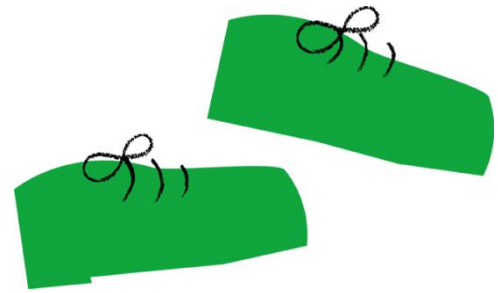


**Paul Stephenson
NSPCC**

**What makes
children in sport's
and voluntary
organisations
vulnerable to
sexual offenders?**



Sports initial response to child protection



“It wouldn't happen now”

A Welsh international sportswoman and coach groomed a young girl and sexually abused her, a court has heard.

Swim Coach Jailed

Ulster sex offender has been caged for forcing two girls to perform indecent sex acts on him.

Sunday World

Former Irish Olympic Coach convicted on seven charges of indecent assault

Jury heard evidence that the sexual abuse was carried out under the pretence of being part of young athletes training regime.

Belfast Telegraph

Key Child Abuser Locked Up
The carrickfergus paedophile was a football coach in the area, when he systematically abused very young children.

Belfast Telegraph

Sex Abuse Boxing Coach Set for Prison

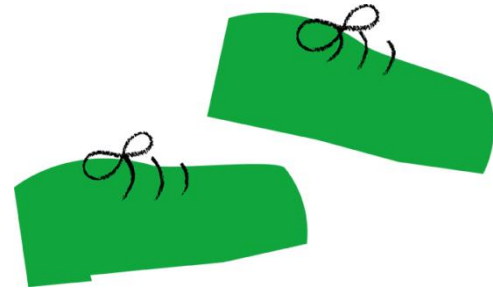
The case concerned the sexual abuse of two former members of the boxing club

Irish News

Sex crime Footballer Freed
Former GAA county footballer who indecently assaulted a 16 year old girl and had unlawful sex with her has avoided jail

Irish News

“we vet all are coaches”



Risks in Sport



1ST

- a high tolerance of random incidents of physical violence and injuries as being part of the “rough and tumble” of sport
- power relationships between coaches and athletes,
- a male-dominated gender ratio,
- a sports culture often being associated with authoritarian leadership,
- often-required physical contact,
- reward structures, and
- participation at an early age

Grooming is an exploitative process in preparation for sexual abuse.

Its purpose is to:

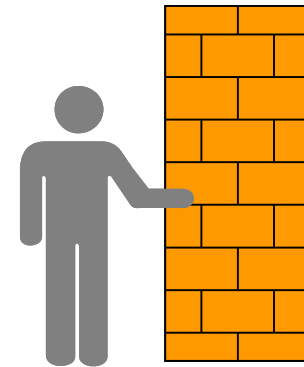
- create opportunities to abuse
- reduce the risk of detection
- increase the vulnerability and apparent compliance of the child

Finkelhor's four pre-conditions to sexual abuse

1. Motivation

- strong urges or desires
- thinking about something or wanting to do something

Motivation

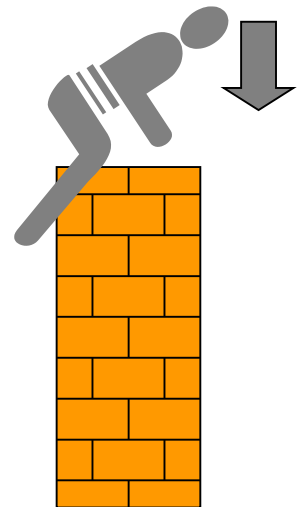


Finkelhor's four pre-conditions to sexual abuse

2. Giving yourself permission
giving in to the urge or desire

- fantasy
- making excuses
- justifications
- overcoming your conscience

Giving self
permission

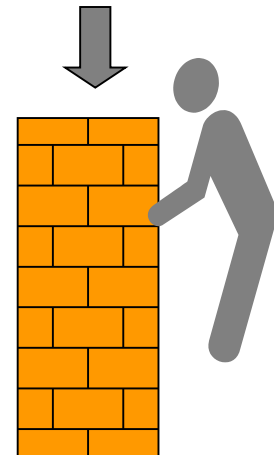


Finkelhor's four pre-conditions to sexual abuse

3. Creating the opportunity - how you go about engaging in the behaviour

- grooming others
- gaining access to a victim
- creating situations where abuse can take place

Creating opportunity

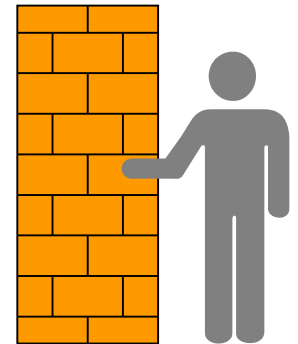


Finkelhor's four pre-conditions to sexual abuse

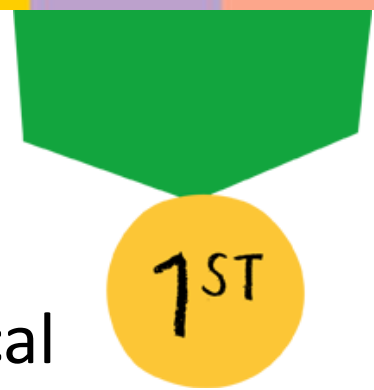
4. Overcoming victim's resistance

- getting the victim to be compliant
- threats
- bribes
- treats
- force

Overcoming
victim's
resistance



Risks in Sport



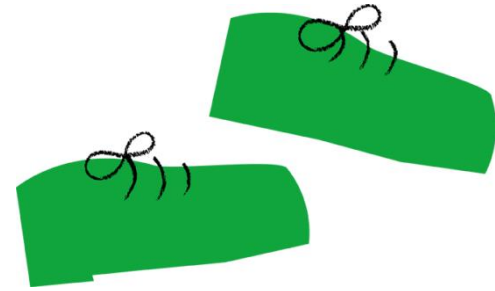
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But.....

Compared to the family setting, sport settings are probably more susceptible to social interventions aimed at preventing childhood sexual abuse because of sports' structures and the many more possibilities to intervene

The experiences of children participating in organised sport in the UK 2011

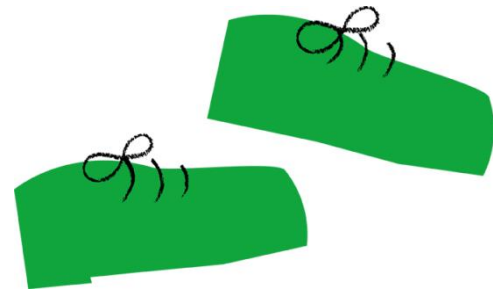


Young people in the study reported widespread **emotionally harmful treatment (75%)** and unacceptable levels of **sexual harassment (29%)**.

Clothing and body image are key issues within sport contexts particularly around puberty and warrant further attention.

17% - experienced violent treatment.

General messages



- Sport should focus more on a **children's rights approach to sport participation**; and greater attention should be paid to creating a **positive sporting ethos** where children and young people are respected, and where their voices are heard and used to shape sporting experience, welfare and performance
- Sport should build on what children and young people value about sport participation. This includes the **social aspects of sport such as making friends** and being part of a team
- Sports bodies should put in place policies, procedures, training and practice which enable sport practitioners to systematically **tackle harm occurring between peers**

Harmful sexual behaviour in sport

Last updated: 22 Mar 2017

Topics: Inappropriate or concerning behaviour



This webinar, held in March 2017, looks at harmful sexual behaviour in sport and what organisations can do to minimise the risk to children and young people.

Presented by Carol Carson, an independent social work consultant and trainer with over 30 years' experience in the management and delivery of children's social care services.

CPSU webinars

Catch up with free recordings, presentations and other resources from previous events, and sign up for upcoming webinars.

[See all webinars](#)

Upcoming webinars

15 Aug 2018

Keeping safe online - advice, information and support for sports organisations
Online

[See other events](#)

Interpersonal Violence against children in sport

The key findings showed that **38%** of all respondents reported experiences with psychological violence, **11%** with physical violence, and **14%** with sexual violence.

Ethnic minority, lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGBT), and disabled athletes, and those competing at the international level, report significantly more experiences of interpersonal violence in sport.

The Additional Vulnerability Of Elite Young Athletes



- more intense, dependent relationship with coach
- higher stakes – for young person and family
- more away, overnight trips and travel abroad
- less family and social/other support network
- relatively isolated
- reputation of coach may generate denial
- ‘win at any cost’ approach allows poor practice
- culture of negative “mental toughness.”

Interpersonal Violence

Policy makers preoccupied with making sport available (the sport-for-all doctrine) and injury-free rather than making it safe from interpersonal violence.



Key messages for policy and prevention:

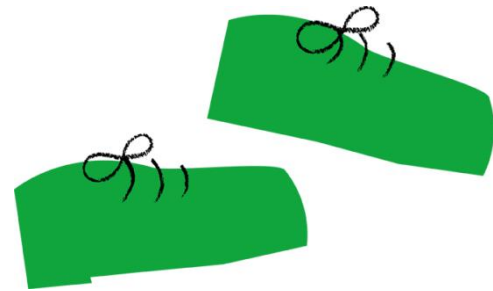
Acknowledge past failings ... denial & minimization not acceptable ... and delay change ...

Acknowledge presence of sexual violence in *your* sport ... be proactive, not reluctant ...

Acknowledge the consequences for victims of sexual violence ... past, present & future ...

Acknowledge the value of the lived experience for improving organizational responses ... *beyond* listening

Reading



- The experiences of children participating in organised sport in the UK
Kate Alexander, Anne Stafford and Ruth Lewis 2011
- Interpersonal violence against children in sport in the Netherlands and Belgium
Vertommen, Van Den Eede and Schipper-van Veldhoven 2015
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Rugby League: Dr Mike Hartill, Dr Melanie Lang & Nicholas Ashley 2014
- **Additional research**
 - Brackenridge, 2010;
 - Cense & Brackenridge, 2001;
 - Kirby, Greaves, & Hankivsky, 2000;
 - Fasting, Brackenridge, & Sundgot-Borgen, 2003;
 - Leahy et al., 2002;
 - Misia Gervis & Frank Owusu-Sekyere 2013;
 - Mountjoy, M., Rhind, D., Tiivas, A., & Leglise, M. 2015;
 - Fraser-Thomas and Cote, 2006

Thank You

www.thecpsu.org.uk

[@paul_cpsu](https://twitter.com/paul_cpsu)

paul.stephenson@nspcc.org.uk

028 90 35 11 35



Child Protection in Sport Unit

NSPCC