

What research has told us

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My brief

To look back at the learning journey we have been
on
since well before the CPSU

... and to consider how **research** has given
impetus to
the birth and early days of the CPSU

When we didn't know that we didn't know

UK sport in the 1980s ...

- No CPSU
- No policy on child protection
- A new NCF (now scUK) focussed on coaches not children
- No education or training on CP
- No recognition that there was even an issue

Wider context ...

- Cleveland scandal but no connection with sport
- Tory government opposed to intervening in sport

Plan

for Child Protection in Sport (January 1996)

- 1 Establish/disseminate/advice on Codes of Ethics and Conduct
- 2 Offer systematic grievance and disciplinary systems
- 3 Investigate the benefits of registers and criminal record checks
- 4 Make child protection modules compulsory in coach education
- 5 Distribute information for parents, athletes and coaches
- 6 Establish simple contracts between parents, athletes and coaches

7 Set up an independent listener/helpline *outside* NGBs

8 Adopt child-centred and democratic coaching styles

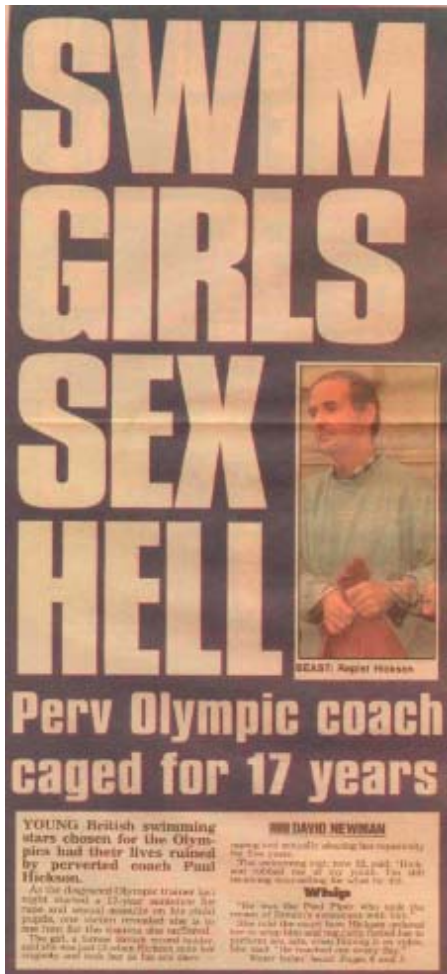
9 Strengthen links with child protection agencies

10 Disseminate and reward good practice

11 Encourage debate

12 Commission research to increase knowledge

When we started to wonder



- Mid 1980s - ASA Education Officer
- Early 1990s – the Hickson case
- Changed everything – but not overnight
- No UK statistics so could not argue for new policy or changes in practice

- Mid 1990s - first research statistics - sexual exploitation was a problem for elite sport – for all sports, for all ages (Canada)
- Later confirmed for grassroots sport (Australia)
- Higher risk for elite athletes demonstrated
- BOA blocked a prevalence study in the UK ... so personal interviews with sexually abused athletes were used to establish risk factors and explanatory models

If you can describe risk and explain it then you are in a much stronger position to predict and control it

When we knew that we didn't know



Gradually, lobbying at the top of British sport and from the grassroots level of SDOs began to make an impact

In 1997 New Labour came to power and doors began to open

Two key areas of research

Behavioural parameters of abuse e.g.

- How widespread is it?
- Who perpetrates it?
- How does it happen?
- What are the risk factors?
- What are the consequences?

Policy impacts e.g.

- How effective is policy at securing prevention?
- What organisational changes are required to safeguard athletes?



We don't need research

- Sportspeople: “There is no abuse in our sport”
- Social workers: “Why research sport? It's no different there”
- Research funders: “Sport is too trivial to merit funding”

But ... we'll develop policy just in case

So, in the 1990s - a few NGBs began to write CP policies, amend their constitutions and send coaches on the NCF child protection module

The NCF filled a gap

- Several studies on the impact of NGB CP policies and educational workshops demonstrated a policy vacuum - messages did not permeate down to local and club level
- The NCF - in the form of its 3 hour child protection module – became a major agent for change in the years before the CPSU
- At one point the workshop was over 70% of its business

In summary

- Practice (of safeguarding) was changed by lobbying rather than the force of research in the 1990s
- Policy and practice was well ahead of knowledge/research
- But the CPSU recognized from the start that its work must be evidence-based

We now know what we don't know

... but do we have the funds and political will to find out ?