

# MIKE HARTILL PER **CHANGETHEGAME**

30 GENNAIO 2024



Edge Hill  
University



**ChangeTheGame**  
AGAINST ABUSE IN SPORT

What do we mean by ‘research’?  
What is the purpose of research?

1. Exploration
2. Description
3. Explanation
4. Community change or action
5. Evaluation
6. Evoke, provoke, or unsettle

(Leavy, 2017)

Qualitative and quantitative research

# Background



**"sexual abuse in sport is the last frontier ...  
there is still terrific fear about discussing the  
subject, possibly because it's much more  
widespread than we all dare to believe ..."**

**Celia Brackenridge (1993)**



# Importance of Reliable Data

**Knowledge and understanding are the essential ingredients of prevention.**

**Yet sport sector characterised by a lack of inquisitiveness in relation to child abuse.**



**World Health  
Organization**



**Edge Hill  
University**

Centre for  
Child Protection and  
Safeguarding in Sport

**Nations must enhance capacity for collecting data on violence.**

“Without information, there is little pressure on anyone to acknowledge or respond to the problem.”

(WHO, 2002)

**Reliable data on violence are crucial for:**

- Setting priorities
- Guiding programme design
- Monitoring progress
- Advocacy
- Pressure for action



# Brief History

**1980s-1990s:** Academic research, outlier victim testimony, and early media attention often met by denial and minimisation.

**Late 1990s:** UK develops national strategy and launches Child Protection in Sport Unit in 2000.

**2000-2010s:** 'Early-adopter' countries initiate *prevention* measures, but develop at different rates and in different ways and without any objective *evaluation* measures.

**2015-2020s:** high-profile cases and renewed focus on victims generates international attention and calls for action

## Current

Investment remains highly *variable*, even among countries considered to be international leaders.

Research data now illustrates scale of problem.

Clear need for *cultural change* in sport.

Rapidly growing number of prevalence studies.

Need contextualised data *within* and *between* countries.

Need monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation and efficacy.



# Characteristics of Abuse

What do we need to know for effective prevention?

What? How?  
Who? Where?  
When? How much? Why?

**Development**

What needs to change?  
How can we improve?  
How can we train our workforce?

What is being reported?  
Who is reporting?  
Who is receiving reports?  
What are the trends / patterns?

**Official Data**

What questions do we need to ask?

Is it working?  
(how do we measure efficacy?)  
Who is it working / *not* working for?  
Are stakeholders aware of it?  
Are they applying it?

**Effective inquiry**

**Policy Response**

What? How? Who?  
Where? When? How  
much? Why?

## Victim-Survivor Perspectives

Lived experience

Experts-by-experience

## Characteristics of Abuse

“... things that I have not said for a long time... burdened me for so long that I could not voice them. ... I have learned that talking - breaking the silence - is an important, if not the *most* important, part of the process of my recovery.”

“very few people in authority have the moral fibre to say ‘we’ve got a problem here, let’s get to the bottom of it.’ Until you let the light in onto the problem, it will never heal.”

“The abuse changed me. I became a different person. I couldn’t even entertain people being nice to me because I wondered what they wanted from me ...”

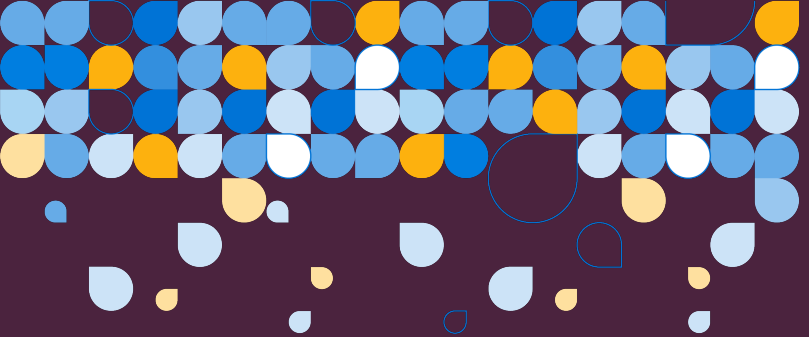
### GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Supporting individuals affected by sexual violence in sport –  
a guide for sport organizations

» YOUR VOICE  
» YOUR LIFE  
» YOUR TRUTH\*

\*Karen Leach, former swimmer from Ireland



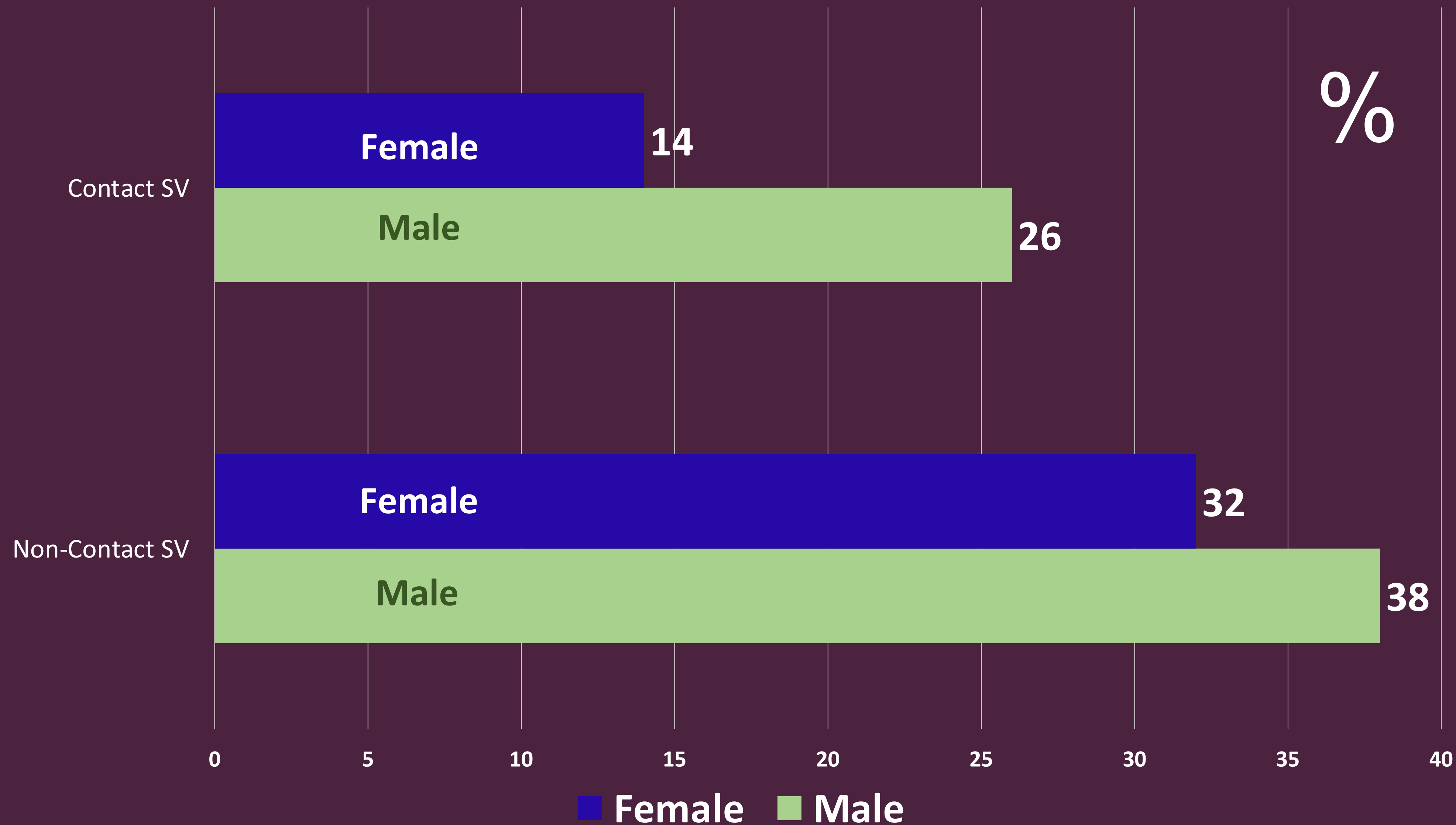


# Prevalence (quant. data)



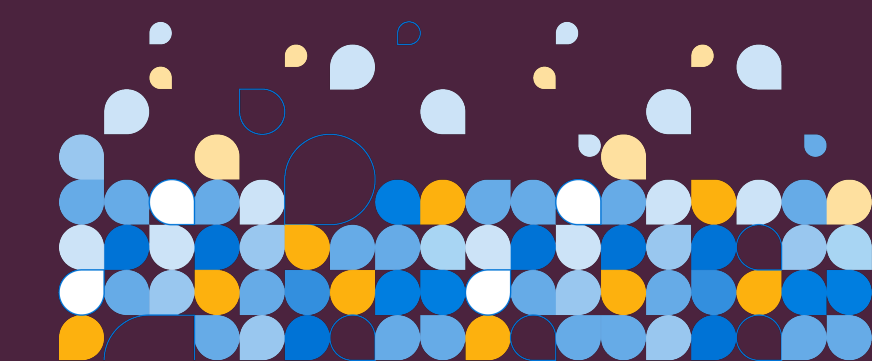
Child Abuse in Sport  
European Statistics

**Total Sample (N=10,302):** Sexual violence in sport setting, by male/female



Prevalence of  
SV higher for  
males.

How does this  
shape policy  
response?



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**Policy Response**



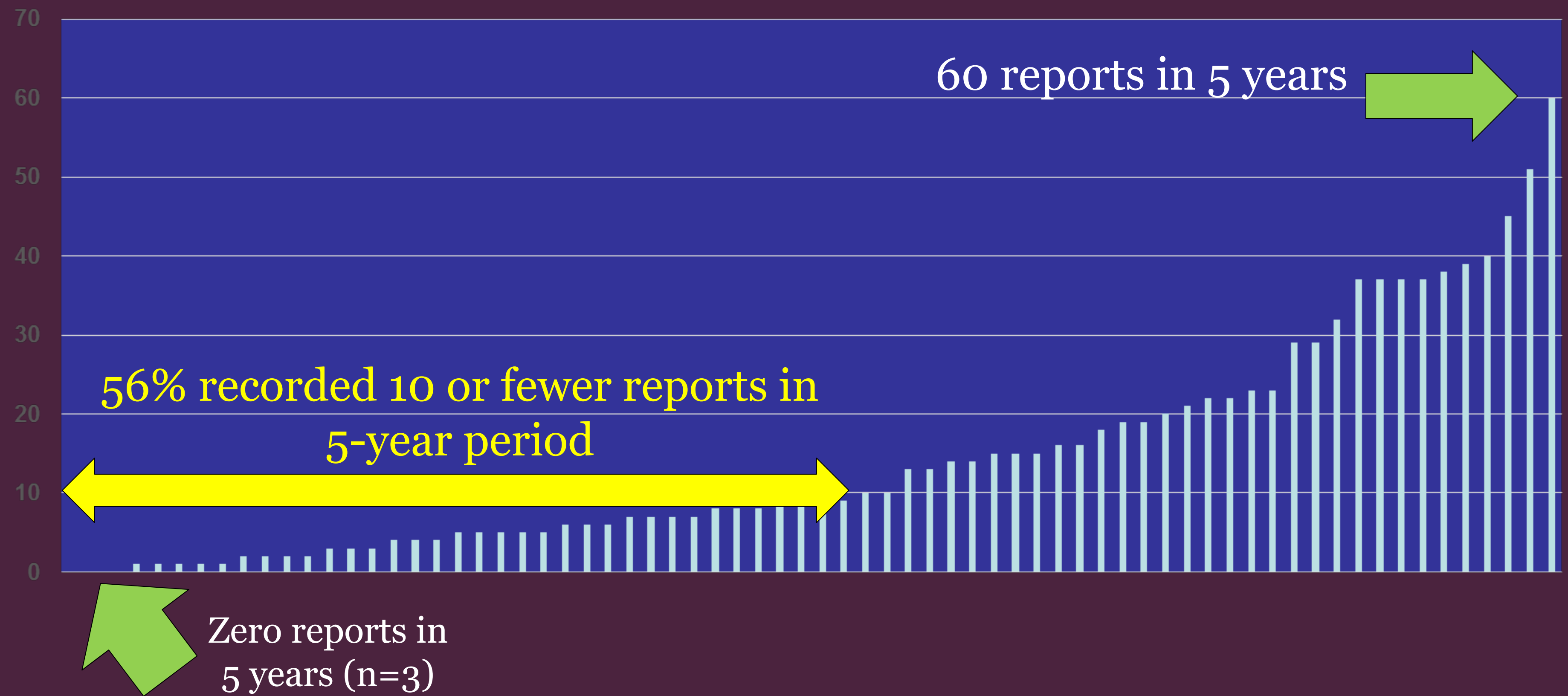
# Official Data

## Reports of Child Maltreatment in Sport received by English Local Authorities between 2010 & 2015 (N=70)

What is being reported?  
Who is reporting?  
Who is receiving reports?  
What are the trends / patterns?

Total Reports from 70 local authorities in 5 years = 1013

underreporting is a major problem.

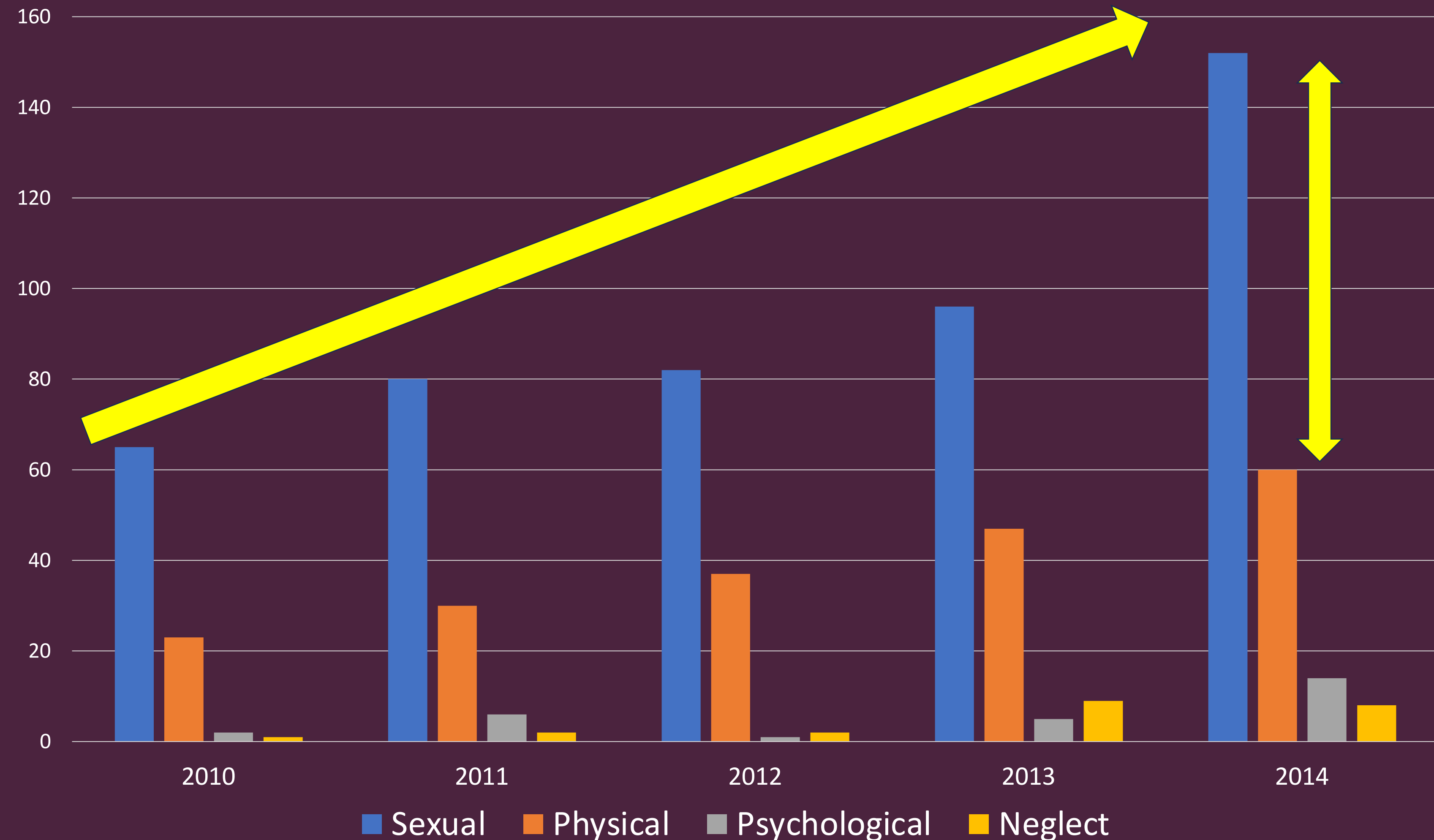


# Official Data: Types of Abuse

What is being reported?  
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Who is receiving reports?  
What are the trends / patterns?

## Reporting Trends

Reports of Child Maltreatment in Sport  
received by 70 English Local Authorities  
between 2010 & 2015



normalisation of  
abuse in sport and  
lack of awareness  
about what  
constitutes abuse

SV reported far  
more frequently  
than other forms,  
and gap potentially  
growing



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**Policy Response**

‘a failure to evaluate means that a programme is operating without clear evidence that it is effective.’

(Tomison, 2000: 6)



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(how do we measure efficacy?)  
Who is it working / *not* working  
for?  
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# Policy Response

“this is a bit of a sledgehammer-to-crack-a-nut situation in Rugby League.”

*Coach & Welfare Officer*

“I am regularly dismayed to hear comments that child protection policies are the thoughts of ‘do-gooders’ and there are no such problems in junior rugby league.”

*Parent Volunteer*

“The leaflets are there for the kids. I don’t actually talk to any of the kids personally. The coaches let them know who the Welfare Officer is.”

*Club Welfare Officer*

“I don’t think they [management] understood it. ... there was this feeling of “this doesn’t happen in our sport. ... this doesn’t happen enough [to justify changes].”

*Governing Body Safeguarding Officer*



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University

Child Abuse Review Vol. 16: 237–251 (2007)  
Published online in Wiley InterScience  
(www.interscience.wiley.com) DOI: 10.1002/car.990



## Serious Business or ‘Any Other Business’? Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in British Rugby League<sup>1</sup>

**Mike Hartill\***

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Activity, Edge Hill University,  
Ormskirk, UK

**Philip Prescott**

Department of Social and  
Psychological Sciences, Edge Hill  
University, Ormskirk, UK

Safeguarding and Child Protection in  
Rugby League: A Research Evaluation

Dr Mike Hartill, Dr Melanie Lang & Nicholas Ashley

A Research Project funded by: Edge Hill University and The Child Protection in Sport Unit



# Recommendations

Training providers should establish multiple learning pathways that provide both tutor-led training and self-guided online training.

Training for learners with little prior knowledge of safeguarding in sport should include tutor-led training.



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## Safeguarding Education in Athletics:

*A comparative evaluation of training effect in three modes of entry-level safeguarding training delivered by UK Athletics*

Prof. Mike Hartill, Dr Axel Kaehne, Dr Tom Simcock, Dr Laura Purdy, Dr Fiona Johnson, Dr Michelle Jones, Julie Feather & Dr Melanie Lang

June 2021

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**CPSS**  
Centre for  
Child Protection  
& Safeguarding  
in Sport

**EPA**  
Unit for  
Evaluation &  
Policy Analysis

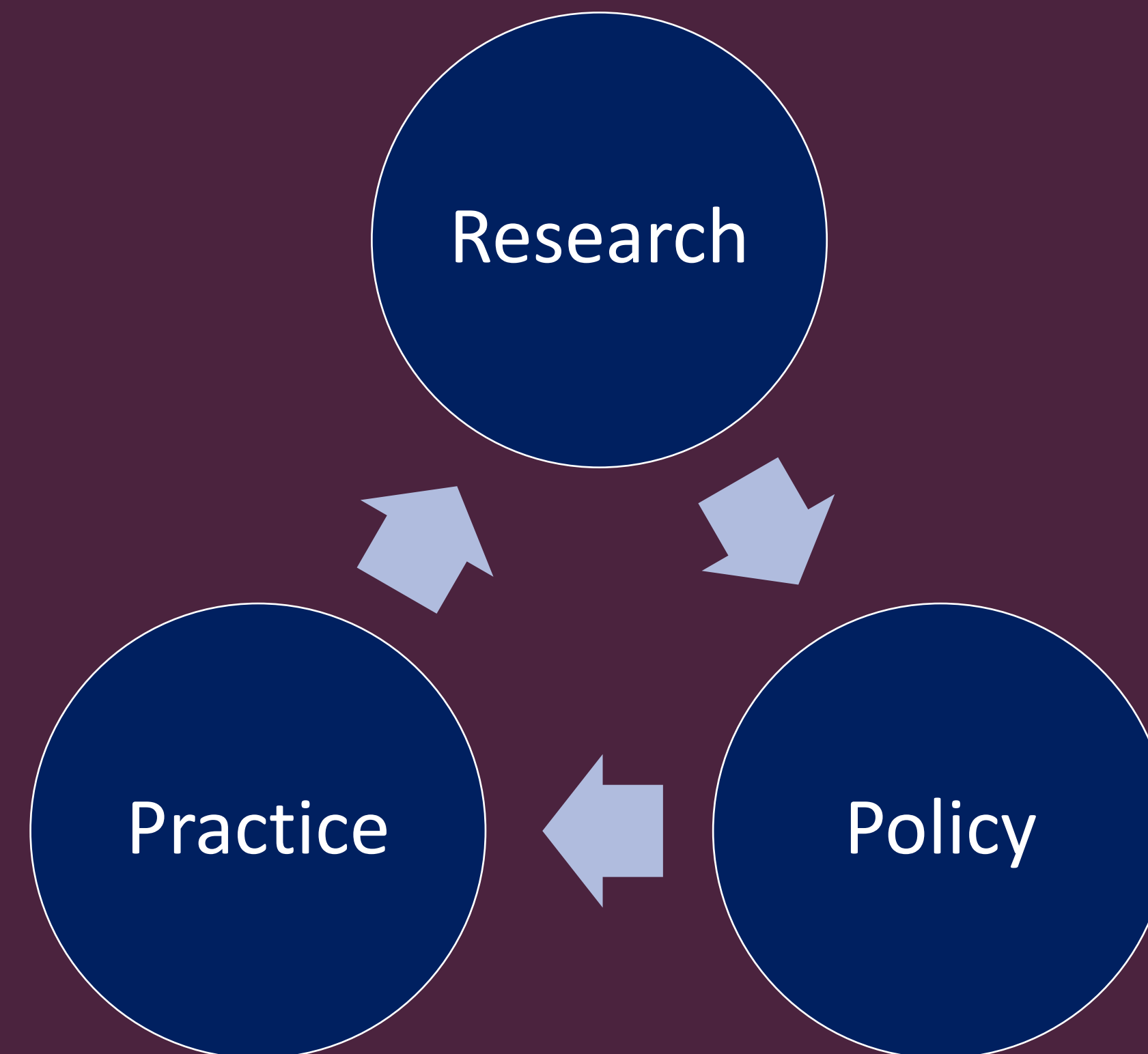




What do we need to know for effective prevention?  
What questions do we need to ask?  
What needs to change?

## **Violence & Abuse in Sport:**

- Character / Nature
- Prevalence
- Official Data
- Policy Efficacy
- Victim Support







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# Research and the Prevention of Violence & Abuse in Sport

## Professor Mike Hartill

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**ChangeTheGame**  
AGAINST ABUSE IN SPORT

# VIOLENCE AND ABUSE IN SPORT:

LISTENING, PREVENTING, INNOVATING

ChangeTheGame  
University of Milan

**JANUARY 30**

11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Aula Magna



New Master's  
programme  
Sept. 2024

# Safeguarding in Sport

## MA

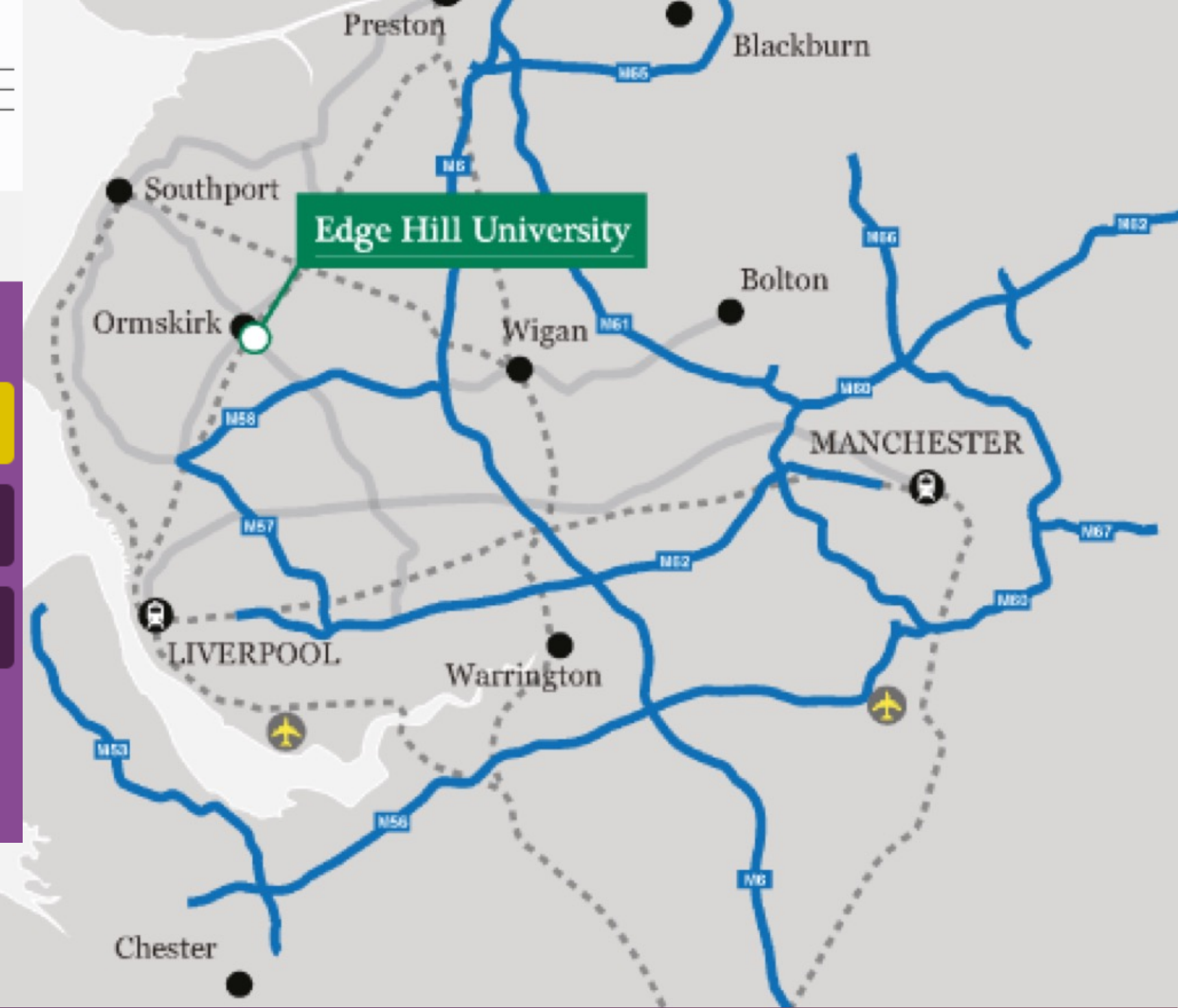
Critique current practices and cultures within sport. Explore the policy around prevention of abuse and maltreatment. Prepare for a career in safeguarding and athlete welfare with this pioneering course delivered by recognised researchers.

 Subject to validation.

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