programmes to see how they align with one another and to create a picture of the overarching framework alongside the day-to-day practicalities of the running of the programmes. It will make a novel contribution to the literature because data will be gathered through interviewing those involved with funding and operating the programmes, it will explore perceptions of the effectiveness of sports-based interventions, and it will study sport programmes in different geographical areas within Wales as opposed to focusing on one programme as a case study.

2.13 Importance of the Study Focusing on Wales

It is important to conduct a study focusing specifically on Wales instead of replicating best practise based on evidence obtained from different countries for several reasons. First, the legal age of criminal responsibility differs between countries. In England and Wales, it is 10 years old (Children and Young Persons Act 1933, s. 50). However, even in a country as similar as Scotland this differs as a young person cannot be prosecuted under the age of 12 (Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, s. 41). Other European countries have higher ages of criminal responsibility, for example, it is 14 in Germany (German Criminal Code 1998, s. 19) and 15 in Iceland (Iceland Penal Code 1940, art. 14). The variation in ages of criminal responsibility

suggest that it is necessary to distinguish between countries instead of following a policy of 'one size fits all' as the legislations regarding youth crime differ. Further, the court systems in countries diverge from one another. In the UK, an adversarial court system is used whereby two parties argue their cases and the magistrate or jury conclude. Other European countries such as France and Germany use the inquisitorial court system which requires a judge to actively investigate the court case. Arguably, the fact that different countries use contrasting court systems suggests a need to focus on Wales independently from other example studies because the way youth crime is handled varies between countries. Third, the cultures and therefore the views on youth crime in countries differ which could influence the ways young people on the verge of committing an offence or those already involved in the CJS are treated and labelled. The epitome of this is the contradicting reactions in the UK and Norway following the murders of James Bulger and Silje Redergård committed by other children. In the UK, there was a drastic emotive reaction from the media, and as Green (2007, p.592) articulates "it has seldom been out of the news" since it happened. On the other hand, the Norwegian media were less sensational, and their coverage referred mainly to the opinions of experts and the importance of reintegration into society of the children who committed the offence (Green, 2007). Overall, focusing on Wales as opposed to emulating the approaches used by other countries is warranted because of the unique culture and legal system in England and Wales that differs from other European countries.

Moreover, across England and Wales there are 39 Police and Crime Commissioners, only four of whom are located in Wales. Thus, it could be implied that it would be more feasible to take a nationwide approach in Wales than in England. Since there is a relatively small number of OPCCs in Wales, a comparison can be more easily made between the different offices. Similarly, due to the relatively small number of OPCCs in Wales, the findings of the study can have a greater impact, than if it were to focus on England and Wales, since the practicalities of sharing best practise and initiating partnerships may be easier to attain. Hence, the significance of concentrating on Wales in lieu of England and Wales.

2.14 Novel Research

The project proposes to contribute to existing literature, by producing an analysis of the perceived effectiveness and role of sport in crime prevention and diversion, through an exploration of the perspectives of those who fund and deliver the programmes. The findings will offer a novel contribution to policy and practice due to its context specificity. Findings from other studies are not directly applicable to inform the particular inquiry of the sports-based programmes funded by the OPCCs in Wales. Moreover, it will explore the feasibility of the OPCCs working together on an all-Wales basis because the funders of the project have requested to see what is happening across the different programmes commissioned by the four Welsh OPCCs and whether a pan-Wales approach could be taken in the future. This approach could be helpful in establishing standardised outcome measures, evaluating value-for-money of the programmes, and sharing expertise and learning between the different programmes. Thus, the findings from this study are novel as they pertain to the context of a pan-Wales approach in researching and understanding the methods taken by the four OPCCs in Wales to reduce youth involvement in the CJS through the medium of sport.

Above all, this is a novel piece of research because there is currently no research available that focuses on all four OPCCs in Wales, nor do any projects rigorously explore the perceived effectiveness of the OPCC funded sports programmes, on reducing youth crime, by those involved in decision making about, and delivery of, programmes.

2.15 Study Aims

Overall, this research project aims to explore the perceptions of the sports-based programmes funded by the OPCCs in Wales which are aimed at addressing youth crime and ASB prevention. The main purpose of the study will be to identify the perceived role of sport as a tool for the diversion and prevention of first-time entrants into the CJS, as well as the reoffending of those already in the CJS. Also, it will explore the perceived role these programmes have in the mitigation of the impacts of ACEs on young people.

The subsidiary aims of this project are as follows:

1. To explore the perceptions of the most appropriate ways of measuring programme outcomes. To identify what makes a programme 'effective' and what the barriers and facilitating factors are to this.

2. To understand the partnerships and referral pathways involved within the operation of the sport programmes.

3. To explore perceptions of factors which could lead to a disinvestment in a sport programme.

4. Provide examples of best practice across the four regions in Wales in regard to the sports-based programmes funded by the Welsh OPCCs and explore if collaborative working is feasible.

3. Research Paradigm

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research paradigm underpinning the project. The research paradigm is significant as it influenced the approach I took in studying the topic. It is influenced by the research philosophy, the belief about how data should be gathered and used, that is adopted by the researcher. My world view has been shaped by two main factors. First, as a child I lived in a non-affluent socio-economic area which meant I was exposed to seeing how my peers could fall into unhealthy behaviour patterns and habits due to not having a positive interest to invest time and commitment in. Thus, I am interested in researching how sport can be used for both personal and societal benefits. Second, sport, particularly rugby, has had a considerable influence on both my childhood and adulthood. However, being a female rugby player has meant that the game has not always been accessible, resulting in having to pause my involvement in the sport during my adolescent years. Hence, it is an interest of mine to explore how sport can be made more accessible to all demographics so that its benefits can be further reaching. As the researcher, I believe that data is best gathered through conversation and seeing examples of how the phenomenon being studied works and interacts with the social world. Subsequently this research paradigm comprises of an interpretivist theoretical perspective, ontological relativism, interpretive epistemology, qualitative methodology and methods.

3.2 Interpretivism

The research project will be based on the theoretical perspective of interpretivism. Interpretivism aims to interpret the meaning people attach to their actions and surroundings. It focuses on relative knowledge which views knowledge as being socially constructed by circumstance and experience, thereby focusing on answering why and how questions. Through the process of interpreting meaning, the researcher will achieve "verstehen", a deep understanding of human action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). An interpretivist approach will be adopted for the research project because it allows researchers to gain in-depth insights into the life experiences of those being studied. With this approach, the researcher's view is that realities are socially constructed (Abdul & Alharthi, 2016), meaning that reality is subjective

and constructed by human interaction. When studying phenomena, interpretivism allows researchers to understand human behaviour and social events in their social context (Pham, 2018). Therefore, to understand a topic, it is important to understand the meanings and different realities people attach to it. An interpretivist approach is suitable in understanding the views held by those working within the OPCCs or sports-based projects funded by the OPCCs since they are target participants who have specific expertise. Hence, they have experienced the context surrounding the research topic of youth crime and have a personal understanding of how sport can be utilised in addressing this issue. Adopting an interpretivist approach is best suited to answering the research question because it is imperative to ask why and how questions in order to ascertain how partnerships are working and to explore the perceptions, held by those working in the organisations, of the effectiveness of sport as a tool for ASB and crime prevention or diversion.

Interpretivism has been criticised for a few reasons. This includes susceptibility to researcher bias caused by the interactive and participative relationship between the researcher and the researched. Nevertheless, a rapport is favourable in an interpretivist study because it may facilitate a more forthcoming conversation between researcher and researched. Subsequently, it will allow more scope for personal topics and opinions to be discussed, as well as gathering more truthful accounts of the interviewees' experiences. Social desirability bias could also result from interpretivist research methods, for instance in face-to-face interviews, the participants may provide answers that they perceive will be socially acceptable (Choy, 2014). Arguably, respondents participating in more traditionally quantitative methods such as questionnaires may also feel the pressure to provide socially acceptable answers. Thus the issue may lie more with the human desire to conform and meet others' expectations than with the mode of inquiry used. Second, due to the small-scale nature of interpretivist research and its focus on personal viewpoints and understanding, the findings may be difficult to apply to different contexts (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Rahman, 2017). However, the aim of this study is not to generalise the findings to the wider population. The purpose of interpretivist research is to discover the views and understandings individuals have "about the social phenomena they interact with" (Abdul & Alharthi, 2016, p. 55). Thus, an interpretivist approach is more applicable for this research than a positivist approach

because the aim is not to generalise the findings but rather to understand the experiences and the meanings the target participants attach to the work and effectiveness of the youth sport programmes.

Interpretivism also has many advantages, such as subjectivity (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). This is a benefit to research concerned with personal beliefs and opinions as subjectivity allows for greater understanding of the meaning individuals ascribe to the social world. It refers to how opinions are moulded by personal views as opposed to being objective. Also, interpretivism is beneficial in understanding human action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), as it questions why people behave the way they do. Overall, interpretivism is suitable for this research project because it is concerned with studying human experiences and the context surrounding them. This approach is advantageous in enabling the encompassment of the different roles, perspectives, and realities that are represented by the sample of people involved in the youth sports-based programmes, and hence this study.

3.3 Ontology and Epistemology

The research paradigm is underlined by ontological relativism and interpretive epistemology.

Ontology refers to what reality is (Scotland, 2012). Ontological relativism is the view that there is no single reality. Rather, there are "multiple realities socially constructed by individuals from within their own contextual interpretation" (Klenke et al., 2016, p. 15). Hence there are an equal number of realities to individuals (Scotland, 2012). In this study, the multiple realities relate to geographical differences: the experience of participants is likely to differ between those living in North Wales, South Wales, Gwent, and Dyfed Powys. Likewise, realities are likely to be contrasting between those with different roles: those working within the OPCCs may have different realities to the coaches involved with the sports programmes or those working within the YJS. By believing in the existence of multiple realities, a researcher is likely to be more involved with the participants to "understand phenomena in their contexts" (Abdul & Alharthi, 2016, p. 52). This is because they believe that realities are socially

constructed and subjective to the individual. Therefore, there is a need to take a more personal and involved approach as opposed to objectively studying the participants or treating them as one.

Epistemology is concerned with "the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated" (Gall et al., 2003, p. 13). Interpretive epistemology reflects the view that reality must be interpreted. Subsequently, it is subjective and requires understanding the personal views, beliefs and life experiences of the individuals involved in the study. Data therefore takes the form of audio or video to uphold the authenticity of the accounts of the researched (Gall et al., 2003). Interpretation of the findings should be inductive whereby the researcher identifies patterns and themes within the data.

3.4 Methodology

Methodology refers to how research is conducted, and knowledge is gathered (Klenke et al., 2016). In line with the research paradigm and philosophy, qualitative methodology is applicable in obtaining first person accounts and perspectives. Qualitative data takes the form of verbal and written data (Polkinghorne, 2005). It can be used to capture the thoughts and experiences of the researched in a more detailed way than a quantitative approach, which focuses on quantifying and analysing numbers (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Qualitative research methodology was adopted for this research process because the aim of the project is to gain a wealth of in-depth knowledge from a small sample. In-depth knowledge from a small sample is preferable than surface level knowledge from a large sample in this study, because the experience and knowledge of the phenomenon is limited to a small group of people and therefore the pool of potential participants is restricted. The current study is focused on exploring the perceptions of those involved in the funding and delivery of the OPCC commissioned sports-based programmes, and as the focus of the study is also on the Welsh context, it is unnecessary to have a large sample or to obtain data which can be generalised. Furthermore, by focusing on obtaining substantial information from a small sample, the researcher can attain the depth of understanding and interpretation desired in qualitative research. For instance, surface level information gathered from a large sample could result in

participants revealing the same answers, but this would produce a limited perspective on the phenomenon. In contrast, collecting more in-depth knowledge from a smaller sample could result in producing a fuller picture as it is likely that more detail and more varying answers will be disclosed.

The study will follow Tracy's (2010) eight "big-tent" criteria to uphold the trustworthiness of the methods which includes the following: a worthy topic; rich rigor; sincerity; credibility; resonance; significant contribution; ethics; and meaningful coherence. In accordance with the criteria, the research is focusing on a worthy topic as the prevalence of youth crime in society warrants further research. The data collection will take place over an appropriate length of time to allow for the study to have rich rigor. The researcher will be transparent and open about personal biases, which has been demonstrated in this research paradigm chapter. The inclusion of a diverse sample and the use of verbatim quotes from the semi-structured interviews will provide the results with qualitative credibility. Resonance may arise from the reader empathising with the situation in which programme participants find themselves. Ethics will be followed throughout the study to meet the criterion of ethical research. Meaningful coherence will be identifiable in the study since semi-structured interviews will be carried out in order to understand people's perceptions of the effectiveness of sport as a tool to address youth crime.

3.5 Method

Interviewing will be the method used to obtain data for the project as it allows for open questions to be asked. As such, knowledge obtained is richer and to an extent participants can shape the discussion. It is a more person-centred research method which is beneficial in obtaining opinions and personal views from participants. Semi-structured interviews will be adopted to prevent interviews from being too rigid. Whilst keeping some form of structure and similarities between the different interviews, utilising semi-structured interviews grants the interviewee with some control on the direction the interview takes. This is preferred within an interpretivist approach as it means that the researcher can gain more insight into what the participant regards as important in understanding the social issue. It aligns well with

the ontology as it allows exploration into each of the realities of the researched and facilitates contextual interpretation. Additionally, interviewing is a reflective method of the epistemology underpinning this paradigm since it gives the researcher room to interpret meanings from the data set, and follow-up questions can be asked to truly capture the views, beliefs, and life experiences belonging to the participants.

One-to-one interviews have been selected as the research method however there are other qualitative methods of enquiry which could have been used instead. These methods include analysing documents, carrying out observations, asking participants to keep diaries over the research timeframe, and conducting focus groups. Observing participant behaviour was dismissed as an option because it was not required to answer the research question since the focus was on perceptions and not observable behaviours. Analysing documents was also not required as this was being carried out in a scoping review as part of the partner research project that was carried out alongside the current research. Furthermore, the documents provided by the OPCCs were policy orientated and did not display personal views and experiences and therefore would have been of limited use in exploring the perceptions held of the effectiveness of the sports-based programmes. Semi-structured interviews were deemed to be a more appropriate research method in comparison to requesting that participants keep a diary because there was a restricted timeframe for the project. Additionally, participants had busy workloads which could have made participant recruitment a more difficult process as people may have been less willing to participate if it required a greater time commitment away from their work-related duties. Focus groups could have been an alternative to one-to-one interviews. However, this could have influenced participant views. For this reason, one-to-one interviews were deemed to be the most suitable research method as they allowed for more divergent views to be expressed, they did not require an excessive amount of time commitment from participants, and it ensured that this project complemented the partner project.

Since the target participants have been chosen due to their occupations and expertise, purposive sampling is appropriate because with this form of sampling, information rich cases

are selected to provide the best insight on the research focus (Emmel, 2013). By using this form of sampling, I can be more targeted with my approach in recruiting participants and focus on contacting those that are likely to provide more in-depth responses. Snowball sampling can also be used due to the participants all working within the same sector. This approach to sampling involves participants providing the researcher with contact details of other individuals who meet the target participant criteria (Noy, 2008). This is particularly useful when there is a lack of response or enthusiasm from the target sample to participate in the study and consequently there is a need for access to new potential participants (Noy, 2008).

4. Methods

4.1 Contextual Information

4.1.1 Geographical Locations

The population and geographical make-up of each force area vary. There is a mixture of rural, coastal, and urban regions which inherently present different needs and issues. Newton and Felson (2015) state that the likelihood of burglary is increased by the number of houses in an area and the likelihood of violence is elevated by the number of people in the night-time economy. Thus, it can be surmised that South Wales, which has a lot of urban areas, will likely face crimes that are typically committed within cities, such as interpersonal violence and theft. On the other hand, Dyfed Powys and North Wales are more rural and are therefore more likely to deal with county lines issues, which is the transport of illegal drugs from cities to coastal and rural towns (O'Hagan & Long, 2019). The differences in population sizes also places varying constraints and demands on the OPCCs.

Data on youth crime across Wales is typically presented as combining England and Wales. This reinforces the need to take a Wales-centric approach to explore the similarities and differences in youth crime across the four Police Force areas in Wales. The country is small with very strong connections between the governance of the different areas which is not as present in England which has a lot more regions. Thus, a shared approach appears more feasible in Wales. Additionally, the funders of the research project would like the research findings to show a broad picture of what is happening across the different areas and in the different programmes and for it to produce data to inform them on the feasibility and prospect of a collaborative pan-Wales approach. Hence, this research project will explore the potential of the OPCCs of Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales, and South Wales collaborating in the future.

Wales has four OPCCs serving the communities of Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales, and South Wales. The regions are geographically and demographically different from one another. The population of Wales on the most recent Census Day, on the 21st of March 2021, totalled

3,107,700 (Office for National Statistics, 2022). This included 182,800 individuals aged 10 to 14 years old, and 175,800 young people aged 15 to 19 years old (Office for National Statistics, 2022).

Between April 2019 and March 2020, 88.8 million passengers travelled on a local bus service in Wales (Welsh Government, 2021). At the same time, bus fares increased by 3.5% from 2019 to 2020 in Wales (Welsh Government, 2021). Disruptions to public transport are a significant issue for passengers in Wales (Public Transports' Committee for Wales, 2012). Public transport may not always be a reliable form of travel, with bus timetables being altered during holiday periods and changed at late notice (Powys County Council, n.d.). Issues with travel and public transport could impact the effectiveness of the sports-based programmes by causing a barrier to participation for young people.

Dyfed Powys covers the largest landmass but has the smallest population out of the four regions. The Dyfed Powys force area covers the largest area in England and Wales, equating to 4,188 square miles and accounting for two thirds of the landmass in Wales. The four counties in Dyfed Powys are Powys, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire (Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Plan, 2021-2025). The region has two ferry terminals and 8,500 miles of road (Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Plan, 2021-2025). The total population of the area amounts to 516,000 or 17% of the entire Welsh population (Office for National Statistics, 2022).

The Gwent force area covers an area of 600 square miles, containing the counties of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, and the city of Newport. This area also includes the Prince of Wales Bridge which is the main route from England to Wales (Gwent Police, n.d.). The population totals 587,700, the equivalent of 19% of the total Welsh population (Office for National Statistics, 2022).

The North Wales force area is approximately 939 square miles, encompassing the six counties of Gwynedd, Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, and Wrexham. North Wales has two cities and two significant ports, expanding industrial regions and numerous towns (North Wales Police and Crime Plan, 2021-2024). Thus, it is a geographically diverse area. The population of North Wales amounts to 687,000, proportionate to 22% of the Welsh population (Office for National Statistics, 2022).

South Wales covers 812 square miles, accounting for 10% of Wales, and including the Welsh capital city of Cardiff (South Wales Police, n.d.). The counties in South Wales are Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea, and The Vale of Glamorgan. The area comprises of 64 of the 100 most deprived Welsh areas (South Wales Police and Crime Plan, 2016-2021). Its population totals 1,317,000, equal to 42% of the population of Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2022).

As this contextual information demonstrates, the four force areas have different population densities with South Wales being the most and Dyfed Powys being the least densely populated. This is important since it could affect the demands and challenges each OPCC faces. Moreover, the differences in transport links could affect the types and numbers of crime that the areas encounter from neighbouring areas. As alluded to, more rural areas in Wales which are in close proximity to cities may be affected by county lines which refers to the travelling of drug dealers from urban cities to more rural areas (Coomber & Moyle, 2017). This could impact areas such as North Wales more than others since it is in close proximity to major English cities such as Liverpool and Manchester.
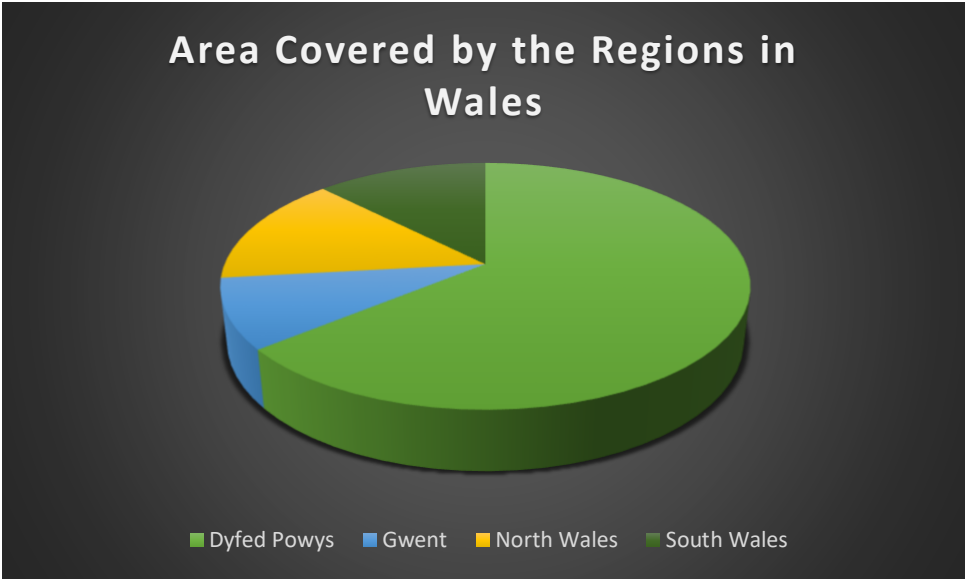
Figure 1.1. A pie chart depicting the contrast in the size of the areas covered by each of the four regions in Wales.
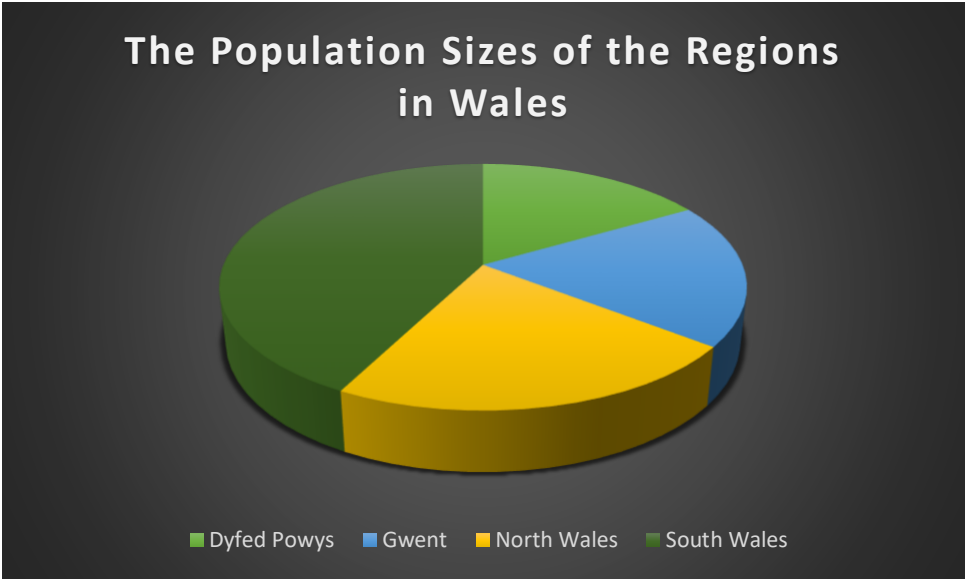
Figure 1.2. A pie chart depicting the different population sizes of the four regions in Wales.
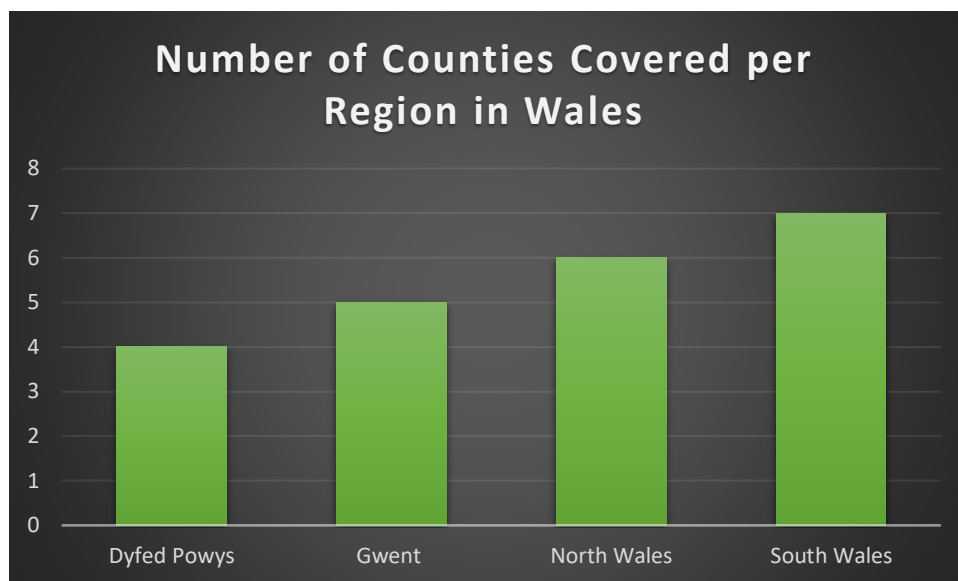
Figure 1.3. A bar graph illustrating the number of counties in each of the four Welsh regions.

Police Force Area	Population Number	Number of Cities	Size of Geographical Area in Square Miles
Dyfed Powys	516,000	1 – St Davids	4,188
Gwent	587,700	1 - Newport	600
North Wales	687,000	3 – St Asaph, Bangor, Wrexham	939
South Wales	1,317,000	2 – Cardiff, Swansea	812

Table 1.1. A summary of the differences between the regions.

4.1.2   Commissioned Youth Sport Programmes

The research project focuses on one sports-based programme per each of the regions, that has been commissioned by their respective OPCC. These programmes have been chosen as examples from each region as they are the most applicable sports-orientated funded programmes to compare to one another. The decision was made by the researcher to take a

case study from each of the regions since there is a partner project, in alignment with the current study, which is conducting a scoping audit of the use of sport and physical activity across Wales. The selection of the programmes was based on what was commissioned by each of the OPCCs. Furthermore, the inclusion criteria for the selection outlined that they must be based in Wales, be commissioned by a Welsh OPCC, focus on young people aged 10 to 18 years old, include a programme which aimed to prevent or divert people from offending, and use sport, physical activity, or exercise as a tool. This eliminated the programmes funded by the OPCCs which focused on people aged under 10 or over 18 years old, used another means of attracting participants such as music-based programmes, or aimed to address an issue besides youth crime such as difficulties with mental health, addiction, or poverty. North Wales OPCC does not fund a specific programme dedicated to using sport to prevent youth crime but through PACT they inadvertently commission community groups, some of which use sport and physical activity. For instance, through PACT, they fund *Aura Leisure* which offers sessions of physical activity free of charge and work in conjunction with Flintshire Youth Services. Gwent OPCC funds two projects, namely *Positive Futures* and *St Giles Trust*. *Positive Futures* was chosen as it is a Gwent-wide programme, funded by the Gwent OPCC, which uses sport to engage with young people. *St Giles Trust* will not be focused on in this study because their remit incorporates a range of issues such as criminal exploitation, poverty, abuse, addiction, and mental health for both young people and adults. Therefore, *Positive Futures* meets the criteria for the research question since it is more focused on young people and the use of sport in addressing youth crime. *Step into Sport* is a pilot programme jointly funded by South Wales OPCC and Cardiff Metropolitan University. It was highlighted as an applicable case study as it would be interesting to compare a programme in its infancy to a more developed programme such as *Positive Futures* which has been running for 14 years. Additionally, there appeared to be no other sports-based programme aimed at youth crime which was funded by the South Wales OPCC. *Seaside Kicks* was identified as being the most applicable sports-based programme linked to the Dyfed Powys OPCC. It is associated with the *Premier League Kicks* programme and therefore it was chosen as it is connected to a well-established organisation. *Ruck It 7s* was also identified as a sports-based programme which focuses on sport and addressing behaviour which could increase the risk of offending. However, it later transpired that this programme no longer receives OPCC funding and therefore it was ruled out for inclusion in this research project. The four different case studies

combined cover a range of delivery and partner modes thereby allowing for greater representation of the different types of sports-based programmes used in Wales.

Swansea City AFC Foundation's Premier League Kicks is a national programme that uses football to help support eight- to 16-year-olds within local communities. With reference to Dyfed Powys, the OPCC commissions *Seaside Kicks*, which was launched in January 2020. It is an extension of the Premier League Kicks programme. Dyfed Powys OPCC awarded the Swansea City AFC Foundation a three-year deal, totalling a grant of £300,000. In exchange, the programme offers free weekly sessions of football to young people in five areas of Dyfed Powys, namely Llanelli, Pembroke Dock, Aberystwyth, Carmarthen, and Newtown.

Gwent OPCC commissions a sports-based programme called *Positive Futures*, which delivers a range of open access and targeted one-to-one sessions across the five local authorities in Gwent. It has been operating in Newport for 14 years and has expanded to also operate in Caerphilly, Torfaen, Monmouthshire, and Blaenau Gwent. *Positive Futures* is targeted at 10- to 19-year-olds. It uses sport as a tool and uses local community facilities to host sessions, for example skateboarding and football sessions, to engage with young people.

South Wales OPCC commissions *Step into Sport*. It was borne out of a partnership between Cardiff Metropolitan University and The South Wales Police Youth Trust. It aims to use sport to promote social change and community engagement. It is targeted at 11- to 18-year-olds and offers a variety of sports, such as mixed martial arts, boxing, and table tennis. The project has been live since May 2021.

Unlike the other OPCCs, North Wales does not directly commission a sports-based programme. However, they do commission an organisation called The North Wales Police and Community Trust (PACT). PACT was launched in 1998 with the aim to reduce crime and the fear of crime. It works with the North Wales OPCC and manages the Police Property Act Fund on the Commissioner's behalf. They fund community and voluntary groups who work

alongside their Neighbourhood Policing teams to increase the safety of communities. Attention is placed on supporting projects which tackle local area issues. Thus, a sport group such as a football or sailing club can indirectly be funded by the North Wales OPCC through this fund and hence PACT will be focused on as the exemplar from this region.

Sports-Based Programme	**Website Link**
Seaside Kicks	https://www.swanseacity.com/sports-participation/premier-league-kicks
Positive Futures	https://www.newportlive.co.uk/en/community-support/community-sport-and-wellbeing/our-projects-programmes-and-initiatives/positive-futures/
Step into Sport	https://www.southwalescommissioner.org.uk/en/news/south-wales-police-youth-trust-and-cardiff-metropolitan-university-launch-new-early-intervention-sport-scheme/
PACT	https://www.northwales-pcc.gov.uk/anglesey-football-clubs-goal-prevent-anti-social-behaviour

Table 1.2. A table with website links to offer more background information on the sports-based programmes which are case studies in this study.

Programme Name	Prevention Type	Length of Running	Delivery Location	Requirements for Involvement	Referral Processes
Seaside Kicks	Primary Prevention	Since 2020.	Llanelli, Carmarthen, Pembroke Dock, Aberystwyth, Newtown.	For 8-18 year olds. 16-25 year olds can volunteer.	Open Invitation.
Positive Futures	Primary and Secondary Prevention	Since 2002.	Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Monmouthshire.	For 10-19 year olds.	Referrals from a range of partner agencies.
Step into Sport	Secondary and Tertiary Prevention.	Since 2021.	Cardiff.	For young people who have had some experience of the Criminal Justice System.	There is a referral requirement.
PACT – Example: Llangoed Football Club	Primary Prevention.	Received Grant in 2022.	Llangoed.	For males aged 16-40. Have events such as anti-social awareness week.	Not Reported.

Table 1.3. The table above provides a summary and comparison of the four programmes and their offerings. As Jugl et al. (2021) defines it, primary prevention refers to programmes which are open to all, secondary prevention refers to programmes aimed at those identified to be 'at risk' of offending, and tertiary prevention refers to programmes for those who have already been committed of a crime.

4.2 Participants

The participant sample comprised of 13 interviewees, aged between 25 and 64 years. All bar one participant filled in the participant demographics questionnaire. There were seven men and five women in the sample. Participants worked in a range of places across North Wales, South Wales, Gwent, and Dyfed Powys. Also, there was variation in job roles, including those working within the OPCCs, those involved with the delivery of the sports-based programmes, and those working within the YJS. There was 1 representative from Dyfed Powys OPCC, 5 participants from the Gwent region with 3 from the OPCC and 2 from *Positive Futures*, 2 representatives from North Wales including 1 from the OPCC and 1 from PACT, and 5 participants from South Wales consisting of 2 from the OPCC, 1 referral partner, 1 from *Step into Sport,* and 1 from the Violence Prevention Unit. Specific role titles have been omitted to protect the anonymity of the participants. The length of time that participants had been in their job role differed from 10 months to 18 years.

The inclusion criteria for the project outlined that participants must be involved in delivering or commissioning physical activity and sport initiatives across Wales for Police and Crime Commissioners targeting young people involved or on the cusp of becoming involved in the Youth Criminal Justice System.

4.3 Procedures

Ethical approval was obtained from the College of Engineering Ethics Committee at Swansea University, before the project commenced at the beginning of October 2021.

4.3.1 Recruitment

Participant recruitment took place between 12th April 2022 and 1st August 2022. The recruitment of participants was based on purposive and snowball sampling methods. Purposive sampling was used in creating the lists of persons of interest that were sent to the gatekeepers. The identity of the gatekeepers is not disclosed to uphold anonymity. The names of target participants were collated through research into the different organisations. This was conducted through a combination of initial conversations, particularly with the gatekeepers, and through internet searches and reading the websites of the OPCCs and the sport programmes. A list of these names was compiled on a Microsoft Word document and emailed to the gatekeepers, who subsequently provided email addresses which were used to initially contact potential participants. Snowball sampling took place in the form of participants suggesting individuals they felt could make an important contribution to the project. Suggestions of individuals who should be involved in the study included those working in the OPCCs, YJS, and in the sports-based programmes. This happened both over email and during interviews.

Prospective participants were then contacted via email. In the invitational email, they were sent the participant information sheet and the participant consent form (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). They were also advised that a follow-up email would be sent within two weeks in the case of no response. If an individual replied to decline the invitation to attend an interview, they were thanked for their response and removed from the contact list to avoid sending them follow-up emails. If an individual replied with an interest in participating in an interview, they were asked to return an electronically signed consent form ahead of the interview and to complete a Microsoft Form regarding participant demographics. Participants were asked for a date and time that was suitable for the interview to be conducted. Once a date and time had been agreed upon, they were sent a meeting invitation.

I declined to interview one respondent since their sports club had not yet been used by a young person involved in the Commissioner's funded programme, and therefore it was felt that their contribution to the research was hindered and would be limited. Out of the 31

target participants that were contacted and asked to participate in an interview, eight declined, and 10 did not respond.

4.3.2 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted between 5th May 2022 and 25th July 2022. Most of the interviews were conducted on the video conference platform Microsoft Teams. This was the easiest means of conducting the interviews due to the participants living across the whole of Wales. Also, it allowed participants to participate within the comfort of their own home or workplace, thereby creating a safe space in which the interview could take place in. Two interviews were however conducted in person at the workplace of the participant as this was their preference.

The duration of the interviews averaged 00:53:45 minutes. The longest interview lasted 1 hour 04:23 minutes. In contrast, the shortest interview was 00:30:55 minutes. This was an appropriate length for the interviews as it allowed for all the question areas to be explored in depth, provided the participants ample time to ask questions, and allowed for small talk to take place at the start to create a more natural and relaxed interview environment. The interviews were recorded using either the recording device on Microsoft Teams or using a Dictaphone. Interview recordings and transcripts were stored on a password protected laptop. Participants were sent a copy of their transcript and were given the opportunity to retract any statements they made in the interview and were ensured that any amendments to transcripts would be made accordingly.

4.4 Interview Measures

Semi-structured interviews were adopted as the data collection method so that interviews could be tailored to the responses that participants provided, whilst also ensuring that interviews had similar layouts thereby making them comparable to one another for analysis purposes.

Interview topics were identified through online research, initial conversations with the gatekeepers, and key themes that emerged through writing the literature review. The interview questions covered the following topics: referral pathways; partnerships; outcome measurements; the OPCCs and Police Forces involvement in delivery, disinvestments; sport as a tool to address ACEs and youth crime; and barriers to programme delivery. Although, a pilot interview was not conducted to test the interview schedule, it was amended and approved by three supervisors to ensure that the questions asked were appropriate and in line with the research aims.

An interview schedule was utilised to ensure similarities and a loose structure between all the interviews. This guaranteed that interviews did not completely stray from the research focus. At the start of the interview, participants were reminded that the interview was being recorded, they were informed about the transcript and their right to retract, as well as being reassured about their anonymity.

A mixture of open-ended and follow-up questions were asked. The open-ended questions facilitated a more free-flowing conversation thus giving participants the opportunity to raise points and recount stories they felt were important for the researcher to know. The follow-up questions allowed for the clarification of certain points and the opportunity to delve deeper into the points raised by the participant that were of particular interest or importance. At the end of the interview, the participants were thanked for their participation and were given the opportunity to ask any questions they had or raise any additional points they thought were necessary to include that had not been touched on. Following the interview, some participants emailed documents to the researcher related to the points that they had raised. This was useful as it provided evidence to support their statements and provided additional detail that could not be covered in the interview.

4.5 Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed by the interviewer to initiate immersion in the data analysis process (Day et al., 2013). Interviews were transcribed verbatim to create a full and true account of the discussion. This also guaranteed that no information from the interview was lost. Where interviewees had given examples of case studies or used names to identify individuals, their names were redacted and replaced with "XXXX" to protect their identity.

Inductive thematic analysis, following the five phases of analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke's (2006), was used to analyse the interview data. The process involves familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. As Braun and Clarke in their later papers have emphasised, this process is "not intended to be followed rigidly" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 331) and there is a need to appreciate the theoretical assumptions that are informing the analysis process. In particular, I adopted the 'reflexive' variation of thematic analysis as this embraces the researcher's subjectivity and personal influence they bring to the process (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

By collecting and transcribing the data first-hand, familiarisation with the data was easily developed. Although this was more time-consuming compared to outsourcing transcription from a service, it was an effective way of becoming familiar with the data. As Braun and Clarke assert, time spent transcribing helps the researcher to "develop a far more thorough understanding of [their] data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 17). By additionally reading through the transcripts before commencing the coding process, I could immerse myself in the data and begin to grasp the key concepts that could be developed from it. This was a key phase of analysis as it developed the base for the other phases to expand on.

The second phase concerned generating codes. This involved reading through the transcripts and highlighting the parts that were of interest. In this phase, the importance was placed on identifying interesting aspects, key words or phrases, and ideas from the data. It was

important to not rule out any meaningful data at this phase, even if it was not apparent that it did not seem to fit with any of the other key words or ideas that were identified.

Once the transcripts had been read and coded, I could begin searching for themes. This involved transforming the codes into themes and "collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 19). Some of the codes could be used as themes, whereas others could be combined, and some even disregarded. The process of turning codes into themes took place by writing each code on a post-it note and then grouping them based on whether they were a similar idea or point of view, or synonyms. In the next phase, these themes were reviewed and refined. I considered whether the data fitted the theme it was in, and if it did not whether this meant that the theme itself was the problem or whether the extract was better suited in a different theme. This process therefore concerned the re-organisation of the themes to ensure that the data was reflected well in my interpretation of it.

The last phase included naming and defining the themes. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 22) state that this process is achieved by "identifying the 'essence' of what each theme is about". In doing so, I pinpointed how each theme related to the purpose of the study and research question. At the end of this phase, the themes were titled.

4.6 Trustworthiness of the Methods

Tracy's (2010) eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research were referred to as a way of supporting the methodological rigor of the study. Tracy (2010) states that research is of high quality if it includes the following: a worthy topic; rich rigor; sincerity; credibility; resonance; significant contribution; ethics; and meaningful coherence.

This research focuses on a worthy topic since youth crime is a social issue and early intervention and diversion can redirect young people from a criminal path to a more enriching

path. This is not only beneficial for the young person but is also beneficial to society as it impacts the demands on the health, criminal justice, and social work sectors.

Rich rigor is present in the study as the data collection period was an appropriate length, accounting for a quarter of the entire study process. This provided ample time to accommodate the schedules of the participants thereby allowing for increased participation from the sample. Additionally, participants represented the different areas in order to create a pan-Wales picture, the literature review incorporated a plethora of theoretical considerations, and the interviews were conducted in depth and were transcribed verbatim.

Sincerity is achievable through honesty and self-reflexivity. This can be demonstrated by the research paradigm, which required a reflection on my personal biases and how they could impact the study. Transparency was demonstrated in outlining in detail the process by which data was gathered, and by being honest with the participants about the aims and process of the study.

Qualitative credibility can be attained through thick description and multivocality. The data has credibility as the context of the study has been described in detail, including the geographical background of Wales and the background of the sports-based programmes that are being studied. Multivocality can be demonstrated by the awareness of the differences between the participants and myself as the researcher. This includes age differences, the fact that they may live in a different area of Wales, and they have more experience in working in the field. The sample comprised of participants working in different regions and in different roles which adds to the multivocality within the study. Thick description is present in the study as the process has been outlined in detail, and the results are supported with verbatim quotes from the semi-structured interviews.

The research has resonance because a reader may feel empathy with the young people requiring the help of these sports programmes. Empathy may arise from the use of case studies which could resemble an experience that reader has themselves been through.

The research will have a significant contribution to policy by identifying and sharing across the four OPCCs examples of good practice. This could help to create markers of success to evaluate if a sports-based programme has had an effect on reducing youth involvement in ASB or crime.

The research meets Tracy's (2010) criterion of ethical research. Participants were reassured that their participation was voluntary and that they would remain anonymous. They were also sent the participant information sheet and were required to sign the participant consent form prior to the interview taking place, thus the research has been carried out in an ethical way. Additionally, the study has been ethically approved.

Meaningful coherence is present in the study. For example, since the aim of the research is to understand people's perceptions and opinions, interviewing was the most apt research method to use. Additionally, meaningful coherence has been established as the theories and key ideas considered in the literature review influenced the questions asked in the interviews thereby interconnecting the literature with the research aims and methods.

5. Results

5.1 Chapter Introduction

A total of six themes were identified by the researcher from the interview data, reflecting the perceptions participants had of the effectiveness of sports-based programmes as a tool to tackle youth crime as well as the practicalities of OPCCs working together to adopt an all-Wales commissioning approach. These include (i) mechanisms for crime prevention, (ii) understanding the effectiveness of sports-based programmes, (iii) reasons for disinvestment, (iv) facilitators and barriers of effectiveness, (v) collaborative working, and (vi) key roles.

5.2 Mechanisms for Crime Prevention

This theme encompasses the perceptions of the use of sport-based programmes to address youth crime including how and why sport is used as a tool. It outlines the perceived positive and negative outcomes it has and how participants think it should be used as a tool to be effective.

5.2.1 Benefits of Using Sports-Based Programmes

Sport programmes were primarily seen as a beneficial tool since sport can be an effective 'hook' to increase the involvement of young people in diversionary and preventative programmes:

> *"…it is the thing that will draw them in" (Participant 10)*

Participant 11 commented on how sports programmes are effective in addressing youth crime as *"young people are probably more likely to engage with a local football club than they may be with their local policing team".*

The opportunities available to young people once they engage with a sports programme were perceived as benefits of using sport as a tool. In the simplest form, perceived opportunities available to young people included being able to try something new:

"They would not have the opportunity to partake in MMA [Mixed Martial Arts] *if it wasn't for the project" (Participant 6).*

Sport programmes can be used to re-integrate young people into the community. As participant 5 acknowledged, *"positive activities, integration into the community, all of these are protective positive factors* [that] *will reduce the risk of recidivism… If they're engaging in an activity that is taking up their time, they see the benefits of it, it kind of makes them feel more part of the community".*

Some participants felt that programmes could have the potential to reach young people currently not in education or with low attendance and slowly encourage their re-engagement with school. Educational opportunities were discussed with regards to the programme being an alternative to education and being used as a tool to reintegrate them back into learning:

"And our role, I see it more as about inspiring them that learning can be fun again" (Participant 2).

"I've talked about a space here or somewhere young people can come and spend half a day in terms of a bit of boxing… and with a bit of learning after" (Participant 6).

Interviewees discussed how volunteering opportunities could be available to those on the programme and how the young people were eager to take on a peer mentor role:

"We do offer voluntary opportunities, for example… staff might be like, 'You can help me. Let's set up the goals. You can take the register. You're going to help me ref the game'. Those type of things" (Participant 10).

Interviewer: Have you ever had sort of like a mentor-mentee thing with the mentor maybe being someone who has been on the programme for a while?

Participant 2: We do have young people at a certain age and has been through the programme several times over, they've got a little bit more of a… we don't call them mentees, maybe a bit more of a senior role. Um, and they have in essence supported or put their arm around another young person… We have had that happen naturally not as a pre-designed part of the programme.

Several participants identified being part of a team as a benefit of sports participation for young people as it creates feelings of belonging and accountability for others:

"Something he started to feel more part of, um, sense of belonging, sense of community, and giving back to that, erm, club or members of that club. So, you start to feel part of something" (Participant 5).

"Understanding that you're working as part of a team, and you are a valuable member of that team" (Participant 3).

Participant 13: It's about turning up for the team.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant 13: And it's about the team being there for you as well and building strong friendships.

Moreover, building a relationship with a trusted adult was highlighted as a benefit for the young people in the programme who may not have one at home or in other areas of their lives:

> *"When it comes to team sports, it's around finding those trusted adults that they don't have at home" (Participant 13).*

> *"We've seen the impact [on] young people especially when mentors are involved and there's like an adult role model particularly for young males who might be missing a strong male or female kind of role" (Participant 4).*

One participant provided more detail on how trusted adults in the programme could help young people navigate difficult situations and help them to understand formalities and processes:

> *"I think sport can give those trusted adults. So, for example, XXXX… his job will be, has been in the past, to deal with kids when they have been arrested and all those things. He sits in and does the Police interviews when they have been arrested if they haven't got an appropriate adult. And the one lad was being arrested, XXXX was talking him through the process but whilst they were playing football" (Participant 10).*

Several participants discussed the way in which the sports programmes create a safe space for young people. A perceived benefit of this was how it can facilitate conversation between the programme participants and deliverers:

"Offering that safe space, often you will find that the children will start opening up about other issues maybe that might be underlying for them and causing them to skip school and be expelled and have these issues in the family home" (Participant 9).

"I think the whole thing about sport is it just allows conversation to happen between children without appearing too focused" (Participant 13).

The development of personal skills was a perceived benefit of utilising sport programmes to tackle youth crime. Installing discipline was cited as one of these benefits:

"I've seen various football schemes put together across [name of region] *and it's good because it's not just about football, it's about discipline" (Participant 3).*

"I think it's… that level of respect, that boundary setting" (Participant 1).

Confidence and self-esteem building were identified as being very important benefits from sports participation. One participant linked the building of confidence to the ability of sports programmes to nurture talent:

"I think going back to sport, it is an effective tool in terms of confidence building, you know, building self-awareness. I say confidence, and more importantly if someone can

be good at something it means they've got, their self-esteem can increase because often they've got a talent as well" (Participant 12).

A benefit of using sport is that it can offer a positive environment for young people which enables them to make more constructive decisions:

"I suppose the goal needs to be for us to facilitate sessions and opportunities to put themselves back in a frame of mind and a position where they can make positive choices and if that is going back into school or college or university or work" (Participant 6).

Several participants stated that involvement in sports was constructive for young people because of the mental health benefits it has, insofar as it is a serotonin release and encourages young people to leave their house:

"There is that competitive edge of sport, but actually it's about mental wellbeing and about getting out and doing something different, challenging yourself" (Participant 13).

"I see exercise as that serotonin release. You know, if you're in a bad mood, go and kick a football around for an hour and have a laugh with your mates and have a piece of your Maslow hierarchy of needs, your societal piece, met. I very much see from a health and wellbeing perspective piece, for bringing those moods up" (Participant 8).

Physical health benefits were not discussed as much as mental health benefits. However, one participant did remark on how *"the physical benefits of perhaps learning what's good for your body"* could result from sports engagement. A second participant also stated that sport is an

effective approach because it can be used as a diversionary tool and *"it's that health and wellbeing piece" (Participant 8).*

Sport was highlighted as an effective crime prevention tool as it preoccupies adolescents' time with a positive and constructive activity. Furthermore, whilst the young person is at a session, they are physically diverted from committing ASB or crime:

> *"Definitely when those sessions are running, there's going to be less antisocial behaviour happening at that point of time" (Participant 7).*

> *"As well as the real surface stuff of diversion. You know, it gives children something to do, it occupies their time" (Participant 13).*

Lastly, one participant suggested that a reason to use sport as a tool was its convenience in the sense that it is easy to organise the sessions:

> *"It is very convenient" (Participant 8).*

5.2.2 Child-led

Participants voiced the importance of sports-based programmes being child-led. As participant 12 stated, *"it can only be effective if you can build it around their needs".* It became apparent from the interviews that the programmes were mostly based on voluntary participation:

> *"It's not compulsory. They make the decision to come" (Participant 6).*

Subsequently, participants stressed that for a programme to be effective, it is necessary for it to be appealing to young people to ensure retention rates remain high:

"It is voluntary which in essence makes our work harder to make them want to attend… So, we have to work in partnership with the young people to provide what really they want and how they would like it delivered" (Participant 2).

Participant 10 also highlighted that young people on the programme may feel socially excluded and therefore it is important to carefully consider the titles of the programme to avoid labelling participants:

Participant 10: I've learnt this with university, the terminology, we always used to call them diversionary sessions, which on reflection I think is wrong because it's assuming everyone needs diverting.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant 10: I'm changing that to make sure we talk about it in access terms because it shouldn't just be you're labelled x, y, z so that's the only reason why you can come because that is wrong.

5.2.3 Mitigation of the Impacts Caused by ACEs

The effectiveness of sports-based programmes in mitigating the impacts caused by ACEs was discussed in the interviews. Several participants perceived sport as an effective tool because sport sessions can be an outlet and form of escapism for young people experiencing difficulties relating to ACEs:

"It can mitigate in the sense it might divert attention away for the period of that activity" (Participant 7).

Moreover, participant 4 suggested that sport programmes can mitigate the impacts ACEs may have on a young person as they can aid the development of protective factors such as resilience and the ability to overcome adversity:

"What we want to do is equip people with the skills and resilience to be able to deal with situations where if they have suffered from trauma or from ACEs that they know or they have a better understanding of how to react in that situation" (Participant 4).

5.2.4 Disadvantages of Using Sports-Based Programmes

On the other hand, drawbacks of using sport as a tool to tackle youth crime were also raised by the participants. Reasons for being hesitant to use sport programmes as a tool to tackle youth crime included that *"there's a lot of sports projects out there already in* [name of region]*" (Participant 3)*.

One concern raised highlighted the difficulty of getting young people to re-engage with education when offered an increased timetable which would decrease their time spent at the sport programme:

"What I've said is that a lot of our children wanted to go to [name of programme]*, but it was during school hours when they were on reduced timetables, and then we were struggling to get them back into school when the school were offering increased hours" (Participant 13).*

Participants accentuated that whilst sport is an effective tool, it does not appeal to everyone and therefore it is important not to solely use it to address youth crime and ASB:

"The big caveat is that if you are into sport. I think sometimes there's a bit of an assumption that everyone is. But no, they're not" (Participant 7).

"You will get some children who will just shut down at the thought of exercise" (Participant 13).

The importance of tailoring the programme to meet the needs of the target participants was conveyed among some of the interviews:

"I think because they're mass participation events, it's really difficult unless they're doing a little bit more one-to-one or small group work" (Participant 2).

"Because equally I remember as a young kid, if there was free football going on, on a Friday, me and my mates would be going down there and taking advantage of that, the free structured football. So, there's inevitably going to be lots of kids who aren't the clientele we are trying to target" (Participant 7).

However, a perceived drawback to this tailored approach was the expense it would incur:

"It's not like an aerobics class where you can pack in 60 people. It's about a tailored made programme for an individual so it does cost more per a person" (Participant 12).

"Ultimately, music will work for one person but not for another person. Sport will work for one and not the other. It's kind of finding what works for individuals. But that is difficult because it is really costly, really expensive" (Participant 4).

Furthermore, negative peer influences were cited as a drawback to using sport programmes:

Interviewer: Do you think that… if you took someone who was very severe, could that then affect the outcomes for the other children in the scheme?

Participant 2: Um, I wouldn't necessarily say affect. It depends on what we're doing. So, we have over the years and times where we do group work sessions that, if there are young people who are within that field and are what we call prolific young offenders or are involved in numerous ASB, their influence can be seen on the others.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah.

Participant 2: That can be small things like going outside for a cigarette. We have had it before unfortunately where someone who doesn't smoke will all of a sudden. You introduce them to someone who smokes a lot, and they just navigate towards them. So, that can be anything from ASB to smoking.

The potential for young people to be exploited in the sport programmes was a severe concern for some participants:

> *"Sometimes, it's not just trusting the place or the person in terms of the coaching, it's having trust in the other people who are using the facility at the same time. Last thing you want to do is send a vulnerable young boy to a gym in XXXX where there is maybe drug use or drug dealing going on there. Those are some of the things you have to take into consideration" (Participant 6).*

"Sport has had dark days when they've created the ACEs. You look at all the child sexual exploitation in football" (Participant 8).

5.2.5 Sports-Based Programmes Should be Used More

The perception that sport could be used more as a diversion and prevention tool to address youth crime and ASB was an identifiable theme from the interview data:

"I don't think we do enough in policing to capitalise on the grassroots sporting element of using the sporting environment for the diversionary and preventative measures" (Participant 1).

5.2.6 Necessary to Have an Array of Tools

It was clear from the interview data that participants thought an assortment of tools should be used in conjunction with sport to tackle youth crime. Participants pointed out that whilst sport will be attractive to some young people, it is not for everyone and therefore it is important that a diverse offering is available to maximise the amount of youth that the programmes reach:

"I think what's good for one person is not the right avenue for another. It's about having the options… So, we try and cover the whole spectrum" (Participant 13).

"For me it feels a bit like all of our eggs are currently in the sports basket. We need to diversify that portfolio really and get that far more opportunity through other means" (Participant 7).

5.2.7 Suggestions for Alternative Tools

An array of alternative tools to sport were suggested by the participants. The practicalities of implementing these were not discussed; however, it was clear that sport was not viewed as the only vehicle which could be used to engage with young people on the peripheries of society, on the cusp of entering the CJS, or in the CJS. The arts were referred to by many participants, with music, drama, filmmaking, vlogging and DJing being cited as alternative tools:

"I think music is powerful and a lot of young people like making these films. They like to do that so we're trying to do more of that" (Participant 10).

"A lot of them do tend to be sport but we have also had things like film clubs, DJ clubs, so many different ones" (Participant 9).

Participant 12: Just to digress now, we're looking at … the arts now as well.

Interviewer: Okay.

Participant 12: As a separate project. It's looking at digital, not just music, drama, and dance, but filmmaking, set design, digital arts.

Gaming was also suggested with some participants pointing to the upsurge of interest in Esports:

"So, you use drama, technology, cyber security, even to a point Xbox and PlayStation. There's a huge debate on it but gaming is a huge, Esports is a huge market… Even

though you are playing on your own, you are a part of it, again, you are a member"
(Participant 6).

"You have to move along with the times as well, it doesn't always have to be a game of football or sport in general. It could be anything that appeals to young children from films to crafting to computer games, a whole host" (Participant 9).

Board games were highlighted as an effective tool to get young people to converse with programme workers especially if they find eye contact difficult:

"Connect 4, dominos, they absolutely love dominos, cards… it's like you're looking at the Connect 4 thing and they don't feel so intimidated. So, board games work a treat" (Participant 10).

Other suggestions comprised of health and beauty sessions, mindfulness classes, or a project such as developing a local piece of land which would include woodwork:

"Things like cognitive behavioural therapy is obviously great on an intense one-to-one basis but it can cost" (Participant 4).

"You could do, um, health and beauty" (Participant 3).

"In [name of town] *for example we are doing some work with a group in a more deprived part of town to redevelop and regenerate a community green area…and getting loads of local young people to help renovate it and actually build structures on*

there. So, a wooden gazebo, some garden benches, tables and the like" (Participant
11).

5.3 Understanding Effectiveness

The theme of understanding effectiveness relates to how the effectiveness of the sports-based programmes are evaluated by the deliverers and commissioners. Quarterly reports, statistical data, and case studies were all highlighted as ways that the programmes' effectiveness is being measured.

5.3.1 Difficulties with Measuring Prevention and Diversion

Some participants voiced the difficulty in measuring the effectiveness of the programme to prevent and divert young people from committing crime and ASB. As participant 9 remarked, *"it would be very difficult to say categorically that it would keep somebody on the straight and narrow".* Likewise, participant 7 commented, *"whether that means long term that if XXXX is going to football every Friday that he's going to stop committing ASB because of the life skills he's getting from those sessions, it's really difficult to manage that and monitor that".*

5.3.2 Outcome Measures

Quarterly reports were identified as the primary outcome measuring tool used by the OPCCs to evaluate the work and effectiveness of the sports-based programmes they fund. When questioned about the content of the quarterly reports and the outcome measures used to evaluate the success of a programme the following were mentioned:

"An update on where we are, how many young people we've been getting in, how many sessions or if XXXX has had a fight, sort of any other partners we've added over that quarter" (Participant 6).

"So, XXXX puts together the performance management report which will outline all the diversionary services they have carried out throughout [a region]*, what sort of referral*

numbers they've had, where those referrals have come from whether it is self-referral or through the Police etcetera, what events they have put on for the children in [that region]*, and what sort of feedback they have had from um the individuals" (Participant 9).*

"So, there's just a requirement to report back on delivery against outcomes and how many young people have benefitted from them, what the benefits were" (Participant 5).

Interviewer: What sort of information does the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office ask for?

Participant 10: Oh, quite a lot. It's a template they send me and each quarter, so every 3 months, I have to fill it in, and it's basically what have you delivered? What difference has it made? What outcomes have been achieved? What challenges have you faced? … Um, and then I have to fill in a data sheet basically numbers. How many have accessed? What have they done? And then it's broken down into, was it open access? Was it a referral? How many are on the child protection register? How many have social workers? Then it's more like the outcomes stuff, what difference has it made? How many feel more positive? How many have gone on to volunteer? How many have gone on to work? That type of stuff.

In reference to numerical data, participants cited attendance rates, the number of sessions held, and the number of referrals received or made over the timeframe as useful information to capture within the quarterly reports to demonstrate the effectiveness of the sports programme:

"We do ask them to take a monitor of how many are attending, you know, are there any drop off rates, the attending rate etcetera" (Participant 1).

"We will be looking at how many diversionary events they've held, how many referrals they've had in, and all those sorts of things" (Participant 7).

Case studies were emphasised by participants as being insightful and meaningful. Participants elaborated on how case studies help with developing an understanding of the effectiveness of the sport programmes and the impact they have on young people:

"But it is not a numbers game. I just don't think it could ever just be a numbers game… I think that it's quite good that they offer us case studies because then you get sort of a generic understanding as to how this can happen specifically and how a young person's life can be improved specifically" (Participant 7).

"One thing I have learnt in this role, you can look at data all day long on referral numbers, demographic etcetera, but those case studies, for me, help bring it to life. It really does showcase everything that can happen with one person" (Participant 9).

One participant explained how filming the sessions and the young people's reactions to it, helped to illustrate the benefits and enjoyment from programme participation:

"We try and film a lot more so I think if they can physically see the differences made that speaks volumes" (Participant 10).

Case studies are useful to depict the small changes that young people make through involvement in the scheme which would be lost or under represented by statistical data. Several participants remarked on the difficulty of capturing the change in young people as it can be minute:

"If a young person in one of our activities smiled more, for example, there's no measuring tool for that in the slightest, I've had a look. But that demonstrates that the young person is happier, more confident, their self-esteem is growing because they're demonstrating it somehow" (Participant 2).

The ways in which the young people's feedback on the sessions could be measured was also discussed. It was suggested that young people would be opposed to filling in lots of paperwork:

"A lot of them just want to tick any box and get out of there" (Participant 2).

Illiteracy was specified as a reason for why a young person would be unable to fill in a questionnaire. For instance, participant 10 stated, *"they would be embarrassed because they couldn't do it. So, the staff have to verbally get it out of them".*

Alternative ways to capture such feedback were presented by a few participants:

"One of the guys always says to the kids 'TripAdvisor rating, can you give us a TripAdvisor?' So, they usually give five stars … We are thinking of different ways we can do it. Is it smiley faces? Or Microsoft Forms they can just quickly fill in? Really basic things like that" (Participant 10).

"So, we utilise star charts for example. Um, so one day they complete it at the start of the project, where are you based on a set number of questions. Then they answer the questions after intervention three months down the line and then a further three months" (Participant 2).

5.4 Reasons for Disinvestment

There were numerous suggestions for why a programme would be disinvested in or funding would be cut or not continued. Participants implied that a programme would be disinvested in if the PCC no longer saw this as a priority to fund:

"We only have a finite budget and if our Commissioner from a policy perspective said 'actually I want all of my commissioned services into domestic abuse, sexual violence support. I want to cut all of my prevention activities'" (Participant 8).

Funding may be stretched and therefore disinvestment would occur if there was a greater need for it elsewhere:

"We tend to prefer that we try to spread it around as many community groups we can" (Participant 11).

"Whether there's anything else that we believe would be more effective. Like I said, we haven't got money to do everything we want to do" (Participant 12).

Furthermore, disinvestment was perceived to happen if the trends of society dictated that youth crime was no longer a policing priority:

"Sometimes, changes in the behaviours of society dictate where funding is aimed at. If gun crime became a huge problem over the next 18 months, then target that. Or if public health and then target that. We then may not fit the trends of society" (Participant 6).

"I'd just have to say to [name of programme] *and sports-based interventions, 'I can only afford this lot. You are doing a brilliant job but I'm sorry you are not in vogue anymore. These are more important', and it may be more important politically"* (Participant 8).

Another cause for a discontinuation of funding would be for non-delivery or if the programme was no longer having the desired impact on youth crime:

"It's not having an impact, or it doesn't have a benefit for the children or young people utilising the service then why would we commission something which is not having the desired impact" (Participant 5).

Several participants expressed that a disinvestment would happen in the circumstance of financial irregularity or fraud:

"There being fraud or irregularity in the administration of their grant, that could be another one" (Participant 8).

Participant 7: For us to not fund [name of programme], *they'd have to basically go bust or something like that.*

Interviewer: Right. Yeah.

Participant 7: Or do something, like I say, proven to be criminally exploitative.

When discussing the discontinuation of funding on a past rugby programme funded by the OPCC, participant 1 explained how the programme was so successful it was no longer needed:

Participant 1: I think the sort of youth referrals coming into the actual youth offending team were sort of dropping, which is a good thing. You know, it kind of did itself out of a project...I think it was sort of that year-on-year depleted need for it, um, which then ultimately they decided that the investment would be best off invested in another area.

5.5. Facilitators and Barriers of Success

This theme includes the factors which participants perceived as influencing the effective delivery of sports-based programmes. Signposting, match funding, and safeguarding procedures were discussed as facilitating the success of the programmes. Conversely, the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to pool resources, and discrimination of programme participants were perceived to be barriers to delivery. The cost-of-living crisis and transport difficulties were viewed by interviewees as barriers to participants.

5.5.1 Facilitators of Success

Interviewees discussed factors which assist the effectiveness of sports-based programmes. Signposting was recognised as a key facilitating factor as it ensures that referrals are coming into the programme and therefore young people in need of the support on offer can access it:

"For [name of programme] *particularly the funding from our side was to go towards funding a co-ordinator for the, to try and raise awareness to co-ordinate the pathways, work with the partners because I think, I've learnt from being a practitioner and commissioning, you can commission a project, but I remember when I was a practitioner and same goes for today, extremely busy caseloads. You might hear about a project one day and completely forget about it two weeks later because it's number one you may not have a case that you think at that point would be relevant or that you*

could refer. Then two, three weeks passed, and you've heard about twenty other potential projects in different areas" (Participant 5).

"It is a constant job of ours to remind the partners of who we are, why we are there, to refer on to us if necessary" (Participant 2).

Programmes signposting outwards to external partners is also a facilitator of success as it means that young people can access further support and help that they may require to address underlying issues:

"Signposting is a massive part of the services that we deliver to the children because offering that safe space, often you will find that the children will start opening up about other issues maybe that might be underlying for them and causing them to skip school and be expelled and have these issues at home" (Participant 9).

It must be noted that a need to signpost more was stressed by one participant who stated *"I don't think we have done enough to publicise the scheme… I think we need to increase the awareness" (Participant 12)*.

Second, participants discussed the importance of the sports-based programmes sourcing match funding from other organisations to accompany the funding provided by the OPCCS. Forms of match funding discussed by participants included financial contributions from either the programme itself or from other organisations such as local councils and businesses, in kind support from people volunteering their time, and in the form of donations of resources such as sport equipment:

"[name of partner] have been good as in they've matched. They are continuing to fund it. If they didn't fund it, it would be difficult" (Participant 12).

Different forms of match funding were suggested:

"The basic match funding would be from their own resources. But then other sources could be other charitable trusts, a local authority, community, or town councils. It might be a local business that they are working with to supply, for example in that [name of town] example to supply wood and timber to make the items. And sometimes the match funding isn't necessarily cash either. It could be in kind support. So, you might get um a local business who want to donate materials or equipment or they might have a volunteering scheme. They might say you can have five of our staff on a Saturday to help you build something or do something for your project. So, match funding can be a variety of different sources really. And not always, it doesn't always have to be cash" (Participant 11).

Several participants stated the significance of safeguarding and having the right person delivering the programme as a facilitator for success:

"They are professional coaches, not just 'does anybody fancy doing a couple of sessions?'" (Participant 6).

"You've got to ensure that all those safeguarding controls are in place for those youngsters" (Participant 3).

Other comments on facilitating factors highlighted the benefits of encouraging family involvement in the sport programme:

Interviewer: Do you think getting the family involved as well helps better with intervention?

Participant 3: Yes. Definitely. If it is possible.

And how holding the session in a different location to where the adolescent lives could help to create a safe space for that individual and thus contribute to the successful impact the programme could have on them:

> *"We try to target places where the young people can come and relax if you like. Um, so they get out of the car down XXXX, so we have a kid from XXXX come to XXXX, a quieter part of the city, and you just see his shoulders drop. He can just come in, relax, smile. Just sort of puff their chest out and enjoy being themselves for an hour where they don't have to project that image" (Participant 6).*

Lastly, capacity to expand and develop the programme was voiced by one participant as being a contributing factor which the programme needed to further its success:

> *"So, the only thing we need at the moment now is the ability to expand" (Participant 6).*

5.5.2 Barriers to Success
Barriers which hinder the effectiveness of using sports-based programmes to tackle youth crime and ASB were discussed within the interviews. Two overarching themes emerged from this discussion: barriers to delivery and barriers to participation.

5.5.3 Barriers to Delivery

Several barriers to delivery were communicated by the participants. COVID-19 was a significant barrier that had been experienced by the programmes and OPCCs. COVID-19 had many knock-on effects on delivery such as community centres being used for other purposes, staff turnovers and an elevated need on the service:

"At the moment we are going through a high turnover of staff. Again, that was evident before but has become a lot more prevalent during COVID" (Participant 2).

"Since COVID, I think the level of need has increased tenfold and lots of projects haven't fully recovered from the pandemic. Schools are still struggling; kids are not full-time back in school. So, yeah, it's a work in progress" (Participant 10).

"We get a lot of barriers through local authority, renting out community centres because a lot of the community centres in the more deprived areas, for example, especially during COVID shut those community centres down" (Participant 9).

"It's been hard with the pandemic to try and maintain relationships. It's been so difficult to do it behind a screen" (Participant 13).

In addition to the difficulties faced during the pandemic, one participant voiced how discrimination faced by participants can be a barrier to delivery when the programme is trying to hire facilities for sessions:

Interviewer: And what are the barriers to delivering the scheme?

Participant 10: Um, venues, facilities. Since COVID the main leisure centre in town and across [name of region], *they've been taken up by max-vac centres. So, we lost loads of place that we could actually deliver the sessions. Sometimes we are not prioritised. So, you can imagine if we have got young people who may not have the best behaviour in some people's eyes, they're like "ugh, we don't want them in here". You get that kind of stuff going on. Especially the ethnically diverse groups we engage with, so a lot of the Roma Gypsy kids, they face huge discrimination, racism basically.*

Funding was the main perceived barrier discussed by interviewees. Issues revolving around funding comprised of there being a lack of pooling funding and funding not meeting demand. Participants spoke about the difficulty of meeting demand with reduced budgets:

Participant 2: What I would say though is funding does get reduced or directed elsewhere which impacts on delivery… It hasn't gone up in line with the increase of everything we are facing.

Interviewer: And does that cause difficulties with running the schemes? And what sort of difficulties are they?

Participant 2: It causes huge difficulties. Um, and the difficulties are I am unable to meet the current demand. That's the reality of the situation. Current demand had increase as well… demand on our service has increased tenfold and current funding does not allow me to meet that need.

> *"We've found ourselves in a position in recent times because of COVID, because of cuts and, you know, austerity leading up to COVID, where people are doing too much with too little time and too little resource" (Participant 4).*

Participant 7 commented on the need for organisations to pool funding, *"we'd all like to do more but clear a barrier to that is the funding we have got to do that and that's why I go back to my point of although a lot of that funding has been withdrawn, there is still a lot of money out there tucked in different agencies. If we worked together better, we could probably get better outcomes from that".* Similarly, participant 12 highlighted how lack of willingness on the behalf of organisations to pool funding was a barrier to delivery, *"people are precious with their money sometimes and they won't necessarily pool their money for joint programmes"*.

Two participants described how they perceived difficulties with collaboration between different partners to be a barrier to delivery:

"There's not really an open communication pathway between what social services are doing and what [name of programme] *are trying to do, it does put up blockers" (Participant 9).*

"Problem is organisations are all set up differently and funded differently" (Participant 12).

5.5.4 Barriers to Participation

Cost was the principal barrier to participation which was deliberated by several participants. It was felt that rising costs of living would further impact the accessibility of sports participation as young people living in deprivation would be unable to afford the necessary kit and equipment:

"I think there would be blockers simply being able to fund the kit because the kit isn't cheap" (Participant 8).

"So, a lot of people wanted to come along but they obviously ran it on 3G pitches where you needed specific shoes etcetera, and a lot of the young people couldn't afford or didn't have the right equipment" (Participant 1).

5.5.5 Transport

Several participants implied that transport should be taken into consideration to ensure the effectiveness of the sport programme, particularly in the more rural parts of Wales:

"What we do have to take into account with any, um, projects we do develop is travel and access. We have to make sure that if we are going to run something, it has to be accessible and if it isn't accessible, we have to make sure we provide that element… Access routes to XXXX and XXXX and XXXX are quite limited" (Participant 1).

Transport may be a barrier to participation if young people struggle to get to the sessions as parents may be unable to drive them and there is a lack of public transport:

"A lot of it is literally parent time and that's the disappointing bit is because the commitment is for the parent to do this and to drive them there and they are maybe working two to three jobs… [and] public transport doesn't work for football on a field on a Thursday night" (Participant 8).

Adolescents may be reluctant to leave their house and therefore it is necessary for the programme to offer transport to encourage them to participate:

"He didn't even want to leave his house every day because of what was happening in his home life. So, they would offer to pick him up every day to take him to this game of football" (Participant 9).

5.6 Key Roles

The roles people play in the delivery of the programmes can contribute to the effectiveness they have. Several key roles were discussed in the interviews including the role of coaches, the YJS staff, PCSOs, and the OPCC team.

5.6.1 The Role of the Coaches

Coaches were perceived as having a significant role since they have a lot of contact with the young people on the programme. Their fundamental roles included being a role model and a form of support for the young people:

"Sometimes they just need an arm around them" (Participant 8).

"They should be able to understand and recognise if a young person is presenting or has faced any adversity or difficulties and how to support that young person" (Participant 7).

"A lot of the staff regardless of if it's youth workers or the sports development coaches that, they are definitely role models for these young people" (Participant 2).

The benefit of the coach being from the local area or the same area as the young people was recognised by participants 7 and 8:

"He's from their community as well. He's got that credibility for them to engage with him" (Participant 7).

"You need that local touch. The one brilliant thing about [name of programme] *is you talk to the people delivering it and they are from those areas" (Participant 8).*

5.6.2 The Role of the YJS Staff

Participant 13 explained how YJS staff will sometimes accompany a young person to initial sessions to help them adjust to participating in the programme:

Interviewer: So, will you take them to the sessions?

Participant 13: We have done, yeah. We have facilitated them going there, not every single time, you know, it's about building the child's resilience and ability to do it on their own as well, and parents doing it on their own. But initially, you know, remember some of our children perhaps haven't been integrated into anything for such a long time, they may not be in school. So, actually, how do we allow them to understand what they need to do, and that's part of our role is enabling them with that.

5.6.3 The Role of PCSOs

The presence of PCSOs at sessions was highlighted as being an integral part of the effectiveness of diversion and prevention programmes. Participants voiced the importance of bridging the relationship between Police and the local community and PCSOs were identified as having the pivotal role of relationship builders:

"When you get into the Police Force, most Police people are looking at promotion boards, but promotion board means you have to work away. PCSOs don't work in that way which is probably why they are more important in terms of knowing local communities" (Participant 12).

Interviewer: Do you have PCSOs come to some of the schemes?

Participant 2: Yeah. So that would be your neighbourhood policing teams predominantly. So, they drop in and out, build relationships, and something we are working on currently in [name of region], because it has become evident that the young people in the identified hot spot areas that we're in don't see the Police in a good light at all, um, so we are working on helping bridge that relationship.

Participant 5 suggested that PCSOs could interact with young people in the programme to discuss topical issues. They stated, *"one thing that could be built into is if you have a local provision running, you could have the neighbourhood policing team working you know with that sport provider. Um, and it could be around helping delivering messages around local issues or other topical issues".*

Notably, a few participants expressed the feeling that there was a lack of PCSOs attending sessions:

Interviewer: Do you have sort of, erm, like PCSOs going to the schemes and having that involvement with the children?

Participant 5: We try to encourage it. I don't think that happens.

5.6.4 The Role of the OPCCs

Overall, the OPCCs' teams were perceived as having a hands-off approach thereby allowing the deliverers flexibility to deliver the programme. This can be exemplified by the following comment:

"I wouldn't say that they are very hands-on. We work with them when needed. Um, but in essence they generally just let us get on with it… They do take an interest and want to come out and see the work that we do. But from a hands-on approach, we are left to our own devices in a way" (Participant 2).

Some participants mentioned that PCCs will visit the programmes which was viewed in a positive light:

"I know it's one the Commissioner looks upon with fondness and he's been involved over the years in paying [name of programme] *a visit and when there's a football game going on for example and it's just great to see the interaction really from the children" (Participant 9).*

The OPCC communication teams were highlighted as playing a focal role in increasing the publicity and awareness of the programmes. This aids the effectiveness of the sports-based programmes by encouraging more young people to participate in them:

"The Easter holidays that just went, we ran some activities during the Easter holidays…The Police Crime Commissioner's Office got in touch, could they come out and do some nice media shots?" (Participant 2).

"I have spoken to the Commissioner and our Engagement Head to see if we can do just another quick press release on it. I think, you know, to encourage more girls to join in" (Participant 1).

There was a desire expressed for OPCC team members to visit the programme more often:

"It would be nice, they've got like a strategic lead, then XXXX makes decisions on the finances, if some of them could come out more. I would like that, and I would actually talk them through what's going on. But I appreciate they are busy people as well" (Participant 10).

Interviewer: Would you like to meet more with them?

Participant 6: I would like to sort of invite, maybe every couple of months, people from the office to come out and see what we are doing. It feels like at the moment for one reason or another, I know we have had COVID, but it is like here is the money and we will see you later on.

One participant explained how they would prefer to directly contact the OPCC with requests or feedback:

Participant 2: [name of town] *is the one with the partnership with OPCC. I can put my opinions and hopefully assist but they are the main contact link with the PCC.*

Interviewer: Okay. And do you think that's successful or would you rather it be directly?

Participant 2: I would like the opportunity to do it directly.

5.7 Collaborative Working

The theme of collaborative working incorporates the different ways in which the OPCCs, and the sports-based programmes they commission, work in partnership with other organisations, including referral partners, and with each other.

5.7.1 Types of Referral Pathways

Participant 4 highlighted referrals from Accident and Emergency departments as an effective referral pathway because nurses can engage with young people involved with serious violence *"at the teachable moment where they have just been stabbed or assaulted"*. Self-referrals, police, school, social service, and third sector party referrals were also cited by participants as the main referral pathways.

Word of mouth was perceived as an effective method to use to ameliorate referral numbers. In particular, participant 9 referred to the [name of programme] branded van increasing self-referrals onto the programme:

> *"A lot of them are self-referral because children hear by word of mouth from other children. They might also see our* [name of programme] *branded van driving around"*.

5.7.2 Success with Referral Pathways

Several participants discussed factors which aid the success of referral pathways. There were conflicting views on how referral pathways should work. On the one hand, some participants perceived a loose criterion as being important in ensuring that referrals are made. On the other hand, one participant felt that funnelling was important to guarantee that the referrals were relevant. This illustrates the importance of referral pathways being context specific and appropriate to the type of programme.

A loose participant criterion was highlighted by participants as being crucial to having successful and efficient referral pathways:

> *"With referral pathways, it's more of a case of reminding them, working with them and not being too strict either. I like to think that we're not too strict with our referral*

pathways. It's very much a bugbear of mine that certain projects that are funded through very strict criteria" (Participant 2).

Participant 10 stated the importance of funnelling pathways to avoid an influx of referrals:

"It's one of them, everyone wants a piece of you. We try to funnel it a bit otherwise we end up with referrals from everywhere and you don't end up getting anywhere".

Participant 13 maintained that strong relationships between partners help to make referral pathways effective:

"I think it's relationship based a lot of it… once you know the person, it is much easier to pick up the phone and have a conversation".

5.7.3 Areas for Improvement with Referral Pathways

Some participants voiced the perception that the referral pathways could be enhanced. Their suggestions for improvements concerned increased capacity within the programme and stronger relationships between organisations:

Interviewer: Do you think that the referral pathways between the different agencies are efficient?

Participant 4: No… It's really difficult to get organisations to be on the same page sometimes because everybody is spinning so many plates.

"I am having to limit and actually say no to some referrals because staff just have not got capacity" (Participant 2).

"I mentioned earlier referrals are quite low from policing so there's more to be done"
(Participant 12).

5.7.4 Collaboration

Collaboration between the OPCCs of Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales, and South Wales was widely discussed by participants in the interviews. Points of consideration included the benefits and drawbacks of working together, and the significance of applying the programmes locally.

5.7.5 Benefits of OPCCs Collaborating

The main perceived benefit of collaboration was sharing best practise. This was viewed as constructive in increasing the effectiveness of sports-based programmes since sharing best practise means that programmes can learn from one another and deliver to the best standard. It allows for an understanding of what works, what provision is already out there, and what does not work:

"Even if we are not commissioning them together, we always have a conversation about what are you doing, what is working in your area, and bringing all of that learning together so that we, it just helps with our processes" (Participant 7).

Several benefits of a co-ordinated approach were raised by participants. The perceived benefits encompassed the pooling and subsequent saving of resources and avoiding the duplication of efforts, the dilution of risk, and the influence OPCCs can have if they work together:

"That whole system approach A it pools money, B it pools resources and know-how, C it dilutes risk. So, huge benefits" (Participant 8).

"A coordination gives an opportunity to not duplicate efforts or work" (Participant 5).

Interviewer: What do you think are the benefits of working together?

Participant 3: Um, cost. We can make, it can be cheaper for us all.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant 3: And we can influence as well. We've all got different networks so we can all really work well in terms of consolidating those networks and reaching out wider. Um, we can be more effective by working together.

Lastly, as participant 12 commented, collaboration between the Welsh OPCCs is more feasible than collaboration between the English OPCCs because *"we've only got four, England have 39. So, doing something on an all-England basis is much more difficult. So, that's a benefit to Wales that we've only got four".*

5.7.6 Drawbacks to OPCCs Collaborating

Conversely, participants did also address the drawbacks to the OPCCs collaborating on sports-based programmes. The perceived drawbacks which were cited included practical difficulties:

"It is good to do things on an all-Wales basis but sometimes practically it's easier for the three of us to work together and North Wales to work with Northwest. That's the dilemma really. You've got the M4 corridor in South Wales that links Newport, Cardiff, and Swansea, and then Carmarthen… But going from Southern Wales to Northern Wales is about three hours. And I said, their communications roads go straight into

Merseyside and Greater Manchester… It's nice to have an all-Wales one but sometimes practicalities work against it" (Participant 12).

Disagreement over priorities was also perceived as a drawback. As participant 8 commented, *"the disbenefits are collaboration only moves at the pace of trust, it's a pain trying to get lots of people around the table who have different priorities, different funding… it moves at a snail's pace".* Likewise, participant 5 remarked on the difficulty of collaboration when parties have contrasting priorities:

"You will often have competing priorities I guess or conflicting ideas sometimes. So, it is not always achievable to have a shared vision" (Participant 5).

Collaboration may be delayed if a OPCC is tied into a contract with an ongoing programme thus it is not always possible for the offices to work together:

"It may be that other Forces have already got something in place or something that they are happy with or tied into for 3 years" (Participant 9).

5.7.7 Collaboration with Other Sectors

A few participants implied the importance of collaborating with other sectors since the benefits of preventing and diverting young people from committing crime are felt across the different sectors:

"If you stop a child from going on a life of crime, policing wins, 'yay, we don't have to nick him 24 times.' Courts HMPP win, haven't got to do prison or probation. Local authority wins because they're not wrecking social housing and things like that. Social

landlords win. Health win because they are not turning up to A and E 24 times having been in a fight or have a serious drug dependency. Everybody wins" (Participant 8).

A perceived benefit of sector collaboration was the pooling of funding and resource:

"We need to work closely with all these agencies because everybody's got interests, and everybody's got funding pots" (Participant 12).

One participant explained that a new Act would be introduced soon which would call for greater sector collaboration:

"There's a new Act coming in called The Serious Violence Duty… There's going to be a duty imposed on a number of statutory partners to consider serious violence and what they do to prevent it. So, statutory partners will be Police, um local authorities, health, Criminal Justice Service, prison, youth offending, education" (Participant 4).

5.7.8 Local Delivery

Local delivery was stressed by participants as being imperative for an effective programme. As surmised by participants 1 and 8, working together would be beneficial but would also require local application to suit the needs of the different communities across Wales:

"We could always benefit to working more closely together and sharing best practice. Definitely. Um, but then you just apply it locally" (Participant 1).

"An overarching framework that allows that local flexibility to deliver interventions in your community with clubs that you recognise, is something I am happy with" (Participant 8).

Additionally, local delivery is important in upholding the effectiveness of sports-based programmes in addressing youth crime as it is necessary to understand the needs of the local community and to have strong partnerships with local facilities to hire them for the sessions:

"I think local delivery is key. It is about understanding the needs of the local community, understanding the needs of the local partners and the local children, and then tackling it accordingly" (Participant 5).

6. Discussion

6.1 Chapter Introduction

The overarching aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of the effectiveness of the sports-based programmes funded by the OPCCs in Wales which are aimed at addressing youth crime and ASB diversion and prevention. The main purpose of the study was to identify the perceived role of sport as a tool for the diversion and prevention of first-time entrants into the CJS, as well as the reoffending of those already in the CJS. Also, it aimed to explore the perceived role these programmes have in the mitigation of the impacts of ACEs on young people. Four subsidiary aims were also outlined in order to respond to the research question: (i) to explore the perceptions of the most appropriate ways of measuring programme outcomes, to identify what makes a programme 'effective' and what the barriers and facilitating factors are to this, (ii) to understand the partnerships and referral pathways involved within the operation of the sport programmes, (iii) to explore perceptions of factors which could lead to a disinvestment in a sport programme, and, (iv) provide examples of best practice across the four regions in Wales in regard to the sports-based programmes funded by the Welsh OPCCs and explore if collaborative working is feasible.

The first part of this study centred around desk-based research which informed the development of the list of potential interviewees as well as the interview schedule. This was a fundamental part of the research project since it formed a basis for the semi-structured interviews to expand on. Qualitative methods were adopted for the study with thirteen interviews being conducted to address the study aims. There were six themes which were identified by the researcher as being key points from the interview data. Namely: (i) mechanisms for crime prevention, (ii) understanding the effectiveness of sports-based programmes, (iii) reasons for disinvestment, (iv) facilitators and barriers of effectiveness, (v) collaborative working, and (vi) key roles. The prominent findings include the significance of case studies in demonstrating the impact of the programmes; the perception that whilst sport is an effective crime prevention tool, it is not for everyone and thus an array of diverse tools should be used in conjunction with sport to address youth crime and ASB; the nuances between the different regions and communities in Wales make local delivery very significant;

and the invaluable roles that coaches and PCSOs have in contributing to the effectiveness of a programme.

6.2 Protective Factors

In the study, participants perceived the development of protective factors as a benefit of young people engaging in sports-based programmes. Resilience was cited as a helpful skill for young people to have when navigating difficult situations in their lives such as those which may be caused by ACEs. This supports the aforementioned argument presented by Norris and Norris (2021) which stated that an involvement in sport is connected to an increase in the development of resilience which is a protective factor against adversity. Robison (2019) concluded that even those who have a low number of ACEs had a higher level of resilience if they participated in sports in comparison to those with no involvement.

Additionally, the interview data implies that sports-based programmes are an effective tool in mitigating the impacts caused by ACEs as they provide young people with an outlet from difficulties happening in their family or school life. The sport sessions can act as a form of escapism for adolescents and divert their focus onto a more positive aspect in their life. Other researchers have obtained similar results such as Massey and Whitley (2016). In their study, participants described how sport provided a distraction from everyday life because of its consistency and the routine participants could gain from it.

Whether these protective factors completely mitigate the impacts of ACEs remains unclear. However, it is evident that involvement in a sports-based programme can support young people who are experiencing or have experienced ACEs to develop skills to help them navigate their way through any difficult experiences they may encounter in later life. Sport sessions also provide a form of distraction from difficult life events and can help young people to develop resilience.

Participants perceived sports programmes as a safe space for young people. This demonstrates the potential of sports-based programmes as an effective crime prevention tool as the creation of a safe space facilitates the disclosure of information between young people and trusted adults. Coaches were perceived as being able to recognise if an individual needed additional support which can lead to signposting adolescents to other agencies. Therefore, it can be implied that sport can inadvertently mitigate the impact of ACEs as the disclosure of ACEs happening by the adolescent and the subsequent referral made by the coach for further support, can help to address underlying issues experienced by young people on the sport programme.

6.3 Preoccupied

In the literature review, the argument was made that crime derives from boredom (Nichols, 2004). Thus, it was surmised that the simplest way a sports-based programme can be effective in reducing youth ASB and crime is by preoccupying the time of adolescents with an engaging and positive activity. The findings from this study offer support for this view as participants expressed that engagement in sport programmes gives young people something to do, and it occupies their time. When young people are at the sessions, they are physically diverted from committing ASB or crime. Morgan et al. (2020) suggest that to galvanise initial participation in the programme, it must provide something that is different from the normal routines that young people have. This further shows that sport is an attractive tool to use as it can provide young people with a pastime which, as some participants remarked, they would not otherwise be able to try if it were not for the programmes funded by the OPCCs. For example, mixed martial arts was referred to by one participant as a sport young people have been able to try because of their involvement on the programme. This supports Kelly's (2011) study which also found that programmes provide young people with opportunities outside of what is normally available to them.

6.4 Building Bridges

Attachments to peers, trusted adults, and institutions such as the Police and school were perceived by participants as benefits deriving from participation in the sports-based programmes.

Being a member of a team supports diversion from crime and ASB as it creates a sense of belonging and accountability to others. Participants discussed the building of friendships and the realisation of being valuable to the team as benefits of utilising sport as a crime prevention tool. This finding correlates with the view that interdependency, which highlights the importance of mutual reliance between individuals, is important (Moreau et al., 2018). As Hirschi's (2002) control theory would imply, this shows that sports-based programmes provide a context to help to tackle youth crime because an individual is more likely to desist if they have strong attachments to others. Moreover, the theory suggests that involvement in crime can jeopardise an individual's relationships with others.

Coaches were identified as being role models to the participants on the programme. Bandura's (1973) social learning theory suggests that people learn new behaviours by observing and imitating others. Thus, coaches play a vital role in modelling positive behaviours which the young people can trial and adopt. Young (2014) stated that the way coaches act, the way they speak, the clothes they wear, and how they conduct the session can all be imitated by participants. This emphasises the importance of coaches as role models and the influence they have on young people's behaviour changes. Furthermore, participants implied that it was better if coaches were from the same community or had a similar background to the participants as this increased their credibility with the young people. It is beneficial if the deliverers are from the local community as they are likely to be more respected by the young people who may feel more connected to them since they are likely to have shared experiences. Further, aspiring to be like a role model from the same background may be a more achievable goal than aspiring to be like someone from a different background. In their study, Morgan et al. (2020) also implied that it was necessary for coaches to understand local concerns and issues. Additionally, Newman et al. (2020) found that staff play a key role in providing support and helping young people to feel a sense of belonging. This shows that involvement in sport can foster feelings of being part of the community. Evidently, it is beneficial to the effectiveness of the programme if staff understand the needs of the community and local young people.

With reference to control theory, it is important to strengthen a young individual's bonds to prosocial institutions and institutional figures to prevent or divert them from committing ASB or crime. The theory asserts that the stronger the attachments a young person has, the more likely they are to desist because there will be greater consequences, such as an impact on their societal status, if they continue to participate in such behaviours (Hirschi, 2002). PCSOs were identified as having a pivotal role in the delivery of sports-based programmes aimed at diversion or prevention. They could help to strengthen the relationship between the Police and young people in the local community by being present at the sessions, thereby interacting with participants and breaking down barriers. Hobson et al. (2021) summarised that Police-led prevention programmes enable the Police to become directly involved and supportive of the local community. Having a constant turnover of Police staff visiting the programmes could be detrimental as young people would have to build multiple new relationships. Hence, participants in this study identified PCSOs as being best placed to build the relationship between young people and the Police as they are already involved in the local community and are less likely to be moved to work in a different area compared to other members in the Police Force. The stability of their position is important because it allows for time and consistency for the relationships to develop. In alignment with control theory, it is beneficial for PCSOs to be involved with the delivery of the sports-based programmes funded by the Welsh OPCCs as this will increase the young people's attachment to Police which will aid their desistance to crime and ASB.

Arguably, sport is an effective tool to tackle youth crime because it is a 'hook' which can advocate reintegration into work, apprenticeships, or mainstream education. Participants commented on how sport can be effective in encouraging young people to re-engage in education. Coaches and other participants can encourage those on the programme that learning can be enjoyable again. This is important because, as Kelly (2011) suggested, reintegration into education or to the labour market can create a sense of social inclusion. It can also increase the number of opportunities available to young people which aids desistance since they will be able to make more positive choices instead of turning to crime.

The results from this thesis demonstrate the necessity of increasing young people's social inclusion and attachments to others to help them desist from crime and ASB.

6.5 Domino Effect

Although the influence of others is widely cited as a benefit of adolescents being involved in sport, it can also be a disadvantage. Negative peer influences were referred to by participants as a drawback of using sports-based programmes. For instance, unhealthy habits such as smoking can be introduced to adolescents by other participants. This is a concern especially for adolescents who are vulnerable to the influence of the behaviour, opinions, and reactions displayed by their peers (Farrell et al., 2017). Participants also discussed being worried about young people in the programme being exposed to drug use in the facilities or targeted and exploited by county line groups. Consequently, it is important to trust not only the deliverers but also the staff in the facilities that the programmes hire to run the sessions, and anybody else who may be using the facility at the same time. A no drug policy for facilities used by the sports-based programme could address this issue.

6.6 Not in Vogue

The OPCCs have a finite amount of money they can allocate to commissioning. Yet, there are competing priorities and demands for commissioning. The discussions in the interviews implied that there is a danger that sports-based programmes or youth crime could be deprioritised, and consequently disinvested in. This could be the result of the PCC no longer viewing it as an important area to fund or because the contemporary needs in society dictate that other areas are more urgently in need of addressing. However, as illustrated by the Police and Crime Plans for the years 2021 to 2025, the prevention of youth crime and the focus on addressing the root causes of crime are priorities for all four of the Welsh OPCCs. The evidence implies that the ability for the programme to diversify to accommodate the changes in social trends could be conducive to its longevity. Notably, violence against women and greater support for victims of crime were also cited as significant areas of concern in the OPCCs' Police and Crime Plans. A few interviewees discussed an increase in the number of girls participating in the programmes, but an expansion of the activities offered by the programmes could potentially see further involvement. Alternatively, female-only sessions

could encourage more participation from girls since research has highlighted boys being present at sport sessions is a barrier to adolescent females participating (Fowlie et al., 2021). Also, Lorenzo et al. (2019) highlighted a need for rural communities to facilitate the social inclusion of disabled young people. Programmes could consider offering self-defence sessions for girls or look at how they can increase the inclusion for different demographics such as disabled young people.

6.7 Already in Existence

One finding from this study was the perception that there are a lot of existing sports programmes in Wales. Whilst this may be a perception, it can be questioned how many of these programmes are targeted at young people on the cusp of being first-time entrants or are already in the CJS. As discussed in this thesis, open sessions are effective in re-integrating young people back into the community. Elkholm (2019) similarly identified sports-based programmes as providing an opportunity for young people from different backgrounds to socially interact. Further, they can limit the opportunity for labels to be placed on young people since they are not specifically targeted at young people involved in delinquency. However, the importance of having targeted smaller group sessions must be acknowledged since this allows for greater attention to be placed on the concerns and challenges that the young people have which could be underlying causes for their offending.

6.8 A 'Pick and Mix'

Using sport as a tool to address youth involvement in crime and ASB is effective as it is successful as a 'hook', it exposes young people to challenges which help to develop their resilience, and coaches are positive role models who can offer support to young people. However, as highlighted by the participants in this study, sport does not appeal to everybody. Whilst sport will be an effective tool for one person, it will not be suitable for another. Therefore, to have the greatest impact on diverting and preventing young people from entering the CJS, it is imperative to offer an array of activities. It must be noted, however, that participants stressed that there is not a single tool which is more effective than sport but rather it is the combination of multiple tools that is most effective. As suggested by several participants, the arts would be an effective complimentary tool to sport. This incorporates

traditional forms of art such as drama and music as well as more contemporary forms such as filming or disc jockey (DJ) sessions. Computer gaming was highlighted as an alternative tool which would be popular amongst young people, with one participant alluding to the growth in Esports. However, sports and physical activity are arguably more beneficial activities on which to base a prevention or diversion programme since they also have positive health impacts such as reducing the likelihood of obesity (Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010), as well as improving mental health and wellbeing (Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016).

Moreover, a tailor-made programme could be effective in addressing youth crime and ASB. Including young people in the decision making over the type of activities offered by the programme could make the programme more cost-effective as young people are more likely to maintain engagement in a programme if it is interesting to them. This reemphasises the importance of providing adolescents with a variety of activities to choose from. The programme also should be tailored to the individual's needs because many young participants have complex issues which cannot be addressed in an open access or one-size-fits-all approach (Chamberlain, 2013). Despite this being a more expensive approach to tackling youth crime and ASB, a more focused approach can help to understand the underlying causes of youth offending and subsequently the programme deliverers can adopt a more targeted approach to help the young people on the programme.

6.9 Barriers to Access

Arguably, the most shocking discovery from this study was finding that it may be difficult for deliverers to obtain facilities to run the sessions due to adolescents on the programme facing discrimination because of their ethnically diverse background or because they are perceived as being badly behaved. With acknowledgement to Labelling Theory, the labelling of participants of the programme in this way is detrimental to their desistance from crime and ASB as it perpetuates the self-fulling prophecy that they are delinquents (Becker, 2018). As Becker (2018) asserts, an individual will embody a label if they are labelled and treated according to it. This discrimination hinders their integration into the community as it reinforces their position as 'outsiders' and as being on the peripheries of society. Young

people who encounter stigma are less like to engage with normative activities such as going to school or seeking employment as stigma is likely to impact their aspirations (Deakin et al., 2022). Likewise, Parker et al. (2019) found that some areas of the community are stigmatised which results in people not wanting to develop programmes there. In their study, a fundraising event was held to reduce exclusion in the community felt by programme participants. Upon reflection, it can be advised that programmes should carefully consider the titles they use to reduce the stigma attached to those participating in them. For instance, words such as 'diversion' and 'crime prevention' could have connotations leading to the participants being perceived as 'delinquents' or 'trouble'. Further, events which encourage the integration between the local community and participants could help to break down these barriers and reduce the labelling and stigmatisation of the young people on the programmes.

The outbreak of COVID-19 and the ensuing pandemic were pinpointed as barriers to delivery that have been faced by the sports-based programmes funded by the Welsh OPCCs. This was a barrier which was not explored in the literature review, but it was discussed by several participants in the interviews. Due to community centres being used as temporary vaccination centres, there was a lack of facilities which the programmes could hire to carry out the sessions. The lockdown restrictions limited contact between people, and programmes had to follow government guidelines on how they could deliver the sports sessions. Participants highlighted that it was difficult to maintain relationships between partners during the pandemic. This impacts on delivery as it is important for there to be strong communication between partners to sustain referrals inwards to, and outwards from, the programme. Also, there has been an increase in staff turnover since the pandemic has ended which has created a barrier to delivery. It is important for staff in the programme to be accustomed to using a youth work approach and to be able to deal with difficult behaviour. Therefore, retaining staff who possess the relevant qualifications and experience is crucial.

The cost-of-living crisis was identified as a barrier to participation. It was perceived by the interviewees that young people may be unable to afford kit and equipment especially if it was specific to the sport. For example, to participate in football sessions which are carried out on

3G pitches, young people are required to have boots with moulded circular multi-studs**.** Adolescents living in deprived areas who may be unable to afford these boots consequently may be disincentivised from participating out of worry that they will be ridiculed for not having the appropriate equipment. Likewise, economic disadvantage can be a barrier to participation because parents may have to work long hours or be unable to afford petrol thereby rendering them unable to transport their children to and from the sessions. In some cases, they may not have access to a car. The results from this study indicate that transport was a barrier to participation, specifically for those living in the more rural areas of Wales. This is because parents may not always be able to provide adolescents with transport and there is a lack of efficient public transport. Even if transport links are sufficient, adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds may be unable to afford the bus fare to consistently attend the programme. Therefore, it is imperative that the programmes consider how the participants will get to the sessions, and if necessary, provide transport or the support needed to access available transport.

In summary, the primary factors which participants perceived as being barriers to delivery or participation include the discrimination faced by the young people on the programme, the restrictions implemented because of COVID-19, the imminent cost-of-living crisis, and the lack of transport for adolescents in Wales, particularly in the rural areas of the country.

6.10 A Teachable Moment

Referral pathways into the programmes were discussed by participants in the study. Nurses working in Accident and Emergency departments were identified as being a very effective referral pathway as they have contact with adolescents at a teachable moment, for instance, following an incidence of violence where they have suffered an injury. During such a critical life experience, it might be suggested that during this moment, a young person may be more inclined to want to make a change to their current lifestyle and potentially will be more willing to join the sports-based programme. Referrals for the more intensive small group sessions may be more appropriate coming from schools, social workers, PCSOs, or third sector parties. However, self-referrals can be effective in retaining high participant numbers for the open

access sessions. One of the programmes involved in the study has a branded van that is driven around the local area. This is an effective way of boosting self-referrals as it in increases awareness of the programme and subsequently facilitates its promotion by word of mouth. If one adolescent starts to engage in the programme and enjoys it or sees the benefits of participation, they are likely to recommend it to their friends. A key outcome from the interview discussions on referral pathways was the highlighted need for engagement with schools, hospitals, and social services to promote the programme. These institutions are best placed to refer at-risk adolescents onto the sports-based programmes since they are likely to interact with them and be able to identify which young people could benefit from participating on the programme. One participant referred to The Serious Violence Duty, which will require a multi-agency approach to be taken to prevent and decrease serious violence (Home Office, 2022). The findings of this study reflect support for the implementation of The Serious Violence Duty. Participants discussed the need for sector collaboration to address youth crime since a benefit of this would be the pooling of resources and funding.

6.11 Difficult to Measure

Prevention and diversion are difficult outcomes to measure since there are many factors which affect a young person's life. Thus, it cannot categorically be stated that involvement in a sports-based programme was the sole cause for a decrease in involvement in ASB and crime. Although sport may be the catalyst of change which helps an adolescent to desist from crime and ASB, it can be argued that even without participating in the programme, the young person could have still desisted from crime. Other causes for desistance could be gaining employment, starting a family, or participation on a programme which uses an alternative tool to sport such as the arts.

Consequently, it is important to measure the outcomes of sports-based programmes in more tangible ways. As such, it was important in the interviews to gather data on the perceptions funders and deliverers had on what constitutes an attainable outcome measure. Numerical data in the form of the number of attendants, sessions, and referrals were recognized by participants as being useful in showing the engagement in the programme. Hartmann and

Depro's (2006) study on midnight basketball found that basketball sessions led to crime rates decreasing especially when they took place during high crime times. Thus, it could be implied that if a young person is attending the sessions, this indicates success in diverting and preventing their involvement in crime or ASB as they are filling their leisure time with a constructive activity, and they are being exposed to all the benefits and positive opportunities that are associated with sports-based programmes. Statistical data can therefore illustrate the number of children participating in the sessions and being physically diverted from committing crime when the sessions are taking place.

6.12 A Picture Paints a Thousand Words

The findings from this study signify the perceived importance of case studies in demonstrating the effectiveness sports-based programmes have on addressing youth ASB and crime. In comparison to statistical data, such as attendance rates, case studies can create a truer understanding of the impact the programme has had or is having on an adolescent. Participants explained how they can help to depict the minutia of changes that young people in the programme display. For example, an increase in communication or eye contact can convey that the young person is feeling more self-assured. By following the progress of individuals on the programme, the challenges that they have addressed and the achievements they have made can be demonstrated in more detail. Case studies are also more personal and are perceived as more effective in making the outcomes of the programme more tangible as funders can see first-hand the changes made by the participants. This is magnified by the young people's feedback on the programme and progress they make being recorded, especially for those who may be illiterate or may be opposed to filling in lengthy paperwork.

A few participants voiced the feeling that demand on the programmes has been elevated since the COVID-19 pandemic and as a consequence of the cost-of-living crisis. This is an interesting finding since the statistics mentioned in the literature review overall point to a decrease in youth crime (Youth Justice Board, 2021; Youth Justice Board, 2022). However, this contradiction does support the earlier claim that a dark figure of crime exists (Buil-Gil et al.,

2021a). The data from this study reinforce the point that "on the ground" statistics are more representative than government statistics and are therefore needed to create a truer representation of the levels of youth crime that exist in Wales.

6.13 Overarching Framework with Local Application

The feasibility of a pan-Wales approach to using a unified sports-based programme to address youth crime and ASB through prevention and diversion was deliberated by the participants. It was suggested that practicality difficulties could arise from the four OPCCs collaborating. Whilst Dyfed Powys, Gwent, and South Wales are connected by the M4, thereby making travel straightforward between the different regions, North Wales is further afield and it could be argued that due to its geography, its natural collaborators would be Merseyside and Greater Manchester. Nonetheless, participants did convey a feeling that an all-Wales approach was not entirely inconceivable. The findings suggest that the most appropriate approach, if there were to be an all-Wales programme, would be to have an overarching framework with local application. This became evident by several participants voicing the importance of local delivery. As hypothesised in the literature review, participants discussed the ways in which the four regions differ from one another. Thus, local delivery is key in meeting the needs of the diverse communities in Wales. For a programme to be effective, it is necessary to contemplate the needs of the local young people as well as understand what local infrastructure and organisations exist and how they operate. The findings of this study imply that programmes should be designed by local communities with young people as stakeholders, but the way outcomes are measured and reported should be consistent nationally.

6.14 Applied Implications

6.14.1 Research Implications

The present study presents several contributions to the literature surrounding the research on sports-based programmes and youth crime. First, this thesis adds to the body of research providing insight into the Welsh context. As highlighted in the literature review, there is a shortage of studies focusing on sports-based programmes in Wales, with most using case studies in England or the United States of America (Sweeten & Khade, 2018; Kelly, 2011).

Thus, the study makes a novel contribution to the literature by presenting findings regarding the perceived effectiveness of sports-based programmes in this country. Additionally, the study sample reflected the whole of Wales, with participants working in Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales, and South Wales. Therefore, representing a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds. As anticipated in the literature review, a key finding from this study highlights the importance of local delivery and paying attention to the nuances of local areas. Participants remarked on the differences between the urban and rural parts of the country and how this requires bespoke application of sports-based programmes across the different areas. This further emphasises the importance of focusing on Wales and across the four regions as the studies which concentrate on other countries are less applicable to understanding the needs and challenges of local communities in Wales. For example, Hartmann and Depro's (2006) midnight basketball study based in the United States of America identified a correlation between basketball sessions and decreased crime rates. Although this study was insightful in highlighting how participation in sport can reduce youth crime, the focus on basketball lacks replicability in the current study since most of the sports-based programmes funded by the OPCCs centre around football or mixed martial arts.

Second, as suggested by Baglivio et al. (2017) future research needs to examine if sport programmes can mitigate the impacts of ACEs. The current study attempted to address this shortfall in the literature by exploring the contribution that sport programmes could have in addressing underlying issues such as ACEs which could be the cause of the young person offending. Afifi et al. (2022) conducted a study in Canada and found that a sense of community was a protective factor from the impacts of ACEs. The present study complements Afifi et al.'s (2022) findings as interviewees highlighted the importance of social inclusion and being a part of a team as benefits of participation in sports-based programmes. It also adds to their findings as interviewees also identified the development of resilience as another protective factor. The findings imply that sport is perceived as an effective tool which can be utilised to help young people develop protective factors, specifically resilience, against the impact of ACEs. Sports-based programmes also provide young people with a distraction, an outlet, and a safe space. These are all factors which can help young people overcome ACEs and the negative impacts they could be having on their life.

Third, this piece of research offers a novel contribution insofar as it explored the perceptions of those involved in the commissioning of diversionary and preventative sports-based programmes targeted at youth involvement in ASB and crime. Jugl et al. (2021) argued that future research should consider the roles of coaches and peers in the desistance process. Therefore, this study adds to existing literature as it also explored the views of programme deliverers, which was insightful as exploring this additional perspective added to the understanding of the facilitating factors and barriers to delivering the programmes. Participants spoke about the cost-of-living crisis as being a barrier to participation which complemented Eyre et al.'s (2022) finding that cost was a barrier to participation in afterschool clubs.

6.14.2 Theoretical Implications

This thesis has drawn upon the underpinnings of several theoretical perspectives, namely Hirschi's (2002) control theory, Bandura's (1973) social learning theory, and Becker's (2018) labelling theory.

The findings of the study strongly resonate with the ideas proposed by control theory. This theory asserts that the stronger the bond and attachment one has to prosocial others, the less like one is to deviate from social norms and be involved in crime. This is because committing crime or ASB could ruin the individual's investment to adhering to conventionality, and the friendships they have made with those who may disapprove of ASB or criminal behaviour (Hirschi, 2002). The participants in the current study referred to the importance of social bonds between young people and institutional figures such as coaches and PCSOs. The importance of being a member of a team was also stressed by the participants. Both points were linked to the benefits of using sports-based programmes and identified as contributing factors to the perceived effectiveness of the programmes. This offers support for control theory as it shows that the deliverers and commissioners of sports-based programmes perceive social bonds as important in encouraging young people to desist from crime and ASB.

Coaches were highlighted in this study as having a crucial role in the effectiveness of a sports-based programme as they can be role models for the programme participants. Bandura's social learning theory maintains that behaviour can be learnt through observation and imitation of others. Role models are important in aiding desistance, especially as they can model prosocial behaviour which the young people can mimic. The way they behave may be used by adolescents as an example on which they can base their own behaviour. In a safe space, which participants identified sports sessions as providing, young people can test new behaviour patterns (Bandura, 1973). One participant stated how one coach discussed a way of dealing with anger with an adolescent and after repeating this multiple times the young person was able to recite the steps on their own. This shows how practising a behaviour pattern with a trusted adult can help young people to adopt new methods of dealing with negative emotions such as anger. Thus, it supports the argument put forward by social learning theory that a safe space facilitates the practice and development of new behaviours.

Labelling was highlighted in this study as being a barrier to participation. It was voiced that participants on the programme may face discrimination from their community due to being perceived as badly behaved. Further, it was implied that the naming of the programmes should be deliberated over since words such as "crime prevention" and "crime diversion" could label participants on the programme as delinquents and they could consequently be looked upon unfavourably by others in the community. The labelling of programmes in this way could have implications on community support for the programmes as venues may not want to facilitate sessions for a group of individuals labelled as delinquents. This aligns with Becker's (2018) labelling theory which outlines how attaching a label to an individual can impact their social participation since it can reaffirm their position on the peripheries of society.

6.14.3 Practical Implications

This study has a number of practical implications which could help inform the OPCCs and programme deliverers on what is working and what needs enhancing in order to uphold the

perceived effectiveness of the sports-based programmes they fund and deliver. In particular, the discussions centred around outcome measures, referral pathways, the roles within the programmes, and the feasibility of a pan-Wales collective programme are of the most practical use.

Interviewees spoke about the effectiveness of using case studies to show the progress that young people make on the programme. Most interviewees regarded case studies as being a truer reflection of the effectiveness of the programmes than statistical data. Yet, government data, such as that produced by the Youth Justice Board (2021;2022), on youth crime tends to be presented in the form of statistics. This could suggest that whilst case studies are useful at demonstrating the impact of prevention or diversion programmes at a local level, statistical data is more appropriate at illustrating the changes in youth crime at a national level. Thus, the findings of this study suggest that case studies should complement statistics on attendance, retention, and referral rates to demonstrate the outcomes of the sports-based programmes.

Referral pathways were discussed in the interviews. A key emerging perception was the importance of continued signposting, which is especially necessary when organisations have a high turnover of staff. It is important to keep the programmes at the forefront of the referral partners' minds so that referral rates are sustained. It was perceived that collaboration between sports-based programmes and referral partners was relationship based. Subsequently, open communication between the programmes and referral partners is vital so that both organisations understand the aims the other is trying to achieve and the work they are achieving. Joint team meetings, the inclusion of case studies in the quarterly report, and consistent feedback could all enhance the dialogue between the deliverers and referral partners.

The findings outline the importance of some of the roles involved in the delivery of the programme. Specifically, PCSOs were identified as being fundamental in building the

relationship between adolescents and the Police. This is a practical implication which has arisen from the current study as it stresses the need for PCSOs to have a greater contribution to the delivery of the programme by attending more sessions and interacting with the programme participants. A suggestion for greater involvement for PCSOs could be for them to become more active in referring at-risk young people onto the programmes. They could also provide feedback to the programmes on the issues being experienced by young people or the crime spots they are recognising in the community, so that the approach taken by the programmes can be more targeted to help the participants.

Regarding the practicality and feasibility of an all-Wales programme aimed at addressing youth crime, the findings from this study suggest that an overarching framework could be possible since all four regions view youth crime as a key focus. However, at present the type of sports-based programmes commissioned by the four OPCCs differ which could place a barrier to collaboration. Further, participants perceived local delivery as crucial to upholding the effectiveness of programmes. As such, it was suggested that the best approach to collaboration would be to have an overarching framework with the flexibility for local delivery. An overarching framework could include having clearly defined roles for deliverers, PCSOs, and the programme itself. Identifying the purpose of the sports-based programme and ensuring that all the relevant partners understand this purpose is key to its effectiveness especially when encouraging the young people to re-engage or increase their hours spent at school. The framework could also outline how often and in what way the programmes could share their examples of best practise to one another, whether this be on a quarterly or annual basis. Standardised national outcome measures and reporting could be implemented to make comparisons and the sharing of best practise between the different regions easier to obtain.

6.15 Critical Appraisal of the Research
The interviews took place over Microsoft Teams. This method of interviewing was an advantage in this study since interviews were conducted in 2022, following a two-year period of uncertainty regarding COVID-19 and the consequential lockdowns that were experienced in Wales. Therefore, hosting interviews on an online platform was appropriate as participants

may have preferred to avoid in person contact and it reduced the risk of interviews being rescheduled because of the potential for further lockdowns to be introduced during the study timeframe. Moreover, as participants were located across Wales, conducting interviews in this way was beneficial as the interviewer and participants did not have to travel long distances for the interviews to take place thereby enhancing the flexibility for scheduling (Gray et al., 2020). Sipes et al. (2019) also found that conducting interviews in this way does not impact the willingness to participate in a study, which reaffirms that it is an appropriate method of interviewing. Interviewing on Microsoft Teams could be criticised as the participant or interviewer may encounter technical difficulties (Gray et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it can be surmised that due to the uptake in using online platforms to communicate during the COVID-19 pandemic, people are more accustomed to using this form of communication and as such technical difficulties are likely to be overcome with ease. Additionally, participants were given the option for the interview to take place face-to-face if that was their preference or if they frequently experience technical difficulties with online communication platforms.

The sample size of this study could be criticised for being too small since there were 13 participants. Nevertheless, qualitative research does tend to focus on relatively small sample groups so that actions and meanings can be understood in the unique circumstances in which they exist (Maxwell, 2008). Therefore, the sample size should be reflective of the aim of the study (Malterud et al., 2016). The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of those involved with the commissioning and delivery of sports-based programmes funded by the OPCCs in Wales. Therefore, a strength of the sample is that it was targeted and information rich. Arguably, the number of potential participants is finite and thus it could be maintained that a small sample size is in line with the aim of the study. This study could however have included more relevant people since 18 potential participants either declined or failed to respond to the interview invitation. It could be criticised since the perceptions represented in this study are from those who were willing to engage in the research and who were at the time of research employed by either one of the OPCCs or commissioned sports-based programmes. There is the potential that those who chose not to engage hold different views. Similarly, due to the limited timeframe of the project, young people on the programmes were

not interviewed. They too may hold different perceptions of the influence of the programmes on their risk of committing ASB or a crime. However, this is speculation and cannot be known for certain. Follow-up studies could explore this further to provide some clarity on whether young people or those who are employed in the future hold differing views to the current study's participants.

A limitation of this study is that there were no follow up interviews carried out. Follow up interviews would have allowed for greater exploration of perceptions and would have allowed the interviewer to probe into answers that were superficial, ambiguous, or unclear. It also would have been interesting to see if answers would be different a few months later on, to understand how external factors such as the cost-of-living crisis were impacting the sports-based programmes. In particular, one participant stated that a programme had been disinvested in because it was so successful and there was a year-on-year depleted need for it. Follow-up interviews would have provided scope to explore whether any learning was captured from this and if this information was shared across the different regions.

The methodology of this study could be criticised as it was based on qualitative data. Some researchers may argue that a mixed-methods approach would have been a more beneficial research method as this would incorporate both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Moran et al. (2011) state that the benefits of using mixed methods include that the methods complement one another, and the stages of research can develop from one phase to the next. For instance, the findings from a questionnaire could provide a basis for the interview questions. Due to the scope and timeframe of this study, it was not achievable to apply a mixed methods approach. However, it could be beneficial for future research to adopt such an approach.

6.16 Future Research

Several recommendations for future research can be suggested based on the results of this study. First, this thesis has focused solely on sports-based programmes funded by the OPCCs in Wales. Whilst this was important due to a lack of research on the Welsh context, the study

did not make any comparison between how the programmes are being delivered in Wales and how they are being delivered in other countries such as England. Future research exploring the differences between the commissioning and delivery of programmes in other countries could provide data to support or dispute the finding that local delivery is perceived as important in producing effective outcomes. Shared learning could also be a benefit of a cross-case analysis approach as different methods of delivering the programmes and measuring the outcomes may be applied in different countries.

Second, the present study explored whether a pan-Wales approach to addressing youth crime could be possible. The findings imply that at a minimum sharing best practise between the four regions would be beneficial and at a maximum an overarching framework which facilitates local delivery could be implemented. Future research could further explore the feasibility and practicalities surrounding an all-Wales approach or programme targeted at addressing youth crime. It could also explore ways in which best practise could be shared and whether this requires a co-ordinator role whereby an individual consistently updates each office on what the others are commissioning and how they are delivering their sports-based programmes. Moreover, future studies could further investigate the impact case studies, produced by the programme deliverers, have on the decisions made by funders, whether they increase attendance rates or referral rates, or if they change the opinions community members have of the participants.

Third, the sample comprised of those involved in the commissioning and delivery of the programmes. Although this was a novel contribution to the existing literature, this study could be complimented by further research which explores the perceptions of other individuals involved with the sports-based programmes. Recommendations on appropriate participants include the exploration of the perceptions of PCSOs, teachers, social workers, parents, members of the local community, and the young people. Exploring additional perceptions will help to create a fuller understanding of the effectiveness of sports-based programmes as well as the impact they have on different people within the community where they operate. For instance, future research could explore the perceptions young people engaging in the

programmes have on the value of participation. Studies could question what young people have gained from participation, if they feel more socially included and if they have a better quality of life because of participation. Also, by including young people in future studies, their views on what makes a programme attractive and appealing can help inform the programmes on which activities to offer, where to hold the sessions, and which days and times they should run. This data could then be used to compare to the findings of the current study to see how closely they align with the views held by the commissioners and deliverers on how the programmes should operate to be effective. The negative labelling of participants by local members was identified as a barrier to delivery. Future research could investigate whether the negative perceptions that local community members may have of the participants could be changed and if so, the ways in which better community relations could be formed. PCSOs, specifically, have been referred to in this study as playing a prominent role in the effectiveness of the programmes and as needing to be more involved in the sessions. Therefore, future research could explore their perceptions of the effectiveness of sports-based programmes, and what they see as being the purpose of their role and their contribution in the delivery of the programmes.

Lastly, future research could delve deeper into understanding the roles of different programme formats to explore which is most effective and appropriate in reducing youth involvement in crime and ASB. As this study found, a mixture of open sessions, small group sessions and sessions with one young person and two members of staff are delivered in Wales. This study did not have the scope to further explore the effectiveness of each of the different formats, but this information could be useful in informing the OPCCs on which programmes to commission or whether having a mixture of programme formats is the most effective approach. The current study identified case studies, attendance rates, referral rates, and the number of sessions delivered as ways to measure the effectiveness of sports-based programmes. Future research could explore the different indices of effectiveness further since there is no clear consensus on what these are. This would allow for a greater understanding of what makes a sports-based programme effective.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, this study set out to explore the perceptions of the effectiveness of sport as a tool to address youth crime and to make a pan-Wales comparison of the sports-based programmes funded by the OPCCs in Wales. By conducting semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in the commissioning and delivery of the sports-based programmes funded by the OPCCs in Wales, this study has been able to attain these aims.

The key practical outcomes from this study include the identification of stigma caused by the labelling of participants on programmes which have titles such as "crime prevention" or "crime diversion". Additionally, the cost-of-living crisis has placed a barrier to participation since young people from deprived backgrounds may be unable to afford public transport or the cost of equipment to attend the sessions. PCSOs and coaches should have a key role in the delivery of the programmes and in aiding the social integration of young people into the community. Practical implications from the programme also comprise of the suggestion that local provision and standardised national outcome measures and reporting would be the most suitable underpinning of a pan-Wales approach to addressing youth crime through the use of sports-based programmes. Lastly, young people should be able to contribute to the planning of programme provision so that it is based on their interests.

An overriding finding that has emerged from this body of research is the consensus that offering an array of different tools for young people to engage with could be more effective than having solely sports-based programmes. This is because different activities will act as effective 'hooks' for different young people. The arts and Esports were cited as being complimentary tools to sport. Moreover, case studies were perceived as being an important way to illustrate the outcomes of the programmes since changes in participants are often minute and consequently may be underrepresented or lost in statistical measures.

The current study adds to existing literature as it focuses on the Welsh context which was insufficiently covered by previous research. It was important that this study concentrated on the OPCCs in Wales because there are four in this country compared to 39 in England. Hence, the sharing and collaborative potential in Wales is more substantial in comparison to England. From a theoretical perspective, this thesis adds to the current body of literature, as the findings from this study illustrate the importance of social bonds and role models in the desistance process, as well as the detrimental impacts labels can have on perpetuating a negative self-fulfilling prophecy. Thereby supporting the foundational arguments presented by Hirschi's (2002) control theory, Bandura's (1973) social learning theory, and Becker's (2018) labelling theory.

The four regions in Wales have divergent approaches in using sport to address youth crime. However, they all recognise the need to focus on this matter which highlights the importance of the work of the sports-based programmes in Wales. Although changes in societal trends were identified as a cause for disinvestment, youth crime is currently a focal point of the work of the OPCCs in Wales commission. Therefore, emphasising that this area of research should be prioritised by future studies. In particular, future research could further examine the roles that PCSOs should have in the running of sports-based programmes, and further explore the feasibility of an all-Wales approach to addressing youth crime by defining and testing the effectiveness of, an overarching framework that has local applicability.

References

Abdul, A., & Alharthi, K. (2016). An introduction to research paradigms. *International Journal of Educational Investigations, 3*(8), 2410-3446.

Abeling-Judge, D. (2021). Social bonding experiences facilitating desistance in adolescence. *Crime and Delinquency, 67*(2), 287-315.

Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting semi-structured interviews. In K.E. Newcomer, H.P. Hatry, & J.S. Wholey (Eds.), *Conducting semi-structured interviews. Handbook of practical program evaluation* (4th ed., pp. 492-506). Wiley.

Afifi, T. O., Taillieu, T., Salmon, S., Stewart-Tufescu, A., Struck, S., Fortier, J., MacMillan, H. L., Sareen, J.,Tonmyr, L., & Katz, L. Y. (2022). Protective factors for decreasing nicotine, alcohol, and cannabis use among adolescents with a history of adverse childhood experience (ACEs). *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction,* 1-19. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11469-021-00720-x.pdf

Alharahsheh, H. H., & Pius, A. (2020). A review of key paradigms: Positivism VS interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2*(3), 39-43. https://gajrc.com/media/articles/GAJHSS_23_39-43_VMGJbOK.pdf

Anda, R.F., Porter, L.E., & Brown, D.W. (2020). Inside the adverse childhood experience score: Strengths, limitations, and misapplications. *American Journal of Prevention Medicine, 59*(2), 293-295. https://www.ajpmonline.org/action/showPdf?pii=S0749-3797%2820%2930058-1

Baglivio, M., Epps, N., Swartz, K., Sayedul Huq, M., Sheer, A., & Hardt, N. (2014). The prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) in the lives of juvenile offenders. *Journal of Juvenile Justice, 3*(2), 1-23.

Baglivio, M. T., Wolff, K. T., Epps, N., & Nelson, R. (2017). Predicting adverse childhood experiences: The importance of neighbourhood context in youth trauma among delinquent youth. *Crime & Delinquency, 63*(2), 166-188. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0011128715570628

Baglivio, M. T., Wolff, K. T., Piquero, A. R. and Epps, N. (2015). The relationship between adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and juvenile offending trajectories in a juvenile offender sample. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 43*(3), 229-241.

Bandura, A. (1965). Influence of models' reinforcement contingencies on the acquisition of imitative responses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1*(6), 589-595.

Bandura, A. (1971). *Social Learning Theory.* General Learning Corporation.

Bandura, A. (1973). *Aggression: A social learning analysis.* Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control.* W H Freeman.

Barrett, D., & Noble, H. (2019). What are cohort studies? *Evidence-Based Nursing, 22*(4), 95-96.

https://web.archive.org/web/20200307052120id_/https:/ebn.bmj.com/content/ebnurs/22/4/95.full.pdf

Becker, H.S. (2018). *Outsiders: Studies in sociology of deviance.* Free Press.

Bekbolatkyzy, D. S., Yerenatova, D. R., Maratuly, Y. A., Makhatovna, A. G., & Beaver, K. M. (2019). Aging out of adolescent delinquency: Results from a longitudinal sample of youth and young adults. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 60*, 108-116. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2018.09.001

Bellis, M. A., Lowey, H., Leckenby, N., Hughes, K., & Harrison, D. (2014). Adverse childhood experiences: Retrospective study to determine their impact on adult health behaviours and health outcomes in a UK population. *Journal of Public Health, 36*(1), 81-91. https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdt038

Berdychevsky, L., Stodolska, M., & Shinew, K. J. (2019). The roles of recreation in the prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs addressing youth gang involvement and violence. *Leisure Sciences, 44*(3), 343-365. https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2019.1571966

Berzonsky, M. D., & Cieciuch, J. (2016). Mediational role of identity commitment in relationships between identity processing style and psychological well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 17*(1), 145-162. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9588-2

Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). *Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input.* Academia.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 18*(3), 328-352.

Brosnan, S. (2020). The impact of sports participation on crime in England between 2012 and 2015. *Sport in Society, 23*(6), 1080-1090.

Buil-Gil, D., Medina, J., & Shlomo, N. (2021a). Measuring the dark figure of crime in geographical areas: Small area estimation from the Crime Survey for England and Wales. *The British Journal of Criminology, 61*(2), 364-388. https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/61/2/364/5924614

Buil-Gil, D., Moretti, A., & Langton, S. H. (2021b). The accuracy of crime statistics: Assessing the impact of police data bias on geographic crime analysis. *Journal of Experimental Criminology,* 1-27. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11292-021-09457-y.pdf

Caldwell, L. L., & Smith, E. A. (2006). Leisure as a context for youth development and delinquency prevention. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology, 39*(3), 398-418. https://doi.org/10.1375/acri.39.3.398

Cameron, M. & MacDougall, C. J. (2000). Crime prevention through sport and physical activity. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, 165*, 1-6.

Chamberlain, J. M. (2013). Sports-based intervention and the problem of youth offending: A diverse enough tool for a diverse society? *Sport in Society, 16*(10), 1279-1292.

Choy, L. T. (2014). The strengths and weaknesses of research methodology: Comparison and complimentary between qualitative and quantitative approaches. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 19*(4), 99-104.

Coalter, F. (2005). *The social benefits of sport: An overview to inform the community planning process* (Report No. 98). Sport Scotland. https://sportscotland.org.uk/documents/resources/thesocialbenefitsofsport.pdf

Coomber, R., & Moyle, L. (2018). The changing shape of street-level heroin and crack supply in England: Commuting, holidaying and cuckooing drug dealers across 'county lines'. *The British Journal of Criminology, 58*(6), 1323-1342. https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article-abstract/58/6/1323/4668676

Copp, J. E., Giordano, P. C., Longmore, M. A., & Manning, W. D. (2020). Desistance from crime during the transition to adulthood: The influence of parents, peers, and shifts in identity. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 57*(3), 294-332. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0022427819878220

Day, M. C., Bond, K., & Smith, B. (2013). Holding it together: Coping with vicarious trauma in sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 14*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2012.06.001

Deakin, J., Fox, C., & Matos, R. (2022). Labelled as 'risky' in an era of control: How young people experience and respond to the stigma of criminalized identities. *European Journal of Criminology, 19*(4), 653-673. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1477370820916728

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2003). *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner. (2021). *Dyfed Powys police and crime plan 2021-2025: A Dyfed Powys of safe communities.* https://www.dyfedpowys-pcc.org.uk/media/11091/police-and-crime-plan-2021-2025.pdf

Easterlin, M. C., Chung, P. J., Leng, M, & Dudovitz, R. (2019). Association of team sports participation with long-term mental health outcomes among individuals exposed to adverse childhood experiences. *JAMA Pediatrics, 173*(3), 681-688. https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2734743

Elkholm, D. (2019). Sport as a means of governing social integration: Discourses on bridging and bonding social relations. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 36*(2), 152-161. https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2018-0099

Emmel, N. (2013). *Sampling and choosing cases in qualitative research: A realist approach.* SAGE Research Methods.

Farrell, A. D., Thompson, E. L., & Mehari, K. R. (2017). Dimensions of peer influences and their relationship to adolescents' aggression, other problem behaviours and prosocial behaviour. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 46*(4), 1315-1369. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10964-016-0601-4.pdf

Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 14*, 245-258.

Folk, J.B., Kemp, K., Yurasek, A., Barr-Walker, J., & Toulou-Shams, M. (2011). Adverse childhood experiences among justice involved youth: Data-driven recommendations for action using the sequential intercept model. *American Psychological Association, 76*(2), 268-308. https://psycnet.apa.org/manuscript/2021-26586-008.pdf

Ford, K., Barton, E., Newbury, A., Hughes, K., Bezeczky, Z., Roderick, J., & Bellis, M. (2019). Understanding the prevalence of adverse experiences (ACEs) in a male offender population in Wales: The Prisoner ACE Survey. *Public Health Wales; Bangor University.* https://research.bangor.ac.uk/portal/files/23356885/PHW_Prisoner_ACE_Survey_Report_E.pdf

Forney, M., & Ward, J. T. (2019). Identity, peer resistance, and antisocial influence: Modelling direct and indirect causes of desistance. *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology, 5*(1), 107-135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40865-018-0102-0

Fowlie, J., Eime, R. M., & Griffiths, K. (2021). Barriers to adolescent female participation in cricket. *Annals of Leisure Research, 24*(4), 513-531. https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2019.1710716

Fox, B. H., Perez, N., Cass, E., Baglivio, M. T., & Epps, N. (2015). Trauma changes everything: Examining the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 46*, 163-173.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction* (7th ed.). Pearson.

Giordano, P. C., Cernkovich, S. A., & Holland, D. D. (2003). Changes in friendship relations over the life course: Implications for desistance from crime. *Criminology, 41*(2), 293-327. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2003.tb00989.x?saml_referrer

Giordano, P. C., Cernkovich, S. A., & Rudolph, J. L. (2002). Gender, crime and desistance: Toward a theory of cognitive transformation. *American Journal of Sociology, 107*(4), 990-1064.

Gomis Pomares, A., & Villanueva, L. (2020). The effect of adverse childhood experiences on

deviant and altruistic behaviour during emerging adulthood. *Psicothema, 32*(1), 33-

39.

http://repositori.uji.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10234/187488/68844.pdf?sequence
=1&isAllowed=y

Gov.UK. (n.d.). *Age of criminal responsibility.* Retrieved June 22, 2022, from

https://www.gov.uk/age-of-criminal-responsibility

Gov.UK. (n.d.). *Youth Crime Prevention Programmes.* Retrieved November 30, 2022, from

https://www.gov.uk/youth-crime-prevention-programmes/what-these-
programmes-are-and-how-they-work

Gray, L. M., Wong-Wylie, G., Rempel, G. R., & Cook, K. (2020). Expanding qualitative research

interviewing strategies: Zoom video communications. *The Qualitative Report, 25*(5),

1292-1301.

https://www.iths.org/wp-content/uploads/2.-Expanding-Qualitative-Research-
Interviewing-Strategies.pdf

Green, D.A. (2007). Comparing penal cultures: Child-on-child homicide in England and

Norway. *Crime and Justice, 36*, 591-643.

Gwent Police. (n.d.). *About us: Overview.*

https://www.gwent.police.uk/police-forces/gwent-police/areas/about-us/about-
us/overview/

Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., & De Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: When to

use them and how to judge them. *Human Reproduction, 31*(3), 498-501.

https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dev334

Hariton, E., & Locascio, J.J. (2018). Randomised control trials – the gold standard for

effectiveness research. *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology,
125*(13), 1716-1716. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6235704/

Hartmann, D. & Depro, B. (2006). Rethinking sports-based community crime prevention: A

preliminary analysis of the relationship between midnight basketball and urban crime

rates. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 30*(2), 180-196.

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0193723506286863

Hirschi, T. (2002). *Causes of Delinquency* (2nd ed.). Transaction Publishers.

Hirschi, T., & Gottfredson, M. (1983). Age and the explanation of crime. *The American Journal of Sociology, 89*(3), 552-584.

Hobson, J., Lynch, K., Payne, B., Ellis, L. (2021). Are police-led social crime prevention initiatives effective? A process and outcome evaluation of a UK youth intervention. *International Criminal Justice Review, 31*(3), 325-346. https://doi.org/10.1177/1057567718814891

Hodge, R. (2009). Advances in the assessment and treatment of juvenile offenders. *Kriminologija i Socijalna Integracija, 17*(2), 49-69. https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2022/4/3/1649859506/public-service-vehicles-buses-and-taxis-april-2019-march-2020.pdf

Home Office. (2022, August 20). *Serious violence duty: Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 factsheet.* Gov.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-factsheets/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-serious-violence-duty-factsheet#timeline

Janssen, I., & LeBlanc, A. G. (2010). Systematic review of the health benefits of physical activity and fitness in school-aged children and youth. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, 7*(40), 1-16. https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1479-5868-7-40/

Jonkman, H., Van Yperen, T., & Prinsen, B. (2008). Prevention. In N.W. Slot & M. Hoeve (Eds.), *Tomorrow's criminals: The development of child delinquency and effective interventions* (1st ed., pp. 179-197). Routledge.

Jugl, I., Bender, D., & Lösel, F. (2021). Do sports programs prevent crime and reduce reoffending? A systematic review and meta-analysis on the effectiveness of sports programs. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology,* 1-52. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-021-09536-3

Jump, D. (2017). Why we should think some more. A response to 'When you're boxing you don't think so much': Pugilism, transitional masculinities and criminal desistance among young Danish gang members. *Journal of Youth Studies, 20*(8), 1093-1107. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2017.1307331

Jump, D. and Smithson, H. (2020). Dropping your guard: The use of boxing as a means of
forming desistance narratives amongst young people in the criminal justice system.
The International Journal of Sport and Society, 11(2), 56-69.

Kalmakis, K. A., & Chandler, G. E. (2014). Adverse childhood experiences: Towards a clear
conceptual meaning. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 70*(7), 1489-1501.
https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.12329

Kavussanu, M., & Al-Yaaribi, A. (2021). Prosocial and antisocial behaviour in sport.
International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 19(2), 179-202.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1612197X.2019.1674681

Kelly, L. (2011). 'Social inclusion' through sports-based interventions? *Critical Social Policy,
31*(1), 126-150.

Kelly, L. (2012). Representing and preventing youth crime and disorder: Intended and
unintended consequences of targeted youth programmes in England. *Youth Justice,
12*(2), 101-117.

Klenke, K. (2016). *Qualitative research in the study of leadership.* Emerald Publishing Limited.
https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/swansea-
ebooks/detail.action?docID=4500561&query=karin+klenke+qualitative+research

Lawson, H. A. (2005). Empowering people, facilitating community development, and
contributing to sustainable development: The social work of sport, exercise, and
physical education programs. *Sport, Education and Society, 10*(1), 135-160.
https://doi.org/10.1080/1357332052000308800

Lee, J. E., Pope, Z., & Gao, Z. (2018). The role of youth sports in promoting children's physical
activity and preventing pediatric obesity: A systematic review. *Behavioral Medicine,
44*(1), 62-76. https://doi.org/10.1080/08964289.2016.1193462

Lorenzo, T., McKinney, V., Bam, A., Sigenu, V., & Sompeta, S. (2019). Mapping participation of
disabled youth in sport and other free-time activities to facilitate their livelihoods
development. *British Journal of Occupation Therapy, 82*(2), 80-89.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0308022618817281

Lucas, P. J. & Staines, J. (2022). *Supporting the youngest children in the youth justice system: What works to reduce offending and improve outcomes?* Local Government Association.

Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: Guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1753 1760. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444

Massey, W. V., & Whitley, M. A. (2016). The role of sport for youth amidst trauma and chaos. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 8*(5), 487-504. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2016.1204351

Matsueda, R. L., O'Neill, K. K., & Kreager, D. A. (2020). Embeddedness, reflected appraisals, and deterrence: A symbolic interactionist theory of adolescent theft. In R. T. Serpe, R. Stryker & B Powell (Eds.), *Identity and symbolic interaction: Deepening foundations, building bridges* (pp. 239-271). Springer.

Maxwell, J. A. (2008). Designing a qualitative study. In L. Bickman & D. Bog (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods* (2nd ed., pp. 214-253). Sage Publications.

Mazzer, K. R., Rickwood, D. J. (2015). Mental health in sport: Coaches' views of their role and efficacy in supporting young people's mental health. *International Journal of Health Promotion and Education, 53*(2), 102-114.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14635240.2014.965841

McMahon, S. & Belur, J. (2013). *Sports-based programmes and reducing youth violence and crime* (02/13). Project Oracle. https://allianceofsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Project_Oracle_Synthesis_Study_02-2013_Sport_interventions.pdf

Ministry of Justice. (2020, October 29). *Costs per place and costs per prisoner by individual prison.* Gov.UK. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929417/costs-prison-place-costs-prisoner-2019-2020-summary.pdf

Ministry of Justice. (2022, January 27). *Costs per place and costs per prisoner by individual prison.* Gov.UK.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1050046/costs-per-place-costs-per-prisoner-2020_-2021.pdf

Ministry of Justice. (2022, May 20). *£300 million to cut youth crime and make streets safer*. Gov.UK.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/300-million-to-cut-youth-crime-and-make-streets-safer

Mizen, P. (2004). *The changing state of youth.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Moffitt, T. E. (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour: A developmental taxonomy. *Psychological Review, 100*(4), 674-701.

https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.100.4.674

Monahan, K. C., & Booth-LaForce, C. (2016). Deflected pathways: Becoming aggressive, socially withdrawn, or prosocial with peers during the transition to adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 26*(2), 270-285.

https://europepmc.org/backend/ptpmcrender.fcgi?accid=PMC4876871&blobtype=pdf

Moran, A. P., Matthews, J. J., & Kirby, K. (2011). Whatever happened to the third paradigm? Exploring mixed methods research designs in sport and exercise psychology. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 3*(3), 362-369.

https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2011.607843

Moreau, N., Thibault Lévesque, J., Moglat, M., Jaimes, A., Parlavecchio, L., Chantau, O., & Plante, C. (2018). Opening the black box of a sports-based programme for vulnerable youth: The crucial role of social bonds. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 10*(3), 291-305. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676x.2018.1430060

Morgan, H., & Parker, A. (2017). Generating recognition, acceptance and social inclusion in marginalised youth populations: The potential of sports-based interventions. *Journal of Youth Studies, 20*(8), 1028-1043. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2017.1305100

Morgan, H., Parker, A., & Marturano, N. (2020). Community-based intervention and marginalised youth: Inclusion, social mobility and life-course transition. *Journal of Education and Work, 33*(5), 327-342. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2020.1767765

Morgan, H., Parker, A., Meek, R., & Cryer, J. (2020). Participation in sport as a mechanism to transform the lives of young people within the criminal justice system: An academic exploration of a theory of change. *Sport, Education and Society, 25*(8), 917-930. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2019.1674274

Murad, M.H., Asi, N., Alsawas, M., & Alahdab, F. (2016). New evidence pyramid. *BMJ Evidence Based Medicine, 21*(4), 125-127. https://ebm.bmj.com/content/ebmed/21/4/125.full.pdf

Na, C., & Paternoster, R. (2019). Prosocial identities and youth violence. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 56*(1), 84-128.

Newman, T. J., Anderson-Butcher, D., & Amorose, A. J. (2020). Examining the influence of sport program staff and parent/caregiver support on youth outcomes. *Applied Developmental Science, 24*(3), 263-278. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1467762

Newton, A., & Felson, M. (2015). Crime patterns in time and space: The dynamics of crime opportunities in urban areas. *Crime Science, 4*(11), 1-5. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1186/s40163-015-0025-6.pdf?pdf=button

Nichols, G. (2004). Crime and punishment and sports development. *Leisure Studies, 23*(2), 177-194. https://doi.org/10.1080/0261436042000226363

Nichols, G. (2007). *Sport and crime reduction: The role of sports in tackling youth crime* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Nichols, G., & Crow, I. (2004). Measuring the impact of crime reduction interventions involving sports activities for young people. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice 43*(3), 267-283.

Noel-London, K., Ortiz, K., & BeLue, R. (2021). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) & youth sports participation: Does a gradient exist? *Child Abuse & Neglect, 113*, 1- 8. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104924

Norris, G., & Norris, H. (2021). Building resilience through sport in young people with adverse childhood experiences. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living, 3*, 1-9. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fspor.2021.663587/full

Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 11*(4), 327-344. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401305

O'Connor, R. M., & Waddell, S. (2015). *What works to prevent gang involvement, youth violence and crime. A rapid review of interventions delivered in the UK and abroad.* Early Intervention Foundation.

https://thehub-beta.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/early_intervention_foundation_gangs_review.pdf

O'Hagan, A., & Long, A. (2019). The socioeconomic effects of organised crimes county lines on the United Kingdom community. *Forensic Research and Criminology International Journal, 7*(5), 274-280. http://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/37921/1/1195444_O_Hagan.pdf

Office for National Statistics (2022). *Crime in England and Wales: Year ending March 2022.* Gov.UK.

https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2022

Office for National Statistics. (2022). *Population and household estimates, Wales: Census 2021.*

https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimateswales/latest

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner North Wales. (2021). *Police and crime plan 2021-2024.*

https://www.apccs.police.uk/media/6948/north-wales-police-crime-plan-2021.pdf

Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). Sport. In *The definitive record of the English language.*

> Retrieved June 27, 2022, from

> https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/187476

Parker, A., Morgan, H., Farooq, S., Moreland, B., & Pitchford, A. (2019). Sporting intervention

> and social change: Football, marginalised youth and citizenship development. *Sport,*

> *Education and Society, 24*(3), 298-310.

> https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2017.1353493

Paternoster, R., & Bushway, S. (2009). Desistance and the "feared self": Toward an identity

> theory of criminal desistance. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, 99*(4),

> 1103-1156.

Pham, L.T.M. (2018). *Qualitative approach to research a review of advantages and*

> *disadvantages of three paradigms: Positivism, interpretivism and critical inquiry.*

> [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Adelaide.

Piggin, J. (2020). What is physical activity? A holistic definition for teachers, researchers and

> policy makers. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living, 2*(72), 1-7.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research.

> *Journal of Counselling Psychology, 52*(2), 137-145.

> https://www.academia.edu/3053549/Language_and_meaning_Data_collection_in_
> qualitative_research?from=cover_page

Powys County Council. (n.d.). *Local Bus Times.* Powys County Council.

> https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/9474/Local-Bus-Times

Public Transport Users' Advisory Panel. (2012). *Provision of public transport information April*

> *2012.* Gov.Wales. https://gov.wales/provision-public-transport-information

Rahman, M. S. (2017). The advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative

> approaches and methods in language "testing and assessment" research: A literature

> review. *Journal of Education and Learning, 6*(1), 102-112.

> https://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/jel/article/view/64330

Reverdito, R. S., Carvalho, H. M., Galatti, L. R., Scaglia, A. J., Gonçalves, C. E., & Paes, R. R.

> (2017). Effects of youth participation in extra—curricular sport programs on perceived

> self-efficacy: A multilevel analysis. *Perceptual and Motor Skills, 124*(3), 569-583.

> https://doi.org/10.1177/0031512517697069

Ribeiro, B., Forte, P., Vinhas, R., Marinho, D. A., Faíl, L. B., Pereira, A., Vieira, F., & Neiva, H. P. (2022). The benefits of resistance training in obese adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Sports Medicine, 8*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40798-022-00501-3

Robison, M. (2019). *Sports as a resiliency factor in Native American youth* (Publication No. 27785884) [Doctoral dissertation, George Fox University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2372037538?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true

Rodríguez-Bravo, A. E., De-Juanas, Á, & García-Castilla, F. J. (2020). Effect of physical-sports leisure activities on young people's psychological wellbeing. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 1-9. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.543951/full

Roth, J. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2003). Youth development programs: Risk, prevention and policy. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 32*(3), 170-182. https://www.activateleadership.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Youth-Development-Programs-Risk-Prevention-1.pdf

Sampson, R. J., & Laub, J. H. (2005). A life-course view of the development of crime. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 602*(1), 12-45. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716205280075

Scotland, J. (2012). Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching, 5*(9), 9-16. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1080001.pdf

Shores, K., Becker, C. M., Moynahan, R., Williams, R., & Cooper, N. (2015). The relationship of young adults' health and their sports participation. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 38*(3), 306-320.

Sipes, J. B. A., Roberts, L. D., & Mullan, B. (2022). Voice-only Skype for use in researching sensitive topics: A research note. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 19*(1), 204-220. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2019.1577518

South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. (2016). *Police and crime reduction plan 2016-2021.*

http://pcclivewww.blob.core.windows.net/wordpress-uploads/Police-and-Crime-Reduction-Plan-2016-21-English.pdf

South Wales Police. (n.d.). *About us: Overview.*

https://www.south-wales.police.uk/police-forces/south-wales-police/areas/about-us/about-us/overview/

Swann, C., Telenta, J., Draper, G., Liddle, S., Fogarty, A., Hurley, D., & Vella, S. (2018). Youth sport as a context for supporting mental health: Adolescent male perspectives. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 35,* 55-64.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2017.11.008

Sweeten, G., & Khade, N. (2018). Equifinality and desistance: Which pathways to desistance are the most travelled in youth adulthood? *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology, 4*(4), 369-394. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40865-018-0092-y

Tracy, S.J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(10), 837-852.

Vella, S., Oades, L., & Crowe, T. (2011). The role of the coach in facilitating positive youth development: Moving from theory to practice. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 23*(1), 33-48. https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2010.511423

Warr, M. (1998). Life-course transitions and desistance from crime. *Criminology, 36*(2), 183-216.

Welsh Government. (2021, March 24). *Public service vehicles (buses and taxis): April 2019 to March 2020.* Gov.Wales.

Wilson, O. W. A., Whatman, C., Walters, S., Keung, S., Enari, D., Rogers, A., Millar, S-K., Ferkins, L., Hinckson, E., Hapeta, J., Sam, M., & Richards, J. (2022). The value of sport: Wellbeing benefits of sport participation during adolescence. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(14), 8579-8588.

https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/14/8579/htm#

Wong, J. S., Bouchard, J., Gravel, J., Bouchard, M., & Morselli, C. (2016). Can at-risk youth be diverted from crime? A meta-analysis of restorative diversion programs. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 43*(10), 1310-1329.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/302594160

Young, J. (2014). Coaches are role models: Tales of influence. *Coaching and Sport Science Review, 64*(22), 23-24.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Carlos-Aviles-10/publication/270896857_Adaptive_and_reactive_skills_involved_in_the_return_of_serve_in_tennis/links/5c5b6d36a6fdccb608ad6a58/Adaptive-and-reactive-skills-involved-in-the-return-of-serve-in-tennis.pdf#page=23

Youth Justice Board. (2021). *Youth Justice Statistics, England and Wales, April 2019 to March 2020.* Ministry of Justice.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/956621/youth-justice-statistics-2019-2020.pdf

Youth Justice Board. (2022). *Youth Justice Statistics, England and Wales, April 2020 to March 2021.* Ministry of Justice.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1054236/Youth_Justice_Statistics_2020-21.pdf

Appendices

Appendix 1

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

(Version 1.1, Date: 01/07/21)

Project Title: Criminal Youth Justice System in Wales' Alignment with Sports Providers and Identification of Readiness to Engage

Contact Details:

Dr Joanne Hudson: ████████████████████████████████

Cleo Fish: ██████████████████████

1. Invitation Paragraph

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. We are researchers at Swansea and Cardiff Universities, working with the Police and Crime Commissioners' Offices across Wales to develop understanding of engagement with physical activity and sport initiatives that are currently used within the Criminal Youth Justice System in Wales, targeting youth already within the Criminal Justice System. Please read through this information sheet to find out what the study is about and what you would be asked to do if you take part. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have prior to agreeing to take part in this study.

2. What is the purpose of the study?

We are interested in obtaining your views on these initiatives, if you feel they are effective, who should be targeted and how their effectiveness can best be assessed. We aim to find out more about the barriers to using physical activity and sport in this way and what incentives

there are in doing so.

3. Why have I been chosen?

The reason we are asking you to take part in our research is because you have been identified as someone who has knowledge of these initiatives and/or is involved in decisions about their use.

It's completely your choice to take part. If you decide to do so but then change your mind, you can opt out of the study at any time without giving us a reason. All participation is anonymous so your involvement will not be disclosed to anyone.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

We will ask you to take part in an individual interview with Cleo Fish to discuss the above topics. This will be conducted via Teams or in person (depending on your preference and at a location of your choice if in person), and it will take up to 60 minutes and no longer. The interview will be recorded, transcribed and you will be sent a copy of the transcript and analysis of data from all of the interviews to check that it reflects your responses.

5. What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

You might be reluctant to share your experiences in the interview, but you don't have to respond to any questions that you do not feel comfortable discussing.

6. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will be contributing to developing new understanding of how physical activity and sport initiatives are used in Wales to support youth who are currently in the Criminal Justice System. This understanding can then be applied to modify their use as appropriate.

7. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Definitely. We will record the discussions we have with people in the study so that we can analyse them more easily, but we won't name anyone and only people in the research team will see the typed transcripts of these discussions and listen to the recordings. We will not link any comments used in reports, publications, and presentations to any individuals in the research, will safely destroy recordings after they've been typed up, and confidentially destroy paper copies of any consent forms.

8. What if I have any questions?

Further information can be obtained from Joanne Hudson ██████████████████████ ████████████

The project has been approved by the College of Engineering Research Ethics Committee at Swansea University. If you have any questions regarding this, any complaint, or concerns about the ethics and governance of this research please contact the Chair of the College of Engineering Research Ethics Committee, Swansea University: <u>coe-researchethics@swansea.ac.uk</u>. The institutional contact for reporting cases of research conduct is the Registrar & Chief Operating Officer; email: <u>researchmisconduct@swansea.ac.uk</u>. Further details are available at the Swansea University webpages for Research Integrity. <u>http://www.swansea.ac.uk/research/researchintegrity/</u>.

> **If you have no further questions and are happy to take part, please complete the Informed Consent Form and return to ██████████████████; further information on how this study meets GDPR requirements is provided below if you are interested in finding out more about this.**

Further information about Data Protection and Confidentiality

Your data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR). All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. Your data will only be viewed by the researcher/research team.

All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer file on a computer owned by Dr Joanne Hudson. All paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at Swansea University. Your consent information will be kept separately from your responses to minimise risk in the event of a data breach.

Please note that the data we will collect for our study will be made anonymous, from after the data have been collected, thus it will not be possible to identify and remove your data at a later date, should you decide to withdraw from the study. Therefore, if at the end of this research you decide to have your data withdrawn, please let us know straight after any discussion has taken place.

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The data controller for this project will be Swansea University. The University Data Protection Officer provides oversight of university activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at the Vice Chancellor's Office.

Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this information sheet. Standard ethical procedures will involve you providing your consent to participate in this study by completing the consent form that has been provided to you.

The legal basis that we will rely on to process your personal data will be processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. This public interest

justification is approved by the College of Engineering Research Ethics Committee, Swansea University.

The legal basis that we will rely on to process special categories of data will be processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes.

How long will your information be held?

We will hold any personal data and special categories of data for 5 years to comply with University and GDPR regulations, after which it will be safely destroyed.

What are your rights?

You have a right to access your personal information, to object to the processing of your personal information, to rectify, to erase, to restrict and to port your personal information. Please visit the University Data Protection webpages for further information in relation to your rights.

Any requests or objections should be made in writing to the University Data Protection Officer:-

University Compliance Officer (FOI/DP)

Vice-Chancellor's Office

Swansea University

Singleton Park

Swansea

SA2 8PP

Email: dataprotection@swansea.ac.uk

How to make a complaint

If you are unhappy with the way in which your personal data has been processed you may in the first instance contact the University Data Protection Officer using the contact details above.

If you remain dissatisfied then you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: -

Information Commissioner's Office,

Wycliffe House,

Water Lane,

Wilmslow,

Cheshire,

SK9 5AF

www.ico.org.uk

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

(Version 1.1, Date: 01/07/2021)

Project Title:

Criminal Youth Justice System in Wales' Alignment with Sports Providers and Identification of Readiness to Engage

Contact Details:

Dr Joanne Hudson; ███

██

Cleo Fish: ██████████████████████

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 01/07/21 (version number 1.1) for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

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

3. I understand that sections of any of data obtained may be looked at by responsible individuals from the research team or from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my

taking part in research. I give permission for these individuals

to have access to these records.

4. I understand that data I provide may be used in reports and

academic publications in anonymous fashion

5. I understand that interviews will be video and audio recorded

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

Name of Person taking consent   Date   Signature

Researcher   Date   Signature

Interview Schedule

Introductory Questions:

1. What is your role within the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office at (their area)?
2. What does your role involve?

Questions to Ask Those Running the Sports Schemes

1. How is the sports programme delivered?
    a. Where are they running?
    b. How often do the programmes run?
    c. How many participants are involved with the sports programmes?
        i. How are participants referred onto these programmes?
        ii. Are the referral pathways from the Police effective?
        iii. Are the referral pathways from the Criminal Justice System effective?
        iv. Are the referral pathways from third sector parties effective?
        v. How could these referral pathways be improved?
    d. How much staffing is required for these programmes?
    e. What qualifications are the staff required to have to work on the programmes?
        i. Do they require any specialist or specific training to work on the programmes?
            1. *How is this training funded?*
            2. *Is it difficult to obtain this training?*
        ii. Is this training sufficient?
            1. *Why/Why not?*
2. *How involved is the Police and Crime Commissioner's team in delivering the sport programmes?*
    a. *Is this sufficient?*
        i. *Could their involvement be improved?*
            1. *How?*

3. *How does the Police and Crime Commissioner's team measure the success of the programmes?*
    a. *How often must the programmes report back to the office?*
    b. *What information is required to be passed on from the schemes to the office to measure their success?*
4. *Do you work closely with your Police Force on these programmes?*
5. *What has not been as successful as it could be in reducing youth involvement in the Criminal Justice System?*
    a. *What are the difficulties with keeping participants engaged within the programmes?*
        i. *How are these difficulties overcome?*
    b. *Have there been any disinvestments for any of the sports programmes?*
        i. *Why was the disinvestment made?*
6. Do you think that sport is a good way to address adverse childhood experiences?
    a. *Why?*
7. Do you think that sport is an effective tool to use to reduce youth offending and reoffending?
    a. *Why?*
    b. Is there another tool you feel would be more effective in preventing youth offending and reoffending?
        i. *And why do you think that it would be more effective than sport?*
        ii. *Do you think that this tool would work well alongside sport programmes to prevent youth offending?*

Questions to Ask Those Working in OPCC

Part A: Initiatives

3. Are the programmes funded by the office aimed more at preventing first-time entrants entering the system or at young people already within the system?
    a. *Why is that?*
    b. Do the programmes aim to address childhood experiences?

   i. How so?

  c. Do the initiatives aim to address serious youth crime?

   i. How?

  d. How do young people become involved in these programmes?

   i. Who refers them to the programmes s?

   ii. Is there a criterion for who can participate in these programmes?

  e. Are the referral pathways effective and appropriate?

   i. What about the referral pathways is (in)effective?

   ii. How could they be improved to become more effective?

  f. Are there any difficulties in getting the target participants to engage in the programmes?

   i. What are the main difficulties faced?

   ii. How can these difficulties be overcome?

4. What are your views on the programmes aimed at reducing youth involvement with the Criminal Justice System?

  a. What are the barriers to their delivery?

   i. How could these barriers be overcome?

  b. What are the characteristics of those programmes which are most effective?

  c. What are the characteristics of those programmes which are least effective?

  d. Are the programmes as successful as they could be in reducing youth crime?

   i. Are they more successful for some participants more than others?

   ii. Why do you think that?

5. How involved is the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office in the running of the sports programmes?

  a. In what ways is it involved?

6. What outcomes do you currently use to measure the success of the programmes in reducing youth involvement in the Criminal Justice System?

  a. How are these outcome measurements created?

  b. Are there other outcomes you would prefer to use to measure the success of the programmes?

   i. Why would you prefer to use those outcomes over the ones currently used?

ii. *Why are they not used?*

　　c. Are there any flaws or disadvantages in using the current outcomes as measures of success?

　　　　i. *What are these flaws?*

　　　　ii. *How could this be improved?*

　　d. How often do the sports programmes report back to the office?

　　　　i. *Do you think this is sufficient?*

　　　　ii. *Why/why not?*

Part B: Sport as a Crime Prevention Tool

7. Do you think that sport is a good way to address adverse childhood experiences?

　　a. *Why?*

8. Do you think that sport is an effective tool to use to reduce youth offending and reoffending?

　　a. *Why?*

　　b. Is there another tool you feel would be more effective in preventing youth offending and reoffending?

　　　　i. *And why do you think that it would be more effective than sport?*

　　　　ii. *Do you think that this tool would work well alongside sport programmes to prevent youth offending?*

Part C: Partnerships

9. How do the four police and crime commissioner offices within Wales work together to tackle youth crime?

　　a. How would you like to see the four police and crime commissioner offices within Wales work together?

　　b. Is it possible for the four offices to work together?

　　c. What would be the benefits and concerns with the four police and crime commissioner offices working together?

10. How does the office work with other key agents within the Criminal Justice System to address youth crime?

　　a. Do you work closely with your Police Force on these programmes?

Part D: Disinvestments

11. What would be the reasons that a disinvestment would occur?

12. What is the impact of when a programme finishes?

13. Are there any initiatives that have received funding and have not received funding after the funding period had ended?

    a. Why did their funding cease?

14. Are you aware of other organisations who fund these sorts of programmes?

15. Is there a limit on how long a programme can receive funding for?

    a. Why is this limit in place?

Conclusionary Questions

16. Is there anything you would like to add?

Example of Analysis Approach

Step 1: Collate Verbatim Quotes from the Interview Data	Step 2: Generate Initial Codes	Step 3: Searching for Themes	Step 4: Defining and Naming Themes

"I think sport is naturally the one a lot of children gravitate towards. But I do think a spread of a little bit of everything would probably be the most effective" (Participant 9).

"I think what's good for one person is not the right avenue for another. It's about having the options... So, we try and cover the whole spectrum" (Participant 13).

"But it is not the silver bullet for all of this. There needs to be more on offer" (Participant 8).

"For me it feels a bit like all of our eggs are currently in the sports basket. We need to diversify that portfolio really and get that far more opportunity through other means" (Participant 7).

"As long as it is suitable for those taking part and it is something they are getting a positive out of, who are we to say you can't mix them?" (Participant 6).

"Having a variety and varied approach is the way forward" (Participant 2).

"I think there is a place for a number of approaches" (Participant 4).

Best to have an array of tools

Different tools work for different people

Need more than just sport on offer for young people

Need to compliment sport with other things

Tools could be used in conjunction with one another

Variety of tools is better than just sport

Variety of tools can be used

Need different tools other than sport

Different tools can be used together
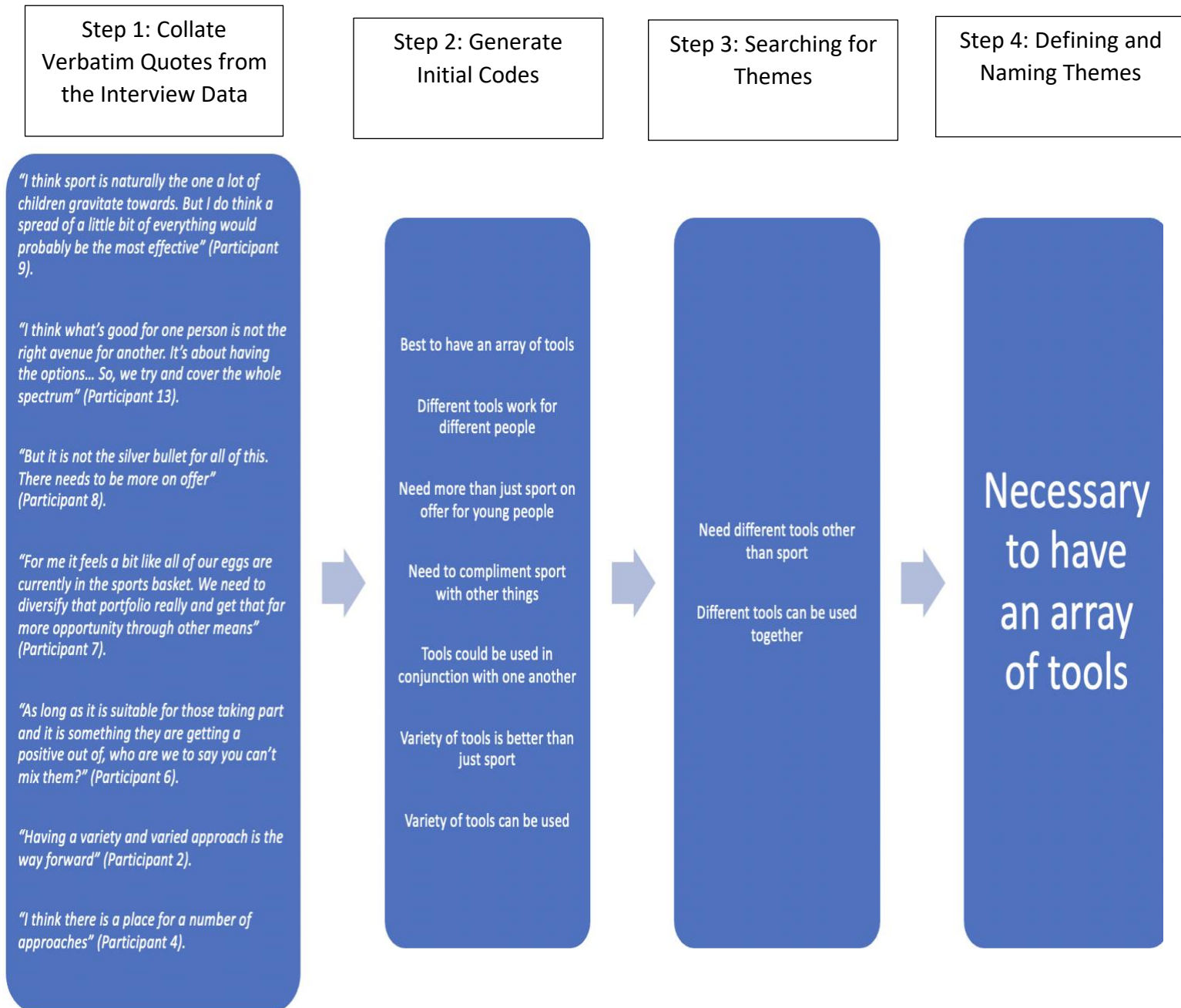
Necessary to have an array of tools

Figure 1.4. This figure shows an example of how the analysis approach worked in practise.

Figure 1.5. Mind map outlining the suggestions made by participants on the alternative crime prevention tools which could be used to tackle youth crime

Figure 1.6. Mind map comprising the different referral pathways used to refer young people onto the different sports-based programmes