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The Experiences of Male Victims of Non-Recent Child Sexual Abuse in Football within the Criminal Justice System in the UK

Final Report

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We understand this content of this research may be upsetting. If you feel like you need to speak to anyone, please do not hesitate in contacting one of the following services:
National Male Survivor Helpline: 0808 800 5005
Text Support: 07860 027573 | Email Support: support@safeline.org.uk
NSPCC's Dedicated Helpline for Football Survivors: 0800 023 2642

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Abbreviations

APPG: All-Party Parliamentary Group

CBT: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

CPS: Crown Prosecution Service

CUREC: Central University Research Ethics Committee

CSA: Child Sexual Abuse

CSE: Child Sexual Exploitation

EDMR: Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprogramming

FA: Football Association

IICSA: Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

ISVA: Independent Sexual Violence Adviser

NAPAC: National Association for People Abused in Childhood

NHS: National Health Service

NSPCC: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

ONS: Office for National Statistics

PFA: Professional Footballers' Association

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

RASASC: Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre

RASSO: Rape and Serious Sexual Offences

SFA: Scottish Football Association

SIO: Senior Investigating Officer

VIS: Victim Impact Statement

VPS: Victim Personal Statement

Executive Summary

In 2016, Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in football was brought into public consciousness when ex-professional footballer Andy Woodward waived his right to anonymity by speaking out about the abuse he suffered as a child at Crewe Alexandra Football Club. The publicity surrounding this disclosure led to a 'snowball effect' of other men coming forward to disclose their experience of being sexually abused while playing in grass-roots and professional football teams. 849 former and current players came forward against 300 suspects, with 340 clubs being implicated and 1,886 incidents reported in the United Kingdom (Operation Hydrant, 2019). Yet these figures remain conservative to the true scale of the abuse, as numerous men will never disclose what they experienced in childhood. These individuals should be acknowledged, despite their voices being absent.

This report is part of an on-going doctoral research project being conducted at the University of Oxford's Centre for Criminology, exploring victims' experience going through the criminal justice system in the many cases of non-recent child sexual abuse in youth football clubs in the United Kingdom. This research is specifically exploring male victims of sexual abuse, therefore focuses on the particular barriers that prevent men from speaking out. The project uses a range of methods including a victim questionnaire and interviews with victims, victim advocates working closely alongside those who suffered abuse, and a small number of criminal justice professionals working on these cases to contextualise the victims' experiences in the system. The report draws upon twenty-one interviews and seven questionnaire respondents. Ten interviews were conducted with victims and victim advocates with lived experience[1] (one participant had two interviews), six with victim advocates, and five with criminal justice professionals (four police and one from the Crown Prosecution Service). With consideration to two interviewees identifying themselves as having completed both an interview and filling in the questionnaire, a total of fourteen victims and victim advocates with lived experiences' accounts are considered in this research. The interviews highlight the complexity of each victim's experience of the criminal justice system, particularly as many of the participants were both complainants and also witnesses to the abuse of other boys.

Although the sample size is too small to make any quantitative observations, the characteristics of participants broadly reflect those of the victims who waived their anonymity and have appeared in the media since November 2016. The demographic data from the victim questionnaire reveal the participants to identify as male, white, over forty years old and as coming from a working class or lower middle-class background. This executive summary provides an overview of the key themes in this research, although to understand the vital role of the voices of victims and survivors which led to these findings, it is recommended to review the full report.

I. The Context of Child Sexual Abuse in Football

Methods of Grooming

Each perpetrator in these cases was either a football coach or scout who exploited their position of trust for their own sexual gratification. The abuse occurred in a number of

[1] *This is in reference to victim advocates who experienced abuse in football, other victim advocates working professionally may have also experienced childhood abuse in another setting but this is not identified in the report.*

scenarios in these cases, often locker rooms, the perpetrator's home and car, and even more brazenly in open areas within training facilities. Multiple perpetrators targeted the boys while away at training camps or tournaments abroad. When the young players were taken away from their family home, the coach had ample opportunity to manipulate and abuse players. How abusers garnered trust varied considerably, yet often included targeting a player and lavishing them with gifts and takeaway meals, which was particularly significant to players from poorer families who may not have been able to afford such luxuries. The culture in which the abuse occurred was also important, as perceptions surrounding what a perpetrator would look like or how they would behave were still fairly rigid at this time. The idea of a paedophile was not the charismatic football coach who got on well with parents and was well respected in the community. Stereotypes such as these ensured coaches were trusted implicitly.

Sport offered up a dream to many young men, often from working class homes, of a future earning a living from playing a game they loved. The coach or scout is the ultimate gatekeeper into professional football, controlling the entry onto this potential career path. The boys were aware of their position in the club, with many believing they had to withstand the abuse to progress in football. Parents were similarly sold the 'footballing dream' for their sons, with many working and lower middle class families investing in their child's aspirations. This was similarly a method of grooming parents, as a promise of social mobility offered hope, pride and promise to families. This made it more challenging for victims to tell their parents or guardians what happened to them, with several perpetrators actively trying to create distance between a player and his family. When all these factors are taken into account with football's widespread influence in British society, it created an environment where the abuse of boys continued unchecked. Ultimately, perpetrators carefully exploited the love and passion players and their families had for the sport to abuse young boys.

Cultural Shift

There was a cultural shift in attitudes toward non-recent child sexual abuse which allowed Andy Woodward to be both listened to and acknowledged when he did waive his anonymity in 2016. Practitioners and advocates noted the Jimmy Savile[2] revelations of widespread abuse and later the MeToo movement to have partly laid the groundwork within society, allowing Woodward's account to gain widespread publicity and cause a 'domino effect' of other survivors coming forward. Timing was crucial here, with this report honouring the contribution of early individuals who waived their anonymity in the 1990s in football, yet were simply ignored. The importance of Woodward's story cannot be overstated, as some victims shared that had they not seen the widespread public coverage of the case, they would never have disclosed. Hearing highly esteemed footballers speak out about sexual abuse gave permission for not just those abused in football, but men abused in other sports and other areas of society to speak out. Charities and helplines supporting victims of non-recent abuse noted that in November 2016 and the months following, there was a spike in the number of men reporting abuse from all sectors and institutional frameworks. These men coming forward allowed for open discussion on the prevalence of male child sexual abuse in society. Due to footballers being held in high esteem by many in British culture, their disclosures made it acceptable for other men to speak out.

[2] *Jimmy Savile was an English TV personality, who used his status to sexually abuse children throughout his career. This was revealed in 2012, almost a year after his death. The scandal was a major factor in leading to the establishment of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse launched in July 2014.*

Barriers to Disclosure

There were and remain several barriers that stopped men speaking out from the time of their abuse into adulthood. From this research, the biggest barrier for men coming forward was the fear of not being believed, particularly when disclosing to the police. Although victims of abuse often share this fear, it is of particular concern for male victims of sexual abuse who historically have not been represented in research or received acknowledgement in wider society. Another barrier for participants in this report was timing, with some sharing they did not feel ready to disclose any earlier. Family played a key role for victims, with many individuals being concerned about the potential impact of a disclosure and criminal proceedings on their loved ones. Despite this, a key trigger for many men was having children, especially when their child reached the age at which they had been abused. This often acted as a trigger for men forcibly to confront what happened to them as boys. Although the victims had no responsibility over the abuse they suffered, they did not wish to cause further harm to their family and loved ones by involving the criminal justice system.

Other barriers that ultimately compounded these fears were concerns surrounding masculinity, embarrassment and shame. Players were faced with certain gendered expectations of how they should behave, with the hyper-masculine sporting environment not allowing for complex expressions of emotion. This left the boys feeling that they had no choice but to suffer in silence. Some victims felt further silenced through experiencing unwanted sexual arousal and ejaculation during the abuse. The perpetrator's hold over an individual was strengthened as a result of the inadvertent bodily responses, leaving victims feeling complicit in the abuse. Perpetrators used this false idea of culpability to silence the boys, with several advocates sharing that male victims of childhood abuse are often traumatised by their own biological response. Physical responses also played into confusion surrounding a victim's sexuality, with shame often stopping them seeking help in the hetero-normative environment of football. These factors, as well as age, race and class, are explored further in the full report as barriers for many victims in disclosing their abuse. These harmful notions of masculinity began to be challenged to some extent when footballers started to waive their anonymity to encourage other men to come forward.

In addition, language was further identified as a barrier for the boys, as it is important to acknowledge that many of the victims would not have had the vocabulary as children to understand or disclose what was happening to them. This was made more challenging by the footballing environment, where hierarchical power differences within the clubs and society meant that the victims did not feel that they had a legitimate voice that would be listened to by those in authority. Language was also invoked by perpetrators who used inappropriate sexualised 'banter' with players (Geekie, 2016: 54-55). Some coaches attempted to introduce and normalise sexual abuse in the boys' lives, as their age and vulnerability meant they could not understand what was happening to them. Football clearly blurred the lines of acceptability as its often harsh environment meant that the boys were not sure what was appropriate from their coaches.

Long-Term Impact of Abuse

The long-term impact of abuse can be extensive, as victims identified the physical, psychological, emotional and financial impact of abuse they suffered in childhood. Victims spoke powerfully about the impact the abuse had on their lives: as one victim described it as 'a life sentence' (V-S7). They described how trauma led to serious mental health issues, substance abuse and, in some devastating cases, suicide. This report touches on how abuse and trauma manifests in the lives of some of the men, however it cannot do justice to the

complexity of each victim's life course as a result of their abuse. The importance of these accounts further solidifies many victims' desire for justice after what they experienced as children and continue to face in their daily lives from the abuse. This impact is not just limited to the individual, but also has a ripple effect on family, friends and communities. This was noted by victims and victim advocates in two key ways: loved ones living with behaviours victims exhibit as a result of the abuse, such as deep-rooted anger, and also the impact if the individual eventually discloses to them. Victims shared the guilt their parents now feel for not having prevented the abuse. Their close connection to the victim meant they also dealt with the aftermath of the abuse, even when they were not aware of the reasons behind the behaviour.

II. The Victims in the Criminal Justice System

Many changes and improvements to the system have been enacted since the first allegations were made in the early 1990s, yet it is important to note the experiences of those who disclosed prior to November 2016. The experience ultimately framed a number of the victims' subsequent encounters with the criminal justice system. Victims who made early disclosures encountered issues surrounding police insensitivity, the use of plea bargains and a general lack of interest and understanding with regards to the child sexual abuse of boys. This will be explored in more depth within the main report. Although the victims' experiences since 2016 have differed quite considerably, this research indicates there are still clear improvements to be made to better a victim's experience of the criminal justice system, while acknowledging the harm caused to many victims in their attempts to get justice.

Police – Disclosure & Investigation

Since 2016, victims' experiences of the criminal justice system, and particularly the police and Crown Prosecution Service's (CPS) handling of cases, appeared to vary considerably among the different investigations of key perpetrators. It is not the purpose of this report to draw out which investigation teams faced more criticism from victims, but to point to the experiences that each victim participant encountered within the criminal justice system. Although the encounters that victims had with professionals working on their cases impacted their experience, more often their issues were with the system and protocols the police teams and prosecutors were operating under. Although acknowledging that fact, there is still compelling evidence that one investigative team in particular surpassed expectations to ensure the victims' wellbeing. Victims' experiences are dependent not only on the particular police investigation team handling the case, but also the policing priorities, culture and resources of the specific force. Although Operation Hydrant[3] played an important role in coordinating the response in such cases, each police force remains autonomous and despite each CPS area appearing more centralised, it is still resulting in victims getting a differing experience dependent on their location. A participant drew attention to the number of police forces and Chief Constables operating across the country, all who have different priorities and resources available to them. The disparities victims faced is a significant theme that runs throughout the accounts, as a victim's experience of the criminal justice system and support services is dependent on what has been described by a number of participants as a 'postcode lottery'.

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[3] Operation Hydrant is a coordination hub established in 2014 to deliver the national policing coordination of non-recent child sexual abuse investigations concerning persons of public prominence, or in relation to those offences that took place within institutional settings.

Despite the desire to be acknowledged within the system and receive justice, many victims spoke of how difficult it was to report their abuse to the police, with participants sharing the distress they experienced providing their account. The act of re-telling their story in such detail can retraumatise victims, therefore it needed to be handled both appropriately and with care. On the whole, the victims shared how police officers were sensitive and supportive through this process. Victim welfare is not just important from an ethical standpoint, but also essential in ensuring a successful outcome to investigations such as these. Victims are more likely to be committed to the lengthy and challenging process if police officers provide adequate attention to their welfare. For victims providing a statement to the police, some spoke of the impact of trauma on their memory. Memory is of course critical in cases of non-recent abuse, however a small number of victims highlighted that some investigation teams did not fully consider the implications of trauma on memory when taking their statement. Although the need for a trauma-informed approach is being seen more widely in the police, this research found that the impact of trauma on memory needs to be more broadly acknowledged within the criminal justice system to better educate juries and ensure victims are able to give their best evidence.

Communication

A common theme through many of the accounts was the lack of communication and adequate information given to victims with regards to the criminal justice system and their individual cases. Victims noted the harm caused by the lack of contact and updates from police officers and other criminal justice personnel. This lack of communication is particularly damaging when victims are navigating criminal justice proceedings while also trying to continue with their daily lives. It was highlighted by some professionals that well-informed victims are better prepared for the likely issues faced in cases such as these, which in turn manages a victim's expectations of the system. It was not just the silences that caused harm, but the variability in the way in which some forces communicated with victims. Some investigations prioritised victim welfare through trauma informed communication; for example, an investigation team sending out regular 'bespoke' emails to victims and arranging a phone call if there was a significant update. What is particularly noteworthy is how the team went as far as to send out each update simultaneously in cases of multiple victims, meaning no victim was disadvantaged by being the last to know. However, this was not the case across all the investigations, emphasising a lack of consistency in their communication and contact with complainants.

Media: Help or Hindrance?

The media's involvement in the investigations and cases had a mixed response from victims and criminal justice professionals. Although many participants acknowledged the media was crucial in getting victims to come forward, there were several complications in the police investigations as a result of the intense media scrutiny. An example was a tabloid newspaper giving the police only twenty-four hours warning before naming a perpetrator in print. This resulted in the police having to gain an emergency warrant from the courts to be able to search the alleged perpetrator's address before the individual was aware of the early investigative process. Although the officer acknowledged their importance, this example shows how the press can be inhibitive on a police investigation. The press did not just have an impact on the perpetrator, with a few victims speaking of feeling overwhelmed by the nature of the press reporting. In relation to the criminal justice process, one victim spoke of the shock of what he disclosed in court being published in the newspapers. Particularly for those victims who did not waive their anonymity, it can be impactful that their darkest moments become public property. Much press reporting acknowledges this, with most

publications following both strong moral and ethical reporting standards. The press and media have the important responsibility of holding those in authority to account, with the significant investigative journalism from both the 1990s and in 2016 being crucial in uncovering the widespread nature of non-recent child sexual abuse in football.

Crown Prosecution Service[4] – Decision to Prosecute

After the police have finished their investigation, the case goes to the CPS to make a decision over whether to charge an offence – in cases of mass disclosure, this includes which individual cases and what charges can and will be taken forward to trial. The very nature of non-recent abuse causes a multitude of challenges for investigations, as there is rarely any physical evidence available. Therefore, the key evidence was the corroboration[5] of accounts from other victims and witnesses. In these cases, corroboration often consisted of other boys witnessing inappropriate behaviour or the abuse itself. This evidence was crucial, leading to both concerns over damaging the integrity of the evidence provided but also the welfare of all victims involved.

Number of Victims Taken Forward

The numbers of victims disclosing empowered many more to seek justice, yet its numerical strength also became its chief challenge. Many of the major investigations into football faced difficulties with the high numbers of allegations made. Operation Hydrant's role in coordinating the response is highlighted in this report, but it is important to note the complexities within the cases to better understand the victims' experiences within the investigations. Overall, only a small number of individuals received justice by comparison to the overall numbers of those who made a complaint to the police. Although the numbers were a result of many factors linked to the specific case, there were other reasons which played a role in whether their case was taken forward, including concerns over maintaining a jury's concentration in a trial with numerous victims and charges. In one of the cases, some victims had to wait four years to be told their case would not be taken forward. This had a devastating impact on both the victims and their families, highlighting the significance of the system in acknowledging the abuse and what happened to them. For many victims, acknowledgement is as much part of justice as the perpetrator receiving a custodial sentence.

Legal Frameworks

Other issues that presented problems were regarding the legal frameworks used in cases of non-recent child sexual abuse. In the major investigations that followed, prosecutors had to charge individuals using the legislation available at the time of the offence, therefore charges ranged from indecent assault to buggery[6]. Challenges victims experienced included a loophole in the double jeopardy legislation regarding some child abuse cases, which inhibits an individual from being tried again on the same or similar charges after a court acquittal. Although, when new evidence comes to light, some crimes are exempt from this legislation, non-penetrative child sexual abuse is not included in this. The guidance remains in place despite the evidence in both the literature and in this report of the harm and life-long impacts

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[4] In Scotland, the Prosecutor Fiscal instead prosecutes cases.

[5] This is different to Scots law, where corroboration is a requirement of two separate sources of evidence before a case can proceed to trial. 'It means that the accused cannot be convicted on the word of one person alone with no supporting evidence.' (Cook, 2014). This barred an individual in this research to have their case taken forward in Scotland.

[6] The Crown Prosecution Service has to charge a perpetrator using the legislation in place at the time of abuse. Under The Sexual Offences Act 1956, the offence of rape would be classed as buggery in reference to non-consensual anal penetration.

of this type of abuse. Further legal issues were encountered when several victims on making a report to police discovered their perpetrator was in fact dead, so could not be convicted in a criminal court. Operation Hydrant has provided increased guidance to undertake appropriate investigations into dead perpetrators[7], however several participants felt these investigations were not always prioritised or conducted to an appropriate degree. The importance of inquiries was noted as significant in cases such as these, with the Geekie (2019) report providing an explanation and justice for victims of the deceased Eddie Heath. Independent and external inquiries can be a powerful tool when the criminal justice system cannot bring about a conviction.

Length of Time

Another significant theme across this research is the considerable length of time it takes for a case to get to court, suggesting the current legal system is not adequately equipped to handle mass reporting of cases. Long wait times were the result of the sheer numbers of victims coming forward, which caused delays in police investigations and CPS decision making, as well as the logistical challenges preparing for trial, such as finding adequately sized courtrooms. One such investigation took four years for final charges to be brought, meaning victims had a long wait for a final decision on their case. The length of time it took for cases to go through the criminal justice system was raised as a key issue by almost all participants in this study. Some victims chose to withdraw from their cases because the length of the wait was having a detrimental impact on their personal life and wellbeing. A key area of concern was the time taken for the CPS to make a decision about whether or not a particular case would be taken forward. This has been attributed to the scale of the cases; however, various advocates emphasised that this could have been mitigated had more criminal justice personnel been working at each stage.

Court – Trial & Sentencing

In the cases where charges were eventually brought, the court process proved to be highly challenging for many victims. Although there have been reforms to improve a victim's experience of cross-examination, a victim still has to face intense and pressurised scrutiny in adversarial systems. Victims spoke of how defence barristers accused them of lying and the distress that this caused. A notable step for improving a victim's experience in court, particularly at cross-examination, was the introduction of special measures in trial proceedings. Special measures are several provisions offered to support vulnerable witnesses 'give their best evidence in court and help to relieve some of the stress associated with giving evidence' (CPS, 2020). These include using screens to block the alleged perpetrator from the victim's view, providing evidence through a live link and the opportunity to use a visual recorded interview as the witness' evidence-in-chief. Many victims spoke of the positive impact special measures had in improving their experience at trial, with several victims opting to use a screen when delivering evidence in court. The screen offers victims some protection from the possible retraumatisation they may face from being confronted by their perpetrator, often for the first time since they were abused as children.

Victim Impact Statements

A theme across many of the accounts was the victims' voices, with many expressing a desire to share their story after being silenced for many years. The most comprehensive way victims can have their voice heard in court at present is through providing a Victim Impact Statement (VIS). A number of participants noted these brought some positive benefits to their court

[7] *See College of Policing & Operation Hydrant, 2016.*

experience. The VIS is a tool to express how a victim's life has been affected by the crime; this is a written statement and can also be delivered orally by the victim during sentencing procedures. However, it was noted by one participant that there could be more guidance available to victims writing up a statement, which again highlights that on occasion victims were not fully informed of each stage and procedure of the criminal justice process. Despite this, the positive effect of a VIS was shown in the empirical data, with a victim stating for example, "it helped me to take back the power" (V-S7). Attention is drawn to the possible personal benefits of victim's participation, however there is not enough evidence to note if there are therapeutic benefits here.

Victim Support Services

The process of going through the criminal justice system is challenging for victims of non-recent child sexual abuse. Support is needed to not only help victims with the impact of abuse but also the subsequent affect of the criminal justice system processes. Therefore, discussion surrounding the victims' experience of the criminal justice system should also acknowledge the victim support services and agencies available to them. Professional support for victims was provided by third sector organisations, including independent charity Victim Support, the National Health Service (NHS) and also football-specific support packages offered by the Professional Footballers Association (PFA) and Football Association (FA). In addition, there was some support delivered by victim advocates with lived experience of abuse, directing their own experiences into both raising awareness of child sexual abuse in sport, as well as supporting other survivors.

Men who reported abuse in the 1990s and early 2000s commented how they were offered no support while navigating the criminal justice system, in comparison to the services now being offered to victims of sexual violence. Participants referenced accessing these resources at different stages, acknowledging the NHS providing important crisis care if required. However, victims and advocates made it clear the demand remains far greater than what is available, particularly specialised services bespoke for men. This inconsistency of the support offered to victims is reflected throughout the accounts, with these men being located throughout the country. This poses a particular problem in more rural communities where support is not as readily available. A particular challenge is that many authorities offer a blanket approach to the treatment of child abuse victims. Despite the men having faced similar scenarios of abuse, this does mean that all victims require the same assistance. The need for tailored and individualised support in cases such as these is an imperative if their needs are to be adequately addressed. Finally, several men shared their worries with and issues accessing therapy in the run up to a trial, due to the fear of the therapist's notes being disclosed to the court. This is concerning when coupled with the long wait times for a conviction being brought to court as discussed previously. Although there are efforts by campaigners to change this, it remains a pertinent issue for victims in cases such as these.

III. Looking Forward

The experiences of those who come into contact with the criminal justice process are an indicator of the strength of its functioning. Through listening to victims and their stories, we can establish whether the system is ensuring victims' rights (with regards to the Victim's Code) and welfare are being appropriately considered. Although the support for those abused has undoubtedly improved in recent years, there are clear areas where further improvement is needed to better a victim's experience of the system. However, whether the system needs to be 'tweaked' (VA10) or fundamentally reformed to improve victims' experiences is up for debate. Simply, will small changes within the current system improve victims' experiences or

does there need to be more structural reform? Of course, not all victims want the same things, however there were a number of potential improvements identified by participants. The concept of 'justice' was at the heart of many of the victims' responses in what they wanted from the system. However, the responses varied widely, ranging from more theoretical notions such as 'acknowledgement' to concrete changes such as longer sentences. The differing responses are reflective of the ambiguity and subjectivity surrounding the concept of 'justice' and its subsequent interpretation. In terms of improving the experience for victims of non-recent child sexual abuse, victims were split between what were referred to as 'tweaks' to the system and fundamental changes as to how the process operates, including relooking at the adversarial system of justice.

However, most victims and advocates focused on the reforms that can improve and mitigate factors in the current system for victims of non-recent abuse. These included more regular and considered communication on the progress of their cases, with particular attention to finding a way to increase the numbers of victims being able to get justice in cases of mass reporting. Furthermore, to bring about change, it was felt further awareness of childhood abuse was needed to help adapt the justice system to handle the large-scale numbers coming through the process. In turn, this could have an impact on improving and widening the support offered to victims, particularly with the risks of retraumatisation brought about by the interrogative nature of the criminal justice system. There were calls for more tailored and individualised support, which was flexible and geographically consistent. There was also emphasis on longer-term support, particularly for victims after their criminal case has concluded. The availability of post prosecution support would further help victims come to terms with the trauma caused both by the abuse but also the processes involved with obtaining justice.

On the whole, victims spoke of criminal justice professionals being sensitive and considerate while they disclosed their abuse, highlighting the change in culture within the criminal justice process in response to non-recent child sexual abuse. However, there were examples of poor practice in some cases, particularly with regards to keeping victims updated and informed in lengthy investigations. These accounts are concerning and are in need of further attention. Many victims who participated in this research shared their negative experience of the criminal justice system, noting the systems and functions that caused them harm. The challenge comes in delivering a system that is both consistent and fair to all victims of abuse. Although there is clear and updated guidance in place from Operation Hydrant, this does not ensure a victim will receive the same level of care in their investigation due to differing police priorities and resources across forces. One particular police team was noted as having been given the resources and time to allocate sufficient attention to the victims' welfare within the investigation, showing the possibility for such an approach. Another key issue with the system as a whole was the length of time it takes for a case to go through the courts, which is a significant area in need of improvement. The experiences of the participants in this research are indicative of not only the experiences of other victims in mass disclosure cases, but more widely victims of sexual violence in the criminal justice system. With the results of the Covid-19 pandemic causing further delays in the criminal courts (*see House of Lords Select Committee on the Constitution, 2021 report*[8]) it seems this is in need of urgent consideration to make sure justice is brought swiftly and fairly.

[8] *See report https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5801/ldselect/ldconst/257/257.pdf*

1. Introduction

In 2016, Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in football was brought into public consciousness when ex-professional footballer Andy Woodward waived his right to anonymity by speaking out about the abuse he suffered as a child, while playing for Crewe Alexandra Football Club. Woodward broke the silence that had long plagued the sport, resulting in a surge of disclosures of non-recent[9] CSA across numerous professional and grass-roots football teams, implicating clubs such as Manchester City, Chelsea and Newcastle United. Statistics reveal that 849 former and current players have since come forward against 300 suspects, with 340 clubs being implicated and 1,886 incidents reported (Operation Hydrant, 2019). These revelations mirror other cases of non-recent abuse that have come to light in recent years, pointing to the exploitation of children by adults placed in positions of trust within numerous organisations. It is likely the true extent of non-recent abuse is yet to be realised, as police are unveiling a 'epidemic' of sexual abuse which occurred in the 1970s and 80s *(see APPG, 2020)*. As Chief Constable Simon Bailey QPM has stated, "Policing today is having to deal with the sins of the past" (Dodd, 2020).

The decision of Andy Woodward to waive his anonymity led to a 'snowball effect' of other men abused in football coming forward. In many instances this was the first time they had spoken about what had happened to them as children. With the support of the NSPCC helpline[10] that was set up in response to a number of footballers publicly disclosing their abuse, hundreds of men went on to report their experience to the police. This lead to the launch of several large-scale investigations into youth football coaches and scouts by police forces across the United Kingdom. Although the investigations often uncovered hundreds of individual cases against a single prolific perpetrator, not all individuals were then taken forward by prosecutors to secure a conviction. Campaigns existed for victims to come forward and disclose their abuse, yet there has been little research exploring the victim's experience of the criminal justice system, particularly those who were then not taken forward to trial. This research focuses on how victims are constructed and understood in non-recent investigations, how victims perceive their experiences, and what victims say they want from the institutions and systems that have had such a significant impact on their lives.

This report is part of an ongoing doctoral project being conducted at the University of Oxford's Centre for Criminology, exploring the victim experience in the number of non-recent child sexual abuse cases in youth football which went through the legal system. The project uses a range of methods including a victim questionnaire and interviews with victims and victim advocates who work closely alongside those who suffered abuse, and interviews with a small number of criminal justice professionals to contextualise the victims' experiences in the system. These proved highly significant in understanding the frameworks and systems within which the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) were working.

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[9] This thesis will adopt the term 'non-recent', instead of historic, as stipulated in the Media Guidelines set out by the National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC, 2016: 4). This will refer to abuse suffered in childhood that is disclosed to the authorities when the victim is over the age of eighteen.

[10] The free helpline offers advice and support to anyone who experienced sexual abuse as a young footballer and can be reached on 0800 023 2642.

Terminology

It is important to note that the victims in these cases are now all adults, largely aged between forty and sixty years old. The reasons and contexts surrounding late disclosures of non-recent abuse, specifically with regards to male victims, will be explored in this report. However, as a victim of non-recent child sexual abuse powerfully stated, he is more than the label of 'victim' or 'survivor'. That is not his identity. He goes on to describe himself as a husband, a father, and a friend (Sport England Safeguarding Advisory Panel, 2019). It is easy when describing the colossal impact of child sexual abuse on the lives of victims to inadvertently define them by their abuse. Unfortunately, this research cannot escape the use of such labels, particularly with the linguistic barriers when anonymising participants. Therefore, the term 'victim' will predominantly be used unless the individual has previously expressed a preference for the term 'survivor'. Although there is widespread debate on the use of these terms (*see Van Dijk, 2009 for discussion*), the research will mainly follow the legal language framework of 'victims' and 'perpetrators', as they are being referred to within this context. Furthermore, although the process of anonymising the participants will be outlined in the Methodology section, it is important to reiterate that behind every letter and number is somebody who faced appalling abuse while playing the game they loved. Although not referring to a participant by name is crucial for maintaining anonymity, it should not result in the reader forgetting the person behind the acronym.

Although the project initially started using the more contemporary term, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), to define the abuse, due to the term covering a wide range of abuse types and there being an example of alleged cross-border sexual exploitation involving two football coaches (Horne, 2019). However, it was felt that this did not have widespread currency in these cases. After completing the victim questionnaire, it was decided Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) would be a more appropriate term as it had been harnessed more widely in both media reporting and victim accounts. A final linguistic point to note is instead of adopting 'historic' to refer to the abuse, this report will use the term 'non-recent', as stipulated in the *Media Guidelines* set out by the National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC, 2016: 4). This will refer to abuse suffered in childhood that is disclosed to the authorities when the victim is over the age of eighteen. It is clear the victims are living with the consequences of this abuse today, with references to 'historic' having the potential to undermine this fact. As other crimes are not referred to as historic when they occurred years prior (ibid), non-recent child sexual abuse should not be stigmatised further through this language. This is summed up by an advocate stating, "It bothers me and [my organisation] when we hear the word 'historic' abuse, or 'historical abuse', because there's nothing historic about this, people are living with the effects everyday." (VA2) These decisions surrounding terminology, and the power that use of language can confer, were carefully considered in this project, yet these decisions may not be the preferred choice of all victims and survivors. Central to this project is the understanding that each man is an individual, with his own experience and life circumstances with which to contend.

2. Literature Review

Child sexual abuse and exploitation is a widespread and deep-rooted problem in British society, reflected clearly by the recent figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in January 2020. For the first time ONS collated data from different government agencies and the third sector when reporting figures on the prevalence of child sexual abuse and exploitation. It estimates that there are currently around 3.1 million adults in England and Wales who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse (ONS, 2020). Although this is a staggering number, an advocate who works at a charity supporting adults abused in childhood believed this to be an 'underestimate' (VA2), as the statistics do not take into account the many individuals who will never go on to disclose their abuse. When this is considered, it can be questioned whether child sexual abuse is particularly common in sport or simply a reflection of what is happening in British society more generally. Though this is a valid observation, it does not deter from the necessity of examining those places where abuse is occurring on a large scale. Scandals revealed in the Catholic church, care homes and other institutions in the United Kingdom highlight the unique vulnerabilities that can arise in organisational structures tasked with the care of children.

Although there is currently no research which examines the experiences of victims of non-recent abuse in football within the criminal justice system, there are various fields of study that are helpful to understand the interconnection of masculinity, victimhood, sporting culture and the criminal justice system within law, criminology, sports sociology, history and critical feminism. However, for the purposes of this report, a brief overview of only a few important areas that tie closely to this research will be provided. Most significantly, there were three reports released in late 2019 and 2020[11] by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and the European research project VOICES For Truth And Dignity[12], which I will draw upon in this literature review. It should also be noted that after numerous delays, the Sheldon report (2021) was released in March 2021. The independent inquiry was commissioned by the FA to look into allegations of non-recent child sexual abuse in football. Although it was too late for this to be included here, its findings regarding the context in which the boys were abused align with those found in this research and both IICSA and VOICE reports.

Firstly, the APPG on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse report explored the experiences of survivors of childhood abuse within the criminal justice system. This is particularly useful in comparing the experiences of victims abused in other areas of society, with the high profile football investigations upon which this report focuses. Additionally, IICSA published a report on child sexual abuse in sport, which analyses data from nine participants who were sexually abused in a number of individual and team sports. This report contrasts with the cases widely portrayed in the media of abuse in professional youth teams, instead focusing on the often ignored abuse which occurs in grassroots sport. Although only half of the participants were male in this report, it is quite clear the grooming techniques used in the abuse were widely similar, with abuse often occurring during overnight stays, trips away and visits to the perpetrator's home (IICSA, 2020: 3). Similarly, although on a much

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[11] These reports were published after this research began, nevertheless are in line with the findings of this project and can contextualise our understanding of the men's experiences of the criminal justice system.
[12] The authors of this report are Rulofs, B. et al., however the in-text citation in this research will be VOICE, 2019 for ease of reference in amongst the other reports.

larger scale, VOICE produced their final report examining abuse in sport across seven European countries and many different sports. Although their findings are significant and will be explored below, it is the methodology and ethical approach of this project that is of particular interest to this research. This will be indicated in the Methodology section that follows.

It has been shown that child sexual abuse and exploitation in sport was first brought onto the public agenda in the early 1990s, with the conviction of Great Britain swimming coach Paul Hickson for the abuse of female athletes spanning fifteen years (The Independent, 1995). Many other cases were also detected throughout sport at this time; however, all were viewed as isolated incidents not indicative of a wider culture within British sport. It is only due to a shift in academia (*see Brackenridge, 2001, 2004, 2006*) and through the work of child protection proponents (Whittier, 2011), that the problem has started to be acknowledged as endemic in sport, rather than a few isolated incidents that could not have been prevented. The numbers draw attention to sport as another institutional environment that has and continues to foster the abuse of children (Murphy, 2018). As Hartill argues, the 'concealment of CSA is an historical feature of organised sport' (2013: 241), yet has only been brought to public attention in recent years. The focus has tended to be on the 'female-victim, male-perpetrator' paradigm, muting the experiences of male victims either by female perpetrators or, as in this project, male perpetrators (Brackenridge, 2001; 2006). Hartill (2009) started to explore the role of masculinity in the experiences of male victims of CSA in sports, which this project hopes to build upon.

Research has found that sport has been used as a cover by the perpetrators of child sexual abuse (*see IICSA, 2020*), as it presents an opportunity for unfettered access to young children:

> "the necessity for touch/bodily contact during exercising; changing and showering associated with physical exertion; physiotherapy and massage; residential/overnight stays during training camps and competitions; and transport. Indeed, the car appears again and again in the narratives of VOICE participants as the location for sexual violence" (VOICE, 2019: 58).

Perpetrators in this study utilised opportunities for close contact with players, drawing attention to a key theme which came up in both the IICSA and VOICE reports – the power and influence of coaches on the athlete's everyday lives and even professional dreams. Coaches are often well-respected members of the community, with their 'high social status' acting as a barrier for athletes to speak out about the abuse they were suffering (VOICE, 2019: 56). The power imbalance between the coach and athlete leaves young people with little control or voice, resulting in prolonged periods of abuse for each player. It is the coaches who are often solely responsible for the player's career, meaning that for ambitious young athletes "speaking out against a coach, about anything let alone the taboo issue of sexual abuse, is virtually impossible for the young athlete who wants to succeed." (VOICE, 2019: 78) The risk of 'being dropped' from a team, for example, is translated to athletes through a number of means, sometimes explicitly but often having the effect through mere suggestion. This is deeply troubling when "the fear of rejection and failure can often trump any other considerations" (VOICE, 2019: 61). Some young footballers, for example, believed they had to withstand the abuse to be able to continue playing the game they loved. The process of grooming would often entail targeting a player, lavishing them with gifts, offering perks and, crucially, always picking them for the squad. Buying presents and takeaways was particularly a technique used with working class or lower middle class athletes who may not

be able to afford these otherwise (IICSA, 2020: 29). Families and background were often manipulated, as the process of grooming did not stop at the individual players, but extended to their parents and families. Abusive coaches manipulated values such as family pride, with complexities at home often playing into a young person's vulnerability. This was revealed to be a significant theme in the current project, while also being reflected in the wider literature as young players often wished to protect their families from the pain and anguish of knowing they may have inadvertently allowing the abuse to take place (VOICE, 2019: 72).

Sociologists Brackenridge (2001) and Hartill (2017) have both drawn attention to the hyper-masculine sporting culture which both fostered the abuse of athletes, while maintaining their silence through feelings of shame and embarrassment. This can be seen through the sporting environment and the treatment of players. An example of how this was enacted was through language shown in Adams et al.'s (2010) study on the discourses of the coach/team relationship within a football club, as they discovered the linguistic environment to be entrenched in antagonistic language. Whatever the background of the player, the majority of the language used consistently challenged the boys' masculinity, implying that any failure on the pitch was to do with their femininity, genitalia and a lack of courage. They found that in this discourse the whole interaction was extreme and linguistically violent, with an example being half time team talks that include statements such as, "Now show some balls and stop acting like a bunch of fucking tarts." (ibid: 288) This antagonistic language presents a major challenge to a young player from speaking out against a coach or scout. It does not create a safe environment for which children can air their concerns or fears. It also raises the question about what is appropriate language to use amongst young players, aged nine years old and above. The fact that the verbal abuse is centred on challenging their masculinity reinforces sexual abuse would also be seen in the same light, presenting a double challenge, both emotionally and linguistically. Although this approach may not be as common today, it is reflective of the sporting culture at the time of abuse (1970s-90s), which has proven history of racism, sexism and homophobia (VOICE, 2019: 11). The connection between identity factors, sport and abuse was indicated clearly by the VOICE report when they stated, "In other words, real men (sports-men) are heterosexual, strong and dominate others – and they are definitely not victims. Therefore, many psychological problems are encountered by boys, or young men, faced with the necessity of integrating 'homosexual' forced or coerced) sex into their developing male identity." (VOICE, 2019: 60) This project further explores the barriers to disclosure described by the men who participated.

Sports provide a key opportunity "to construct boys as pseudo-men" (Hartill, 2009: 237), as the lifestyle of a young player is rooted in travel away from home, being surrounded by adults, and being placed in high pressure situations. This blurring of the boundary between 'boy' and 'man' (Brackenridge, 2001) was employed particularly in elite football for various commercial and competitive reasons. This left young people believing they could not show any gendered sense of 'weakness', as they would be viewed as less of a man and athlete. Lang et al. (2018) have drawn attention to the assumption that aggression and impenetrable strength are essential qualities of being a male athlete. Yet, there seems to be a contradiction within this, as although they attempt to portray a hyper-masculine bravado of 'no pain, no gain', these pseudo-men are ultimately treated as children who must comply and fulfil their coach's demands (VOICE, 2019: 63). By subordinating 'athletes' and their welfare, it helps foster a culture where abuse can occur and continue unchecked (VOICE, 2019: 63). The previous literature makes clear that athletes' voices are often ignored (Brackenridge et al, 2004: 43), so despite constructions of 'pseudo-men' by sporting culture and perhaps even institutions, the players were still just children. Hartill (2014) draws attention to the fact that

stories of male victimisation are rarely highlighted in sport, as they go against everything that is revered in sporting culture. However, this wall of silence has started to be dismantled through Andy Woodward waiving his anonymity and the snowball effect of men coming forward to disclose abuse suffered in football, yet there is still a long way to go.

Although there is a growing scholarship examining sexual abuse in sport as briefly noted above, there has been little attention to the victims' experiences in the criminal justice system. It is widely recognised that males tend to disclose abuse suffered in childhood later than females (O'Leary & Barber, 2008), for reasons which this report will explore in some depth. Yet, despite the experiences of youth football players in the criminal justice system not being examined previously, some victims in the recent reports did comment that they had pursued charges in the criminal justice system. Their responses provide a strong initial indication of the experiences of victims of non-recent abuse in this respect. The IICSA report indicated that communication with police and a lengthy wait had been an issue for one of its participants, with others commenting on a lack of response from the police due to the perpetrator being deceased (IICSA, 2020: 48-50). The court process was also noted as insensitive to victims, failing to acknowledge the great impact their abuse had had on the their lives (IICSA, 2020: 69; VOICE, 2019: 60). This poor response had such an impact on victims that participants referenced the 'secondary victimisation' they experienced from the response, or lack thereof, of institutions, sports communities, and the police (IICSA, 2020: 46). The toll this caused was noted as likely to hinder victims' recovery from the impact of abuse (VOICE, 2019: 70), drawing attention to the power which the criminal justice process can hold over victims who disclose.

The APPG on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse report provides the most useful indicator to how victims of non-recent abuse experience the criminal justice system and victim support services. The report revealed that only 54% of survey participants had reported their abuse to police, showing both the societal factors and barriers which stop victims speaking out and the reality that the number of victims of childhood abuse could be much higher than reported. When asked why victims did not report to police, a common issue was the lack of confidence in the criminal justice system to take them seriously (APPG, 2020: 4). This was reflected by experiences of police insensitivity by those participants who did disclose to police. What was particularly significant was that nearly half those who disclosed were not informed what the next steps would be, with the report authors concluding – "Survivors said they want regular communication, realistic expectations and compassionate officers who understand the impact of trauma." (APPG, 2020: 4) Although experiences such as these are clearly echoed in this research, it may be significant to understand when victims faced such issues to pinpoint what improvements the criminal justice system needs to make, and what amendments are required to take ownership for the harm the system has caused previously. Similarly, with regards to the CPS, survey participants shared frustration at both their role and the decision-making process as a whole. The data revealed that 77% believed their communication was 'poor' or 'very poor' when a charge wasn't brought in their case. The justification for this decision and the support provided thereafter was also highlighted as of key concern. To put it bluntly, "Survivors deserve better after a lengthy and intrusive police investigation." (APPG, 2020: 5)

If a complainant was fortunate enough to get their case to court, there was more avoidable pain caused, as "69 per cent of survivors said they were not given appropriate explanation or support when attending court as a witness." (APPG, 2020: 5) This caused clear anxiety, and raised many practical issues, such as childcare arrangements and taking time off work. Some

survivors were not offered special measures[13], making the court process even more traumatic than necessary. Furthermore, it was heard that many survivors faced 'traumatising questions' with defence barristers 'deliberately using rape myths to influence jurors.' (APPG, 2020: 5) Nevertheless, there were two areas which were spoken highly of in the criminal justice process: the support provided by Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) and Victim Impact Statements[14] (VIS). However, only half of participants were offered use of the ISVA service (APPG, 2020: 5) and with regards to VIS, the report referred to evidence that showed only one in six victims are offered the chance to make a statement (APPG, 2020: 32). This is quite shocking when the report found, "The VPS is a crucial tool in empowering survivors during the criminal justice process and they should be given information that clearly sets out the role of the VPS in the sentencing process." (APPG, 2020: 32)

Finally, the APPG report also discusses victim support services offered to survivors, with attention drawn to the important role of the specialist voluntary sector in offering effective counselling and therapy. However, the report found that "Government funding to services is currently insufficient to keep up with the increasing demand." (APPG, 2020: 4) This is of particular concern when access to mental health services is subject to a postcode lottery, with some areas facing poor commissioning and resources, and therefore unable to offer appropriate care to all survivors. This is reflects the finding that only 16% of participants believed the NHS mental health services met their needs (APPG, 2020: 15). It was found that survivors valued trauma-informed care when they received it, reflecting a need for all services to be equally informed and trained in delivering this service. The importance of adequate support services for victims and survivors cannot be overstated, as individuals have to contend with the impact of both sexual abuse and criminal justice system.

As reflected in all the reports released and findings from academics in a range of disciplines (e.g. Lisak, 1994; Easton et al., 2014; Gartner, 2018), the impact of child sexual abuse on an adult is 'extensive and diverse' (IICSA, 2020: 4). Victim support services are essential when considering the long-term impact of abuse, as the APPG report showed that abuse had negatively impacted survivors' intimate relationships (90% of respondents), their mental health (89%), family life (81%), career (72%) and education (65%) (2020: 4). Although the adverse impact of childhood sexual abuse is well documented in research, in public understanding and policy, it is widely less recognised. It is also important to note that many survivors have found a sense of healing or purpose when being involved in advocacy roles in this area. This theme was mentioned briefly in the IICSA and VOICE reports (IICSA, 2020: 61; VOICE, 2019: 77) and will be explored in this report in the interviews with victim advocates with lived experience. Participants in this study have described how they can invoke change after years of being silenced.

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[13] Special measures are a number of provisions offered to support vulnerable witnesses 'give their best evidence in court and help to relieve some of the stress associated with giving evidence' (CPSa, 2020).

[14] Although referred to as a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) in the IICSA report, this research will use Victim Impact Statement (VIS) as an alternative. Roberts & Manikis (2011) state, "VIS more accurately conveys the purpose of the statement – to document the impact of the crime and not the personal views of the victim about the offender or the appropriate sentence to be imposed."

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This report draws upon the findings of a qualitative mixed methods project which aimed to explore some of the stories and experiences of the men who have come forward to disclose childhood abuse in football. Methods included a victim questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with victims, victim advocates, and interviews with police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) personnel. The victim questionnaire and interviews with victims and key victim advocates explored their experience of the criminal justice system and what they now wanted from the system going forward. Interviews with criminal justice professionals who investigated and prosecuted cases of non-recent abuse in football looked at their decision-making and the challenges they faced in these cases. The hope is that this study will provide a more thorough understanding of the procedures which impact upon the victim's experience of the criminal justice system. The University of Oxford's Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) granted approval for this fieldwork in February 2020[15]. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the fieldwork faced numerous restrictions, delays and obstacles that will be noted throughout this section of the report. The changes made to adapt this project at this difficult time have been noted.

The report draws upon twenty-one interviews and seven questionnaire respondents. Ten interviews were conducted with victims and victim advocates with lived experience (one participant had two interviews), six with victim advocates, and five with criminal justice professionals (four police and one from the CPS). With consideration to two interviewees identifying themselves as having completed both an interview and filling in the questionnaire, this means a total of fourteen victims and victim advocates with lived experiences' accounts were considered in this research.

'Survivor led'

A number of disciplines were drawn upon when establishing the methods for this project, particularly championing the role of sports sociology in drawing attention to this important field of research. The growing research base of CSA in sport resulted in the advent of the Centre for Child Protection and Safeguarding in Sport at Edgehill University in 2020, which is at the forefront of research on the prevention of abuse, exploitation and maltreatment in sport (CPSS, 2020). Prof. Mike Hartill, in particular, has employed a survivor-lead approach for researching victims of non-recent child sexual abuse in sport. This can be seen most recently in the collaborative VOICE Project for Truth & Dignity with which he was closely involved. This project applied an in-depth narrative interviewing technique to hear survivors' first-hand stories in sport across seven European countries. This can similarly be seen in the growing scholarship of narrative victimology (*see Walklate, 2018; Pemberton et al., 2018a; 2018b)*, which uses narrative methods to better understand victim experiences and the harm caused when a crime is committed. Although this research is also 'survivor-led', I am instead using a mixed methods approach to provide victims and survivors with choice over how they wish to proceed. With both victim questionnaires and interviews, every effort was made to ensure the victim had full autonomy over what they wished to discuss, as I did not want to replicate another environment where control was taken away. It is also important to note no questions were asked about the abuse itself, however many of the men referenced it when sharing their experiences of the criminal justice system. These responses can be seen in

[15] *Reference Number: R68125/RE001*

Section 4. Non-Recent Child Sexual Abuse in Football to provide relevant contextualisation of the barriers they faced disclosing as boys and later as men.

It has been indicated that men who have suffered sexual violence are not only reluctant to disclose and access support, but also to be involved in research due to the gendered belief that men should not be victims (Javaid, 2015: 287). This adds a further challenge to accessing men who were willing to be participants in this research, therefore I have attempted to use various methods to try and reach as many victims as possible. Therefore, the use of an online questionnaire, as well as more conventional interviews, was decided to be another helpful form of data gathering in this area. The options provided in choosing the methods ensure the men's voices are central to this project and with full consideration and prioritisation to their welfare in the process. The ethical responsibility of the researcher raised by Cook and Walklate (2019) goes beyond the simple research principle of 'do no harm', but centres each decision around the wellbeing of any vulnerable participant. The possibility for harm is summed up well in the VOICE report as:

> "Harm may be caused by the exercise of talking to individuals who have experienced sexual violence (even by the act of contacting them); harm may be caused by interpreting their stories' and harm may be caused by the mere action of putting into concrete text (written word) an expression of their experiences that had previously remained (forcibly) hidden and unspoken (see Brackenridge, 1999)." (2020: 16)

The goal of this research is therefore to amplify voices, not speak for victims, using my third party perspective to decipher themes and bring the stories together.

The Covid-19 Pandemic

This project has been inevitably impacted and influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Although several changes are apparent, such as the shift from in-person to phone and video interviews, it is the more subtle changes in the data gathered which may have the widest implications. Timing plays a key role in all research, with data-gathering due to start in March 2020 – a week before the first UK lockdown was announced. After careful consideration, the online element of the research was taken forward, which involved sharing and circulating a questionnaire with victims. It was made clear this was only for participants feeling in the right headspace to at this time to contribute, as I was acutely aware that possible participants were facing major concerns in their work and personal lives as a result of the impact of the virus. Furthermore, many charities were facing intensive pressures causing some issues circulating the questionnaire as originally planned. Soon after, the UK was put into its first national lockdown and I took the decision to pause the call for interview participants, which was due to be announced the following week. I believed it was not fair or appropriate to be asking individuals to be partaking in interviews, even remotely, when the health, personal and financial concerns were so great. This experience can be compounded with the unique challenges victims can face in lockdown scenarios (*see NAPAC, 2020*[16]*).*

After the situation settled slightly, I decided to begin virtual interviews, shifting to phone or video call interviews, with victim advocates. Remote interviewing comes with its unique set of challenges both for the researcher and for the participant, for example, a fire alarm going off, someone knocking on the door or simply being unable to find a private area to take the call. There has been discussion surrounding the use of phone interviews in qualitative

[16] *See https://napac.org.uk/feeling-safe-during-covid-19/*

research, particularly the benefits of using this method (*see Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Novick, 2007; Mealer & Jones, 2014*). This includes some participants preferring to share their story without staring at the researcher, often feeling safe at home and preferring of this environment. There were also logistical benefits to switching to remote interviewing as I was able to speak to participants across the United Kingdom far more easily than in person. This was important as many participants had moved away from where the abuse had occurred. Travel expenses which were originally set aside for this were instead donated to a number of charities who are supporting men who were abused in childhood.

Positionality

Before starting any qualitative research study, the individual(s) conducting the study must explore and locate their positionality on the topic. An individual's perspective inevitably influences every stage of the research process, possibly leading to unconscious bias influencing findings. Firstly, one must question why this area originally sparked interest for the researcher, including what drew them to this specific research question and then consider from what perspective they might approach such a topic. For the purpose of making it known to the reader how my own perspective may impact this research, I will briefly introduce my background to contextualise my own position. However, this is deliberately a short account, as the research focus should be solely on the men and their stories. I was drawn to this research area while completing my Master's thesis on child sexual exploitation and the on-street grooming gangs operating across the country. Coming from a family of football fans (Leicester City), I followed the Bennell case going through the courts and was surprised that only 12 complainants were initially being taken forward after the press had reported hundreds of victims coming forward – although against numerous perpetrators. What happened to other men? Why were they not taken forward? What was their experience of the system? The project originally was going to be focused on these individuals, but the difficulty in accessing those who often turn their back on systems after having such an experience would be highly challenging. Therefore, the research opened up to all those who had disclosed to police, whether they were taken forward or not. Early data from the victim questionnaire emphasised the complexity of an individual's experience even when if they received 'justice' in the courts. Therefore, I believed this to be an appropriate participant pool to reach, with the assistance and input of victim advocates and criminal justice professionals.

This type of research requires a skill set and understanding that I believe I have gained through my professional experience in working in various roles with vulnerable individuals. In my position as an Appropriate Adult, I saw the rapid increase of non-recent and on-going child sexual abuse and exploitation cases coming through the system. This meant I was increasingly required to be present in victim support interviews, largely for non-recent child sexual abuse cases. Through supporting the victims in writing their VIS, it became clear the detrimental impact their childhood abuse was having throughout their adult lives. These experiences are essential in framing my approach and understanding of the topic, particularly the emphasis I put on placing victims' voices at the forefront of my research. This experience and other research with vulnerable individuals has made me fully aware of issues surrounding vicarious or secondary trauma on researchers (*see Williamson et al., 2020*), a subject with which I have received training. Although this report will be as objective as possible, it is important to note the impact my background could have on this research.

3.2 Empirical Research

Victim Questionnaire

The victim questionnaire operated as a pilot study, providing a strong indicator of the types of experiences victims who disclose to police face in the criminal justice system. The choice to include a victim questionnaire in this research was due to it ensuring victims enjoy full agency in this process, as they are able to complete it in their own time and space. They can skip questions without unintended pressure from the researcher and with the option to save the progress of the questionnaire to come back to later. This allows victims to thoughtfully share their narrative, while also not having to reveal their identity, even to the researcher. The questionnaire was conducted through Jisc Surveys software[17], by recommendation of CUREC, aimed at male victims of non-recent sexual abuse in both professional and grass-roots football teams. The key aim of the victim questionnaire was to learn more about the victim's experience of the criminal justice system and what they wanted from the system going forward. The questionnaire began with an introductory section outlining in simple terms what participation involves, their rights as participants, how what they share would be used and so on. Once the participant had read this information, they were required to tick a box to say that they agree to be involved and are above the age of the eighteen. This was to ensure informed consent can be gained, despite it being an anonymous and online platform.

When designing the victim questionnaire, I aimed to ask clear and open-ended questions which would act as prompts for victims to share any relevant information they wished to in this format. This consisted of a number of open-ended questions that explored the participant's experience of the police investigation, victim support services and judicial proceedings (or lack thereof). Each question included the option to click 'prefer not to say' which then skips to the next page, this is to make sure victims could ensure their autonomy when participating in this study. An option available on the questionnaire to skip to the final page, if the participant would prefer to share their story without any prompts. Once I had prepared a draft design of these questions, I contacted an expert working in a charity specialising in child sexual abuse and exploitation. This individual had been working alongside many of the victims who have come forward since 2016, and agreed to look over the questionnaire design. Their comments were positive, offering no suggestions for modifications. To circulate the victim questionnaire, Twitter was used as it is an active platform for survivors in football, shared by notable figures and charities in the field. It was also emailed to various professionals to share with interested participants. The questionnaire was available for completion for nine months (March- December 2020), although only actively promoted in the first couple of months of it going live.

As there were key concerns over the retraumatisation[18] of participants, I took all available precautions to prevent this from happening while undertaking the research. Although there was no questioning on the abuse itself, it is impossible to uncouple victim experiences of abuse with their interactions with the criminal justice system. Therefore, numbers for support agencies were provided for participants on almost every page of the questionnaire. I made an agreement with the National Male Survivor Helpline, operated through Safeline, to use their number and I also added the Samaritans' number and email for more immediate and serious

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[17] This platform ensures survey authors are not able to track IP addresses, guaranteeing full anonymity to participants and is both fully compliant with the University's guidance and UK data protection laws.

[18] Retraumatisation is a conscious or unconscious reminder of past trauma that results in a re-experiencing of the events.

support. As the participants were fully anonymous, I could not offer more comprehensive assistance, however these numbers did ensure the men could be signposted to essential support if needed. As my research could result in extra calls to the National Male Survivor Helpline, particularly with increased pressure on mental health resources as a result of Covid-19, I decided to make a donation to the charity that run its operation; I deemed this as an important use of my fieldwork budget. Although no victim has drawn my attention to this issue, I realise the helpline only supports males living in England and Wales. I had originally not anticipated that any victims from Scotland would participate, however these victim accounts have provided a useful insight of issues central to the Scotland legal system. Although the issues are fairly similar across both systems, where there is any deviation it will be noted.

Victim & Victim Advocate Interviews

From the questionnaire, I received an email from a participant who wished to share more about his experiences in a video-call. I adopted a more narrative survivor-lead approach (VOICE, 2019), where the participant shared their full experiences of the system and I asked a couple of clarifying questions at the end. This was a fruitful conversation and highlighted the use of remote interviewing techniques, an approach of which I had previously been slightly sceptical. A follow up was later arranged for the participant to share more information to this project. The key reason for not starting with victim interviews were concerns surrounding retraumatisation, with these processes having the power to cause further damage to survivors. Before agreeing whether to participate, each interviewee was sent an Information Sheet and later an Informed Consent Form for them to look over and sign. This included the details of helplines, similar to those listed in the victim questionnaire.

Additionally, I have conducted semi-structured interviews over the phone with prominent victim advocates in the field to further enrich the data gathered, as each individual who was interviewed has extensive experience advocating and working alongside this community of men. This included both professionals working in charities and support environments, and victims of non-recent abuse in football who went on to take on advocacy positions – these will be referred to as victim advocates with lived experience[19]. The inclusion of as many individuals who work closely with victims was crucial for reaching a hard to access demographic and better understand the experiences of voices which are often ignored. Victim advocates with lived experience in particular could share their own experiences, while also discussing the important collective identity of survivors and the experiences of others with whom they were working closely.

Access was gained through connections already forged in the field, cold emails and other participants referring individuals who might be useful to this research. Participants were sent an Information Sheet and Consent Form prior to the interview, which allowed them to consider all the information before consenting. I particularly drew attention to the fact the interview was to be recorded, as unlike face-to-face interviews, participants could not physically see the recording device. Questions were also sent to victim advocates so those with lived experience could determine what the conversation would entail to make an informed choice whether to participate or not. Participants were clearly told they were just some suggested prompts, with the conversation to focus on areas they felt were important to this research and were comfortable discussing. For victims who were only discussing their

[19] *Some victim advocates I have spoken to may also have experienced some kind of abuse in childhood but not specifically in a footballing context.*

own experiences, they had the option to simply go through what they felt like sharing or have the researcher ask prompts to aid the conversation. This ensured even in a more structured interview setting, victims had control and autonomy within the conversation.

Criminal Justice Professional Interviews
In addition to the questionnaire and interviews with victims and advocates, I wanted to add the perspective of criminal justice professionals who were involved in these cases. I conducted interviews with four police officers who investigated cases of non-recent abuse in football, looking at the decision-making and challenges faced. I contacted five police forces to request (and follow-up where necessary) their participation, due to each of these forces having handled high profile cases. I realised based on the early responses from victims and concerns about possible negative attention that many forces may not want to be involved. Despite the forces and officers being anonymised, I was aware it would be a challenge to find individuals willing to participate. Furthermore, as thoughtfully stated by an advocate who specialises in male sexual abuse, the police officers who request their assistance tend be more attuned to the impact of non-recent abuse and the importance of prosecuting such cases. This is, of course, true in research as well, as those officers who were willing to speak to me tended to be well experienced and proud of the actions they took, therefore willing to discuss the investigations.

After seeking permission from the Chief Constable of each police force that conducted a major investigation into non-recent child sexual abuse in football, three forces agreed to support the research. This resulted in four interviews, with officers from two forces and an individual from Operation Hydrant on their co-ordination and oversight of non-recent child sexual abuse in football. Two Chief Constables declined their force's involvement; one citing workload and the other did not wish to give any further information. One officer from another police force agreed to an interview but after multiple attempts to schedule a date and time, stated a lack of availability. This small sample is not an attempt to produce definite findings of how cases such as these are investigated or prosecuted; instead it aims to provide a useful context of the complexities and challenges which impact on a victim's experience.

Although the CPS do not often participate in academic research studies, I sent out emails to the five CPS RASSO[20] teams where there were large investigations of non-recent CSA in football. After following up, I received a response from one individual who said they had contacted their seniors to ask if this would be possible. Their response was that there was no precedent for this but the prosecutor could go ahead if they wish. This interview offered a highly informative perspective to this research, with the individual spending time drawing attention to the complexities and challenges with prosecuting cases of non-recent abuse in the current system. This helped contextualise the experiences of the victims and provide a thorough understanding of the realities involved with getting cases such as these through the system. All interviews with criminal justice professionals occurred over the phone and Informed Consent Forms were signed and returned prior to interview.

3.3 Data Analysis
After interviews were held, the research data (including recordings and transcripts) were stored confidentially using secure encrypted files, which comply with the Data Protection Act, University policies, and advice from the Data Management team. Each participant was assigned an identifying number in place of their name to keep their identities protected, with

[20] *Rape and Serious Sexual Offences*

identifying information being anonymised within the transcripts. Many victim advocates with lived experience also shared their own experiences in the criminal justice system; despite this they were given a victim advocate identifying number (e.g. VA12). To analyse the data, pre-defined codes were created such as 'disclosure to police' and 'cross examination' which left space to establish themes within these experiences, such as 'lack of communication by the police.' What has also been emphasised strongly through the subsequent empirical research is the complexity of each victim's experience of the criminal justice system, particularly as many victims' involvement has spanned many years and numerous cases against their perpetrator. Individual case studies and further details were not provided to protect the identities of the participants. Therefore, attention needs to be drawn to the danger of oversimplifying when anonymising and writing up these stories in research. Furthermore, although the sample size is too small to make any quantitative observations, we can see that the data follows the trends seen in the media since November 2016 of widespread non-recent child sexual abuse in football. The demographic data from the victim questionnaire reveal the participants to identify as male, white, over forty years old and as coming from a working class or lower middle-class background. An unexpected result of the questionnaire was the number of individuals from Scotland who participated in this research, this can be identified as a result of Settle the Score[21] sharing the questionnaire on their Twitter page. After thematic analysis, the project is currently in the process of being written up with this report being the first output to draw attention to the findings gathered so far.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge a number of limitations in this study, as this is not an all-compassing report. The sample of participants is relatively small and participants are on the whole self-selecting. This means that caution is needed in generalising from the experiences of participants to all victims of non-recent abuse in football. However, as previously outlined, a key premise of this study has been that each participant is an autonomous individual and should be recognised as such. In addition, it must be noted that these are incredibly difficult experiences to talk about and to share with a researcher, and the small number of participants likely reflects an understandable reluctance on the part of victims to come forward to participate in research. I am very grateful to those that felt able to do so, and for the time and investment they made in this project. What I hope this study represents is an in-depth exploration of their experiences and a contribution to a small but growing literature that has started to document the complexities and contours of this problem. Finally, although I have no way of knowing the true impact of the switch to remote interviewing and the overall impact of the pandemic on participant participation, it would be naïve to not consider its role in shaping this research. Though this report has attempted to bring in number of victim accounts, further research is necessary for the voices of the men to be truly heard.

[21] *Settle the Score is a support group for survivors, victims & families of child sexual abuse within Scottish football.*

4. Non-Recent Child Sexual Abuse in Football

4.1 Background

It is important to first acknowledge that institutional abuse makes up only a small number of the overall cases of childhood abuse, with many advocates noting familial abuse to be where the majority of cases of abuse exist[22]. Nevertheless, child sexual abuse in sport is still a pertinent problem, shown not only by the numbers of non-recent cases but also by the more contemporary incidents coming to light (e.g Roan and Nathanson, 2021[23]). As one participant stated, perpetrators "will infiltrate every single area where there is an opportunity to gain a relationship with a child and it's not going away, let's make no qualms about it, it's not going away, it's going to continue." (VA6) Although this is of serious concern, this report will focus on the non-recent abuse cases in football, which occurred predominantly in the 1970s to 1990s. It will centre on male athletes who were abused in both grass-roots and professional football.

Although the sample size is too small to make any quantitative observations, the data corroborates the identities of victims shown in the media since November 2016. The demographic data from the victim questionnaire reveal the participants to identify as male, white, over forty years old and as coming from a working class or lower middle-class background. From the sample in this study, many participants started their journey playing grass-roots football before progressing to a professional youth team. The main cases explored in this report will be connected to the abuse perpetrated by Barry Bennell[24], Bob Higgins, George Ormond, Jim McCafferty and Jim Torbett, due to the widespread and complex police investigations which followed. Although one participant in this research was part of a much smaller investigation, they faced similar challenges with the criminal justice system. As it stands, thirteen individuals having been convicted of child sexual abuse in football as a result of the 'snowball effect' of victims coming forward in 2016. There were barriers to achieving justice in several cases, including alleged perpetrator Michael 'Kit' Carson taking his own life on the first day of his trial, resulting in no formal convictions being brought against him. Other abusers discussed by participants, including Eddie Heath and Frank Roper, were deceased by the time allegations came to light in 2016.

The Cases

At the start and centre of the revelations regarding abuse in football is the case of Barry Bennell, affiliated with professional teams Manchester City and Crewe Alexandra. He was convicted in five separate trials for charges against boys in his professional care. The abuse spanned over thirty years during which he coached at various institutions across the UK and abroad. His behaviour continued even after complaints were made, as football clubs opted to simply release Bennell from his contract rather than report his conduct to the authorities. This failure to report enabled the abuse to spread to the next club that subsequently employed him, allowing further boys to be abused. One advocate noted, "We see this all the time with institutions, church and boarding schools, almost daily across the world, people being moved on, paedophiles being moved on, because it's such a thorny issue to tackle." (VA9) Although early charges were brought in the 1990s, made possible by the courageous actions of individuals highlighted below, the extent of the abuse was not recognised by the system or

[22] *See McAlinden, 2012; McNeish & Scott, 2018.*
[23] *A recent example is British Judo investigating a number of cases in which coaches have been arrested for sexual offences (April 12th 2021).*
[24] *Name changed to Richard Jones.*

society despite indications of wide scale abuse having taken place. It was not until Andy Woodward, who had been abused by Bennell, waived his anonymity in 2016 that the extent of what had happened started to emerge with over a hundred men coming forward against Bennell alone. This resulted in two further convictions for charges against twelve victims in 2018 and a final two victims in 2020, when Bennell eventually pleaded guilty.

The media has also been criticised for its previous under-reporting of child sexual abuse cases in sport (Conn, 2016), meaning the public have been left with a severe lack of awareness on the issue. It was not until 2016, when a number of ex-professional footballers came forward with their stories, that it hit the headlines. The men's experiences of waiving their anonymity in 2016 was purely dependent on the cultural shift in recent years which allowed space for the men to come forward and be recognised. Individuals such as Ian Ackley note the difference the societal changes have made, as when he first disclosed his abuse in the 1990s it failed to receive any serious recognition. Initial reports of abuse lead investigative journalist Deborah Davies to explore the subject on a Channel 4 documentary Dispatches: Soccer's Foul Play (1997). This included interviews with players who had come forward since Bennell's first conviction in the US (Cooper, 1997), this included Ian Ackley who had waived his right to anonymity to appear in the documentary. However, it did not garner widespread consideration at the time, with Ackley referencing a particularly 'damning article' by Giles Smith in The Daily Telegraph, who believed the documentary to be 'scare-mongering' (Ackley, 2018). The media indifference to the subject was highly damaging, as Ackley stated, "If only we had been taken seriously all that time ago, just think what could have been prevented. I can't even bear to think about it; it saddens me greatly." (ibid)

Other allegations were made in the 1990s about football coach Bob Higgins, affiliated with Southampton and Peterborough United football clubs. Higgins was found not guilty at this time. However, in 2016 a large number of victims came forward, culminating in his conviction in 2018 of forty-six charges against twenty-four victims[25]. Similarly to Bennell, George Ormond, a former Newcastle United youth coach, received a prison sentence for child sexual abuse in 2002. Yet, the exposure of the issue in 2016 lead to many more men coming forward, resulting in him being convicted of a further thirty-eight charges against nineteen victims in 2018. Child sexual abuse in football was not just a pertinent issue in England but also in Scotland, reflected by a number of individuals revealed to have sexually abused boys in youth football, including Jim McCafferty and Jim Torbett, who both shared affiliations with Celtic FC. In these cases mentioned above charges of sexual abuse ranged from indecent assault to buggery[26], which will be explored in the following section. This brief overview hopes to provide some contextualisation to the types of case victims in this report were involved in[27]. However, it does not underline the complexity of each investigation undertaken by police forces across the United Kingdom. The purpose of this research is not an examination of each individual investigation but to explore the experiences each of the participating victims had in the criminal justice system, drawing attention to key themes and areas of both success and possible failure.

[25] *It should be noted one of these victims was not abused in football.*
[26] *The Crown Prosecution Service has to charge a perpetrator using the legislation in place at the time of abuse. Under The Sexual Offences Act 1956, the offence of rape would be classed as buggery in reference to non-consensual anal penetration.*
[27] *For further information see reporting by Daniel Taylor at The Guardian (now The Atlantic) on the issue from 2016-2020.*

Position of Trust

Although it is important not to generalise the harrowing and unique experiences that the victims faced, it appears the grooming methods used in non-recent child sexual abuse in football follow similar trends. Each perpetrator in these cases was either a football coach or scout who exploited their position of trust for their own sexual gratification. Particularly at this time, coaches were left solely responsible for the boys during training sessions, which provided an ideal setting for abuse to occur. One advocate stated, "In sport, there is touch, showers, locker rooms. It could be argued the world of sport is a perfect environment to abuse boys." (VA7) The abuse occurred in a number of scenarios in these cases, often locker rooms, the perpetrator's home and car, and even more brazenly in open areas within training facilities. Targeting of the boys while away at training camps or tournaments abroad was also used by several perpetrators, as when the young players were taken away from their family home, the coach had ample opportunity to manipulate and abuse players. How abusers garnered trust varies considerably, yet often included targeting a player, lavishing them with gifts and takeaway meals – particularly pertinent to poorer families who may not have been able to afford such luxuries. As one victim stated, "You're at a professional club and he's very charismatic and you don't know it at the time of course, but the grooming side – the gifts, the kit, the clothes, the fast food" (VA9). The culture in which the abuse occurred should also be pointed to, as perceptions of what a perpetrator looked like or how they behaved were still fairly rigid. As one advocate stated, "That whole monster myth about who is a paedophile, they're a monster, rather than they can be people who might actually be very nice in many other parts of their life. They look like the rest of us." (VA10) At the time, the idea of a paedophile was not the charismatic football coach, who got on well with parents and was well respected in the community. Stereotypes such as these insured coaches were trusted implicitly.

Accountability

It is important that there is a thorough examination and acknowledgement of the role of clubs and footballing authorities, what was known about the abuse, and why action wasn't taken. However, the culpability of such organisations goes beyond the scope of this project. After numerous delays, the highly anticipated findings of the Sheldon report[28] (2021) were released in March of this year. The independent review was commissioned by the FA in 2016 to look into allegations of non-recent child sexual abuse in football. It found the Football Association (FA) to be culpable of 'institutional failures' in its responsibility to keep players safe, with a number of clubs being shown to have ignored allegations and rumours surrounding coaches and scouts in their organisations (ibid). Similarly, the Scottish Football Association (SFA) released their report[29] (2021) which found suspicions of abuse that were not acted upon. Prior to this, important investigative documentaries including Deborah Davies' The Wall of Silence (2018) and Mark Daley's Football Abuse: The Ugly Side of the Beautiful Game (2017), and public accounts from victims and those working in the game at the time highlighted key areas of concern. These sources suggest that the warning signs of the systematic abuse of young players in some of the clubs were pervasive, yet no meaningful action was taken.

[28] *See FA report https://www.thefa.com/news/2021/mar/17/clive-sheldon-qc-independent-commission-report-released-20210317*

[29] *See SFA report https://www.scottishfa.co.uk/media/7516/independent-review-of-sexual-abuse-in-scottish-football-final-report.pdf*

4.2 November 2016

Child sexual abuse in football did not receive widespread public attention until ex-professional footballer Andy Woodward waived his right to anonymity by speaking out about the abuse he suffered as a child, firstly in a piece for the Guardian and later on live television on BBC Two's Victoria Derbyshire show. Woodward broke the silence that had long plagued the sport, resulting in a surge of disclosures of non-recent CSA across numerous professional football teams, implicating numerous high-profile clubs. Woodward has been described as the 'catalyst' (VA8), which triggered hundreds of men to disclose their abuse. There were several men who had made reports, and even waived their anonymity, prior to 2016. Despite the barriers, some boys and men came forward shortly after they were abused but their subsequent treatment by the authorities indicated the prevalent culture and damaging assumption that men could not victims of sexual abuse. Some of these accounts will be noted in this report, honouring those that paved the way for others to come forward years later.

Cultural Shift

There was a cultural shift in attitudes to non-recent cases of child sexual abuse, which allowed Andy Woodward to be both listened to and acknowledged when he did waive his anonymity in 2016. Practitioners and advocates noted the Jimmy Savile revelations of widespread abuse and later the MeToo movement to have partly laid the groundwork within society, allowing Woodward's account to gain widespread publicity and cause a 'domino effect' of other survivors coming forward. The importance of Andy Woodward's story cannot be overstated, as some victims shared that if they had they not seen the widespread public coverage of the case, they never would have disclosed. One victim powered stated, "There is no way I was ever going to talk about it. It was just buried, gone." (VA8) For many, the press reporting brought suppressed memories to the forefront, leading one victim to describe their memories of abuse having 'come back like a volcano erupting' (V-S1) after seeing a photo of their abuser in a newspaper. This is not to say the abuse had been forgotten, as suppressing traumatic memories can be a common coping mechanism for victims of sexual violence. However, hearing other footballers share their experiences publicly ensured each victim no longer felt alone in their abuse. This led to a large number of victims disclosing to their families and friends for the first time, with many then going on to report their abuse to the police. As one participant stated, "They were empowered, the people they had played football with and that macho culture and finally someone was saying, 'wait hang on a minute this isn't right. I'm not embarrassed and I'm not ashamed and it's not our fault'. That was so empowering for the lads." (VA9)

Permission

Hearing highly esteemed footballers speak out about sexual abuse gave permission for not just those abused in football, but men abused in other sports and other areas of society to speak out. Charities and helplines supporting victims of non-recent abuse noted that in November 2016 and the months following, there was a spike in the numbers of men who were abused in all sectors and institutional frameworks coming forward. Andy Woodward and the subsequent footballers that spoke publicly gave men permission to disclose and break their silence. One support line for survivors stated they usually received a ratio of 70% female to 30% male callers, however in the first weeks this shifted to 55-60% male callers vs. 45-40% female callers (VA2). An advocate shared that this was not just men who had been abused in football, or even a wider sport setting, but men abused in a range of contexts. As one victim advocate explained: "There is so much shame and guilt and secrecy about abuse, and what we hear so often on the [support] line is 'I thought I was the only one.' So when men, male victims, who generally would never have spoken about it before, suddenly saw

high profile male footballers, public figures, standing up publicly and saying 'this happen to me, I was abused and I'm struggling with it' and it's like 'oh that's like me.' It gives that caller, that person, permission to start to reach out and look around for what support is there." (VA2)

The impact of these men speaking out is clear as it allowed for open discussion on the prevalence of male child sexual abuse in society. Footballers are held in high esteem by many in British culture, so for them to disclose made it acceptable for all men to speak out. As one advocate stated, "I think the football survivors faced a lot of barriers and what they've done is absolutely fantastic in coming forward and really changing the landscape." (VA10) Therefore, it is clear that two key factors allowed for the increase in disclosures since November 2016: the time being right and permission. Woodward was given the space to speak out, due to societal changes in the wake of the Saville allegations and other disclosures of non-recent abuse. Others had previously tried to draw attention to this in the 1990s (Davies, 1997), yet were ignored. Therefore, both Andy Woodward speaking out and the response he received gave the message to all other male victims that they are not alone and can also disclose. There is most certainly strength in numbers, which enabled the men to report their abuse to the authorities. In cases of widespread and institutional abuse, it often takes one courageous individual to step forward leading to a 'snowball effect' of others joining, but only if the time is right for them to truly heard.

4.3 Late Disclosures

Prior to 2016, many of the men had carried this silence throughout their childhood and into their adult lives. Decades later, some took the decision to tell family and friends, with a small number going to the police before Woodward waived his anonymity. Yet, many men have never told anyone of the abuse they suffered as a child and never will. It should remain acknowledged in this research that these individuals exist, yet their voices are unfortunately not included in the report. The decision to remain silent may be the correct personal decision for that individual, however it is problematic if perceived stigma, shame and concerns about the criminal justice system are impacting on that decision. From the interviews, various barriers stopped the men speaking out from the time of abuse to adulthood. As one victim advocate said, the men's reluctance to come forward is "for various reasons but it's for similar reasons." (VA6) These reasons will be explored throughout this section.

Fear of Not Being Believed

From the data, the biggest barrier for men coming forward is the fear of not being believed. This was raised in various forms in most of the questionnaire responses and interviews with victims and advocates. As one individual powerfully stated, "So belief, belief is the biggest thing. That was what stopped me for nearly forty years disclosing. Would you be believed? Would people think 'oh it's just a little story in his head'? That's the main thing." (VA11) This was a particular barrier for men to disclose their abuse to the police, which will be explored later in this report. Although all victims of abuse may share this fear, it is of particular concern for male victims of sexual abuse who historically have not been represented in the victimology literature or received acknowledgement both by the system and wider society.

Timing

In addition, simply the impact of growing older had significance for many victims, as one stated, "I think it is only when you grow older that you realise, I don't care what people think." (VA9) Some victims expressed that they were always going to disclose but it was

about personal timing. One stated, "I think as you get older you're aware what you've got hidden away in a box and lots of people choose not to open the box. That was for me was never going to happen, I was always going to open that box. It was just a case of when?" (VA6) It is clear that timing is highly important, both culturally and personally. Aging seemed to influence many individuals and can help us in understanding late disclosures of child sexual abuse. One victim, who in fact started criminal proceedings against his football coach prior to Woodward waiving his anonymity, spoke of the fear over leaving it too late. He poignantly stated, "a massive thing is not regretting, that was a big driver for me […], it suddenly dawns on you I don't want to be sat in my eighties, not very well, wishing I had said something and had my say and been recognised. That was a massive part for me and the lads have said that as well." (VA9) So for many individuals who did not disclose before 2016, seeing many ex-footballers speak publicly gave them the sense that it was now or never. Some even saw fellow teammates and friends on the television, and in press reporting, whom they did not know were also abused. This gave them the strength they would require to both disclose to loved ones and for many to start criminal proceedings.

Scepticism about the Criminal Justice System

Further issues surround the connection many victims hold between disclosing abuse and reporting it to the authorities. However, as previously pointed to, many victims will never report their abuse to the police, despite recent efforts to destigmatise child sexual abuse in society. One victim stated, "Quite a few players have never come forward and given a statement, because they don't feel comfortable. That's how I was originally." (V-S8) The reasons for this are complex, with victims' scepticism of the criminal justice system being a key barrier to disclosing. This was summed up by an advocate noting, "The bottom-line is from the survivors' point of view, what's the point? What is there to gain out of making a report to the police? It is going to be incredibly painful." (VA4) The criminal justice process can be traumatic for a victim, as simply giving their account means reliving possibly the most painful moment or period of their life. Although there are things that can be done to improve and support the victim through this process, it does not take away from the emotional energy and strength required to contact the police and deliver a statement. Unfortunately, it is common practice for a victim to go through such a process and not receive justice, so it is clear why other victims would not see the purpose in reporting. This can be understood when the reality of the situation for some victims is that the criminal justice system has 'left a trail of devastation in their path, it is they who have drawn it out and made it such a painful experience.' (V-S8)

Family

A key trigger for many men was having children, especially if their child reached the age in which they had been abused. This often acted as a trigger for men to be forcibly confronted with what happened to them as a boy. One individual spoke of how his children gave him the strength to disclose: "I've always taught them to stand up for themselves and do the right thing, for a number of years I've always felt a fraud telling my kids to do that, yet they don't know their Dad has not done that with something major in his life." (V-S9) Many individuals were concerned about the potential impact of a disclosure and criminal proceedings on their family members. This is highly complex as although the victim has no responsibility over the abuse they suffered, they do not wish it to cause further harm to their loved ones. One victim stated, "I've met many, many men who have said they have waited for their parents to die before coming out and disclosing, because they didn't want their parents to be further inflicted – the feelings of guilt and shame parents do all feel through sending their boys to the football." (VA9)

4.4 Gender & Masculinity

Other barriers that ultimately compounded these fears were concerns surrounding gender, embarrassment and shame. Gender and masculinity were found to be key issues that almost all victims and victim advocates acknowledged at varying levels to be a significant barrier to men reporting abuse. This appears to be particularly pertinent in sporting environments which prescribe certain expectations and behaviours for their players, as one advocate stated, "I think when you're in a hyper-masculine environment there can be the rigidity [in what is expected]." (VA7) The abuse, and response to such trauma, did not fit the determined narrative which boys, and particularly young footballers, were expected to follow. It did not allow for complex expressions of emotion, leaving the boys feeling that they had no choice but to suffer in silence. One advocate noted this was aggravated by 'social stereotypes' within our society that 'boys don't cry', which was upheld vigorously in the sporting environment (VA4). Additionally, boys and men are expected to 'fight back' if attacked, this was even noted in the response by some public figures[30] when the abuse came to light in November 2016. Again, many participants noted that shame was at the centre of this, as rigid notions of masculinity, or hyper-masculinity, were able to continue through shaming any boys who did not conform. Male bravado ensured men never showed any perceived weakness which could be used to question their masculinity. This kept them silent over the abuse, as they were worried how they would be judged if it came to light.

'Male' Victim

These harmful notions of masculinity began to be broken down when footballers started to waive their anonymity to encourage others men to come forward. Nevertheless, gender does impact on both a victim's experience of abuse and their experience of the criminal justice system. Even linguistically, women are still represented as the common victim in discussions of victimhood and sexual violence. This misconception permeates popular culture with victims often automatically assumed to be 'she' and perpetrators gendered as 'he.' One participant summed it up well stating, "With boys and men, they're less likely to recognise they're being abused, less likely to be identified by professionals as being abused or at-risk of it, less likely to disclose and they're less likely to engage in services." (VA7) This puts young boys in a precarious position and reveals how non-recent abuse in institutions could continue for so long.

Unwanted Arousal

A key experience that impacts male victims of sexual abuse is unwanted arousal and ejaculation. A few bravely articulated this issue, drawing important attention to feelings of complicity which such a response can denote. As one victim stated, "How do you know that first time if you've never done it, how do you tell somebody and how do you put it into words that maybe you were sexually aroused yourself, maybe in some cases ejaculated, or in some cases made him ejaculate, whatever it may be. To have that come out and talk about it is obviously very difficult." (VA6) The stigma attached to this and the lack of education surrounding unwanted arousal can act as a barrier for disclosing even as an adult. This false idea of culpability was often used by perpetrators to silence boys. As "perpetrators will make the victims feel complicit, if you didn't fight back physically like "men are supposed to do", that you must have wanted it or at least you didn't mind it." (VA2) In essence, unwanted arousal or a sexual response, "gives that extra leverage to the perpetrator to enforce silence,

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[30] *Darts player and pundit Eric Bristow tweeted in November 2016: 'Might be a looney but if some football coach was touching me when I was a kid as I got older I would have went back and sorted that poof out.' https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/nov/29/eric-bristow-loses-sky-sports-role-twitter-sex-abuse-story-comments*

to enforce compliance, to maintain secrecy." (VA4) Several advocates shared that this was a familiar problem in their work, with many male victims of childhood abuse being traumatised by their own biological response. The perpetrator's hold over an individual was ensured through this false idea of complicity, which secured their silence. One victim stated, "I'd got no voice, I didn't really know what was going on to be honest, because you'd never had a sexual experience at that age, at 11. […] You know it's wrong but once you've gone along with it once or twice, you've sort of come complicit in it or it feels complicit and you don't want to rock the boat." (VA9) These feelings continued into adulthood indicating the need for better acknowledgement over unwanted arousal and other physical issues which impact on male victims of abuse.

Confusion Around Sexuality

Physical responses then played into confusion surrounding a victim's sexuality, with shame often stopping them seeking help in the hetero-normative environment of football. To explore such complex issues, it firstly needs to made very clear that the sexual abuse of a child is an 'a violent act of contempt, not an expression of sexuality or affection.' (Cassese, 2016: xxiii) Secondly, a young person questioning or exploring their sexuality is no way wrong, nor does abuse impact on an individual's sexual orientation. Discussions surrounding such an area can be easily misconstrued, therefore a sensitive exploration is required to understand how abuse compounds feelings of confusion, which perpetrators often utilise to ensure silence. One participant discussed these feelings stating, "Very often, a lot of confusion – 'did it make me gay?' 'Am I gay?' All that sexual orientation stuff can become very confusing, particularly in adolescence when hormones are kicking in strong." (VA4) This needs to be contextualised at a time when homophobia was pertinent in both society and footballing culture. By declaring their abuse, the victims believed they would be labelled as homosexual, meaning they would lack the masculinity required to play football at the highest level.

4.5 Race, Power & Class

Other identity factors which should be noted are race and class. Every victim involved in this research was white working or lower middle class, which is reflective of the makeup of the teams at the time. However, there are issues involving race in these cases that need to be acknowledged. This was noted by several advocates working closely with victims of CSA in football. One stated, "So one issue that I feel strongly about is that all the footballers that have come out are all white men and I cannot believe that this hasn't happened to black men or Asian or other minority ethnic groups. […] How do we get these people, these cohorts of individuals from different groups to start recounting their stories?" (VA3) Another acknowledged the additional barriers which non-white players face speaking out (VA1), which identifies a need for further research and exploration. Although the majority of the victims who spoke out were in fact white, it draws further attention to those who may not feel ready to disclose due to additional barriers.

Race was also a factor in the instances of physical assault of a sexual nature at Chelsea FC. Due to widespread allegations of abuse, Chelsea FC commissioned two reports, one to look at the racist bullying allegations at the club conducted by children's charity Barnardo's (2019), while Charles Geekie QC (2019) investigated non-recent sexual abuse. The racist bullying included 'physical' contact of a sexual nature to humiliate the boys. However, it was perceived this was not for the sexual gratification of the perpetrator, therefore was separated from the cases of non-recent child sexual abuse. One advocate explained how the attention in criminal law is given to the motive of the perpetrator, rather than the impact the abuse has on the recipient (VA1). This draws attention to the discrepancy that exists between physical

assault of a sexual nature vs. sexual assault in criminal law, despite both being instances of sexual assault. Those involved in the racist bullying at Chelsea also experienced abuse of a sexual nature, including the touching of genitals. Although this is a legal framework issue, it raises questions as to why all abuse of a sexual nature is not treated to the same legal standard, with one involving an investigation by a charity and the other a barrister. As an advocate stated, "The question is why have a different standard? Why not have a QC for both?" (VA1).

Language

Language was further identified as a barrier for the boys, as it is important to acknowledge that many of the victims simply may not have had the words as children to understand or disclose what was happening to them. One simply stated, "So we're talking about the late 60s, early 70s. We didn't have the words, didn't have the language for the issue." (VA8) Some of the boys were as young as nine years old, so didn't understand what was happening to them. Yet this adds to the theme of feeling culpable via silence, their age and simply not having the words to understand what was happening to them left the boys highly vulnerable. It is poignantly summed up a victim stating, "I think for me I can't explain what happened to me when I was 12, all I know is I remember it was wrong, it shouldn't have happened and it did happen." (VA6) An environment was created through which hierarchical power differences within the clubs and society meant that the victims did not feel that they had a legitimate voice that would be listened to by those in authority.

4.6 Footballing Environment

When all these factors are coupled with football's widespread influence in British society, it created an environment where the abuse of boys could continue unchecked. This has been touched upon but not yet been explicitly noted in this report. Its influence both on the boys and their families cannot be overstated which will be explored in the following sections. Football blurred the lines of acceptability as its harsh environment meant that the boys were not sure what was appropriate from coaches. One police officer shared the difficulty in contacting individuals who had come to light in their investigations, yet did not recognise themselves as victims. They stated, "Many of them didn't actually realise they had been victims as such. They thought it may have just been banter as it happened in a changing room" (P3). This does not downplay what occurred to them as children or the impact abuse had on many individuals lives, yet does highlight questions around coping mechanisms and the football environment and culture which existed at that time. This was reflected by one individual who said, "Sometimes that moment when you acknowledge and realise you've been abused can be more traumatic than the actual abuse itself." (VA7) This helps us understand how abuse was normalised for many young boys in the footballing environment.

Locker-Room 'Banter'

Perpetrators carefully exploited the love and passion players and their families had for the sport, with many boys believing they had to withstand the abuse to progress in football. The merging of abuse with football was further utilised through the coach's language, and use of inappropriate sexualised 'banter' with players. Abusers could hide behind this aggressive and vulgar sporting language, shown by perpetrator Eddie Heath's 'sexual banter', which he used in the locker room (Geekie, 2016: 54-55). This attempted to introduce and normalise sexual abuse in the boys' lives, as their age and vulnerability meant they could not understand what was happening to them. Other perpetrators instead simply threatened the boys, utilising ideas of shame and culpability to keep them silent. This was effective through cultural ideas of the time regarding masculinity, age, and sporting culture.

Power of the Coach

Sport offered up a dream to many young men, often from working class homes, of a future earning a living from a game they loved. The boys looked up to the coaches as role models because they had built successful careers in football. Bennell himself had previously been a talented youth player at Chelsea Football Club, who was struck with injury at a young age. Therefore, coaches in sport are placed in positions of unequivocal power and authority, as they are responsible for building or alternatively destroying the careers of young athletes. Two perpetrators in particular were even nicknamed the 'star-maker' (Sheldon, 2021), reflecting the power and respect they yielded. Several victims and advocates expressed this to be a key barrier to young boys disclosing at the time. One stated, "This coach-player relationship is still one we haven't come to grips with […]. In elite sport, the coach has so much power to determine your future." (VA8) Additionally, as one victim advocate explained: "It's also about being believed, 'who's going to believe me against that well known football coach, or pillar of the community?' (VA3)

The coach or scout is the ultimate gatekeeper into professional football, controlling the entry into this potential career path. The boys were aware of their position in the club, with many believing they had to put up with abuse to progress in playing the game they loved. When this is coupled with other grooming techniques, it left the perpetrators with considerable control and power over the players they abused. As one participant stated, "Your dream would have burst [if you had spoken out]" (VA9). Coaches sell the dream to young players and their families, as football did not just offer a career playing a game they loved but the opportunity for social mobility for many working class and lower middle class players.

Grooming of Parents

Ultimately, the process of grooming did not just stop at the individual players, but extended to their parents and families. Abusive coaches exploited values such as family pride, with complexities at home often playing into a young person's vulnerability. This was a theme raised by many victims and advocates, as it is clear parents were manipulated by perpetrators to keep victims silent. The coaches often ingratiated themselves into family life, for example, staying for dinner and popping round to the family home unexpectedly. This led to many families having a close bond with their son's coach, highlighted by cases where parents vouched for the perpetrator when allegations first started coming to light. Parents were similarly sold the 'footballing dream' for their sons, as one victim stated, "The family invests in this idea that they're going to make it in football. That was exactly the same as my family, working class family, exactly the same." (VA8) This link to class was clearly a method of grooming parents, as a promise of social mobility offered hope, pride, and promise to families. This made it more challenging for victims to tell their families what happened to them, as one participant stated, "How do you do tell the parents this is happening to you when the parents are really encouraging you to go and play sport. They are taking you; they want you to succeed. How can you tell the parents this?" (VA3)

Almost all the victims who participated in this research noted their parents were completely unaware of what was occurring to them, due to being groomed themselves by the perpetrator. Additionally, changes in the boys' behaviour as a result of the abuse were often simply put down to adolescence. Nevertheless, one participant went as far as to say that there were cases where parents had more knowledge: "It seems to be so much at stake – a career at stake. I know some parents were complicit and knew it was happening, but decided it was the price worth paying, which is hard to hear but it's actually true." (VA8) This is a highly complex and challenging assertion, with no victim having stated or insinuated that their own parents

were wilfully blind to their abuse. However, this is a possibility that should be considered when looking at how abuse was allowed to continue for so long in some cases. The level of emotional investment that parents had placed in the potential success of their sons, coupled with the relationship cultivated with them by the coaches, placed the victims in an invidious position. It should also be noted that safeguarding and child protection concerns were very different than they are today. Many parents were simply not aware of the extent of risk in such scenarios.

4.7 Long-Term Impact of Abuse

The long-term impact of abuse is extensive for many, as victims revealed the physical, psychological, emotional and financial impact of abuse they suffered in childhood. Victims spoke powerfully about the impact the abuse had on their lives: as one victim stated, "This is a life sentence no matter how I portray myself to others." (V-S7) The trauma has led to instances of severe mental health issues, substance abuse and in some devastating cases, suicide. This report will briefly touch on how abuse and trauma manifests in the lives of some of the men, however it cannot do justice to the complexity of each victim's life course as a result of their abuse. Although the impact can manifest itself in a myriad of unique ways, one individual spoke of their partner's reaction when he finally disclosed to her in 2016, "I decided I would, I told [my wife] about it and she was a bit shocked, but she said 'that explained a lot' – my behaviour, which seemed to be obvious to her but not to me." (VA8) This shows how an individual could still be exhibiting certain behaviours and responses decades after abuse took place. Another example is when a prosecutor spoke of the impact on an individual's career and life, stating "He was tipped to be probably a professional footballer and play for England, […] but just couldn't cope with what had happened and it ruined his life really." (CPS1) The importance of these accounts further solidifies victims' desire for justice after everything they've been through and continue to face in their daily lives as a result of the abuse.

Ripple Effect

This impact is not just limited to the individual, but also has a ripple effect on family, friends, and communities. This was noted by victims and advocates in two key ways: loved ones living with certain behaviours victims exhibited as a result of the abuse, such as deep-rooted anger, and also the impact if the individual eventually disclosed to them what happened. As one participant stated, "the ripple effect with your family is massive, it is, because they took you there and the shame and guilt is there, they are victims as well." (VA9) This is particularly with reference to parents who in most cases inadvertently helped facilitate the abuse. Their close connection to the victim meant they also dealt with the aftermath, even when they were not aware of the reasons behind the behaviour for years to come. This draws attention to the importance of the criminal justice system for victims' families as well, particularly if their loved one is deceased. They bravely wish to continue the fight for justice on their behalf, as one police officer stated, "A couple of victims who were deceased, one in particular had a very difficult life as a result as the abuse he suffered as a child. I think it was giving his family, you never get closure from it, but that satisfaction, the man that had caused so much difficulty to their [loved one] had actually been held accountable for what he had done." (P3) Although the impact of abuse is widespread and there is no quick fix, this indicates the criminal justice system can offer some level of accountability and justice.

Acknowledgement

Therefore, previous harmful assumptions that non-recent abuse is simply in the past and therefore not requiring of attention are quite clearly false. To a victim "there is nothing non-

recent about it - I live with it everyday." (V-S1) The reasons why some, including the Prime Minister Boris Johnson[31], still hold on to such notions are debatable, but as one participant suggests, it can be an excuse to ignore the issue entirely. One victim stated, "I think there is an argument that it is relied on, the 'oh I don't understand' argument is relied on to avoid it." (VA5) Many victims and advocates acknowledged that the long-term impact of abuse is not widely accepted within the criminal justice system and society as a whole. As one advocate stated, "We're still not having people talk about it because it's still a taboo subject." (VA3) Although a participant does highlight the long-term impact of child sexual abuse is being acknowledged more with females (VA8), there is still a way to go for male victims. However, the publicity surrounding the football revelations in 2016 made some considerable progress in raising awareness of the prevalence of childhood abuse. This should in turn lead to more attention on widening comprehensive support services and offering an accommodating criminal justice response to these reports. Whether this actually occurred for all victims is up for debate.

4.8 NSPCC Helpline

Soon after this information came to light, the FA set up a helpline in collaboration with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) for victims to come forward to disclose their abuse. Within the first two hours of it opening, it received over fifty calls (BBC Sport, 2016) and within three weeks, calls totalled more than 1,700 disclosing instances of abuse in football (Rawlinson, 2016). This resource for victims to disclose has been highly commended as being a positive mechanism for victims to start the pressurised and highly personal process of reporting their abuse. Many participants in this study used this service, with the police similarly speaking positively about the impact on their investigations. One officer stated, "The response by the NSPCC and Operation Hydrant was so quick that the setting up of that helpline just made everyone's life a lot easier in terms of from an investigative point of view." (P2) However, it was expressed by the same individual that it did cause some challenges later on down the line, as it had to be explained to the jury that the account given to the call-handler might not necessarily be the exact same account given in the police interview. The officer articulated, "there's lots of reasons why further things come out in a police interview, we're trained interviewers, we're trained to bring out all of that. We built the trust with them by then. Whereas picking up the phone to a stranger, they didn't disclose everything, that's normal. So yes, while it had it's real benefits, it did come with some challenges." (P2) It was discussed that potential lessons could be learnt if other cases such as these required a similar response, yet many participants spoke of the benefits of having such a mechanism particularly in mass-reporting cases.

Press & Media Attention

The role of the press and media in covering mass-reporting cases is also important to note, as through printing and circulating stories of those who had waived their anonymity, it encouraged the snowball effect of others to come forward. It enabled victims to get a sense of strength in numbers, especially when there are concerns surrounding being believed and/or being able to prove abuse occurred. Both victims and police officers spoke of the influence of this as one officer stated, "I think the more exposure, the more people will come forward and feel emboldened to do so." (P1) Two themes soon became apparent surrounding the media

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[31] Boris Johnson stated in an interview with LBC radio station in 2019, "I think an awful lot of the money, an awful lot of police time, now goes into these historic offences and all this malarkey… £60m I saw was being spaffed up the wall on some investigation into historic child abuse and all this kind of thing." (LBC Radio, 2019) His political authority and status emphasise the pertinence of recognising power dynamics in the treatment of victims.

attention, firstly the hierarchy which emerged as accounts started to publicised and later the inevitable cyclical nature of press reporting. Many victims discussed how it was the ex-professional footballers who received the most media attention, however this was discussed with optimism over the attention and acknowledgement this could bring to the issues faced by all survivors. One advocate summing up the press attention as, "What you do get is a footballer coming out, that will make the main news. If you get a non-league footballer, it makes nothing – you may get local news." (VA3) Although victims in this research did not express resentment over this, it perhaps is reflective of the commercial nature of media organisations.

This was shown further through the inevitable cyclical media interest, with one advocate stating, "So you get this kind of yo-yo of media interest, and that's just the way the media operates." (VA3) One participant spoke about the lessening interest as time went on, comparing the press coverage from Bennell's trial in 2018 with the media interest for his final conviction in 2020 (VA8). This is not to downplay the investigative journalism and considerable activism from survivor groups, such as The Offside Trust and SAVE Association which have brought and kept the issue in the public eye for a considerable amount of time. It simply reinforces the importance of the subject being kept high profile in the media. The role of the media in police investigations will be explored in the following section.

4.9 Disclosing vs. Waiving Anonymity

After Andy Woodward waived his anonymity, it led to a number of individuals following suit and speaking out publicly about their abuse. However, this resulted in confusion amongst those coming forward concerning the difference between disclosing abuse and waiving anonymity. Due to so many people speaking to the media about their abuse, some victims believed that they had to disclose publicly when they made a complaint to police. Due to this, a highly informative and supportive resource was developed in partnership with survivors of non-recent abuse in football and the PFA and FA[32] in 2020. This was particularly based on the reflections and expertise of survivor Ian Ackley, who had created a previous document in response to the lack of information available to him when waiving his anonymity in the 1990s. This resource provides much of the information needed for a victim to make an informed decision, however it was not available at the time participants in this study were navigating this issue. The gravity of waiving anonymity cannot be overstated, as the impact on the victim and their family and friends is considerable – particularly in high profile cases. As one victim stated, "It was the anonymity which was the big one, because you're never quite sure what you are letting yourself in for." (VA8) Some individuals were given advice from the police about how best to combat media attention, although this varied depending on the investigation team. This report will include experiences from those who have waived their anonymity and those who have chosen not to.

Empowerment

Several victim advocates with lived experience have spoken of the decision to waive their anonymity as 'empowering' (VA9), reclaiming their voice and speaking out with the hope to encourage others to come forward. It is apparent that if many of the ex-professional footballers had not shared their experiences on national television, it would not have

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[32] *See document –'I'm A Survivor Of Childhood Sexual Abuse In Football. Should I Waive My Anonymity?' A Guide To Help You Make An Informed Decision (2020)* *http://www.offsidetrust.com/application/files/4316/0562/2615/9-4-waiving-anonymity-a-guide-colour-version.pdf*

encouraged as many other victims to speak out. In fact, the press attention would most likely have been very different if Woodward and others had all remained anonymous. This was the precise reason many victims wished to use their unique platform as footballers to encourage others to both come forward and seek support. As one victim expressed, "I wanted to encourage others to come forward and try to deal with what has happened rather than bury it." (V-S6) Disclosing abuse meant that the men could finally start to deal with the trauma they had been coping with for decades. Others wished to use their platform to bring about accountability, with individuals going to the press, as "the truth for all victims has to be addressed by clubs and governments." (V-S2) This was a significant theme for those victims who were seeking justice from both the clubs, the criminal justice system, and the State.

Privacy

However, some took the decision to disclose to the police but not waive their anonymity, as one victim said, 'personally, it's not a route I'd like to go down' due to concerns about privacy (V-S8). There is no right decision for victims to take, therefore it is important this decision is considered and supported by family and friends. Yet, although many victims spoke about feeling empowered, some expressed feelings of being rushed into a decision, in both disclosing and in waiving their anonymity. It is important to note that not all victims were ready to make such a personal and life-changing decision in November 2016, yet nevertheless the snowball effect encouraged them to do so. Regret was expressed in two key areas: for those who disclosed but did not waive their anonymity, they expressed regret with making a report to police – this will be explored in depth in this report. For those who waived their anonymity, some found the media attention to be intensive, yet of course anonymity cannot be retracted once it is waived. There has been a lot of attention to the positive impact of disclosing, however there are many challenges that follow, particularly in cases that gain a lot of media attention. Intrusion from the media can be overwhelming, as one survivor who spoke out in the early 1990's was then faced with intense media attention when the story broke again in November 2016 (Ackley, 2018). He explained the challenges that come with waiving anonymity, as once the decision is made it cannot be reversed. This could impinge on a victim's ability to move on once a case has finished.

Regret

For those who did not speak publicly, the nature of press reporting and others doing so meant details of cases against the same perpetrator were all over the media. As one victim stated, "The impact on my wife and [child] has been absolutely massive. My wife had no idea, I'd not told anyone what the details were so they never knew anything, just knew I was involved previously. Now it's splashed all over the papers." (V-S8) The impact of this is poignantly summarised in the following quote:

> "It knocked me for six. It's had such an impact on everybody who's been involved this time around. More so than previously. More so because it's in the public domain. So much more information has come out so previously you could… telling someone you suffered abuse as a child is one thing but them knowing the actual level of abuse that was involved has been very difficult for everybody. Some people had never disclosed previously, were never going to but were taken up by this whirlwind that they were sucked into it. Some people disclose to the police or family and then they'll struggle with that for the rest of their lives because they would have preferred not to. Sometimes, for me personally, it was the worst thing it could have happened in 2016, it coming out, I know for a lot of other people it was as well." (V-S8)

4.10 Power of Activism

Nevertheless, many victims went on to waive their anonymity and take up advocacy positions, such as setting up charities to support other survivors of abuse in football and running campaigns to raise awareness of abuse in sport. The reasons for this are both interesting to note and important, as many victims stated they wanted some good to come from their experience, namely that no other child be abused playing the sport they love. Furthermore, some spoke of providing support for survivors which did not exist for them when they disclosed. This was discussed in depth in the interviews and victim responses and is an important component of the case study of non-recent child sexual abuse in football. However, it should be noted that advocacy takes various forms, both privately and in the public domain. Although this section shines a light on the public actions of advocates with lived experience, we must remain aware of the many victims who have not spoken publicly yet will be battling privately each day with the harmful legacy of the abuse they suffered.

Platform

Some victims recognised the unique platform they were afforded as football survivors and wished to raise awareness of wider abuse. The fact that despite the numbers of players abused in the game and in wider society, no current professional player has waived their anonymity to speak out about abuse is notable. One participant stated, "One of the big issues is, it's all right for an old guy like me and various others to come forward but the people involved in sport at the moment, particularly at the elite level, there are so many barriers to them coming forward. One being they're in the midst of their career, they may well be abused in whatever way, emotionally or whatever, it is a much bigger step. Everything is at stake. I think this is part of the issue with this [elite sport], it is held in place by a power system which is endorsed in governing bodies – they turn a blind eye, as we see in gymnastics. I think it's really problematic." (VA8) This specifies that many of the barriers the boys faced still exist today, with the stakes being raised due to business interests now monopolising the game. This is a key factor why many victim advocates with lived experience went on to campaign to raise awareness of safeguarding and child protection in sport, using their lived experience and expertise to evoke change.

Helping Others & Healing

Two other reasons victim advocates with lived experience articulate as a reason for their advocacy was to help others and also start the healing process themselves. As one stated, "I can use my history and experience to positively effect and help change the culture and landscape of safeguarding and survivor engagement utilising a lived experience for the greater good." (V-S5) This passion to evoke change and help other survivors is powerful, highlighted by individuals and groups, such as The Offside Trust and SAVE Association. Others spoke of therapeutic benefits, with a participant stating, "I feel when I do this work it helps my healing journey knowing I may be helping others." (V-S7) No action will make up for the impact the abuse has had on a victim's life, but the power survivor-led activism has for the individual and for society should not be overlooked.

5. The Victims in the Criminal Justice System

5.1 Background

This next section explores the experiences of victims within the criminal justice system from the 1990s when early allegations were made, through to the major investigations that launched in November 2016 as a result of the ongoing disclosures of CSA in football. It has highlighted the many changes and improvements to the system have been enacted since the first allegations were made in the early 1990s, as one advocate stated, "It's an awful lot better than it was." (VA4) However, it should be noted that these early experiences framed a number of the victims' encounters with the criminal justice process, so will be included to provide context of how some participants in this research first came into contact with the criminal justice system. This research indicates there are still clear improvements to be made to victim's experience of the criminal justice process, while acknowledging the harm caused to many victims of childhood abuse in their attempts to get justice.

Key Investigations

The key police forces that launched major investigations as a result of revelations in 2016[33] were Cheshire Police, Hampshire Police, Police Scotland, Cambridgeshire Police and Northumbria Police. Although every police investigation is different, many faced similar challenges with cases crossing jurisdictions, victim welfare and the scale of disclosures being made. Some appeared to overcome such challenges, with Hampshire Police receiving an award acknowledging the 'feedback from the victims and witnesses praising the exceptional support, professionalism and integrity that the team provided.' (Police Federation, 2019) However, as noted by the majority of the participants who contributed to this research, this was not the case for all the victims involved in each investigation. Victim experience of the criminal justice system, and particularly the police and CPS handling of cases, appeared to vary considerably between investigations. It is not the purpose of this report to draw out which investigation teams faced the most criticism, but to highlight the problems each victim participant encountered within the system.

Although it is not public knowledge exactly which investigations received additional funding from the Home Office, a couple of teams did indicate they received additional financial support to undertake such large-scale investigations. Both advocates and criminal justice professionals highlighted the platform football had provided to these cases, meaning they were prioritised by police forces to a varying degree. The police officers involved in some of these investigations stated they were able to do so because of the extra funding which was given as a result of the publicity these cases received.

5.2 Experiences Prior to 2016

Most victims did not come forward about the actions of their coaches at the time of the abuse, or soon after, as a result of the various barriers outlined in the previous section. However, there are still a number of victims who did report their abuse when they became young adults, with one stating, "I knew that if I didn't report what had happened to me, he would be free to abuse others." (V-S6) The accounts of such individuals in multiple investigations indicate the general experience victims faced in the criminal justice system at the time of the abuse. One victim described "a large amount of errors and poor practice" (V-S5), with an example being the police pretending to be unable to locate the alleged perpetrator (V-S3). However, when

[33] *Although a smaller investigation was already underway due to a victim reporting their abuse to the police prior to November 2016, this was then included in the large investigation that followed.*

the victim returned with further evidence it was soon apparent the police were aware of the individual, yet had chosen not to act. Although the reason for this is unknown, it raises questions as to whether such actions were a result of incompetence, or down to something more concerning. It is perhaps more simply reflective of a lack of interest in such cases at the time.

Police Insensitivity & Culture

A common theme in accounts of victims making early disclosures were instances of insensitivity by police officers handling such cases, which could possibly reflect the culture of policing at that time. One victim believed his age impacted on his treatment by police, as police officers warned him of the consequences if he was lying. He recalled, "I was a young lad who was told that if I had lied my football career was over and nobody would believe me ever again" (V-S1). This draws attention to concerns children and young people had regarding disclosing to the authorities at the time, as they questioned whether they would be taken seriously or not. This shines some light on the treatment of young, often working class, boys at the time, and the attitudes towards male child sexual abuse. Some victims waited many years, as seen in the late disclosure figures amongst men, to disclose their abuse. By this time, many structural changes and reforms had inevitably taken place, including dedicated teams charged with investigating non-recent child sexual abuse. However, based on some examples of poor practice experienced by participants in this research, it would indicate that further improvements in some forces might still be necessary.

A notable factor in the experiences of those who disclosed at this time was a lack of specially trained officers taking their statements. Victims of sexual abuse are highly vulnerable and need to be supported and encouraged through the process of sharing their account. One victim said, "I did not feel believed at all. I felt despite the significant detail and list of others abused they merely ticked boxes in their investigation." (V-S7) This example indicates there may have been an issue with police insensitivity towards such victims at the time, as this was emphasised again in the insensitivity of one of the officers when taking a victim's statement. A victim recalled, "One of the officers involved was very open, trying to be reassuring and follow the right protocols. The other one seemed to be very dismissive, wasn't understanding at all, if I tried to speak he would cut me short straight away and tried to talk over me. Even though I was trying to say something he would just raise his voice, until I just thought, you know what – sod it, he doesn't want to listen." (V-S8)

Plea Bargains

Another issue, which came up in multiple accounts, was surrounding the use of plea bargains in these cases. For one of the cases it meant that the abuse of multiple victims over two decades only resulted in a one-year prison sentence. The perpetrator was then released after six months. This clearly did not provide adequate justice for the harm caused to the many victims. Due to the plea bargain the case never got to court, with victims to this day being left without answers surrounding their charges. One stated, "I feel there was a miscarriage of justice in not allowing the case to go to court." (V-S1) Another case had similar issues, with victims being uninformed of the prosecutor lead plea bargain that took place, which was only brought to light after the football allegations were made in 2016. This played a significant role for one individual who stated he got the 'opposite' of justice through the system, as "I was left with the reality […] I would NEVER get justice as my charges could never be lifted off file and resurrected. This is something the police said I would be able to do if he was ever re-charged. It was a blatant and total lie which I only found out some 20 plus years later when I asked to be included in the most recent trial." (V-S5) The decision for a prosecutor to bring

forward a plea bargain which excludes several charges and victims is reflective of the attitudes of the time, as 'all they wanted was the guy behind bars, forget the impact on victims and survivors.' (VA5)

Criminal Justice Practice

In addition to this, there was an example of an acquittal in the 1990s against Bob Higgins that resulted in the barring of any further charges being brought in the involved victims' names today. A possible reason for this acquittal is the severing of victims into separate trials often used as a strategy at the time, as one prosecutor stated, "I think it wasn't uncommon at the time that the more complainants were felt to be more prejudicial and suggestion that he couldn't have a fair trial, so they were severed. Nowadays if there's a nexus, a connection between them all, and they can be included on the same indictment, they are, which obviously really helps in cases when you have more than one person complaining of the exact same behaviour. It makes it more likely in the jury's mind, especially if they don't know each other." (CPS1) This had further implications for the recent investigations because an obvious line of defence for the perpetrator was that, 'everybody knew I was tried in the '90s and none of these boys came forward then. If I abused them, why did they not come forward then?' (CPS1) This posed an array of challenges for the prosecution and also proved highly difficult for victims who could not have their case go to court again due to the double jeopardy[34] legislation in place, this will be explored in more depth later in this report. Further issues noted with criminal justice practice at this time was also the short sentences given to charges of child sexual abuse, one victim expressed, "He only actually served 15 months in prison for the abuse I suffered at his hands, this has always been something that has pained me." (VA5) This shows both the sentence lengths given at the time and the lack of understanding surrounding the harm of childhood abuse.

The impact of both the policing culture at the time and ineffective criminal justice practices with regards to child abuse were significant to victims. One participant had his charges left on file by police, meaning he would be unable to receive any justice for the abuse he suffered described the pain this caused. He went to court when later charges were brought against his perpetrator to see if he could get some 'final closure' and also in a victim advocacy capacity. He stated, "To be honest with you, it was really a double-edged sword because I knew I'm never going to get justice, I know that at this point. I knew by going to the trial that if everybody gets successful convictions, yes that's brilliant and that's what we want but it's also going to stick in the heart a little bit. I am never going to get that justice." (VA5) This powerful account highlights the lasting impact that the justice system can have in a victim's life and the important role of justice for victims of childhood abuse.

Change in Attitude

An advocate described the general culture that existed at this time surrounding non-recent abuse, as "I think the police would be the first to admit, ten years ago, even five years; they were not geared towards a culture of making people feel comfortable to come forward. There was often a culture of disbelief. There was often a culture of having to repeat your story time and time again, it's very retraumatising to recount your experience to multiple different people. There were very poor communication practices, not keeping victims and witnesses updated about their case." (VA2) The response of the police also acts as a barrier for men to come forward, as previous flippancy and insensitivity has strengthened the assumption that

[34] *Double jeopardy legislation ('non bis in idem') inhibits an individual from being tried again on the same or similar charges after a court acquittal.*

victims won't be believed. Nevertheless, police attitudes and culture have undoubtedly changed; especially since widespread allegations of both non-recent and contemporary child sexual abuse has come to light. As an advocate stated, "the police believe it now" (VA4), with this change of attitude having undoubtedly evolved as a result of a development in knowledge and understanding of abuse, as well as policy and protocol changes within the police.

5.3 Police – Disclosure & Investigation

Since 2016, the victims' experiences of the police have varied quite considerably depending on each force's handling of the different major cases. This is reflected in participants highlighting the police response to be 'very patchy' (VA3) and 'inconsistent' (VA10) across the cases. This is even acknowledged to some extent by a police officer as, 'that initial response may not be the same for every victim or survivor' (P4) due to it being handled at the local level. This variation of response is worrisome, especially when such cases need to be handled so sensitively throughout the full investigation. As a police officer noted, "When you are dealing with adults that have been abused as children, especially in a position of trust, their ability to trust and to rely on authority is hugely damaged." (P2) This officer recognised the importance of building trust and investing in each victim, with the most successful investigations embodying this ideal. A number of investigations took on a specialised trauma-informed approach, with the team members being well trained and equipped to handle such challenges. However, based on the victims' accounts, this was not consistent across all cases of non-recent child sexual abuse in football.

Reporting to the Police

Many victims made the decision to disclose their abuse to the police because they wanted to be 'heard' and 'recognised' (VA3), indicating the importance of a criminal justice response. This feeling was reiterated by other participants, such as one individual stating "as much as it was difficult, I just had to get rid of it" (VA6). Despite this desire to be acknowledged within the system and receive justice, many victims shared how difficult it was to report to the police, with one describing it as 'extremely stressful and upsetting' (V-S6). Re-telling their story to the police can retraumatise victims, therefore has to be handled both appropriately and with care. Some victims shared that when they disclosed the police were "very understanding and helpful", with another commenting that "The detectives I gave the statement to were two nice fellas, they weren't questioning in any shape or form. I didn't think in any way they didn't believe me, because that was something that had always held me back." (V-S9) This shows that in amongst the experiences of victims, particularly in the complex and large-scale investigations which many victims got lost in, there were some positive experiences of empathetic and understanding police officers.

Memory

For victims providing a statement to the police, a key theme that emerged was memory, which is particularly pertinent in cases of non-recent abuse. One victim noted the challenge this caused him, as "there was such a big gap between the end of the abuse and when I came forward, I had blocked a lot of things out. Even though my statement is correct and true, it wasn't necessarily 'full' if that makes sense. There were lots of things that I started to remember, because once I had come forward the floodgates started to open and all the memories came. Which I didn't want, that's what I had tried to suppress over the years so when I gave my statement, it was quite quick after the police had contacted me and I hadn't had time to gather my thoughts." (V-S9) This victim in fact contacted the police to provide more information, however they stated to amend the statement would look like fabrication

and would not be believed (ibid). Another victim had a similar experience with memory loss when giving a statement stating, "The abuse was so bad my mind blanked it out of my memory. I was given no support during the process of giving evidence to the police." (V-S1) It appears that some investigation teams did not fully consider the implications of memory when gathering details of the crime from the victim. It is understandable inquiries do not wish to indicate any possible discrepancies within an account which could be used against a victim in court, however it does highlight the need for further support when a victim makes their statement.

The issue is starting to be recognised within the police as one officer spoke of traumatic memories and the challenge surrounding recovering such events. They articulate how, "victims and witnesses will recall things not necessarily in an ordered way […]. There can be gaps in memory that are quite legitimate in the way that a victim or survivor has dealt with trauma." (P4) This is presented as a challenge for gathering evidence but also presenting the victim statement in a coherent fashion to the Crown Prosecution Service, with consideration on how it translates in court (ibid). Despite better understanding of how trauma manifests in memory, it is still a common line of defence put forward by a perpetrator that gaps or inconsistencies in the victim's memory are because the person is not telling the truth. When in fact, it could be the impact of trauma (P4). This needs to be more widely acknowledged within the criminal justice system, to better educate juries and ensure victims are able to give their best evidence.

Evidence Gathering

It is well recognised that childhood abuse or any sexual violence is extremely hard to prove in a court of law. The very nature of non-recent abuse causes a multitude of challenges for investigations as "you don't have the luxury of forensics, CCTV and phone evidence to back up corroborate the allegations so the crux of it is strength in numbers, so that comes with, it's fraught with danger so you have to be very careful in how you approach those people." (P2) This draws attention to the key evidence used in these cases, the corroboration[35] of accounts from other victims and witnesses. This evidence became crucial in these investigations, leading to both concerns over damaging the integrity of the evidence provided but also the welfare of all the victims involved. Criminal justice professionals in this research discussed that they needed to ensure there was no suggestion of collusion between the victims in the investigations. Therefore police teams ensured those involved and the content of their statements were not shared with other victims. This was with consideration to a common line of defence in high profile cases such as these, particularly when there were several civil cases and compensation claims being processed.

Victims and criminal justice professionals also drew attention to other evidence that was provided, such as team photos, certificates and confirmation of attendance at football camps by family members. A couple of victims drew attention to a key difficulty most victims faced: it was highly challenging to pin down exact dates of abuse, especially when it occurred over a long period of time. One victim stated, "I had specific dates because of the certificate I got from attending – which exactly specified the two dates I was sexually abused. Whereas a lot of the other boys will remember it as quite a few Friday nights. So your actual evidence is sketchy in many cases and you maybe don't have much other evidence to go alongside that. It

[35] *This is different to Scots law, where corroboration is a requirement of two separate sources of evidence before a case can proceed to trial. 'It means that the accused cannot be convicted on the word of one person alone with no supporting evidence.' (Cook, 2014). This barred an individual in this research to have their case taken forward in Scotland.*

becomes difficult." (VA6) As a result, a number of victims believed the charges did not reflect the scale of the abuse they faced, due to difficulties pinpointing when abuse occurred decades previously. With regards to the football clubs involvement in the investigations, both police teams commented, the clubs were 'cooperative as they needed to be' (P2) and 'they were cooperative, I wouldn't say they went out their way to assist.' (P3) It goes beyond the scope of this report to comment on the response of the football clubs, however it should be acknowledged the extent of the help they provided to teams investigating abuse that occurred at, or was closely affiliated with, their clubs.

Pursuing Charges

Due to the numbers of victims who came forward, it was possible for many complainants to have their accounts corroborated by other victims who witnessed inappropriate behaviour and even instances of abuse. The nature of mass reporting meant investigations could also identify possible further victims who had been abused but had not yet come forward. Police officers highlighted that having the NSPCC helpline was a truly helpful resource, as it was "unique in terms of the sheer publicity generated […], most of our jobs are us going to them [the victims] and identifying and cold-calling people, whereas this was mainly them coming to us. So we straight away had a number of people we knew were going to be complainants so that was quite different." (P1) An officer acknowledged the high numbers which came forward in their investigation, to the extent that that they were visiting individuals who came up in their inquiries, yet were not ready to make a report to police (P1). This draws attention to the scale of the abuse which occurred in football which goes beyond the statistics that are currently available to us.

The decision to disclose and participate in an investigation is solely down to the victim. As one police officer explained, "Certainly the vast majority […] were happy to pursue the matter through the courts. But we always say to people that's very much their decision; they are not on a train which they can't get off. The ball is very firmly in their court. We say to them, the offending was as such they didn't feel like they had any control and we certainly don't want to place them in a similar situation by them thinking that the power to get involved or not is taken from them, quite the contrary." (P1) This is very important, however it is problematic when the system itself discourages a victim's involvement. Scepticism surrounding the criminal justice system and its reputation for handling cases of sexual violence can stop victims making a report to police. As one participant stated, "I have had examples of men who have said 'well I'm not going to go to the police because it's going to drag it all up and for all of what, to go through a court case which may be more traumatic than the abuse, I don't want to do that.'" (VA7) This indicates that even if the system has improved dramatically, there is still a lot to be done in rebuilding the reputation of the criminal justice process for victims of sexual violence.

Mass Disclosures

It appears that the numerical strength of these cases empowered victims to seek justice, however also became its chief challenge. Each major investigation into football faced difficulties with tens to over a hundred victims making allegations to a number of police forces. The role of Operation Hydrant in managing this will be outlined below, but it is important to note the complexities within such cases to better understand victims' experiences within these investigations. One participant spoke of the police responses noting, "They can't cope at times. I know some of the survivors came forward in November and December 2016, they didn't speak to police officers for two to three months after they had initially phoned up and said this happened to me." (VA6) Police forces faced the challenge of

victims living all over the country, as many had moved away from where the abuse occurred. One team spoke of the importance of doing personal visits, not just asking local police teams to capture a victim statement (P2). This was to ensure continuity in who the victims came into contact with, improving their experiences within a system which can often be impersonal and automatic. The challenge of sensitively handling large number of victims coming forward in a short space of time was a theme across the interviews.

Victim Experience of the Police Investigation

Some police teams understood the importance of getting justice for victims in these cases. However based on the experiences of the victims who were involved in this study; this was not always the case. As one victim clearly outlined, "It's been very frustrating from start to finish with how it's been handled." (V-S8) Although their experiences are complex, issues can be understood in four key areas:

I. Communication

In some cases there was a lack of effective communication between the police and victims. This is highly important for a victim, even if a conviction is not achieved or an individual case is not taken forward. From the participants' accounts, there were issues particularly with the lack of updates victims received through both the investigation process and during the wait for a CPS decision. It has been described as being 'quite poor, sporadic' to 'a bit of a shambles' (V-S8). One victim shared a particularly damaging experience where they were supposed to be acting as a witness at trial, however in the lead up to the court date, did not hear from the police or any other criminal justice professionals. This led them to call the officers responsible for the investigation, "saying 'look you haven't been in touch since you told me what the charges were, what's happening? Am I witness?' It's like weeks away. They were like, 'oh no decided not to use you.' Well was anybody actually going to tell me this? Absolutely appalling communication." (VA5) Victims described a range of experiences such as this, particularly with regards to one of the police investigations. One victim shared, "If you get any information you have to go and search for it, you have to request it. It's not forthcoming." (V-S8) This is particularly damaging when victims are navigating both criminal justice proceedings while trying to continue with their daily lives. As one participant stated, "I've had many guys say to me that it's such a momentous experience when you go to the police and you tell them [about the abuse] and then here's just a massive silence. Nothing happens and nobody gets back to you. You're locked into the system but the communication is very very bad." (VA8)

II. Trauma-Informed

It was not just the silences that caused harm, but also how some police officers and teams communicated. The importance of trauma-informed[36] policing to avoid causing further distress to victims has been presented in the literature, however some victims spoke of how this was not apparent in their own experiences. One victim powerfully stated, "Especially with the way the police contact you or the CPS, there is no emotion attached to it, so they will ring you out the blue, they'll ask a couple of questions, they go away and go and speak to somebody else. They don't realise each contact they make with somebody, it takes two, three, four days to get over the fact I had just been contacted again. It is just a constantly revolving door, it never actually stops" (V-S8). This is important to note, as it can often be forgotten in complex and large-scale investigations that every contact with a victim leaves a trace.

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[36] For further information see 'Trauma-informed practice: what it is and why NAPAC supports it' on NAPAC's website.

Therefore, it appears further consideration is needed when building such cases of non-recent abuse to the potential effect of each contact.

However, this was not the case with all the police teams, with a investigation team understanding the implications of every contact. One police officer stated,

> "We have to consider that we can't just go and knock on someone's door thirty years after something that may have happened to them, something so significant that may have happened to them. We often have to really put in place a victim's strategy around contact, initial contact, and we will always make sure we have a legacy in place that if we don't know who's going to answer the door, for example, we have a backstory because it may well be that that person doesn't want anyone else to know. So there's a lot involved in building strategies around your investigation to make sure that the evidence isn't tainted and also so you don't do anymore damage to those vulnerable individuals and their lives as they are now." (P2)

The officer also explained how they sent out regular 'bespoke' emails, or arranged a phone call if there was a significant update. What is particularly noteworthy is how the team went as far as to send out each update simultaneously, meaning no victim was disadvantaged by being the last to know (ibid). This speaks to how victim welfare can be incorporated into an investigation of this size.

III. Expectations

At the heart of effective communication is managing victims' expectations in the system, most notably through clearly explaining and outlining the process and likely time-scale of their case. Multiple police officers spoke of the importance of explaining the process clearly to victims, to ensure they are well prepared for what lies ahead (P3). This is highly important as one victim stated, "Those lads that came forward, they hadn't got a clue about disclosure and the court process but they were empowered. They were empowered, the people they had played football with and that macho culture and finally someone was saying, 'wait, hang on a minute, this isn't right. I'm not embarrassed and I'm not ashamed and it's not our fault.' That was so empowering for the lads." (VA9) Victims in this research widely shared more positive experiences with officers when reporting their abuse since 2016. However, not all police teams understood how a lack of effective communication can be as insensitive and harmful to victims.

IV. Victim Welfare

Victim welfare is not only morally and ethically important, but also essential in ensuring a successful outcome in investigations such as these. One team in particular took on such ideals at every stage of their investigation, providing each victim with an individual team member as a first line of contact, giving regular updates and even arranging meetings with the prosecuting barrister to familiarise the victims with the court process. The officer described how they went above and beyond in 'investing' in each victim (P2), which reveals an understanding of the importance of ensuring victim welfare. However, this is not common practice across policing due to the lack of resources available to teams in such investigations, as one officer commented, "We were afforded the resources and the time to really dedicate to the victims. Ordinarily in police work you are juggling quite a lot, it's very difficult to afford as much time as you need to, to support those people through an investigation." (P2) This lead to the success of the investigation, as the officer stated, "the fruits of that labour really were born out of the trust we were able to build with them and the support they gave us

through the investigation." (P2) This was concurred by another member of the same team who stated you must "always have the welfare of that person at the forefront of your mind." (P1) This was reflected in a victim sharing how after disclosing to police, he was asked if he would be interested in any support. The police then contacted and made all the arrangements to attend a support group near where he lived, which he described as helping him through what became a challenging and lengthy criminal justice process (VA6). Yet, this best practice approach was not used in every investigation of non-recent child sexual abuse in football. It appears from this research that this standard of welfare was not common across these cases, with the majority of victims who participated in this study not experiencing this level of investment or care by the police. It is not the purpose of this report to explore the parameters of the police's responsibility to a victim's welfare in these cases. However, as highlighted above, policing is increasingly recognising the importance of the victim and their welfare in successful investigations of child sexual abuse. The investigative process should certainly not cause any further harm to vulnerable victims, with the care to victims needing to be prioritised wherever possible.

Policing Priorities and Resources

Victims' experience of the treatment by police forces handling the different major cases varied quite considerably. This reflects the different resources and priorities available across forces, with many victims and advocates acknowledging this when drawing attention to the inconsistency across victims' experiences. As one participant shared, "every police force works differently" resulting in victims facing 'a postcode lottery' in how the force handles their case (VA12). One stated, "I understand they are doing a hell of a lot more, but we do have regional police forces and it's pretty much by the region and whoever the Chief Constable is, what priority he or she gives to these particular things." (VA8) This was substantiated by another participant who stated, "First and forefront, our big issue is that we have 43 forces, 43 kings and queens doing 43 different things." (VA9) The experiences of victims were dependent on the particular investigative team handling the case, but also the policing priorities, culture and resources of the particular force. Some advocates went as far as saying the police are 'under-resourced' and 'under-funded', therefore have no choice but to prioritise contemporary cases of sexual violence (VA5). As one advocate simply stated, "Is non-recent CSA top priority for police? I think that's always going to be a problem." (VA8) Fundamentally, providing a universal experience for every single victim who engages with the criminal justice system can be challenging, as one victim advocate explained:

> "I do quite a lot of work with the police, I guess when I do work with the police I am often seeing a certain sub-section of police investigations because the police that ask for help and want the input of a [specialised advocate] are often those people who are already doing it better. But if I then talk to survivors and victims then you're looking at a much patchier picture. So inconsistency that you've got some police forces, some police teams, doing a brilliant job and others doing a really poor job and I think there's something there systemically that there's a latitude that police have around an investigation of any crime. It seems they can do a really good job, or they can do quite a poor job. Yes there are some systems in place but I would argue […]it's not robust enough at ensuring consistent practice." (VA10)

This shows that although there have been pockets of excellent practice, the number of victims who had negative experiences with the police in this research reflect there is still a way to go until this consistent.

Operation Hydrant

What has played a big role in standardising the approach to mass disclosure cases of non-recent abuse has been the work of Operation Hydrant. Operation Hydrant is a coordination hub established in 2014 to deliver the national policing coordination of non-recent child sexual abuse investigations concerning persons of public prominence, or in relation to those offences that took place within institutional settings. This came in the wake of the Jimmy Savile allegations[37], which lead to a surge in individuals reporting child sexual abuse to police and statutory agencies. The key role of Hydrant is to co-ordinate cases which have occurred across numerous police force areas, while offering reviews, guidance and advice to police forces and investigators taking on such complex cases. An individual from Operation Hydrant was interviewed for this research to discuss their role in supporting the investigation of cases of non-recent child sexual abuse in football. They spoke of the initial importance of principally coordinating investigations where there were overlaps across police force areas ensuring that there was a single direction or coordination across forces (P4). This is essential when victims are reporting abuse to their local police station, involving various forces in an investigation against a sole perpetrator.

Operationally, Hydrant take on the role of providing early analysis and exploring models to determine which force should be responsible for the investigation. They offer a range of formal and informal support, including a peer support and review service. They also produce written advice for Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) (e.g. College of Policing & Operation Hydrant, 2016) and briefing notes, jointly with the College of Policing, around specific learning from recent investigations. This is constantly in review and being developed through acknowledging the successes and challenges of previous investigations. Despite the importance of this process, it presents a challenge to this research, as it is challenging to pinpoint the standard advice and procedures used by police in investigations in football when the situation was ever evolving and progressing. Would victims coming forward today have the same experiences of those who reported in 2016?

The significance of Operation Hydrant was spoken of in several interviews with both victims and advocates. As one advocate stated, "Operation Hydrant […] has had a huge effect on standardising and spreading good practice. So I would say now, as victim-survivor of abuse going to the police, there is definitely updated guidance, there is definitely a lot more police officers and forces understanding the nature of the offence and the difficulty of the offence." (VA2) With another sharing, "The police are doing their best, they really are, they are working hard on this now – this is a big change. Particularly Operation Hydrant, the National Coordinating Team, they are really taking this stuff seriously." (VA4) It is clear that there is strong guidance available for police teams, although based on the victims' experiences, there was challenges enforcing it for what could be a number of reasons. For example, regular communication is clearly outlined in the guidance as imperative for ensuring both victim welfare and cooperation in the case (College of Policing & Operation Hydrant, 2016), however this research highlights this not to be the case in all investigations – even up until the most recent convictions in 2020.

A key challenge for Operation Hydrant is that every force is autonomous, with different resources and funding streams available to each police force. As an individual at Operation

[37] *Jimmy Savile was an English TV personality, who used his status to sexually abuse children throughout his career. This was revealed in 2012, almost a year after his death. The scandal was a major factor leading in the establishment of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse launched in July 2014.*

Hydrant acknowledged, "You have some forces, the bigger forces, that actually have dedicated non-recent sexual abuse teams that purely deal with that kind of offending and what that allows them to do is build up a degree of expertise and they will find it easier to deal with because they have that greater knowledge and understanding. […] There are other forces, smaller forces, which don't have the scale of resource to allow that dedicated team to actually function in that way, nor would they necessarily have that demand for that team. What a force can do is use the SIO Advice which we have provided to apply those principles in a different way." (P4) It was explained that the guidance is 'scalable' (P4), with the victim experiences of the police suggesting challenges either implementing or incentivising its use.

5.4 Crown Prosecution Service[38] – Decision to Prosecute

After the police have finished their investigation, the case goes to the Crown Prosecution Service to make a decision over whether to charge the individual – in cases of mass disclosure, this includes which victims and what charges can and will be taken forward to trial. Therefore, the role of the CPS prosecutor is to decide whether a suspect should be charged and what they should be charged with. If charges are authorised, then it is up to the prosecutor to decide which evidence and exhibits should be used, and potentially prepare the case for trial (CPS1). Although in the past, cases of non-recent CSA have proved hard to prosecute, the more recent investigations have proved to have a considerably higher success rate – particularly in mass disclosure cases, which provide corroborative and consistent evidence (CPS1). As a prosecutor involved in one of these cases stated, "So it's looking at each complaint but also then cross-referring them all and looking at how they all link together, because some complainants were giving evidence about themselves but they gave important corroborative evidence with regards to other complainants." (CPS1) In these cases, many victims were able to provide compelling witness evidence to support the cases of their teammates, as one victim stated, "There's people in the bed with me, there's a guy who was in the same bed who spoke at the trial for me, which is dead rare to get that isn't it?" (VA9) Despite the successful convictions, there were two notable themes that impacted on the victims' experience with the CPS – the length of time to make decisions and the number of victims which were taken forward in some of the major investigations.

Length of Time

A key theme noted by all participants in this research was the length of time it took for these cases to go to trial. As one advocate stated, "The wheels of justice turn very slowly don't they?" (VA2) Long wait times were as a result of the sheer numbers of victims coming forward, which caused delays in police investigations, CPS decision making and caused numerous logistical challenges preparing for trial. One such investigation took four years for final charges to be brought, meaning victims had to wait years for a final decision on their case. This may be reflective of some wider-issues in the criminal justice system, with cuts and restructures leaving victims with prolonged wait-times. It is clear some aspects of the process can be sped up, for example, one police investigation were close to charging the perpetrator after five months, which is impressive for an investigation of its size.

The experience for victims who are awaiting a decision is truly important to consider, with one stating, "It's just far too long. From my side of things, you're trying to do it, as lots of people will be, you're trying to do it under the radar, you're trying to do it with maybe just some immediate family knowing, most of the world won't know that you're a non-recent survivor of sexual abuse, you're going through a court case. It's not something you're going

[38] *In Scotland, the Prosecutor Fiscal instead prosecutes cases.*

to sit and openly broadcast and tell lots and lots of people, so you've got this year you're trying to function, trying go to work, trying to be a Dad, or a brother, or a son. You've got it in your mind all the time […] and it's horrendous. It's a very very difficult period for people to cope with." (VA6) The victims are being asked to cope with the stresses of the criminal justice system for years, while also continuing their daily lives and responsibilities.

The toll of this wait for victims is so great that advocates spoke of it stopping others from disclosing, due to the process being 'so lengthy and so painful' (VA1). One victim shared, "[It] took two years to get to trial. So as you can imagine not only did I have the 30-odd years of living with what had happened, I then had another two turbulent years on that." (V-S10) Some victims have withdrawn from their cases because they were taking too long and having a detrimental impact on their personal life. This was voiced by a victim, "I know it was really frustrating there was another lad, I know that his case was potentially going to be taken up as part of [the larger] case but he chose not to in the end. One, the delays which were involved and he didn't feel comfortable enough to go through the process. You know it has a massive impact on your whole family and circle of friends, you might be ok yourself but you don't want to impact your family as well." (V-S8) The damage being caused is inexcusable, as sadly a victim shared how one of his close friends attempted to take his life due to the impact of the delays on his case, he noted simply, "the CPS have no idea and the police have no idea the impact that it has." (V-S8)

Expectations

For victims having to withstand long periods waiting, it was noted by advocates that being updated consistently throughout the investigation could mitigate against the trauma caused by if a case is not taken forward. As a participant noted, "So the impact is magnified and worsened if communication hasn't been present and continuous and consistent throughout the process. […] There's obviously disappointment as they won't get their day in court or their perceived justice, but it's easier for them to process and accept." (VA2) Although it is undeniably distressing for a victim to not be taken forward, it does highlight that there are actions that can make this decision even slightly more tolerable. Communication was a key theme throughout this research, as repeatedly victims voiced how they were not informed and updated of the progress of the investigation. One advocate stated, "Expectations being raised but not fulfilled. There being a lack of communication about what to expect and so survivors can be very validly expecting something better than they're actually getting and that can be a resource issue, it's just communication can go a long way around that." (VA10) By providing victims with updates and managing their expectations through each stage of the process, a victim's experience of the criminal justice system can be drastically improved.

Resources

A key reason for the length of time before a CPS decision is made has been attributed to the scale of the cases, however a number of advocates indicated this could have been mitigated against with more criminal justice personnel working at each stage. As one advocate stated, "We don't want to be too negative about it all, but unfortunately the experiences they have gone through haven't been great. That could be just down to sheer numbers but the question is: why were there not more police officers, CPS prosecutors put in place as soon as we knew what the scale of this issue was. There hasn't been, there have just been continued cuts by the Conservative government unfortunately." (VA1) Although extra funding was attributed to several investigations, the cases are still operating in a system which has faced numerous cuts and restructures in recent years. This can then have a severe knock-on effect for all those

involved in the criminal justice process, but particularly those most harmed – victims and survivors.

Number of Victims Taken Forward

Once the police investigation was completed, the regional CPS prosecutors made the decision on how many victims to be taken forward in the case. In some of the larger cases, advocates described that despite high numbers of victims disclosing abuse to the police, often only a small number of victims were included in many of the judicial proceedings. For example, in the first Bennell trial only twelve victims were taken forward and a further two in proceedings in 2020. Of course, the reasons behind this are often specific to the individual inquiry, however external factors are playing a role in a number of instances. The crux of the issue is the inconsistency of the response across the different police forces and CPS jurisdictions, with one victim stating, "up and down the country it's different, does my head in, there's no continuity." (VA9) Another participant shared with regards to these cases:

> "So for some of the bigger groups, where they is about 100 survivors, there is only about 1 in 4 who will proceed with a criminal charge. So that means 75% are not going to have that ability to get closure or justice through the criminal justice system. There are two aspects, you don't get the end result – the justice, the closure, the conviction, but also the second aspect is the mental side, it's either you are deemed not to be credible, and that can have a huge impact on someone. The question is why me? Why are you not pursuing, is it because there is not enough evidence or am I not believed? Is it my fault? Did I lead him on? It reinforces all those things, the stereotypes and feelings and emotions that you had in your head and and what you have then done is you have broken your silence for no gain." (VA1)

This section will explore the reasons surrounding why only a select few victims and charges were able to be taken forward in some of the larger investigations, while considering and centring the experiences of those who did not receive justice in their individual case.

I. Severity of Charges

Different criminal justice personnel provided various reasons why more victims were not taken forward, such as the severity of charges, juries, logistics and the financial cost of multiple trials. As one victim who was excluded stated, "So I was thinking, why? Why wasn't I chosen? I wasn't given a reason why I wasn't chosen. […] There was no contact in between and there was no reason, they didn't give a reason as to why. I felt massively let down for the second time then, because I've been given no explanation […] They had us hanging on for nearly four years with regards to am I going to get my day in court? I'm not." (V-S9) The reason this individual was previously given was that those taken forward were the most 'severe' charges against the perpetrator, however as the participant later found out, this was not the case. Although he had originally accepted he would not be taken forward in the first trial, it proved to be a large blow when he realised the charges were not more 'severe' than his own. Another victim shared, "I did ask on a number of occasions, why was it those [men]? What were they basing those cases on? Why were they choosing those people? They said it was because they were the most severely or most severe cases. It was interesting when I went to the summing up and I heard the charges that were being levied […] For me, that's not one of the stronger cases and there were a couple of people I know who had been more severely abused." (V-S8)

II. Jury Retention & Logistics

Another reason why only a certain number of victims were taken forward was the role of the jury (Saker, 2021). As was publicly acknowledged by the investigation team in the Bennell case: "We took advice very early on from legal counsel with regards to what a prospective trial should look like; their advice was very clear. We should limit the number of victims represented at any one trial to anything between 10 and 14. It was our counsel's view that a jury would really struggle to maintain concentration and to maintain the degree of inquisitive interest that they would require in this case if it was above that number." (Gordon, 2021) A prosecutor spoke of the decision behind some investigations having multiple trials and "how overwhelming it could be to a jury to have huge amounts of complainants." (CPS1) This will be explored in some more depth below, with the rationale being that a jury can only cope with a certain number of charges and complainants. The CPS therefore has to present a case that can easily be understood and prosecuted by a lay jury.

Others spoke of logistics, as a police officer stated, "There had to be a cut off because surely by virtue of numbers and time you could never have a trial where everybody gets to speak, it would just never end." (P2) With a victim concurring, "It is the logistics and that is purely it, but those lads – I could cry for those lads – and I know a lot of them that came forward and have been told, that's it, we're not doing it anymore. But where do they go?" (VA9) However, the varying numbers of victims taken forward in these cases did not reflect any clear logistical challenges, such as the size of courtroom, leaving the question – why in several key investigations were more victims not taken forward? This inconsistency has resulted in victims appearing to have a different chance of their case being taken forward based on the regional protocols and resources in place.

III. Comparisons with other Jurisdictions

Although the numbers vary based on the individual investigation, there seems to be a cut off on the scale of numbers at trial. This was challenging for victims, as many made comparisons to the Larry Nassar case[39] in the US, as despite a plea deal, more than a hundred and fifty women were able to be included through providing VIS at his sentencing hearing. This acknowledged the true scale of his offending and proved a powerful example to many victims and advocates of how large numbers of victims can be included. Whereas, in the football abuse cases, there had been decisions over what constituted a criminal offence. For example, it was discussed in one of the cases all inappropriate touching of a child is sexual assault, however there would be too many victims to take forward under such guidelines. Therefore, it was decided only cases which met a certain threshold would be pursued, for example, touching purposefully near an intimate area. This draws attention again to the lack of acknowledgement to the long-term impact of this kind of contact for the victim.

IV. Financial

Unfortunately, another reason which cannot be ignored is the financial implications of holding such trials. In just a couple of years before Woodward waived his anonymity and drew widespread public attention to the issue, a victim was told by the CPS no further charges were going to be brought against an individual due to the financial costs of putting on a trial. The perpetrator had already served time in prison for child abuse offences, leading to concerns whether he would get a prison sentence for crimes against this particular victim. As he powerfully shared, "It could cost £10,000 a day – a 3 day court case would be £30,000 and

[39] *Larry Nassar was the USA Gymnastics national team doctor and an osteopathic physician who was accused of sexually assaulting hundreds of girls while working as a sporting doctor between 1992-2016.*

for that money he might not get a conviction. They said they think he might be found guilty but he might not get a prison sentence and as such, it wasn't worth spending £30,000. However, it would be worth spending £30,000, regardless of what happened after – the fact that over 100 boys have come forward. It was worth £30,000 for me." (VA6)[40] Attempting to put a cost on the trauma of abuse proved to be particularly harmful for victims. Although this is the reality of operating public services, it does go to the crux of the common critique levelled at the criminal justice system, which is "the general feeling is still that the criminal justice system is about making sure abusers are put away, rather than ensuring justice is obtained for as many people as possible. There is a bit of a disconnect between the two, when there shouldn't be, it should be achieving the same thing but that doesn't happen." (VA1)

V. Experience of those not taken forward

The cost for those who were not taken forward is highly significant, with the short sections of this report not doing justice to the many men who were not taken forward in the judicial proceedings. Although this is often calculated in numbers, behind each is an individual who have had theirs, and their loved ones', lives impacted in a multitude of ways. Many victims spoke of the decision being a reflection of how they are seen by the criminal justice system, with one voicing, "You're just a reference number and I still believe that to this day." (VA6) The experience of this is significant, with one participant stating, "You feel sorry for all those people that came forward, which were actively encouraged to come forward, whose lives now will have immeasurably changed. A lot of them will be wondering, why did I come forward? What good has it done?" (V-S8) This proved to be a key theme throughout the accounts from victims who were not taken forward, as they went through the challenging process of providing a victim statement to then receive no justice whatsoever, often being left feeling worse than before reporting their abuse. It also plays into key concerns which initially stopped victims disclosing, with one advocate stating, "it reinforces that core problem of not being believed. Although the police officers take them seriously and they do their best, the message from the State is that you're not believed or it doesn't count." (VA4) The impact for those not being taken forward highlights the significance of the system in acknowledging your abuse and what happened to you. This appears to be as much part of justice as the perpetrator being put in prison for many victims.

One victim whose case was not taken forward articulated his experience as 'a loss', sharing "So I went from initially thinking that I would get my justice through these lads with the guilty verdict, but when it came I felt a massive loss." (V-S9) Every victim and advocate shared the impact as immense, especially after victims were encouraged to come forward and disclose to the police (VA9). This can be poignantly summed up by a victim who sharing that, "It absolutely broke me. I don't think there's any other words to it than that. I was destroyed, I was heartbroken, devastated." (VA6) Within the bureaucracy of the criminal justice system are individuals deeply affected by what occurs, the accounts from victims within this research clearly point to this and should be centred when considering restructuring and reform.

VII. Multiple Convictions & Trials

Due to the sheer numbers of victims reporting abuse to police, some investigations opted for multiple trials against a perpetrator. One victim discussed the challenges with this, as "they took ten lads to the CPS, by the time it went through the motions, eight dropped out, of their

[40] *This decision was eventually reviewed after the victim made an official complaint and charges were brought against the perpetrator.*

own volition, but because of the time. […] What's going on? They should have started straight away. It ended up with just two lads on the last one, so the length of time is a problem." (VA9) The length in between each trial going to court was problematic, resulting in a large proportion of victims waiting years before knowing whether they would be taken forward or not. As a victim stated, "in the press it was reported there was another eighty-six lads, I was one of those eighty-six lads who had not had their day in court. The police took ages, the first trial ended in February '18, they took over a year to decide whether they were going to do another trial, maybe longer." (V-S9) This has led to debate amongst victims and advocates whether it is worth having multiple trials.

Although it is important that as many victims as possible get their day in court, some victims expressed reservations about whether it was worth pursuing when such small numbers were being taken forward to trial. One victim explained,

> "So going forward with another case, what's the point of it? There's a couple of arguments I suppose, you could say, it's good for those people who haven't yet have their day in court. Ok, however the police have always stated there will be tranches of people, so nine or twelve people. However, there is 100 odd people waiting in the queue, you going to do twelve then you're going to do another twelve, then you're going to do another twelve and so on. Is there any point? When do you draw a line in the sand? Also, when you say it's good for those people to have their day in court, if you don't try the hundred odd that are left to have their day in court, then why carry on with any others? For most people I know, the fact there is the potential for another court hearing[41], it is very distressing. They are not able to move on with their lives. Considering it's been two years since the last court case, what have the CPS and police been doing all this time? When are they going to make a decision if another case is coming or not? I've enquired all along, why is it taking so long? What's happening?" (V-S8)

The decision to then only charge the perpetrator for two further individuals was described as 'so disappointing and so frustrating' (V-S8). This was made worse by the fact it was felt that the police and CPS were not putting forward further charges in a timely manner. As there was the knock-on effect on other areas such as civil cases and the Sheldon inquiry report, with neither being able to go forward until the cases has cleared the criminal courts. However, when a prosecutor for another case attempted to pursue further charges in the original indictment, there was considerable push back, which lead to work being done to shorten and simplify it for the jury (CPS1). The prosecutor spoke of the balance of making it clear for the jury so they can convict, while reflecting the level of criminality and not reducing the judge's sentencing powers when shortening (ibid). This highlights that the problems victims are facing are embedded into the current criminal justice processes, with the structural issues being wider than any individual police team or prosecutor.

5.5 Legal Frameworks

It was not just the criminal justice process which impacted on a victims' experience but also the legal framework constraints which barred some victims from being able to get justice. Below are some key areas which were raised as problematic by victims and advocates with regards to legislation regarding abuse in childhood.

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[41] This was in reference to the possibility of further charges being brought, which resulted in a conviction of nine charges in respect to two victims in October 2020.

Double Jeopardy

One issue raised was the loophole in the double jeopardy law, barring a participant's involvement in recent proceedings against his perpetrator. This was after a previous trial resulted in an acquittal nearly thirty years ago. Double jeopardy legislation ('non bis in idem') inhibits an individual from being tried again on the same or similar charges after a court acquittal. There are exceptions for this, which consist of new evidence being brought forward in twenty-nine 'serious crimes' case – including murder, rape and some class-A drug offences. In these exceptions, suspects can be tried more than once where 'strong and viable' new evidence has emerged. Although in many instances this is an important piece of legislation that protects defendants, it has proven to be problematic in cases of non-recent child sexual abuse involving non-penetrative sex. Charities and a group of ex-footballers fought to reform the double jeopardy law in England and Wales so that all child abuse offences would be exempt from the law, however Justice Secretary Robert Buckland QC rejected this in 2019. A victim who was denied involvement because of this shared, if the loophole in the legislation was not closed 'there will never be any closure' for him (V-S6).

Attitudes to Child Sexual Abuse

Other issues within the legislation have been perpetrators being prosecuted based on the legislation available at the time of abuse. Although, the need for this is clear, it has meant that some charges could not be brought due to the law at the time of the offence not being extensive enough to cover all aspects of child sexual abuse (CPS1). This shows the consequences victims face in the legal system when it is slow to recognise the seriousness of childhood abuse. A few victims and advocates indicated that the lack of protection under law for child abuse victims was simply down to its lack of prioritisation. One victim noted,

> "If you look at the sentencing for sexual offences, compared with fraud or monetary criminal activities, there's a huge imbalance, massive. Then you ask yourself the question, why don't we have mandatory reporting for serious suspicions or knowledge of child abuse? Well then you come with all these political answers. Funny isn't it, because we do have mandatory reporting for financial abuse, with a minimum custodial sentence of five years. So, if I'm working in a bank and I know my colleague is fraudulently ripping that bank off and do not declare that, I will go to prison for five years. Yet, if I stand in front of another person who is raping a child and I say nothing to the authorises and latterly it is found I knew about it, there is no law in this country to prosecute me for not giving that information." (VA5)

Mandatory Reporting

This leads to the final concern which was raised by many victims and advocates in this research, regarding the lack of mandatory reporting legislation for those working in sport. Mandatory reporting is the legal requirement to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the authorities. The pressure group Mandate Now brings this issue to light by campaigning for the introduction of a law to be put in place to require those working in 'Regulated Activities[42]' (including sport coaches) to report known and suspected abuse (sexual, physical and neglect) of children to the Local Authority (*see Mandate Now website*[43]). Despite many proponents for a change to the legislation it has caused debate and some controversy amongst

[42] *Regulated activities refers to certain roles that involve working with children or vulnerable adults, for further information see* https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/schedule/4

[43] *See* http://mandatenow.org.uk/

some in the field[44], yet was strongly called upon by participants in this research to better protect children in football and wider sporting environments.

5.6 Court – Trial & Sentencing

The final stage of the criminal justice process is the trial, although if a perpetrator pleads guilty then the case can go straight into sentencing procedures. The trial in an adversarial legal system has a history of being deeply troubling for victims, with one describing it as 'brutal' (VA9). Although there has been considerable progress in the victims' treatment in the courtroom, including the introduction of special measures and Victim Support services, this following section explores how far this has gone to improve the experience of victims of non-recent CSA in football at trial. While also acknowledging the role of the victim's voice, or lack thereof, in this process, most notably through the delivery of Victim Impact Statements at sentencing.

'Day in Court'

The victim's role in court proceedings has been widely debated amongst both advocates and criminal justice professionals alike. This has been reflected on a more individualistic level in this research over whether victims wanted their 'day in court'[45]. Although this expression often refers to the right of the alleged perpetrator to have a fair trial, victims have also used this to express a desire for their own opportunity for justice. Some victims wanted more involvement in their case, as one advocate responded, "the people I speak to describe being a 'passenger' in the criminal cases, they disclose the abuse that happened to them and that's it. Everything else is without them, then suddenly on the day of the trial they have input again. I feel like it's a lot better now from how it was perhaps ten/twenty years ago, however it's still an ongoing issue in relation to input they can have. The ability to do Victim Impact Statements is helpful for them, gives them a chance to have input into it" (VA1). This brings up a lot of questions over the role of the victims in their own cases, which has been discussed widely in the field of victimology. However, for the purposes of this report, it shows that some victims wish to have more control and be heard in the courtroom.

One victim described this, stating "lots of people who you speak to would like the opportunity to confront their abuser. They would like their day in court, they would like that opportunity." (VA6) Whereas, it was highlighted others would like to avoid the court process entirely, with one victim stating, "Nobody wants a day in court; they want the evidence to be that strong that [the perpetrator pleads] guilty." (VA9) Others spoke of the positive benefits of simply attending court, with one stating, "I found it quite a cathartic experience, because I was able to actually hear things that now makes sense as an adult, but as a child it didn't make sense. The fact I was dumped when I was, well certainly surplus to requirements, although the abuse happened continuously throughout that period it slowed and died when I got to like fifteen/sixteen years old. He actually said in court, it was mentioned, and I saw his interview and some of the stuff, where he said his predilection was towards twelve to fourteen year olds. So it was interesting to hear those things, for myself, after all this time, it made sense, it filled a few jigsaw pieces that were missing." (V-S8) This again indicates that every victim has their own personal reasons to come forward and disclose their abuse. Some want their charges to simply result in the perpetrator receiving a custodial sentence, while others wish to have their voice heard and recognised in the process. The introduction of

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[44] *See https://www.iicsa.org.uk/research-seminars/mandatory-reporting-child-sexual-abuse*

[45] *Having your 'day in court' refers to being afforded the opportunity to appear and be heard in court when charges are brought against you, with inference to being able to present one's defence or argument.*

Victim Impact Statements arguably takes a step towards this. Although examining the role of the victim in the criminal justice process is both contentious and highly important, it goes beyond the scope of this report.

Logistics

The process itself of getting a case with mass disclosures to court is not a simple one. One police team in particular took a hands-on role in the logistics surrounding the trial due to seeing the significance this would have for victims. This included organising rendezvous points, accommodation, transport and so on for all the victims involved. However, this was noted as being possible because of the time, resources and the support they were afforded from their organisation to do so. This was appreciated by the men, as the police officer stated, "I know having spoken to the guys, they were very thankful for all of that and that we certainly made their lives a lot easier." (P2) This is particularly noteworthy when participants shared that the practicalities surrounding the trial cause added stress to an already challenging experience. Although some police teams put in a lot of work to ensure the logistics surrounding the victims at trial were taken care of, others simply did not. In one of the cases there was too many people in attendance to sit in the public gallery, meaning some victims who had been involved in the case were not able to be in the courtroom for summing up. As one victim recalled, "there ten, twenty police officers there, you're thinking what's the point in this? They're not going to be offering anything further. They were taking up seats. Not one of them offered to give up their seat when they could see, not just myself, but other people, visibly distressed by the whole situation." (V-S8) These two examples show the impact logistics can play on a victim's experience of the court process.

Cross-Examination

Although reforms have come about to improve a victim's experience of cross-examination, in an adversarial system a victim still has to face scrutiny. As an advocate noted, "You are going to be cross-examined by a very well paid defence barrister who is going to call you a fantasist and a liar, as that is what they are paid to do. That is incredibly hard work to cope with." (VA4) The process has been described as 'ferocious', as one victim simply stated, "It was absolutely fucking horrendous." (V-S10) Victims spoke of how defence barriers tried to steer them off track when answering questions in court (V-S8), with one individual describing feeling 'railroaded.' (V-S10) As a result victims adopted a number of coping strategies, as "the only way to deal with it is to detach yourself from situation, just focus on, blinkered vision, put everything else out the way." (V-S8)

Participants discussed the emotional toll this brought, with a number highlighting that afterwards they were left questioning themselves. The impact was described as "after you're completely and utterly physically and mentally drained, what I found frustrating was I wasn't able to say what I wanted to say because I'd been instructed in advance to not move from that original statement." (V-S8) This also draws attention to the lack of voice some of the victims felt they had, which to an extent can be mitigated against through the use of a VIS at sentencing. Retraumatisation was another key issue, as one victim recalled, "I think back to that experience and I don't remember it in the position I was stood in, I view it from watching above. Almost out of body experience, where you're watching something happening and you're thinking… it's been explained to me through counselling that you're disassociating yourself from that traumatic experience. By doing that you're putting a distance between you and the pain you are feeling." (V-S10) Although the police and CPS are becoming more trauma informed, a police officer suggested that needed to be developed throughout the system – "That then needs to extend to other areas of the criminal justice system, particularly

the courts and judges and juries. A lot of it is psychology, it's a science in itself and if people understand that then that will be much better for everybody." (P4)

Special Measures

A big step for improving a victim's experience in court, particularly at cross-examination, is the introduction of special measures in trial proceedings. Special measures are several provisions offered to support vulnerable witnesses 'give their best evidence in court and help to relieve some of the stress associated with giving evidence' (CPSa, 2020). These include using screens to block the alleged perpetrator from the victim's view, providing evidence through a live link and the opportunity to use a visual recorded interview as the witness's evidence-in-chief. Many victims spoke of the positive impact special measures had in improving their experience at trial. Criminal justice professionals also welcomed this, as a police officer stated; "it's an amazing tool to get the best evidence from somebody." (P2) It offers victims some protection from the possible retraumatisation they make face from being confronted with their perpetrator, often for the first time since they were abused as a child.

Unfortunately, there were some instances of human error leading to devastating circumstances of victims being confronted by their abuser. One victim shared their experience;

> "I was always going to do it behind a screen. One of the issues, everyone has different issues, one of the issues I have is I have that picture of him. I have it right there, his face pretty much on top of my face – you never forget. I can see his eyes, I can just close my eyes and see his. It's one of those things when they talked about […] going to court, I said pretty much from the very first interview – 'I don't want to see him.' I want to be in court, I just don't want to see him. I don't want his current look, I don't want his current look in my life. I don't want his current look in my life. It wasn't about being scared. It wasn't about not wanting to face this little old man. It was pure and simply, I didn't need the memory. Then they left me with him outside court." The impact of this is was significant for the victim, as they stated, "Am I bitter about it? You bet I'm bitter about it. You cannot even put into words how that's affected me the last seven years. It's incredible. And that happened in our justice system and has happened to others." (VA6)

Similar experiences were shared by a small number of victims, highlighting the importance of the care and diligence in delivering special measures for all victims of abuse.

Special measures offer an individual the choice of how to proceed, however it should never be assumed victims want to be behind a screen, for example, with a victim stating, "I requested there was no screen covering me, I wanted to see him and I wanted him to see me." (V-S8) This emphasises that special measures should be an important option offered to victims of abuse, however not a blanket approach which fails to acknowledge the victim's agency. This was also noted when a police officer spoke of the system often being 'automatic' particularly with the use of video evidence in cases such as these. Yet, they spoke of the benefits of in-person evidence for both the jury and complainant, as "Interestingly for those people who gave evidence live instead of the video, it was a far more positive experience for them, we tell that to all of our complainants now, perhaps the downside of giving a video interview, when you then give your live evidence you're straight into cross-examination, so you can come away feeling that you never gave your story because you're fielding questions from someone who is trying to undermine your evidence. […] So that was a quite an interesting lesson for us to learn really and something that we factor into when

we're speaking to people about how they would like to give their evidence." (P1) The officer acknowledged how video evidence can be a 'brilliant tool' (ibid); however again this notes its use should not be assumed for all victims in cases such as these.

Victim Welfare

The value of ensuring the victim's welfare both ethically, and ensuring a victim is able to deliver the best evidence, is clear. One team described going above and beyond to ensure a victim's needs were met. Alongside their barristers, police officers travelled around the country to meet each complainant ahead of the trial to discuss the court process, so the victims were able to ask any questions they may have. This ensured "the barrister wasn't just a faceless individual that they first see at court with a wig on." (P1) In addition to this, they organised a meeting to occur just before the sentencing procedures whereby the victims were able to come together to meet criminal justice professionals, including the barristers and investigative team, alongside individuals from victim support agencies. This provided an opportunity for victims to ask any legal questions and concerns they may have, as well as meeting the other complainants in the case. The investigative team had been careful not to identify complainants to each other, for fear of the collusion argument being made in court, so for the first time the men were able to meet each other:

> "They had this fantastic evening where they all got to meet and cry and let out all of their emotion, talk about all of their stories and become united as a group of victims, before they went into a very formal court environment where they were quite stifled, we didn't have the privacy for them to be able to do that." (P2)

It was a 'great benefit' to all the complainants, as it was facilitated in an environment with adequate support available, which the men were able to access after the trial had concluded (P2). A police officer spoke fondly of this sharing, "so that is something that I will forever remember because it was an incredible experience but is something that I learnt, if I ever get into a situation where I have multiple victims again it's certainly something I will do again." (P2)

However, the police investigative team that were able to provide this rare but highly beneficial focus to victim welfare acknowledged the circumstances surrounding how and why this could occur. As one stated, "I suppose there were particular circumstances, I suppose because it was so high profile, everything, all the stops were pulled out. But for our team, it's certainly something we're thinking of utilising for other jobs of its sort." (P1) This approach could be employed in other instances if required, highlighting the impact the criminal justice system can have when there is a dedicated and creative police team involved. Most significantly, the funding was in place to allow this, as one officer responded when asked if the funding would be available for other less high-profile cases, "No, is probably the answer. We are relatively well placed because the force have recognised the need, post-Saville, post-Hydrant, for this area of work and they've invested in it. That pays dividends, because with the best will in the world, would these offences gone within the hurly burly of day to day policing, it would suffer and you would never be able to do it the justice that thankfully we were able to." (P1) This again draws attention to the importance of policing resources and priorities in responding to cases of non-recent child sexual abuse cases in the United Kingdom.

Sentencing – Victim Impact Statements

The most comprehensive way victims can have their voice heard in court is through the VIS, articulated by several participants to have some positive benefits to their court experience. VIS is a tool to express how a victim's life has been impacted by the crime; this is written and can also be delivered in court by the victim during sentencing procedures. It is important to note these were not available in early charges against perpetrators, as they were only rolled out nationwide in 2001. The positive impact of VIS was highlighted in the empirical data. As one victim stated, "I love Victim Impact Statements. I'm a massive advocate. I wrote my own, I read it out myself and I always say, 'that is your opportunity, in a constructive manner, not a rant, to have your say. You can stand up in court and say it if you have the strength to and if you haven't, the QC or the prosecutor generally reads it out. It's a great tool." (VA9) A police officer in one of these investigations was also a proponent stating, "The therapeutic way that I watched those men deliver their own [statements] was unbelievable, incredible. But we had a real fight on our hands, luckily we had a Judge that listened to our argument that needed to take place. […] yes it's going to take you an extra day to do the sentencing but actually it's really important and that's their right and it's part of the Victim's Code." (P2) This is in acknowledgement that it does lengthen the sentencing process in mass disclosure cases, but is an important element where victims are able to share how the harm has impacted on their lives.

There is widespread debate in the literature over whether the VIS may impact on sentencing decisions, with many opponents suggesting a victim's input leads to disproportionate sentences for offenders (*see Roberts & Manikis, 2011 for discussion*). Although this widely disputed, a police officer did comment on the influence the VIS had stating, "So we had a lot of huffing and puffing from the defence because obviously they know what damage it does as well, in terms of for the Judge. Our Judge, having listened to the Impact Statements, he then adjourned the case until the next day because he felt he needed to re-review his sentencing remarks. He really took on board the level of damage that was quite evident in the statements […] without a doubt it had an impact on his sentencing and it was their own only opportunity to look him in the eye and tell him what he'd done to them. So for them it was amazing, an incredible moment." (P2) The impact went beyond the sentences in these cases, with victims noting it as a 'cathartic' process (VA1). One victim who read out a VIS at trial stated, "it helped me to take back the power, or at least make him feel that was what I was doing." (V-S7) This draws attention to the possible personal benefits of victim's participation, however there is not enough evidence to note the therapeutic benefits here.

However, there has been some criticism on the current procedure surrounding VIS, with one advocate stating, "The only problem which I do have to say is that when survivors read their Victim Impact Statements often it doesn't actually show the impact. It may seem a bit odd. Often when you see a VIS, it's a difficult one as they've never been able to say what they want to say to the abuser. It's often emotive, the words used, if its four/five pages long, four of those five pages will be emotion about how it made them feel and so on. It doesn't actually show the impact. I think the guidance given to survivors should be better, of course it should be emotive and how it made you feel – that's important, but it doesn't really then go into how it affected relationships, how it affected the relationship with drink, drugs, personal relationships, children, parents, having to disclose, setbacks in their career, their earnings. […] The criminal justice system just says 'say something' but does not give them any guidance, it doesn't have to be a template, but just 'you want to say anything about the impact on your kids etc.? […] Something that is very simple for the criminal justice system to fix and they just haven't done it for some reason." (VA1) This emphasises ways in which the

VIS can be improved to reflect the harm caused by simply providing support and a better explanation of the role the VIS will play in court.

Short Sentences
Despite questions surrounding proportionality when it came to sentencing procedures, there were also a few victims who commented on the length of sentences brought in these cases. A couple suggested perpetrators should face whole life tariffs for their crimes. As one stated, "He needs to be prison for the rest of his days because the trail of destruction he has left behind is massive." (VA9) Another commented, "An eye for an eye... he took away many years of my life and now he loses years of his. One day he will be freed, but I will never be free from the memories and nightmares." (V-S7) Although this is representative of just a couple of victims, it does highlight once again that justice is a subjective notion, with some victims wishing for more punitive measures in their cases. For others, the length of the sentence did not matter, as one participant stated, "for me it was about being able to tell what happened to me and being believed, that's all that mattered. What he got for his sentence, I don't care. It's irrelevant for me." (V-S10) Nevertheless, it is important the sentence reflects the severity of the harm caused to the victims.

5.7 Dead Perpetrators
Furthermore, it should be noted that not every victim was afforded the possibility of having their perpetrator stand trial. Many victims discovered their perpetrator was in fact deceased on reporting their abuse, so could not be convicted of any crime. Nevertheless, there has been increased guidance provided to undertake appropriate investigations into dead perpetrators by Operation Hydrant (College of Policing & Operation Hydrant, 2016[46]). However, as indicated by victim accounts, this was not always undertaken. As one advocate explained:

> "Having the acknowledgement from the police and the police saying yes, if the person was still alive there would be sufficient evidence to go ahead and charge him. Some police forces do that and others just can't be bothered. Actually for a survivor to know that yes, what you're saying is sadly totally believable, totally credible and if he was alive we would have looked to charge him. It may seem slightly odd, but it gives them vindication, I was believed, he would have got done but he's dead. That is a postcode lottery, some police forces do it and some don't. It's about looking at the survivor experience, why do they commit to this? Why are they disclosing now for? I think that we do need to look at the criminal justice system and figure out how we do that a lot better." (VA1)

Although Operation Hydrant guidance states police cannot provide any indication over a charging decision when an alleged perpetrator is deceased, there should be a proportionate investigation into any allegations of abuse. Although this is not what victims hoped for when reporting their abuse to police, it can offer victims some answers, which should not simply be overlooked.

However, there is opportunity for some sense of justice to be provided outside of the criminal justice system. For example, there has been positivity surrounding the Geekie report (2019), where Charles Geekie QC was commissioned by Chelsea FC to investigate the allegations of non-recent child sexual abuse at the club; this resulted in his findings being published in

[46] *Operation Hydrant consistently updates guidance, however this would have been available to the early investigations in 2016.*

August 2019. One individual when asked about getting justice when the perpetrator was deceased responded, "the idea of a sense of justice… probably not. It's very hard, there probably isn't enough in place but I understand this is low priority. I'm lucky I was at Chelsea, which sounds like a bizarre thing to say but I think as a club they've done a very good job of their inquiry, by making it public and getting Heath's victims involved and giving them early copies of this." (VA8) This gave them justice they didn't get in the criminal justice system, as he went on to say, "because I was at the club I was at, I feel somehow that Charles Geekie has done the job of the criminal justice system." (VA8) However, as this individual voices, many have not undertaken investigations or inquiries into allegations at their clubs.

The response by this individual to the inquiry at their former club draws attention to the many different reasons victims come forward. As an individual at Operation Hydrant stated, "a victim or survivor, their motivation for reporting may be different for many, many reasons. Some may want a criminal justice outcome which to be fair, that's just not possible to give them with a deceased suspect because they're never going to go through a trial process. Others just want to tell their story, be listened to and be believed and for them that is enough. But what the police service should do is undertake that proportionate investigation, acknowledge the facts that are there and ensure that there are no outstanding safeguarding matters that need to be dealt with. Very often for many victims that will be enough." (P4) It does indicate the criminal justice system is often restricted in ways that a public inquiry is not, indicating a possible alternative route for a sense of justice. The impact this can hold for a victim is considerable, as one stated, "I remember when I read it and it's an absolutely ridiculous thing to say, and as I'm about to say it I'm think nahh. I thought, 'oh gosh, it just wasn't me then' and of course I knew it wasn't. It was a weird thing for me after fifty years, thanks for writing that because I still in my head think – 'what did I do?' Classic stuff. You realise it isn't just you." (VA8) A few victims who participated and witnessed the trial of their perpetrator also noted this, as it helped them understand what had occurred to them as children.

5.8 Media: Help or Hindrance?

The media's involvement in the investigations and cases had a mixed response from criminal justice professionals and victims alike. Although the media was acknowledged as crucial in getting victims to come forward, there were various complications in the police investigations as a result of the intense media scrutiny. The role of the Victoria Derbyshire show in giving the platform to a number of ex-footballers to share their story has been noted as particularly significant, as "that was what really opened the floodgates to the whole football abuse area. So certainly on balance, the widespread media coverage was a blessing rather than a curse." (P1) As outlined earlier in this report, the media is an important tool to encourage more victims to come forward in mass reporting cases and without their involvement, the number of victims who reported their abuse to the police would have been considerably lower. It is widely acknowledged that other sports would not receive this same media and public attention, yet the significance of football as the national sport made it a defining moment.

However, certain publications and press scrutiny did add a further challenge to a police investigation of non-recent abuse in football, as one police officer described how the press 'turned into the bane of our lives' (P2). An example of this being a tabloid newspaper giving the police only twenty four hours warning before naming an alleged perpetrator in print. This resulted in the police having to gain an emergency warrant from the courts to be able to search his address to recover the evidence before the individual was aware of the early

investigative process. Although the officer acknowledged their importance, this example reveals how the press can be 'really inhibitive on a police investigation.' (P2) Several publications also printed an array of stories surrounding alleged perpetrators which lead to concerns over whether an individual could receive a fair trial. A police officer explained how this could be used by the defence, who would say 'how on earth can he possibly get a fair trial when this has been all over the media for months, his name is out there, how are you ever going to find a jury that are independent?' (P2) Although they noted this was an expected line of defence and did not impinge on the success of the case, the media intrusion did lead to a number of safeguarding concerns which the police had to mitigate for. As one office stated, "Regardless of what he had done, we still have a duty of care to ensure that him and his family are protected." (P2)

The press did not just impact on the perpetrator, as a few victims spoke of feeling overwhelmed by the nature of the press reporting. In relation to the criminal justice process, one victim spoke of the shock of what he disclosed in court being published in the newspaper. He stated, "That was difficult again to take, as you feel like you're in a safe environment." (V-S8) Particularly for those victims who did not waive their anonymity, it can be impactful that their darkest moments become public property. Much of press reporting acknowledges this, with most publications following both strong moral and ethical reporting standards. The press and media have the important responsibility of holding those in authority to account, with the significant investigative journalism which revealed non-recent child sexual abuse in football already having been noted. Another investigation team spoke of a good working relationship with the press, with this meaning they "didn't really print anything per se prior to any court appearances" (P3). The fact two police investigation teams had rather contrasting experiences of media intrusion reflects how it is completely dependent on the ethics within different media organisations, alongside working relationships with the police.

Other issues between the media and police investigations were surrounding those who waived their anonymity before reporting their abuse to the police. This has been described as slowing the process down. As one victim stated, "Those people that went on Victoria Derbyshire and went to the media hadn't even gone to the police at that point – just through naivety really, it was genuine. I know these guys and it was genuine naivety, they wouldn't have a clue about how the justice system could use that and everything that they've said or written is disclosable." (VA9) Although, this did not cause harm in these cases, it can cause delays to already lengthy investigations, as a result of court orders being issued for the material. Although this was not the case in these accounts, speaking publicly over details of the case has been known to impact on investigations. One police officer shared, "There are always potential pitfalls if you do have people giving accounts to media organisations that get reported at the same time as they give their formal evidential account. It can come back and haunt them in cross-examination." (P1) Therefore, it is important that investigative teams have a strong media strategy both in how information is shared with the press, but also in informing victims of what they can and cannot share in the run up to a trial. A police officer spoke of the benefits of having a media team, which meant "the media were kept well away from the investigation team, we tried to manage the process from that point of view the best we could. Obviously those that had engaged with the media in the early stages, the media team could give them suitable advice to dos and don'ts." (P1)

5.9 Victim Support Services

The process of going through the criminal justice system is significant for victims of non-recent child sexual abuse; therefore, victim support is paramount to ensure a victims' well-being throughout such a challenging process. Therefore, it is impossible to discuss the victims' experience of the criminal justice system without acknowledging victim support services and agencies available to them. There is a lot to unpack here, with this section just briefly overviewing a few key themes that play into the area of victim support. As one advocate stated of their own experience of childhood abuse (in a non-footballing environment), "I didn't want criminal justice, I didn't expect compensation, I wasn't interested in any of that, I just wanted to sleep" (VA4). Support for victims can be accessed in various different areas, including the National Health Service (NHS) and the third sector. These will be explored in this report, looking at which areas victims received support from following reporting their abuse to the police.

There is widespread acknowledgement that the introduction and proliferation of Victim Support improved victims' experiences of the criminal justice system, particularly by those who disclosed in the 1990s and regrettably received no support. However, there was still a lot of negative feedback regarding many victim's experiences of accessing this support. One participant when asked what the biggest issues they'd seen victims of non-recent abuse face in the criminal justice system stated, "I think lack of support is by far the biggest." (VA3) This is reflected in several of the interviews, as it is clear that "Survivors [are] potentially needing [of] support around the impact of the abuse but then also some support around the impact of the criminal justice system." (VA10) The experience for victims appears to again vary depending on location, with an advocate stating, "So the support is patchy depending on where you live, there are often long waiting lists for support." (VA2) This is summed up by a victim stating they "have attempted many times to seek info and support and never received any." (V-S5) This inconsistency of the support offered to victims is reflected throughout the accounts and will be explored in more depth below.

Victim Support

A key source of support for victims going through the criminal justice system is Victim Support, an independent charity that supports people affected by crime in England and Wales. They state, "We're not part of the police, courts or any other criminal justice agency, but work alongside them to support victims of crime"[47]. Victim Support Scotland[48] operates similarly north of the border. Although offering crucial assistance to victims navigating the justice system, a couple of victims indicated some serious human errors that had a detrimental impact on their care. As one participant shared, "Victim Support actually sent a letter to me about going down to view the court layout in advance, however I wasn't aware they had sent it because I ended up being contacted a couple of weeks late from someone else who received that letter. That other person was involved in the case, although I was anonymous, that person then knew I was involved. By the time I did actually get the letter, when it was redirected, I contacted them to make a date to take up the offer of viewing the court, however I was told there was nothing they could do." (V-S8) Although this could just be a rare error, it also could highlight issues surrounding the charity being over-extended beyond their limits.

[47] *See Victim Support website https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/*
[48] *See Victim Support Scotland website https://victimsupport.scot/*

Another victim highlighted that the support provided should be more proactive, as he stated, "Although you get a bit of paper which says 'ring this number if you feel', you don't. It's alright giving people a bit of paper to say if you're feeling anxious ring Victim Support but it's not good enough. Afterwards there should be something in place for you to get a call a week later, and then a month later, and then six months later, or some sort of timescale […]. The criminal justice system should have a mandatory obligation to give the services you deserve for coming forward and sharing your soul in court." (VA12) This draws attention to an alternative approach to offering support, particularly for victims who may not seek it out on their own. Although some individuals may not want this, this participant highlighted the benefits of such a support package being offered.

Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs)

In addition, a number of victims make reference to ISVAs, which operate through various charities and organisations. An ISVA advises and supports individuals who have experienced rape and sexual assault, irrespective of whether they have reported to the police or not (Home Office, 2017). These were noted as a fantastic resource, however were not accessible to all victims. As one advocate stated, "I think there are some great ISVAs out there but it's a postcode lottery, as it often is. I think that if you speak to victims and survivors in general about their experience of courts or civil matters (civil or criminal), there are not many people who have many positive things to say about it." (VA5) This again is due to the local commissioning of support, which has resulted in geographical inconsistencies in what is offered to victims of sexual violence. As a police officer stated, "things like ISVA, things like therapeutic support, are all commissioned locally and not on a national basis [… therefore] may differ area by area." (P4) Although not many participants were able to access such a service, it highlights a significant source of support which could improve victims' experiences of the criminal justice system.

Further Third Sector Support

It was clear that the third sector[49], or the voluntary sector, was where victims most commonly received support. One victim spoke positively of the support he received as a result of the police setting up therapy with a local organisation. He stated, "It really really helped me and my side of things, it's a must." (VA6) However, others only received an information pack with numbers of charities and support services. One victim stated, "They just directed me to the usual ones, NAPAC, RASASC[50], those kinds of things. When you try to ring, you just can't get through, they are inundated. It would have been handy to have those support networks." (V-S8) One advocate involved in a victim support line stated, "we're overwhelmed. We answer on a very good day 20% of call attempts, usually it's less than 10%, so the service provision is not there really." (VA4) The police's reliance on the third sector to provide victim welfare is apparent. Although this has not necessarily been criticised, with one victim stating that he thought the police should focus on the investigation, with specialists then offering support (VA9). However, is there enough support available to offer every victim the adequate level of care? Are the police doing enough in connecting these victims to support services?

It appears in sport, and football more specifically, there are several charities specialised in supporting ex-players, with one participant stating, "I think it's better than it was because

[49] *The third sector, also known as the voluntary sector or independent sector, is an umbrella term to refer to organisations which are neither operated by the Government public sector or for-profit private sector.*
[50] *Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre*

you've got Sporting Chance, Offside Trust and probably others which I may not know of that do provide specific support to people within the world of sport and ex-sports people as well – not just around sexual abuse but lots of different things." (VA7) This links with the support package offered by the FA, which will be discussed below. It appears football is fairly unique in the additional support provided, which leads to questions over the level of support other cases of non-recent abuse receive. There are now also several survivor-lead support services operated by advocates with lived experience of abuse.

Third Sector (with Lived Experience)

This significant area of support is delivered by victim advocates with lived experience of non-recent CSA in football, directing their own experiences into both raising awareness of child sexual abuse in sport, as well as supporting other survivors. The reasons why victims take on advocacy roles are varied; however a number of key themes have been identified. A victim spoke of how they had used the resources offered by a survivor-lead charity and wanted to give back, noting "they'd helped me a lot through some quite tough times." (VA11) They also saw the gaps in support offered, for example, the lack of support available in more rural areas and within the realms of grass-roots football (VA11). Various victims commented they took on such positions because they wished there had been similar services available to them. One participant stated, "The reason I do this job is I know how much I would have benefited, even now would benefit from having someone doing a job like mine that I could tap into in times of need. That's why I do it. I recognise how much I could have benefited. I'm sure there are other guys that really need that help or have needed that help and it's not been there." (VA5) These ideas will be explored in further depth below.

Raising Awareness & Supporting Survivors

The importance of raising awareness of child sexual abuse and safeguarding in sport was emphasised in many of the interviews and accounts. The goal was to bring this discussion to the 'forefront', with sport being a 'fantastic medium' to get information and resources out to the public (VA11). One participant articulated, "That's the humbling part, your journey is helping many people. If we stop one person suffering what we suffered, our job was done, and I know that's a cliché but we believe we're making a difference." (VA11) Additionally, victim advocates with lived experience are in a unique position of truly understanding what other survivors are going through, as one stated,

> "I know from my own personal experience the very moment I disclosed my abuse, I lost total control of my life. Everything was out of control. The police were in the control, solicitors were, everyone around me, my employer had an opinion. I just felt totally out of control and arguably the last twenty years, I have been trying to regain some sense of control of my life. So what I say to survivors, 'you need to lead this, you need to feel like you're in control of it and you own it. My job is to assist and support you along that journey – but not make it my thing or take it over, or tell you what you should and shouldn't do.'" (VA5)

Advocates with lived experience can truly relate to the needs of service-users, therefore are able to support them, particularly through the criminal justice process. An individual spoke of how he, alongside several other survivors, sought training so they could be adequately prepared and informed how best to support others, stating, "We thought if we're trying to help people, we should be professionally qualified to help them, although I could use my experience I didn't want to give people the wrong advice." (VA12) It is important to note the

risks of retraumatisation and having an intense emotional toll are high; therefore this is certainly not an option or a responsibility for all survivors.

Representation of Victim Voices
However, the duty to use their voice and platform for good played a key role for victim advocates with lived experience, as they did not take the decision lightly. One participant reflected,

> "In a lot of respects, I represent other survivors so I have a responsibility to make sure I don't give professionals the opportunity to what I call – 'write the single story' – the idea that it is the professionals in the field who write the single story about other colleagues, and they have the power to change people's perception about who they are by that single story. Professionals have a responsibility to not tell a single story but tell a big picture, so they don't pigeon-hole people as one thing: survivors are broken, fragile etc. – cautious to work with, and taking away these stereotypes. I have a responsibility I think in my role to show that we're not all daft, cracked and broken, or unfixable and we have value as people, just like everybody else in society." (VA5)

These poignant remarks again remind us to not stereotype or attempt to pigeon-hole victims into a singular group, as they are individuals with a diverse range of experiences and opinions. One victim spoke of the key goal being to remove the barriers for victims or survivors, noting the 'labels that are put round our necks by professionals.' (VA5) He wanted to remove false perceptions surrounding survivors to provide a 'more open landscape for others to come behind us' (ibid). This individual is pointing to the importance of changing society's understanding of abuse victims, with the desire for better representation leading men to feel more comfortable disclosing.

Expertise
This can lead to further challenges over positions of power that victim advocates with lived experience are allowed to operate within. An advocate shared, "My experience as a survivor is that we get asked to speak at lots of different places and conferences and sit down and chat about what we have 'been through' for the professional experts to go, 'we'll take those insights and work upon them.' We're never included in the decision-making process or the professional element of it as such." (VA5) Victims are asked to share their expertise but are not often included in the creation of child protection protocols or support packages for survivors of childhood abuse. It is important victim advocates with lived experience are not left feeling exploited, as this participant notes, yet those who are both safely recruited and show relevant skills and experience, should be properly recognised and celebrated in victim advocacy work (VA5).

National Health Service (NHS)
Many victims came into contact with the NHS, often when dealing with symptoms of their abuse, such as alcohol dependency, severe mental health problems and a multitude of other challenges. Although it was indicated in moments of crisis the NHS offered exceptional support, both victims and advocates in this research highlighted the long waiting lists for psychiatric services and a reliance on a more universal approach to male victims of abuse. One advocate noted, "It's difficult to get good effective support from the NHS, again that is changing slowly. There are huge waiting lists in the NHS for support and what support you

tend to get is 6 or 8 sessions of CBT[51], maybe a bit of the EMDR[52] if you're lucky." (VA4) A victim spoke of his positive experience with the NHS stating, "I did receive a lot of support and I know a lot of people who I have spoken to have struggled to access that support." (VA11) From the victim accounts there was a focus on providing each individual with six to eight sessions of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), with one advocate noting such a rigid approach was 'reductionistic' and not truly meeting the varied needs of victims (VA10). This reflects a need for more responsive tailored, individualised and long-term support for victims, with the resources to put this in place currently not being available.

Pre-Disclosure Therapy

However, a barrier raised in several of the victims' accounts was accessing comprehensive support while their case was in the criminal justice system. There were worries with and issues accessing therapy in the run up to a trial, due to the likelihood of the therapist's notes being disclosed to the court. This is concerning when coupled with the long wait times for a conviction being brought to court discussed previously. As a victim stated, "The PFA offered counselling, I did actually do a couple of sessions but I stopped doing it for the simple reason that once the counsellor said that I couldn't speak about anything that had happened to me because it was pre-trial. I just thought what is the point of coming here, coming to speak to you, if I can't. If the defence know I've been to counselling they can ask for my counselling record to check to see if I've been coached in any way so that's why the counsellor wouldn't speak about what had actually happened to me. So what is the point? I don't want to sit here and talk about the weather and talk about how I feel today because I feel crap so, yer." (V-S9) One advocate made clear that we should not simply write off therapy while a case is on-going, stating "For me that's quite a simplistic, a very risk-adverse, back-covering approach when we need to start with – 'what is in the survivor's best interest?' and their informed decision making." (VA10) Although there are campaigns working on this, it still remains an issue for victims of non-recent child sexual abuse.

Football Authorities

There were a number of resources made available for men abused in football, which specialise in the unique barriers which these men abused face. As a victim explained, "I think football's exceptionalism, English football's exceptionalism is the thing that stands out for me. They have done more than any other football governing body. I thought I would never be praising the FA too much, they've done a hell of a lot and they've put a lot of support in place." (VA8) The status of English football has enabled considerable progress to be made in the arena of safeguarding and child protection. The support packages provided by the FA and PFA after November 2016 were noted, with many victims accessing this resource. Yet, whether this was enough was a contentious issue. Referring to the FA support package, one victim described the support he received had been 'invaluable.... and can't thank them enough for that' (V-S8), with an advocate noting, "my overall impression is that it's been of something of real value to people" (VA10).

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[51] *Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is 'a talking therapy that can help you manage your problems by changing the way you think and behave' (NHS, 2021a). For more info see https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/cognitive-behavioural-therapy-cbt/overview/*

[52] *Eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) is a treatment to reduce the symptoms of PTSD, which 'involves making side-to-side eye movements, usually by following the movement of your therapist's finger, while recalling the traumatic incident' (NHS, 2021b). For more info see https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/treatment/*

However, it was also noted by participants that the footballing authorities, and in particular certain clubs, were not doing enough to support players who were abused whilst in their care. The treatment by the clubs in fact compounded some of the men's trauma, with a victim noting, "The club has just been horrendous […] They are not even acknowledging we exist." (V-S8) Although some men had more positive experiences, a few clubs were widely criticised in this research for the lack of acknowledgement and support they have provided the victims. As an advocate stated, "Some clubs have been proactive, faced the storm and some are still in denial." (VA4) As stated previously the role of the clubs and footballing authorities goes beyond the scope of this report, however it is important to note the impact they have had on the victims' experience since disclosing their abuse.

6. What Improvements Could Be Made to the Victim Experience of the Criminal Justice System?

6.1 Background

This final section will examine what could be done to improve a victim's experience of the criminal justice process, and what, if anything, victims want from the system itself. All these suggestions come from victims and the advocates working alongside them and have been drawn together into key themes. It should be noted some of these ideas are more theoretical – with ideas such as 'justice' being pertinent throughout many of the victims' accounts. There were also more practical suggestions and recommendations, which would have alleviated much of the harm and distress that the process had on participants. These suggestions range from small tweaks within the current system to fundamental reform in how the criminal justice system operates – as one victim suggests 'an over-haul' (V-S5).

What victims look for in from the criminal justice system is of course subjective, however it is important to recognise the reasons why victims report to the police to better understand their expectations and needs. As an advocate notes, "It's about looking at the survivor experience, why do they commit to this? Why are they disclosing now for? I think that we do need to look at the criminal justice system and figure out how we do that a lot better." (VA1) It is clear for many victims of non-recent childhood abuse; a custodial sentence is not all they require from the criminal justice system. There is widespread debate in the literature over making the process more 'victim-centric', and whether the criminal justice process can and should provide victims anything other than an opportunity to disclose to the police and have their allegations investigated. However, for the purposes of this report, we will simply look at what victims and close advocates offer as suggestions to improve a victim's experience of the process.

This should be considered in the unique context that these particular investigations took place as a result of the widespread attention given to football in our society. A participant stated, "Certainly one of the things I'm finding is the criminal justice system […] to be a bit better now in football, because football is high profile." (VA8) The attention these cases received has started to invoke change, as most recently new legislation has been brought by the government through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. This will now make it illegal for adults in positions of trust, including sports coaches, from engaging in sexual relationships with young people under the age of 18, as is in place for other occupations such as teachers and doctors (House of Commons, 2021).

6.2 What is justice?

A theme explored in both the questions and the victims accounts was the idea of 'justice', or certainly for many a lack thereof. However, the term **'**justice' is open to interpretation, with each victim's definition varying considerably. Some took the more literal definition of justice, a conviction in a criminal court, while others related to a certain sense of satisfaction regarding the outcome for all parties involved, including the football clubs and authorities. This can result in victims feeling frustration and distress, particularly by those whose individual cases were not taken forward against the perpetrator. There was an expectation they would get a sense of justice through the perpetrator being convicted of harm caused to other boys. As one advocate eloquently explained, "Just the fundamental point that because it is not derived from an understanding of impact, it means justice often becomes another route for injustice, so it's kind of a double whammy. First, experiencing the injustice of abuse and then experiencing the injustice of the response to the abuse, so it becomes a criminal injustice

system." (VA10)

It should also be noted that a common misconception is that justice is synonymous with closure, when for many victims this is unfortunately not the case. Even with a conviction, the criminal justice system does not provide closure or an end to their pain. As one victim noted, "I woke up the day after sentencing and thought 'is that it?' I've got what I set out to do, to say what had happened and have people believe me. You think, I'm still living with it, it hasn't taken it away in any shape or form. It's just a little bit easier to cope with." (V-S10) When the same individual was asked whether he got a sense of justice from the criminal justice proceedings, he responded, "In terms of what happened to me, definitely. For what I've had to live with, no." (V-S10) This indicates that although they received justice in the legal sense, the impact of both the abuse and the experiences of the criminal justice system has not left them feeling as such. A conviction does not make for the harm caused by the abuse and the challenging pursuit of justice.

The common response when asked whether victims got a sense of justice from the proceedings was 'no, zero justice.' (V-S3) This is reflective of a widely negative experience that many victims faced after disclosing their abuse to police, with many not having their individual case taken forward. As one victim stated when asked what they want from the system now, "justice, but that wont happen in the criminal courts but may occur in the civil court." (V-S3) This was also noted by those calling for "justice for all victims" (V-S2), again noting many individuals who came forward did not get charges in their name. For some, justice meant closing the loopholes and legal restrictions which meant that a number of victims could not have their cases pursued.

Football Clubs & Authorities

Finally, when one individual was asked whether he got a sense of 'justice' from the criminal justice proceedings, he responded, "Absolutely not – there has never been an admittance from any organisation that there was a duty of care and they failed in their duty to uphold that principle." (V-S1) This shows that justice for many lies in holding the organisations involved to account, as well as prosecuting perpetrators. This becomes challenging in the criminal justice system and explains the decision of many of the men to pursue a civil case against the football clubs where they were abused. The powerful testimonies shared by victims highlight a desire for acknowledgement, both by the State and the football clubs and authorities. Therefore, it is unsurprising that when a victim was asked what he wants from the system now, he stated, "Justice - I want acknowledgement from the [footballing authorities] that they got it wrong. They hid the secrets for thirty-five years and that the pain and suffering experienced by having to go through years of litigation causes more pain and suffering needlessly."(V-S1)

Impact of No Justice

This draws an important attention to the need to prosecute cases of non-recent abuse, as it is clear that abuse is tied intrinsically to justice. As one victim articulated, "Every day that passes without justice brings more pain to me. It never gets any easier like the loss of a parent or loved one. Time does not heal these wounds." (V-S1) This draws attention to the role of the criminal justice system can play for a victim processing what has happened to them, with a victim highlighting, "If this doesn't happen [justice], there will never be any closure." (V-S6) This research certainly does not suggest any kind of closure from getting a conviction, as victims face the impacts of their abuse long after a criminal case draws to a close. However, the increased pain victims face when they do not get justice in the criminal justice system is

significant. One victim noted the impact this has had, as he copes by "just crawling under a rock, not being seen and not being heard and just getting on with life as best as I can and not involving myself with anything else like this ever again." (V-S9) This damages the relationship between victims and the criminal justice agencies, resulting in a lasting effect not just on victim but on their families, friends and in some instances, communities.

To truly start to understand the experiences of these victims, we must look at the following quote:

> "The hard thing is that I was abused through no fault of my own, so I felt let down by my football club because I believe 100% that they knew what the individual was all those years ago but did nothing about it. One of their Directors said on an investigative television documentary – they turned a blind eye because he was producing the goods. He was producing those players. I feel I was let down then. I get to the age of forty-four it comes out in the press and I finally pluck up some courage to go to the police and then I'm let down by the police. I'm made to feel like I'm not any use to them at that point which makes me feel even worse, they obviously don't think what happened to me is, in their opinion, something they can get a guilty verdict from. […] they are not looking at me as an individual, they are not thinking of [me… name of victim redacted], they are thinking of themselves so they can get their guilty verdict. I want that guilty verdict but I want it for me because I believe in me and I know how it affected me. I kind of just feel like the police used me as a… put me to one side and thought 'forget him.' That happened on two occasions, for the first trial and then keeping me on tenterhooks and the second trial comes around and again you are cast to one side. So I feel really let down through that, I go to the PFA in the early instances they say, 'we're sorry' and 'is there anything we can do?' But I've heard nothing else since, I know I have to be somebody who asks for help but sometimes it would go a long way if somebody rang you up afterwards to say 'how are you doing?'" (V-S9)

Regret

For both those who received traditional justice in the courts and those who did not, some victims expressed regret coming forward. One victim describes it as, "layers and layers being put on it all the time – the fact we've been failed by the police, the fact we've been failed by CPS" (V-S8). This was in regards to the treatment he, and other victims, had faced by the authorities in these cases despite getting a conviction in his name. However, it was those who reported, yet had not been taken forward which expressed the most regret in disclosing to police. It appears the system itself is making some victims wish they had never come forward, with one stating, "I wish from the very outset I had listened to myself and not ever come forward. If someone ever asked my advice whether to come forward, I would say categorically no and that's my own opinion." (V-S9) Although there were examples of difficulties with individual officers, more commonly the issues lay with the system itself and how it operates.

6.3 'Overhaul' or Small Tweaks?

Therefore, to examine the system, we must explore the question that lies at the heart of debate surrounding victims in the criminal justice system. Do victims want and need increased procedural rights[53] or simply improvement to existing services? As one advocate indicated, "There are some things we can do to tweak it and there are some fundamental

[53] *This is in reference to the legal rights of a participant in the criminal justice process, for example, providing a VIS.*

structural shifts." (VA10) A victim in particular called for 'an overhaul' (V-S5), as they saw the issue as deeply structural and embedded in current practices. Whereas others saw that the victims' experience could be drastically improved within the confines of the current criminal justice process. A key reason for some victims and advocates supporting structural changes was due to the fundamental principles of the current adversarial[54] system not being conducive to allowing victims a voice or a truly better experience of the system. As an advocate notes, "In criminal justice, it shouldn't just be about the conviction and the sentence, but also importantly, they get the closure and justice for each survivor." (VA1) With a victim stating, "Until we change our mindset with regards to how we value people, whether it's children, or adults, or vulnerable adults, victims or survivors I think it's going to be very hard to change the culture without legislative change. Unfortunately those that are in charge of changing the legislation in favour of victims and survivors tend to be few and far between. So I think it's going to be a very long process unfortunately." (VA5)

Adversarial System

This resulted in a number of participants calling for a shift to a more inquisitorial system[55], after drawing attention to the issues within the adversarial system for victims – most notably, experiences of cross-examination. As an advocate notes,

> "I guess if I start with that comparison to other sectors, if you went to your doctor and you had cancer and your doctor said to you 'we've got a great treatment for this, you're going to love it because it was developed in the middle ages.' We would rightfully query that, yet that is the rationale for our adversarial system that it's a time hallowed tradition, it's part of our culture, rather than an evidence-based approach. Where is the evidence that adversarial justice delivers justice? Surely truth has got to be a part of justice, yet truth is not a primary objective or value of the adversarial system. It's about winning and about a justice being defined as both sides having their moment in court, rather than actually what is best for discovering the truth." (VA10)

This emphasises fundamental concerns within the UK's current system of justice, which arguably has a detrimental impact for participants. As the advocate goes on to say, "So personally I think the system, there are lots of tweaks going on and that's great, but they are just tweaks and I would like to look at a inquisitorial system and what that might look like. I know that's really complex and there are real challenges with that kind of approach, but I think actually having an approach based on truth rather than winning might be a start." (VA10)

Procedural Rights

Others expressed that victims should be more involved in the system, as a victim noted, "It should be up to the victims what happens in regards to criminal cases, not the public funding restrictions placed onto the Procurator Fiscal office or the CPS." (V-S1) This individual

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[54] "Common law countries use an adversarial system to determine facts in the adjudication process. The prosecution and defence compete against each other, and the judge serves as a referee to ensure fairness to the accused, and that the legal rules criminal procedure followed. The adversarial system assumes that the best way to get to the truth of a matter is through a competitive process to determine the facts and application of the law accurately." (UNODC, 2018)

[55] "The inquisitorial system is associated with civil law legal systems, and it has existed for many centuries. It is characterised by extensive pre-trial investigation and interrogations with the objective to avoid bringing an innocent person to trial. The inquisitorial process can be described as an official inquiry to ascertain the truth, whereas the adversarial system uses a competitive process between prosecution and defence to determine the facts." (UNODC, 2018)

suggests wanting to be more involved in their case, having a say within this process and not be held back by bureaucratic means such as funding allocations. This was also touched on in the previous section with victims wishing for 'a day in court' to share their story, as it was noted that some victims are left feeling like a 'passenger' in their own case (VA1). This indicates that some victims wish for more ownership of their cases, which has been widely discussed in the victimology literature[56] and is the case in other jurisdictions, such as France. Although this was only touched upon by a small number of participants in this research, it is important component in this discussion. However, the reality of such is both theoretically and logistically far more challenging to implement, with the alleged perpetrator's right to a fair trial needing to be upheld. Yet, by looking at other jurisdictions which have embodied such principles into their criminal justice system, such as Japan (*see Herber, 2016*) some changes could possibly be made. This certainly requires extensive research and examination to see if this would be suitable in the UK context.

6.4 Changes in the Current System

Despite such discussion, others see space within the current system for impactful reform and improvement, with the majority of victims and advocates suggesting change within the present confines of the process. These will be addressed below with regards to both the criminal justice system and the support provision available to victims who disclose their abuse to the police.

Communication

Many victims noted communication as the area which would have most improved their experiences of the criminal justice system. As evidenced in the previous section, many victims were not regularly and appropriately updated on the progress of their case. A victim when asked what would have improved his experience of the criminal justice system summed up; "Communication would a big one. Sensitivity from the police. I would hope that in future there would be a different approach to it so rather than contact you out the blue then leave you and think that's it; they've done their job. It's not." (V-S8) Victims require regular communication and updates with regards to their cases. However, it is important that this communication follows a trauma-informed approach, with consideration to how police teams make contact victims in these cases.

Expectations

This was coupled with managing expectations, as "the police [need to] manage expectations of those that come forward more effectively, i.e. many were left to believe that by disclosing that their lives would be somehow better for it; from experience this may not be the case for many." (V-S8) It is important that victims are fully informed of each stage of the process, with the fact that this would often scare off an individual being indicative of the harmful process that is in operation. Nevertheless, it is important victims are prepared for what will follow, as a victim highlights;

> "I guess it was unfamiliar territory, however it seemed to be that no matter how many came forward, people were still actively encouraged to come forward, without the relevant support being put in place or the knowledge of what a massive step it would be in their lives to disclose to friends, family, or the police, never mind going public with the media. For many this was the first time they may have told anyone and without the appropriate professional support mechanisms in place it could easily have a detrimental

[56] *See Christie, 1977 for early discussion.*

> impact on their mental wellbeing, which unfortunately for many this has been the case. It should also have been made a lot clearer that coming forward didn't mean getting your day in court, however that with them coming forward this meant that it was catalogued / registered and meant that… If there was a criminal case it would be acknowledged, however this didn't mean court appearance, or charges being brought." (V-S8)

This ties in with the theme of 'transparency' (V-S1), in particular keeping victims updated and involved in their cases. It is clear that police investigative teams had to be wary over sharing information that would impinge on the case, however this does not mean that victims should be kept in the dark over the progression of the investigation.

Advice & Information

A further recommendation noted in the accounts and interviews was regarding advice and information, which is linked closely to both communication and managing expectations. This was referenced most commonly in this research regarding the decision whether to waive anonymity. As one participant noted;

> "Something else I have always been keen to point out from the outset was the way it was handled generally, in that it wasn't made clear enough that there is a massive difference between disclosing and, or going public, again I don't think this was made clear to many, with some waiving their anonymity without knowing what this would mean and others getting swept along on the tidal wave of public interest the case generated. I was contacted from the outset by some media outlets and although I told them I wasn't interested in telling my story in the public domain, there wasn't any support or advice offered to deal with this." (V-S8)

As a result of this, a highly informative and supportive resource was produced in partnership with survivors of non-recent abuse in football and the PFA and FA[57] on the decision whether of not to waive anonymity. However, there were calls on police teams to make this resource available to victims who reported their abuse to the police. There was also a lack of information in particular cases surrounding the use of social media, as the victim went on to say, "there wasn't sufficient advice in place to warn people that this again could have a detrimental impact on a criminal case, or on their mental health." (V-S8) Although this research highlights some victims received clear and useful information on this, others were not as well advised by the police and support agencies.

Length of Process

Another key area which was called on to improve a victim's experience was the length of the process, as victims called for "faster decision making" (V-S2). This is highly significant for victims, as the impact of a lengthy case has proven to be detrimental to their mental wellbeing. A participant voiced, "If you could actually write a piece on how not to handle things, this would be a case and point. It's a drawn out process for everyone, it's painful. For a lot of people who may have heard the news originally who are not connected to it, they wouldn't know all this that's going on. Whereas when you're actually involved it's all encompassing and it's your day to day thought processes – when are we going to hear anything? What's going to happen? Why am I not hearing anything? Why is it so quiet?" (V-S8) This was expressed with reference to many victims not receiving therapy until after the

[57] *See document – https://www.thefa.com/-/media/thefacom-new/files/rules-and-regulations/safeguarding/section-9/9-2-waiving-anonymity-a-guide-black-and-white-version.ashx*

trial, due to issues regarding pre-trial disclosure. An advocate noted that this can deteriorate a victim's mental health, as "it's not just the fact you're being delayed by two years, if you were on a 4/10 on severity before those two years not discussing the issue, it may be up to 7 or 8 [by hearing a decision] and actually that's then compounded by not getting justice. You can see how the criminal justice system hasn't helped, it has actually made things a lot worse." (VA1)

This was acknowledged by some individuals in the police, with a possible solution to speed up the system being the allocation of a dedicated CPS prosecutor at the start of the case. A police officer noted, "Police forces should be allocated a barrister for these cases because these cases are so complicated and really do need an awful lot of attention and planning to get trial ready. That would be an improvement across the board for the CPS and policing." (P2) Another police officer acknowledged, "I think the biggest one is speeding up the criminal justice process. Without a doubt that is the biggest thing that I said before that really does put barriers in place for many victims and survivors because they simply don't want to go through that ordeal what is for many of them is years." (P4) This could be feasible with the adequate resources and attention in place to ensure victims are not left waiting years for a decision in their case.

6.5 Number of Victims Taken Forward

Another key theme is regarding the number of victims taken forward, with one advocate calling for a 'careful review' to explore how best to respond to a large number of individuals coming forward in a case. This is to "make sure as many people as possible can be included. That's not just within sport, it's in a number of different areas, it needs to be considered to ensure perpetrators are prosecuted for all their offences." (VA1) Attention was brought to what was perceived to be a 'lottery' with respect to how many victims were taken forward, highlighting that Hampshire Police took forward twenty-four claimants, whereas other police forces believed "the jury could not deal with more than X number of cases." (V-S8) A victim stated, this 'could be changed in the future.' (V-S8) Many victims and advocates referenced other jurisdictions where it was possible to do so, reflecting a feeling of discontent with the current procedures regarding prosecuting cases with mass disclosures.

Regional Courts

It was not just other jurisdictions which were referenced as examples in how more victims could be included in charges, but a couple of victims noted the Sinaga case[58] as precedent for having back to back trials, resulting in the perpetrator being convicted of a larger number of offences. This lead a participant to suggest the use of regional courts in cases of mass reporting, allowing for more victims to be included. One victim stated, "The capability, the logistics I think of getting a trial with so many is obviously a factor, the actual space in a court, but it's not insurmountable surely. We need this conversation about taking it forward and it's probably specific RASSO courts are required. […] Things can change." (VA9) By suggesting regional courts specialising in RASSO cases, it would enable large-scale charges to be brought. As the participant explained, "I mean they're not every week are they, in terms of resourcing, they wouldn't come round that often but get it on. Let's get these people convicted, everybody who has credible evidence that is corroborated should, in my opinion, get charged with and go to court." (VA9)

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[58] *Reynhard Sinaga was found guilty of 159 offences across four separate trials, including 136 unprotected anal rapes, in the 'largest prosecution of its kind in CPS history' (CPSb, 2020). For more information see https://www.cps.gov.uk/north-west/news/britains-most-prolific-rapist-jailed-life-following-historic-prosecution*

6.6 Legal Reform

As was highlighted in the previous section, there were several concerns regarding the law and whether it fully protected and supported victims of non-recent child sexual abuse. From the selection of victims and advocates who participated in this research, this was shown in three key areas: a loophole in double jeopardy legislation, lack of cohesive mandatory reporting legislation and some concerns of the length of sentences for perpetrators of child abuse. As a participant whose case was acquitted in the 1990s states, "according to the law, because of Double Jeopardy, I may never get justice." (V-S6) He referred to this legislation as 'ridiculous' (ibid), with this being a clear area where those who faced non-recent child sexual abuse face problems.

Furthermore, the need for mandatory reporting legislation was indicated as a way to move the focus from children reporting abuse to responsible adults. Under such proposals individuals would face criminal charges for not reporting suspected abuse, as there is currently "no legal requirement on those working with children to report either known or suspected child abuse or neglect." (Khan, 2018) This has been an issue of contention, particularly amongst police and social services who have voiced concerns over a lack of resources to deal with what would undoubtedly result in an influx of reports. Furthermore, there are questions over the criminalisation of what could be caring professionals, who are simply unaware of any possible abuse. This needs to be taken into account when designing the statutory duty. Nevertheless, it is clear more stringent controls on organisations are needed to protect young people from institutions than can often forget their responsibility to the children in their care. As one victim stated, "Mandatory reporting is a great tool, it's not a silver bullet […] but I think it's a good tool that is needed." (VA9)

Finally, as highlighted prior, a couple of victims noted the length of sentences were not proportionate to the pain they had faced across their lifetime. Although, in these cases, each perpetrator received a considerable custodial sentence, it perhaps emphasises that some victims did not feel it fully represented the seriousness of the crime. Therefore, it seems further consideration should be given to the sentencing guidelines regarding child sexual abuse. The importance of legal reform is clear, with a victim noting, as "Unfortunately as you know in this country most things only happen through reform of law. I know there are other ways but that is the single most common way." (VA5) It is clear further attention is needed to ensure the legal frameworks can adequately represent victims of non-recent CSA.

6.7 Funding & Resources

Most improvements require increased funding and resources going into the criminal justice system. This was noted simply by an advocate stating, "I think the one thing we do need a lot more money in the criminal justice system for the police, the CPS, the criminal courts, and the prison and probation service." (VA1) Although for some victims, the situation is more complex, with calls for an 'overhaul' of the system, with some believing there needs to be a fundamental shift in how the criminal justice process operates. Some victims do not trust the core functioning and morality of the system, as one participant stated,

> "It's not about justice and not about closure and not about the victim or survivor getting what they deserve out the system. It's about lawyers and barristers earning money and keeping their reputation, keeping the cogs turning. Keeping the CPS going, keeping the police going. That's what it's about… I know they've put the Victim's Code in and when you consider the police are so under-resourced and under-funded, we've recently had the

specialist non-recent CSA teams taken away and now they've just been put in the generic sexual abuse teams – which means current rape cases and abuse cases take priority, of course they have to – but what does that mean for non-recent victims?" (VA5)

6.8 Wider Awareness & Recognition

It appears for such changes to be put in place there needs to be wider awareness and recognition of the prevalence of non-recent abuse and the importance of prosecuting such crimes. However, this can be difficult to contend with, as "It's too hard to confront the truth that as a society we hurt children. It's a horrible, horrible thing to contemplate so they turn their face away, they think it happened to someone else far away over here. It hasn't. It's either happened to you or someone you love or someone you work with. The better we can be about speaking about it more openly […] the better we can make up for the failings of the past." (VA2) The prevalence of child abuse challenges the 'adaptive illusion' that we live in a 'just world' (VA10). Advocates and victims alike commented that child sexual abuse in widely ignored in society due to making individuals, organisations and communities feel uncomfortable (VA5). A victim powerfully stated, "I can clear a room in thirty seconds by starting to talk about my abuse and what happened to me. You watch people twitch and switch and get out the way quickly. It makes people really uncomfortable; it's not a common conversation so I get people's hesitancy." (VA5) To truly address this an advocate called for a cultural shift in our response to victims, as "On a very fundamental level, there is something about us as a society not acknowledging abuse and trauma and for me, this is behind a lot of the issues that we are coming across, is that we're not facing the pain." (VA10)

6.9 Victim Support Services

Several victims also highlighted the lack of support they received after disclosing their abuse, particularly while navigating the criminal justice system. When asked what would have improved his experience, a victim stated, 'support, counselling, advice none of which were ever offered.' (V-S5) At the heart of this is the lack of availability of support services for all victims, with the demand appearing to extend beyond the capacity of services available. More generally, a couple of advocates noted the NHS England's Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services Framework[59] as an excellent tool-kit to better support victims of abuse across the system (VA2, VA4). In these cases of abuse in youth football, there were various more specific suggestions to improve the support given.

Specialised for Men

Although there are growing services provided by charities supporting male victims of abuse, these were not accessible to all men in this research. This lead to an advocate specifying there needs to be more support services which specialise in male sexual abuse and violence (VA7). They stated, "I think we have to be open to different ways of working with different people. I think we also need to challenge gender bias, when people are dismissing or minimising the abuse of boys and men." (VA7) This was testified to by another advocate who stated, "In lots of places there isn't much support for men, which might well be why they don't speak out." (VA4) The number of victims coming to light is an indicator of the number of men who may need support. Therefore, widespread appropriate support, which is easily accessible to meet their needs, is required. A victim stated, "I actually met with a male survivor of non-recent sexual abuse last week, he actually told that basically he's got a partner, he's got money,

[59] *See document – https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/strategic-direction-sexual-assault-and-abuse-services.pdf*

supportive family who are aware of what happened, he's also a few good friends and yet he's got nobody he feels he can talk to about what happened to him. He's one of the lucky ones in a way because he has got all those other people, yet he still doesn't feel like he's got anybody." (VA6)

Although there several key charities and support services which focus on male victims of sexual violence, it is more common for organisations to simply include men as a 'add on' in historically female focused organisations (VA7). This results in offering the exact same support to male and female victims when often the nature of abuse and circumstances surrounding can vary quite considerably. Arguably the support required is dependent on the individual victim and the exact circumstances of their abuse. Some advocates noted gender can impact on the support required and how it needs to be delivered. An advocate suggested using 'action-orientated language' in therapy and also making services clearly approachable for men, noting details such as which magazines are available in the waiting room play an important role – "it's about making sure we give people the message that we are accessible to girls and women *and* we are accessible to boys and men." (VA7)

Tailored and Individualised Support

Furthermore, another issue that was raised was the type of support that was offered, with a number of advocates and victims commenting on the 'one size fits all approach.' As an advocate clearly outlines, "survivors' needs change over the course of a lifetime […] So there is no one size fits all model, so you can't give everyone twelve hours CBT and people will be cured." (VA2) Due to the resources available, support services are limited in what they can offer, with the focus on a quick fix approach option rather than a long-term support package. An advocate commented that offering victims six sessions of CBT is 'just insulting' in consideration to the level of trauma they have faced (VA10). As they poignantly stated, "Somebody has been raped as a child and we are offering six sessions of CBT, it's just a joke." (VA10) These are a diverse group of individuals, who are at different points on their journey, therefore there is a need for a 'bespoke' response which is responsive to the individual needs of the victim (VA10). A victim draws attention to this stating, "We're all different men, we're all made differently, so the level of support you need could be slightly different. […] I think the support needs to be tailored to the individual, rather than generic support." (VA11) Simply, the support victims receive should reflect their personal and individual needs, not just a blanket response given to all victims of sexual violence.

Flexible & Geographically Consistent

Another area of improvement was how flexible support services could be, with the third sector being noted as better at providing this response – "the third sector are more responsive after hours, compared to the statutory sector. Adult and child mental health services work from nine to five, generally it's when these people are home ruminating, something on TV could trigger them and they need a conversation maybe at 1am or 2am." (VA3) Another participant noted, "My clients often can't speak privately, or they're at work, so they need an evening or a weekend to have a private conversation. I have to build that flexibility in." (VA5) Yet such a service requires funding and is not universally available to all victims across the United Kingdom. As this research highlights there is a postcode lottery with organisations being dependent on their localised funding to survive (VA2).

Post- Prosecution Support

Finally, there was a call for longer-term support, particularly for victims after their criminal case had concluded. This was referred to in the interviews as 'follow-up' (e.g. VA3) or

'aftercare' (e.g. VA12). It was described as essential in helping victims come to terms with the impacts of both their abuse and the criminal justice system – as "the guilt and the pain is a lifetime, it never goes away." (VA3) From one victim's perspective: "I think there should be a lot more aftercare after the court case as that's when you find the adrenaline is gone, although court can be quite an anxious time, it's afterwards I think that affects people. When all the press stops and everything quietens down in the limelight, I think that's the biggest time victims need support." (VA12) Yet the resources needed to offer comprehensive and longer term support is currently not in place, as an advocate stated, "We need more funding for longer-term work, a lot of funding out there is on a short term intervention – which is better than nothing, but what we really need is for more long-term work. Usually if there is someone coming into therapy and it's a guy, it may be that it takes a while to build a relationship, if there is a long-term investigation or court process, that's a length[y period] of time. It may be that we have to fund additional services or existing ones to expand." (VA7) However, for these services to be offered there needs to be the funding and resources available so victims can receive the appropriate level of care.

7. Conclusion

This report contributes to both the discussion on non-recent child sexual abuse in football and also abuse found in other scenarios, indicated by the APPG report (2020) and the evolving guidance coming from Operation Hydrant. It provides a key addition to the limited but important research undertaken into abuse of young boys by male perpetrators (e.g. Hartill, 2014), particularly in a sporting environment. The Sheldon report (2021) highlighted the way in which victims of non-recent child sexual abuse were let down by their football clubs and the FA, with this research expanding the focus to the subsequent experience of these individuals within the criminal justice system. This report corroborates evidence in the literature of the experience of other victims of non-recent child sexual abuse in the criminal justice system, as reported by the APPG Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse (2020). Yet differs in respect to focusing on 'male-perpetrator, male victim' abuse, as found within the context of football. Although there are some themes that would be common to both male and female victims, the focus of this report was on the male experience of the criminal justice system, framed within the 'masculinised' world of football. As a result the report gives a specific insight into the challenges facing men who were victims of child sexual abuse and their journey to find justice, specifically the barriers they faced to disclose to the police. It also emphasises the nuanced nature of the support that is needed for male athletes who come from an environment where aggression and strength are seen as prerequisites of success. It is important to keep the experiences of this community of victims on the agenda, while ensuring long-term and individualised support is in place for them.

On the whole, victims spoke of criminal justice professionals being sensitive and considerate while they disclosed their abuse, indicating the change in culture within the criminal justice process in response to non-recent child sexual abuse. However, there were examples of poor practice in some cases, particularly with regards to keeping victims updated and informed in lengthy investigations. These accounts are concerning and are in need of further attention. These investigations received both wider public attention and resources than many other cases of non-recent abuse, which allowed these large-scale and complex investigations to take place. Despite this, many victims who participated in this research highlighted their negative experience of the criminal justice system, noting the systems and functions that caused them harm. As one victim stated, "I look back at it and I think, would I want to go through that again for anything? Probably not. If I knew then what I know now, would I have reported it? I don't know." (V-S10) The issue lies in whether the system needs to be tweaked or fundamentally reformed to improve victims' encounters with the criminal justice system. The challenge comes in delivering a system that is both consistent and fair to all the victims of abuse. It seems incongruous that the way in which a victim's case is dealt with against an abuser is handled differently depending on which regional jurisdiction the victim happens to live. The good practice identified in Operation Hydrant needs to be cascaded through the justice system so that victims receive the appropriate level of consideration and care.

A research study such as this will inevitably attract victims who have had a negative experience of the criminal justice system, although the narrative across most of the respondents was consistent and commented on both positive and negative aspects of their experience. Conversely those criminal justice professionals who consented to be involved in this project were more likely to be involved if they saw the importance of investigating these cases with care to the sensitivity and vulnerability of the victims. This report has tried to take these perspectives into account when analysing the findings. Nevertheless, there are clear areas of further research needed to explore the experiences of both male victims of sexual

violence, victims of non-recent abuse and victims of mass disclosure cases in the criminal justice system. For example, further attention is needed to explore the CPS decision-making processes that lead to issues such as the number of cases being brought forward and the delays in bringing cases to court. Research is also needed on understanding the support required and the communication processes needed to ensure that the re-traumatisation of abuse victims is kept to a minimum. This will require the need for multi-agency alignment to understand the complexities within the cases and the system itself.

The experiences of those who come into contact with the criminal justice process is an indicator of the strength of its functioning. Through listening to victims and their stories, we can establish whether the system is in fact still fit for purpose, with the introduction of the Victim's Code ensuring that the system is no longer charged with bluntly applying justice. There is now a focus on the impact and ripple effect it had on those involved, particularly those impacted most by the crime. Although the support for those abused has undoubtedly improved, there is work to be done to speed up the wheels of justice. The experiences of the participants in this research are indicative of not only the experiences of other victims in mass disclosure cases, but more widely victims of sexual violence in the criminal justice system. With the results of the Covid-19 pandemic causing further delays in the criminal courts[60], it seems there is need for urgent consideration to make sure justice is brought swiftly and fairly.

[60] *See House of Lords Select Committee on the Constitution, 2021 report* *https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5801/ldselect/ldconst/257/257.pdf*

Notes

4.9 Disclosing vs. Waiving Anonymity (p.42)
In an earlier draft, when introducing the document –'I'm A Survivor Of Childhood Sexual Abuse In Football. Should I Waive My Anonymity?' A Guide To Help You Make An Informed Decision (2020), the report did not acknowledge this resource was initially developed from the reflections and expertise of survivor Ian Ackley, who had created an earlier document in response to the lack of information available to him when waiving his anonymity in the 1990s.

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Further Victim-Survivor Accounts

To gain a further understanding of the depth of the experiences of victims and survivors in detail, see the autobiographical accounts below:

Lean, D., 2019: *My Truth*. [PDF] (December 2019). Available at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Tj_yWVjEEVOrf5S30h88VIElz1mRLZzsPaIWhJeHK30/edit> [Accessed 10/02/20].

Stewart, P., 2017: *Damaged*. Liverpool: Trinity Mirror Sport Media.

White, D., 2017: *Shades of Blue*. London: Michael O'Mara Books.

Woodward, A., 2019: *Position of Trust: A Football Dream Betrayed*. London: Coronet Books.

There are also various articles and interviews in which men share their stories which can be consulted online.