Exploring the value of extracurricular activities to young people's wellbeing: Three case studies

Submitted by Laura Angharad Douglass
to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Educational, Child and Community Psychology

May 2022

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: ..... Laura Angharad Douglass

Acknowledgements

My first thank you is to all of the participants who so generously and openly shared their thoughts and experiences with me to make this research possible.

To my research supervisors Brahm, Margie and Liz, thank you for your guidance and reassurance. Without your continued support this thesis would still be far from completion.

To my placement supervisor Kate, thank you for always being willing to listen to my half-formed ideas and for being a fountain of knowledge and support.

Thank you to my colleagues and fellow trainee educational psychologists, it has been a pleasure to share this journey with you.

The biggest hugs and thanks to my wonderful friends who continue to make time for me despite the number of times I have had to turn down social events for this research.

Finally, to Edd and my amazing family, thank you for your patience, kindness, fun, reassurance, motivation, and endless belief in me throughout this journey. None of this would have been possible without you all.

Abstract

Background. The PERMA model of wellbeing proposes that there are five core elements to the construct of psychological wellbeing; positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. Previous research indicates that structured extracurricular activities (ECAs) have the potential to promote positive socioemotional outcomes and wellbeing in young people who participate.

Aims. To explore the value of community-based ECAs to young people's wellbeing from the perspective of young people, parents, and organisers, through the PERMA model of wellbeing.

Methods. A case study methodological design was adopted to gather qualitative data to understand ECA practices within three cases; dance, athletics and girls' football. Observation, focus groups, questionnaire, and interview methods were used to gather a range of information in relation to the research questions from young people, parents, and organisers. The case studies were analysed using deductive thematic analysis and compared using a cross case analysis.

Findings. Three key propositions emerged from the cross-case analysis. 1. The PERMA model is helpful to understanding the value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing, 2. Individual and environmental barriers and enabling factors impact on a young person's access to and participation in ECAs, 3. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing.

Conclusions. The research implications for policy and practice include considering how community-based ECAs can be supported at policy level through government-backed initiatives. Educational psychologists can have a role in promoting the benefits of ECA participation and in working with schools and communities to further enable participation.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Full word or phrase
BPS	British Psychological Society
COVID-19 or Pandemic	Refers to the coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic
CS1	Case Study 1, dance activity
CS2	Case Study 2, athletics activity
CS3	Case Study 3, girls' football activity
DfE	Department for Education
ECA	Extracurricular Activities
EP	Educational psychologist
FA	Football Association
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
PERMA	Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment
PYD	Positive youth development
RQ	Research question
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SMSC	Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Thesis Overview and Purpose

In this introduction I provide an overview of the three main aspects to the context and rationale for the research; extracurricular activities (ECAs), young people's wellbeing, and the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter serves as an overview of these topics which are explored in further detail within the literature review in Chapter 2. The aims and research questions are outlined to conclude this chapter.

1.1.1 Extracurricular Activities (ECAs)

ECAs are part of the lives of many children and young people, and it has long been considered that there is a range of benefits to participation in these activities. ECAs can be defined by a set of descriptors and in the context of this research the working definition of ECAs was; structured or organised activities for children and young people that take place outside of classroom time and are not part of the curriculum (Bartkus et al., 2012). These activities could take place within the school environment or within the community and include arts, sports, and academic clubs (Shulruf, 2010). Further discussion about defining ECAs is included in section 2.3.1.

ECAs have been a long-standing feature of young people's development in the United Kingdom (UK), with their importance in relation to education being recognised by the National Commission on Education in 1993 (Andrews et al., 1996). Since this time, ECAs

have gained greater research interest in exploring academic and socioemotional benefits to participation (Feldman & Matjasko 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012). Evidence in one paper providing an overview of the research highlighted ECA participation as a significant and influential developmental context (Metsäpelto & Pulkkinen, 2014). Students in one study have noted that the positive contribution of ECAs to their development continue through their experiences at university (King et al., 2021). Much of the existing research into ECAs and developmental outcomes rely on correlations rather than being able to establish causality, and relatively little is known about the long-term impact of ECA participation (Metsäpelto & Pulkkinen, 2014). Raffo and Forbes (2021) have therefore argued that it is helpful to view young people's development as a whole to take into account relationships, cultural and temporal influences, rather than isolating ECAs and specific measures of developmental outcomes.

In a UK context, research indicates that between forty-six and sixty-four percent of young people participate in an ECA (Social Mobility Commission, 2019). ECAs in a UK context are further discussed in section 2.6.1. This would mean that approximately half of all young people in the UK participate in an ECA. Under the United Nations (UN) Convention of the Rights of the Child, all young people have the right to engage in recreational and leisure activities (UNICEF UK, 1989). Further research to understand the role of ECAs in a UK context is therefore useful in considering how to increase opportunities to access ECAs.

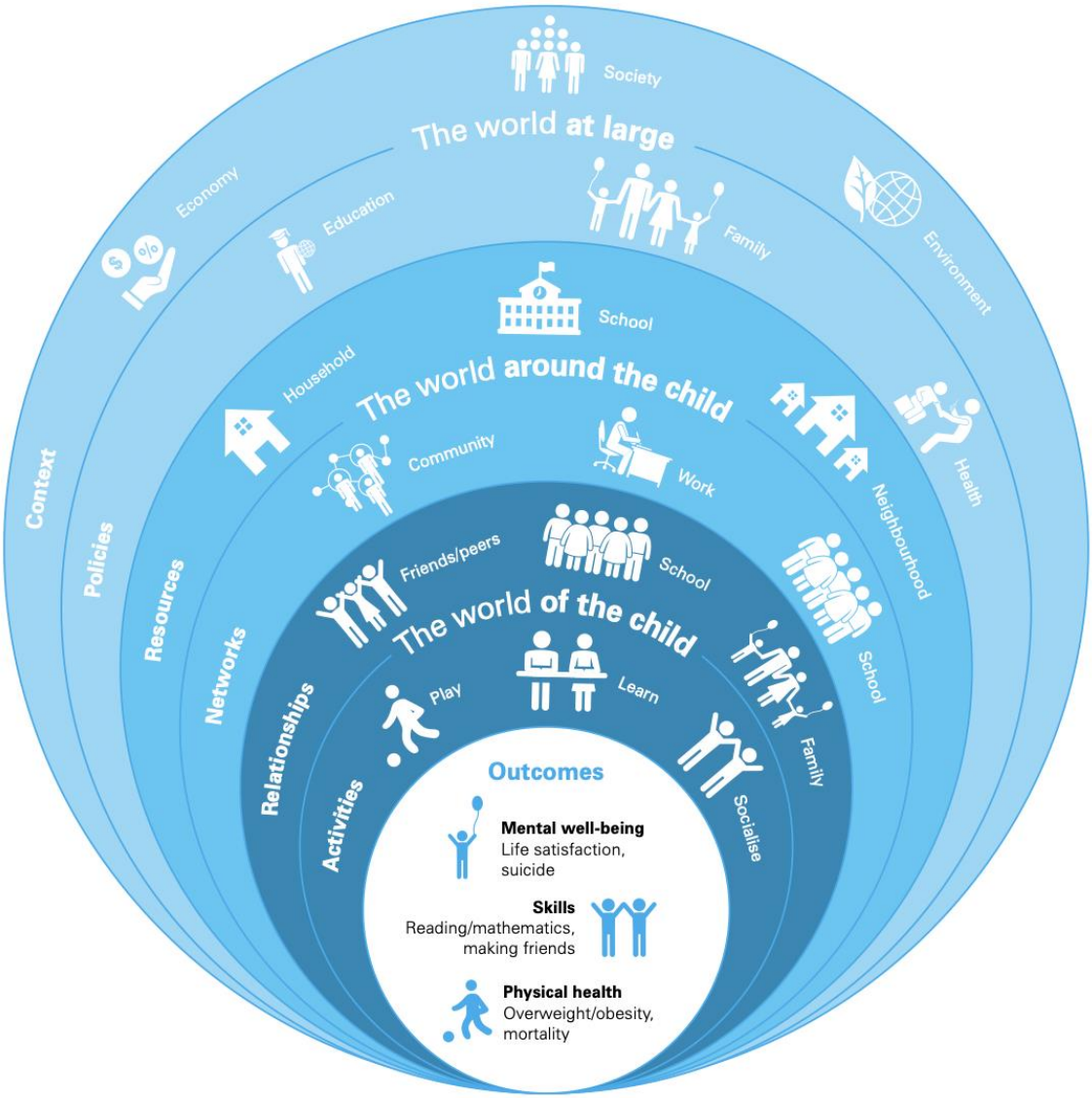
1.1.2 Young People and Wellbeing

There are several definitions of wellbeing, discussed in section 2.4.1 of this research. The working definition of wellbeing guiding the current research is a state in which an individual is able to flourish, with the psychological, social and physical resources to manage the

normal stresses of life, to realise their own abilities, and contribute to their community. Models of wellbeing have been developed to provide parameters for definitions of wellbeing (Kern et al., 2015a). One such model is the PERMA model of wellbeing which views wellbeing as a construct comprised of five core elements; Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). Understanding the ways young people's wellbeing can be supported is an important aspect of education in the UK as recent reports have highlighted that children's wellbeing has been declining since 2010 (The Children's Society, 2021). A UNICEF (2020a) report using evidence from the world's forty-one wealthiest countries emphasised good physical health, developing academic and social skills, and mental wellbeing as key aspects to a 'good childhood' (UNICEF, 2020a). Barriers to this included the absence of good-quality relationships and a lack of resources, services, and opportunities. The bioecological model is a useful model through which to understand the influences of resources and services on wellbeing (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The bioecological model views the child as an active participant in their development, embedded in multiple interrelated contexts. It has been proposed that the more positive resources, experiences, and synergy there is between these interrelated contexts, the more positive the outcomes will be for young people (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Figure 1 highlights how this multi-level model can be applied in the context of understanding children and young people's wellbeing (UNICEF, 2020a).

Figure 1

A multi-level framework of child wellbeing as applied in the context of understanding children and young people's wellbeing (UNICEF, 2020a).



Education professionals in the UK have noted an association between wider socio-political factors and young people's wellbeing (Hanley et al., 2020). These education professionals feel they have been providing an increased level of support with fewer resources and more limited support at government level. It is therefore important to understand the environments and resources that already exist within schools and communities to support wellbeing.

1.1.3 COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world in early 2020 and led to significant changes in how we lived our lives, changes which are thought to continue to impact the lives of children and young people for years to come (UNICEF, 2020b). The changes presented new challenges for young people including missing parts of the school curriculum and isolation from friends and adults outside the home (Scott et al., 2021). These challenges, amongst others, impacted on the wellbeing of young people and as such wellbeing has become a greater focus within education and wider communities (Kwong et al., 2021). As the pandemic has impacted on people's lives across the world, it is important to consider its influence as a contextual factor as part of this research.

In response to the pandemic, the Conservative government's 'catch up' programme, a proposal for an extended school day following the pandemic, and the Labour party's 'ten by ten' initiative both include ECA participation in their proposals (House of Commons Education Committee, 2022; Streeting, 2021). The 'catch up' programme focuses on school-based ECAs, where there is more existing research in the literature. Further detail on government initiatives in relation to ECAs are referenced in section 2.4.3. Further consideration of the role of community-based ECAs and existing resources within communities is needed in order to inform government initiatives.

1.2 Personal Context

As a trainee EP, my experiences have given me a greater understanding of the importance of considering the range of contexts which influence young people's development. I am

interested in children and young people's wellbeing and my role in supporting this within my practice. EPs are well placed and skilled to be able to respond flexibly to changing socio-political contexts, including responding to the challenges of the pandemic (Fallon et al., 2010; DfE, 2020a). This makes the exploration of ECAs and wellbeing a relevant research project within the field of educational psychology.

During my childhood I was fortunate to have opportunities to participate in a range of ECAs. My parents were passionate in supporting and facilitating my involvement in a range of sports and arts activities. I feel that my participation in these activities had a significant positive impact on my personal development in a range of areas including learning perseverance through focus and hard work towards a goal, improving my self-esteem, and understanding how to keep myself fit and healthy while having fun. My participation in ECAs has given me the confidence and curiosity to continue with these activities and take up new hobbies in adulthood.

Due to my background and previous experiences with ECAs, there was a close relationship between myself as a researcher and the research (Creswell & Clark, 2007). I have a positive view of ECA participation due to my own positive experiences, and therefore a need to be aware of how this bias could influence the research. As both an inside and outside group researcher, there were elements of shared group membership between me and the participants as well as areas of difference (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). Elements of shared group membership include positive ECA attendance, gender, ethnicity, and a middle-class upbringing. This means that reflexivity was important to enable me to consider how my own identities, life experiences, beliefs and behaviours influenced the research process (Ormston et al., 2014).

My professional and personal experiences fuel my interest in understanding other people's experiences of ECAs and their value. I want to use this interest to add to current knowledge and understanding of the value of ECAs and bridge the gap between psychology research and practice by sharing these findings within my practice (Norwich, 2000). I hope this research will inform practices to work towards ensuring that all children and young people have opportunities to participate in ECAs.

1.3 The current study: Research aims and research questions

The overarching aim of this project is to explore the value of ECAs for young people's wellbeing from the perspective of young people, parents, and organisers. This will be explored through the PERMA model of wellbeing and by considering changes to ECAs and to wellbeing due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Exploring the aim within community-based ECAs is rooted in a bioecological model of development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The overarching aim can be broken down further into the following specific aims;

1. To understand the value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing through the PERMA model.
2. To understand the barriers and enabling factors that support and hinder young people's participation in ECAs.
3. To explore the impact of COVID-19 on ECAs and wellbeing.

The research questions to be explored are;

1.

    a. What is the perceived value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing?
    b. Which elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing are supported through ECA participation?
    c. How are these elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing supported through ECA participation?
2. What are the perceived enabling factors and barriers to participating in ECAs?
3. How have ECAs changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and what impact has this had on young people's wellbeing?

1.4 Conclusion

The current research aims to explore the value of ECAs for young people's wellbeing from the perspective of young people, parents, and organisers. This research aims to provide further understanding about the role of ECAs in a specific UK context, and in considering opportunities young people have to access ECAs. Exploring this within community-based ECAs could provide a greater understanding of the environments and resources that already exist within communities to support young people's wellbeing.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Literature Review

This literature review aims to synthesise existing debates, trends, themes, and approaches on the topics relevant to this thesis including ECA participation and the documented benefits, adolescence, wellbeing, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK.

2.2 Literature Search

A review of the literature was conducted searching relevant databases through the University of Exeter Library database, Education Research Complete, Educational Psychology in Practice and the British Journal of Educational Psychology. Online search engines were also used including Google Scholar. Key search terms in relation to the literature aims were used in various combinations; extracurricular activities, after school activities, structured activities, community activities, socioemotional outcomes, wellbeing, young people, adolescence, positive youth development, bioecological model, COVID-19 pandemic, UK. References from key papers were used to identify further relevant research papers. This review includes relevant international research as a reflection of the more limited UK-based research in some areas.

2.3 Extracurricular Activities

2.3.1 Defining Extracurricular Activities

In the literature, ECAs do not have one clear definition and descriptors tend to be used in place of a single agreed definition (Bartkus et al., 2012). Shulruf's (2010) review demonstrated this by having to use thirty-eight descriptive keywords to facilitate a comprehensive review of the literature on ECAs including out-of-school, non-academic and leisure activities. Eighteen higher education teachers interviewed in one UK research study did not have a clear and unified understanding of the boundary between curricular and ECAs in higher education (Clegg et al., 2010). This may reflect a lack of shared understanding across the UK education system of what an ECA is and the need for clarification on a definition.

A review and analysis of the literature and popular sources highlighted that context is important in descriptors of ECAs (Bartkus et al., 2012). This review suggests that ECAs are optional, happen outside of the curriculum, do not contribute to academic credit, can be academic and non-academic, and are conducted with the support of schools. Contrary to this last descriptor, in other literature ECAs have been defined as including structured leisure activities in a range of contexts, including opportunities within the community (Eccles et al., 2003). A distinction has also been made between structured and unstructured activities, with ECAs considered to be structured activities with a clear structure, skill-building focus and adult-leader, and unstructured activities being free leisure time, for example going to the park with friends (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Bartoko & Eccles, 2003). There are a wide range of activities that could be considered ECAs that tend to fall into three categories;

athletic, artistic, and academic, and these activities do not all share the same characteristics (Friedman, 2013; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). Inconsistencies in defining ECAs in research, along with varied approaches taken to gather data, makes it challenging to directly compare research and could be an explanation for differing or contradictory findings (Shulruf, 2010). It will be important for these elements to be clear in any future research so that the reader can easily understand the parameters used to define ECAs.

The following descriptors have been used to define ECAs within the current research; structured organised activities for children and young people that take place outside of normal classroom time and are not part of the curriculum (Bartkus et al., 2012). These activities could take place within the school environment or in the community and include activities within three categories; arts, sports, and academic clubs **(**Shulruf, 2010; Friedman, 2013). Any research that defines ECAs within these parameters has been considered useful and relevant to this review. Where research has used differing descriptors of ECAs and this impacts on the interpretation of the findings, this has been made explicit.

2.3.2 Why are ECAs Important?

ECAs are an important feature in the lives of many children and young people and it has long been considered that there are developmental benefits to ECA participation. In the UK it is estimated that just under half of ten- to fifteen-year-olds participate in ECAs on a regular basis, and so this forms an important developmental context for these young people (Social Mobility Commission, 2019). ECAs have the potential to provide opportunities to acquire social, physical, and cognitive skills, build resilience, belong to a social

group, establish supportive networks of relationships, contribute to community wellbeing and increased wellbeing later in life (Eccles et al., 2003; Guilmette et al., 2019). Increased ECA participation has been found to be associated with important measures of development including academic and psychological competencies and positive peer relationships (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). A study of over two-thousand adolescents found school-based ECA participation to be related to higher reported grades and a more positive attitude towards school and future aspirations, when compared to a control group and controlling for demographic characteristics such as gender and ethnicity (Darling et al., 2005). King et al. (2021) surveyed and interviewed undergraduate students, the majority of those involved in ECAs felt that their ECAs had contributed to their successes in life. Two reviews of the literature on school-based ECAs found that when compared to participation in unstructured activities, ECA participation is associated with a range of positive academic and non-academic outcomes (Feldman & Matjasko 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012). Although the literature reviews have revealed consistency in the findings, the authors speculated that this may have been contributed to by methodological limitations, such as selection bias and a lack of longitudinal data (Farb & Matjasko, 2012). An argument has also been proposed that existing research may not consider relationships, cultural and temporal influences that influence the whole of a child or young person's life (Raffo & Forbes, 2021). However, the existing findings do highlight a relationship between ECA participation and a range of developmental outcomes for children and young people.

2.3.3 Educational Outcomes

A critical review of twenty-nine studies on educational outcomes and participation in ECAs has shown a positive association between the two (Shulruf, 2010). This idea that

participating in ECAs is related to positive educational outcomes has been shown through a variety of experimental studies for school aged children and young people (Mahoney et al., 2005; Bailey, 2017; Freeman, 2017). Specific educational outcomes that are reported in relation to ECA participation are; low rates of school drop-out, improved school achievement, and higher rates of post-secondary education completion (Farb & Matjasko, 2012). Longitudinal data from research in England supported this general trend in the literature, which is largely US focused, finding that students who take part in positive ECAs achieved better educational outcomes later in their schooling (Vignoles & Meschi, 2010). Recent research has highlighted ECA participation as having a positive association with 'soft skills' and cognitive abilities, and sight ECA participation as indirectly leading to increased motivation and self-regulated learning for primary-school aged children (Feraco et al., 2022a; Feraco et al., 2022b). However, there has also been research suggesting that young people's time commitments need to be well managed for there to be a positive association between ECA participation and academic performance (Buckley & Lee, 2021). This suggests that ECA participation needs to be considered with a wider context of development for an individual.

Although a relationship between academic outcomes and ECA participation is reported, causality between the two has not been established due to a lack of supporting evidence and methodological limitations such as small sample sizes and only being able to measure associations between variables (Shulruf et al., 2008; Shulruf, 2010). However, the difficulties in assuming a relationship between the two factors may be due to the role and influence of socioemotional mediating factors.

2.3.4 Socioemotional Outcomes

Socioemotional outcomes are the social and emotional skills considered to be important to an individual's development (Puerta et al., 2016). The literature on ECA participation refers to outcomes that would fall within this description such as identity formation, positive peer relationships and group membership, as well as broader constructs such as mental health and wellbeing (Eccles et al., 2003). ECAs have the potential to promote the positive mental health of young people who participate, particularly for those identified as being at risk for negative developmental outcomes (Gilman et al., 2004). These benefits include increased self-esteem, increased resiliency, reduced worry about the future, a lower rate of risky behaviours, reduced symptoms of depression, identity formation, positive relationships, and reduced feelings of social isolation (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Mason et al., 2009; Berger et al., 2020; Hardaway et al., 2012; Heaslip et al., 2021). Despite the range of factors that have been researched, a literature review concluded that these socioemotional factors had continued to receive less research attention than cognitive outcomes (Farb & Matjasko, 2012). The researchers speculate that this focus on cognitive outcomes is due to a bias in the literature towards studying school-based ECAs.

A longitudinal study of self-esteem tracking young people from the age of fourteen to twenty-six demonstrated a growth in self-esteem that was related to ECA participation, regardless of the type of activity (Kort-Butler & Hagewen, 2011). This suggests that participating in ECAs over time may be more important than the type of activities that young people participate in. Further support for this suggestion comes from a study of over ten-thousand early adolescents in Canada comparing the benefits of ECA participation to

a smaller non-participation group (Oberle et al., 2019). Where non-ECA attenders had started to participate in an ECA in the four years between data collection points, this was associated with better mental health, mediated by higher levels of peer belonging. Group and peer-supported sport and dance activities have been found to have the potential to enhance young people's subjective well-being (Mansfield et al., 2018). Behtoui (2017) suggested that young people gain access to valuable social support networks through the relationships they develop with young people and adults at their ECAs. Research exploring peer processes in the context of community-based ECAs in Chile highlighted them as important for supporting socioemotional development and in creating a sense of ingroup belonging (Berger et al., 2020). Belonging to sports and arts groups has also been found to be associated with high levels of resilience in Mexican adolescents (Ruvalcaba et al., 2017). In addition to group belonging, research found that university students who had previously or continued to participate in ECAs demonstrated positive self-regulation strategies that were related to higher levels of emotional wellbeing, positive adjustment, and academic success (Guilmette et al., 2019). Guilmette et al. (2019) identified the need for a longitudinal design to be adopted to gain a better understanding of the role of ECA participation across development. One UK study used data from an ongoing longitudinal population-based cohort to identify protective factors against physical or emotional maltreatment before the age of five (Khambati et al., 2018). The researchers found that ECA participation was one of several school-related factors that facilitated resilience in self-esteem and wellbeing. This highlights the important role that ECA participation in a range of contexts can play in contributing to positive socioemotional development.

Longitudinal research has shown an apparent positive relationship between structured ECA participation and wellbeing in a variety of domains (Busseri et al., 2006). However, evidence

for the positive link between ECA participation and socioemotional outcomes has not been found consistently. Some of this inconsistency may be due to methodological limitations such as additional measures of psychological adjustment emerging in the literature over time; young people's feelings about themselves, perceived importance of the activity, and emotional experience during the activity (Farb & Matjasko, 2012). This wide range of measures makes it difficult for direct comparisons to be made between research and may have contributed to a lack of consistency in the findings. In some cases, ECA participation has been found to be related to negative adolescent outcomes and risky behaviours (Farb & Matjasko, 2012). Peers attending some types of ECAs may influence particular negative behaviours, for example one study found that among positive outcomes, sports participation was associated with an increased risk of substance use in some young people (Martin et al., 2013). This mixed evidence highlights the need to conduct further research exploring ECAs as contexts that have the potential to contribute positively or negatively to young people's development.

2.3.5 Mediating Role of Socioemotional Factors

It has been suggested that there are socioemotional mediating mechanisms involved in the link between ECA participation and educational outcomes, including identity formation and peer group membership (Eccles et al., 2003). A dual-step transfer hypothesis has been proposed as one of three major developmental frameworks in the literature, theorising that socioemotional benefits associated with ECA participation have an indirect positive influence on academic outcomes (Seow & Pan, 2014; Bradley & Conway, 2016). However, a recent argument has emerged that this dual-step transfer of skills may not be the best explanation for the relationship between ECA participation and educational achievement. Due to the lack

of evidence of causality between these two factors, Raffo and Forbes (2021) proposed that the relationship between the two can be better understood from a Deweyan perspective. Dewey (1938) took a child-centred view of education and believed that students learn best by doing, learning through engaging with their social environment. The individualised nature of this perspective means that for one young person at a given time ECA participation may be positive and enabling, but for another young person at that time the same may not be true (Raffo & Forbes, 2021). This perspective further highlights context as an important factor to consider in relation to the benefits of ECA participation.

Another mechanism by which academic and socioemotional outcomes may be linked is executive functions. Diamond (2006) presented the argument that executive functions are crucial to children and young people's development to equip them with the skills needed to succeed in life. Executive functions including self-control, perseverance, creativity, and flexibility, can be impacted by environmental factors such as adult-child interactions and social stress (Huizinga et al., 2018). Research has highlighted that participation in a range of ECAs can help to both directly and indirectly support executive functions through a broad focus on young people's social, emotional, and physical development (Diamond & Lee, 2011).

Although there is some debate over the mechanism, causality and direction, research highlights that there is an important relationship between ECA participation and developmental outcomes. A report from England concluded that socioemotional outcomes and academic achievement are inextricably linked, and therefore this relationship needs to be carefully considered in the context of a young person's development (Vignoles & Meschi, 2010).

2.3.6 Bioecological Model of Development

A bioecological model of development can be applied to explore the contextual factors that influence the relationship between ECA participation and a young person's development (Guest & McRee, 2008). Using this model, research has highlighted the importance of the interaction between the individual and their context at the microsystem level, indicating that this context is more important than the type or content of ECAs (Guest & McRee, 2008; Mahoney et al., 2009). The microsystem refers to the direct contact between a child or young person and their immediate environment, such as key relationships with teachers and friends (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The mesosystem refers to the interaction of any two elements in the microsystem, for example between parents and ECA organisers. To have a greater understanding of a young person's development, Bronfenbrenner and Evans (2000) suggested that it is important to focus on the young people, their context and specific developmental outcomes. ECAs sit within multiple contexts, including schools and communities, and are influenced by the resources that exist within these contexts (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). The bioecological model can therefore be applied to gain a greater understanding of the bidirectional influence of ECAs on an individual's development.

2.3.7 Positive Youth Development

Positive youth development (PYD) is a strengths-based perspective that views connections between individuals and their ecological settings as forming an important basis for development (Martin et al., 2013). PYD can be applied in several ways, in this context it is applicable as a developmental process (Burkhard et al., 2020). There are several different

models that seek to understand the process of PYD, but the commonality is that they highlight the importance of the relationship between an individual and their context to a relational developmental process for individuals to thrive (Lerner et al., 2015). The PYD perspective has been criticised for emphasising developmental assets at the individual-level, rather than at the contextual-level (Lerner et al., 2005; Wexler & Eglinton, 2015). This critique provides further support for the value of framing development through the bioecological model. Wexler and Eglinton (2015) propose viewing adolescent development as a fluid, dynamic and relational process that is formed through a variety of contexts; historical, political, economic, and social. This view allows us to better recognise the active role that young people play in shaping their lives and the contexts that are important to their development (Lerner et al., 2005).

2.3.8 Adolescence

Adolescence is a critical period of physical and psychological development (Cunsolo, 2018). During adolescence, young people provide an increasing and active contribution to their cognitive, behavioural, and social relational development (Lerner et al., 2015). This is a real strength of the adolescent period, when young people gain independence and autonomy over their lives (Lerner et al., 2005). A review of existing research on the participation of adolescents in structured ECAs found consistent evidence to indicate that participation has the potential to promote positive mental health (Gilman et al., 2004). Engaging with a greater number of ECAs has been found to be a factor that contributes to lower levels of symptoms of depression in adolescents (Mason et al., 2009). These findings point to the potential importance of ECAs as a means of supporting positive mental health and wellbeing in adolescents.

Despite these documented benefits to participation, in the UK there is a reported decline in participation in ECAs and increasing amount of sedentary time during adolescence compared to childhood (King et al., 2009; Harding et al., 2015). Data on ECA participation rates is not systematically collected in the UK so there are no actual rates of participation available (Social Mobility Commission, 2019). The most recently available reporting of ECA participation rates indicates participation in young people aged between eleven and sixteen to be between forty-six and sixty-four percent (Social Mobility Commission, 2019). One of the aims of the current research is to focus on ECA participation in adolescence to gain a greater insight into the potential barriers to participation.

2.4 Wellbeing

2.4.1 Defining Wellbeing

The World Health Organisation (WHO) views wellbeing as a state in which an individual realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, are able to work productively, and able to contribute to their community (WHO, n.d.). This definition is one of many that exist as the term wellbeing has been poorly defined and used interchangeably with related terms (Camfield et al., 2009). This means that the concept of wellbeing has been highlighted as challenging for researchers to define (Dodge et al., 2012). Following a review of previous attempts to define wellbeing across disciplines, a definition was proposed as "the balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced" (p230, Dodge et al., 2012). This definition suggests that individuals will have stable wellbeing when they have the psychological, social, and physical resources needed to meet the

psychological, social, and physical challenges they are facing. McCallum and Price (2016) highlighted wellbeing as being a fluid concept, respecting culture, contexts, beliefs, values, experiences and opportunities of individuals, families, and communities across time. The UK government's view of wellbeing encompasses health as an additional factor, viewing health and wellbeing together as entities that can be formed at a variety of contextual levels and has highlighted that both physical and mental health influence wellbeing through a bidirectional relationship (La Placa et al., 2013; The Department of Health, 2014). Although there are differences between these definitions, wellbeing consistently conceptualises the importance of the interactions between an individual and their environment. Taking into consideration the diversity of wellbeing definitions, in the context of the current research wellbeing has been defined as; a state in which an individual is able to flourish, with the psychological, social and physical resources to manage the normal stresses of life, to realise their own abilities and contribute to their community.

As a single definition alone may not be sufficient to capture the complexity of wellbeing, this has led to research being guided by descriptors and models (McNaught, 2011; Dodge et al., 2012). There are several models of wellbeing that have been proposed with the aim of providing parameters for operational wellbeing definitions (Kern et al., 2015a; La Placa et al., 2013). McNaught (2011) developed a definitional framework to include the key factors and relationships that tend to be seen to comprise wellbeing. The WHO state that there are subjective and objective dimensions to wellbeing and this framework was intended to account for both objective and subjective elements, incorporating the wellbeing of the individual, family, community, and society (WHO, 2013). The framework provides a useful structure to consider the wider circumstances in any individual's life and allows for the incorporation of community elements such as ECAs, and social justice issues such as poverty.

Individual experiences contributing to wellbeing tend to be viewed as subjective, typically relying on self-reports of how individuals think and feel about their lives (Cunsolo, 2017). These subjective elements need to be captured alongside other aspects of a person's life to account for contextual and social factors that contribute to wellbeing (Diener, 1984; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). Therefore, when considering individual experiences of wellbeing, an alternative model that is primarily focused on individual wellbeing may be useful.

2.4.2 PERMA Model of Wellbeing

The PERMA model of wellbeing is a multidimensional approach that focuses on individual wellbeing (Seligman, 2011). Seligman (2011) proposed that individual wellbeing is a construct that is best understood as being comprised of multiple elements, rather than a single measure. The PERMA model hypothesises that there are five core elements to the construct of psychological wellbeing; positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. The model proposes that the goal of wellbeing theory is to increase flourishing by nurturing these five core elements to live a 'good life'. Support has been found for the PERMA model's ability to assess and predict wellbeing and flourishing outcomes (Coffey et al., 2014; Heshmati et al., 2020; Leontopoulou, 2020). The model has been used in a variety of ways, such as to develop assessment profiles to measure wellbeing, identify specific elements of PERMA that can be targeted to improve wellbeing, and to explore wellbeing in people with disabilities (Lee et al., 2017; Nebrida & Dullas, 2018; Tansey et al., 2017). The first empirical study of the application of PERMA with adolescents found evidence to support this multidimensional model of wellbeing (Kern et al., 2015b). Subsequent research carried out using the PERMA model with just under three-

thousand adolescents in Ireland found that reported wellbeing decreased steadily from lower to higher education years, highlighting a need to better understand wellbeing in adolescence (Burke & Minton, 2019). A review of the literature on factors influencing adolescent psychological wellbeing found social relationships and social support to be of most importance, suggesting that the relationships element of the PERMA model may be a particularly strong contributor to adolescent wellbeing (Cunsolo, 2018). Further research is needed as there is limited empirical research into flourishing in adolescence (Butler & Kern, 2016; Kern et al., 2015a; Witten et al., 2019).

The PERMA model was developed under the branch of positive psychology. Positive psychology was developed in response to the tendency for research to focus on pathology, instead focusing on positive experiences, traits and factors that enable individuals and communities to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology has tended to steer focus away from the concept of self-esteem, citing problems with pursuing self-esteem as a central focus and measure of how well an individual feels they are doing (Seligman, 2006). However, Mruk (2008) proposed that there is a place for self-esteem within the field of positive psychology from a humanistic perspective, and value in exploring self-esteem within positive psychology research. Positive psychology has also been criticised for overemphasising positive states and failing to sufficiently consider negative experiences (Ciarrochi et al., 2016). This has relevance for the PERMA model as the five elements refer to positive elements of mental health, as a reflection of positive psychology viewing wellbeing as more than the absence of negative psychological states (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Kern et al.'s (2015b) research identified adolescent wellbeing as being multidimensional, with separate positive and negative mental health factors. This highlights that negative factors may also need to be considered in relation to wellbeing and mental

health. Kern et al.'s (2015b) research also cited overlap between Meaning and Relationships and speculated that adolescents may gain meaning from their relationships with others. Further research is needed to explore whether Meaning is distinctly different from the other four elements. One other criticism of the PERMA model is that it does not include physical wellbeing, and so some researchers have considered the value in adding of a sixth element of Vitality to include diet, exercise and sleep (Eaker, 2020). Another expansion of the PERMA model has been developed for use in organisational psychology, PERMA+4, which includes the additional elements of physical health, mindset, environment, and economic security (Donaldson et al., 2021). These two recent iterations of the model highlight how the PERMA model is still subject to research investigation and may develop further over time.

An alternative model of wellbeing to the PERMA model is the Tripartite model of subjective wellbeing, which views wellbeing as an evaluation of quality of life in relation to three components of subjective wellbeing; life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Diene, 1984). Researchers have considered different ways in which these three components are related to each other, and highlighted intrapersonal and contextual factors as significant predictors of subjective wellbeing (Busseri & Sadava, 2011; Galinha & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011). Another alternative model of psychological wellbeing outlines six components of wellbeing; self-acceptance, environmental, mastery, positive relations with others, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ryff, 1989). However, a debate arose following publication of research stating there was a lack of independent variation between the six components of the model, with a call for the need to re-consider this model of psychological wellbeing (Ryff & Singer, 2006; Springer et al., 2006a; Springer et al., 2006b).

There has been some debate as to whether the PERMA model is distinctly different from these other models of wellbeing (Goodman et al., 2018). However, Seligman (2018) defends that while the model may be capturing the same overall construct of wellbeing, the core elements have unique features that are useful and different from other models, and this has also been supported by experimental research (Goodman et al., 2018). Both the McNaught (2011), and Seligman (2011) models have been criticised for representing a western view of wellbeing, and Cummins (2018) argued that current wellbeing tools are insufficient to allow for cross-cultural comparison. In one study using the PERMA model with a Malaysian sample, religion and security were identified as additional important elements of wellbeing (Khaw & Kern, 2014). Although McNaught's model allows for consideration of wider contextual influences, the model was developed from a western approach and so may also only be meaningful in a western context (La Placa et al., 2013).

The PERMA model was chosen within the context of the current research because of its strength in being a multi-dimensional model. The model was also considered to be accessible for young people and other participants, with the PERMA model having been developed to be accessible to the general public (Seligman, 2011). Unlike the McNaught (2011) framework, the PERMA model is focused on the individual level, and therefore in the current research the bioecological model will be drawn upon to consider wider factors including family, community, and political factors (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

2.4.3 Adolescent Wellbeing and ECAs in a UK context

In 2003, the Labour government introduced the 'Every Child Matters' agenda which highlighted a range of protective factors for young people to overcome disadvantage

including positive role models, active involvement in school and community life, recognition and feeling valued (DfES, 2003). Many of these protective factors could be supported through ECA participation, and there was emphasis on this with the Department for Education and Skills later committing fifteen-million pounds of funding to support all children and young people to take part in cultural and enriching community activities (DfCMS, 2012). Between 2010 and 2015, the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government committed to supporting communities to grow sports initiatives for adolescents through Sport England funding (DfDCMS & DfE, 2015). In 2019, with the introduction of Ofsted's new Inspection Framework, it was confirmed through a press release that schools would be rewarded for including opportunities through ECAs (DfE, 2019). However, this announcement was made against a backdrop of three years of increasing financial constraints for schools, leading to potential difficulties in implementing school-based ECAs due to staffing pressures (Institute for Government, 2019). Since 2020 the UK has been adapting to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and media reports expressed concerns that some grassroots sports ECAs may not return following national lockdown (MacInnes, 2021). A report from the Social Mobility Commission (2019) found that young people in the UK see benefits to ECA participation for their skill development and wellbeing, and particularly view them as a chance to have fun and step away from the pressures of school life. This, along with the evidence outlined throughout this literature review, highlights the value of ECAs to young people's development and therefore the importance of supporting the recovery of these activities (Sport England, 2021). In addition, significant inequalities in terms of access and opportunities to participate in ECAs had been highlighted before the pandemic, indicating that current government initiatives may not be working to support ECA participation for all young people (Social Mobility Commission, 2019). In August 2021, the Labour party also announced a new

ambition ‘ten by ten’ which outlines ten opportunities children should have before the age of ten, including those related to ECA participation; joining a competitive team sport, learning to swim, taking part in performing arts and playing an instrument (Streeting, 2021). Most recently, a report considering the purpose of the government ‘catch-up programme’ following the pandemic has proposed an extended school day which includes a school-based ECA offer (House of Commons Education Committee, 2022). The inclusion of ECAs as part of current initiatives is positive as it demonstrates a recognition of the value that these activities can have in children and young people’s lives. A summary of these key timepoints can be seen in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

Timeline outlining the key government developments in relation to extracurricular activities in the UK

Educational inequality is a feature of UK society, and this is also seen outside of the classroom where ECAs are more accessible for financially better-off families (Sutton Trust, 2014). In 2014, sixty-seven percent of parents surveyed reported that their child had taken part in some form of ECA in the previous twelve months (Sutton Trust, 2014). The highest earning social groups report greater ECA participation rates and spending more money on these activities, compared to the lowest earning social groups. This finding was supported by a more recent Social Mobility Commission (2019) report. Research found that middle-class parents from a small Northern City considered ECA participation to be a key feature of 'good' parenting within their social networks (Wheeler & Green, 2019). However, parents from working-class families in a nationally representative Midlands local authority valued ECAs as highly as those from middle-class families, highlighting that there are likely to be factors preventing young people from working-class families from participating, beyond parental choice alone (Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2014). Although the reported figures differ across surveys, the trends remain consistent, highlighting inequalities between social income classes and children's engagement in ECAs (Sutton Trust, 2014). Recent events in the UK in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic have been reported to have increased existing inequalities, and so the impact of the pandemic on ECAs in the UK needs to continue to be explored (Blundell et al., 2020).

2.5 COVID-19 Pandemic

Supporting young people's mental health has been high on the agenda of local authorities since the 2018 Green Paper (DHSC & DFE, 2018) and further wellbeing support has been implemented in schools in response to the pandemic (DfE, 2020b; Children & Young People's

Mental Health Coalition, 2021). A range of surveys and research exploring the impact of the pandemic on young people's wellbeing have been conducted.

One report demonstrated that young people's self-reporting of wellbeing early in the pandemic was significantly lower than typical population levels (Yeeles et al., 2020). Parent reports also demonstrated that children and young people's emotional difficulties had increased during each of the lockdowns, with reported difficulties in January to February 2021 surpassing the level of difficulties reported in March 2020 (Co-SPACE Study, 2021b; Creswell et al., 2021). Additionally, reports of low wellbeing have been shown to have increased according to age, with older adolescents in school years twelve and thirteen reporting the highest proportion of low wellbeing, and lowest reports of high and moderate wellbeing (Mansfield et al., 2020).

One contribution to reports of reduced wellbeing is school closures, which have been found to be associated with a negative impact on wellbeing in the short-term (Viner et al., 2021). Three surveys of young people with mental health needs in the UK carried out at different timepoints during the pandemic found several additional factors to be contributing to poor mental health including loss of routines, a lack of social connectedness with friends and trusted adults outside of the home, and not being able to do activities they would usually do (YoungMinds, 2020a; YoungMinds, 2020b; YoungMinds, 2021). Several of these factors may have been supported by ECA participation pre-pandemic and as such could be a means of supporting wellbeing recovery. Although this research was not peer-reviewed, it highlights potential areas to focus on in relation to ECAs as published research on the pandemic continues to emerge.

Young people have provided their own thoughts as to what would support their wellbeing since COVID-19 including physical activity, creative arts, and nature (Cowie & Myers, 2020). Based on the evidence provided through this review, ECAs can play a role in supporting young people's wellbeing through our recovery from the pandemic. However, evidence from one survey highlighted that the contribution of ECAs to wellbeing during the pandemic may be complex (YoungMinds, 2020c). Young people reported a mixture of positive, negative and no effect of school-based ECAs on their mental health following a return to in-person school teaching in Autumn 2020. This further strengthens the need for research in this area to be able to understand the contribution that ECAs can make to young people's wellbeing in the current and changing context of the pandemic.

To further understand the impact of the pandemic on wellbeing, research has explored reports from young people who experienced increased wellbeing. Some young people aged thirteen to fourteen in one area of the UK who were experiencing difficulties related to their wellbeing before the pandemic had experienced increases in their wellbeing during the pandemic (Widnall et al., 2020). A descriptive analysis of the OxWell Student Survey dataset found that increases in wellbeing were attributed to improved family and friend relationships, less loneliness, less bullying, and better managing schoolwork (Soneson et al., 2022). In McKinlay et al.'s (2022) research, some young people shared changes that had occurred during the pandemic that were helpful to their wellbeing, such as a greater awareness of and comfort in talking about their mental health and improved family relationships. Families and communities have played a crucial role in supporting young people through the pandemic, and there have been many examples over the course of the pandemic in popular media of the importance of community (Public Health Matters, 2020).

This further emphasises the potential role that community-based ECAs could play in supporting young people's wellbeing through the ongoing pandemic.

Ford et al. (2021) stated the need to exercise caution with interpretation of studies comparing wellbeing pre- and post-pandemic as the measures can differ in terms of time of data collection and who provided the information; parents or young people. However, young people provided accounts of varied experiences during the pandemic and this variability emphasises the importance of understanding individual experiences and the context of an individual's circumstances (Holt & Murray, 2021).

Cowie and Myers' (2020) review of existing research into young people's mental health and wellbeing suggests that whilst it is too early to make firm conclusions about the impact of the pandemic, it seems to have exacerbated existing disadvantages for children and young people. It has been highlighted that the support for young people's wellbeing before the pandemic was inadequate and so the pandemic has amplified existing inequalities faced by young people (Children's Commissioner, 2020b). Parents of children with additional needs and from low-income or single adult homes in the UK have reported higher rates of mental health symptoms in their children during the pandemic than those outside of these demographic categories (Co-SPACE Study, 2021a). This is in keeping with a trend that has been identified across thirty-nine European countries that young people from less affluent families report lower levels of life satisfaction, and during the pandemic young people from deprived backgrounds have had their mental health and wellbeing impacted even more so than those from more well-off families (Zaborskis et al., 2019; Cowie & Myers, 2020). Families and communities are limited by the resources available to

them, making it more challenging for families who live in deprived areas to access appropriate resources to support their wellbeing (Spencer et al., 2020).

2.5.1 RSA Future Change Framework (RSA, 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity for individuals, organisations, and services to learn about existing and emerging ways of working. The RSA (2020) developed a model to conceptualise collective sense-making through crisis-response measures. Figure 2.2 depicts how old practices can be abandoned or resumed, and how new practices can emerge and be adopted following a crisis. This model was developed to help individuals and organisations to consider the impact of the pandemic and to learn from changes to practices. This framework is considered as one part of a systemic approach to understand the challenges of our time and what actions to take to address them. This framework could be applied to learning in the context of ECAs and the challenges faced over the course of the pandemic.

Figure 2.2

RSA future change framework to conceptualise collective sense-making through crisis-response measures (RSA, 2020)

		Post-crisis		
		Stopped	Started	
During crisis	Started	END: Things done to immediate demands, but specific only to crisis	AMPLIFY New things tried and they show signs of promise for the future	→ NEW PRACTICES
	Stopped	LET GO: Things that were stopped during crisis; no longer fit for purpose after crisis	RESTART: Things stopped so focus on crisis, but need to be picked up post crisis	→ OLD PRACTICES

As the pandemic continues to impact life in the UK, the long-term effects of the pandemic and the future remain uncertain (Ford et al., 2021). Therefore, using the RSA future change framework to continue to reflect on practices may be useful to advance learning from the pandemic.

2.6 ECAs and Adolescent Wellbeing: Gaps in the literature

2.6.1 ECAs in the UK

Much of the literature on the topic of ECA participation comes from research conducted in the US, Canada, and other European countries (Social Mobility Commission, 2019). This highlights a bias in the literature towards these countries, with research on the topic of ECAs being less prevalent in the UK (Sullivan, 2018). One explanation as to why research may be less focused on ECAs in the UK may be related to the purpose and value of education. A Deweyan view of education focuses on the child at the centre of education and as a valued member of society (Sikandar, 2015). The purpose of education from this perspective is to provide children and young people with experiential learning to be active participants in their own development and to acquire new skills and knowledge to engage with the world around them (Haynes et al., 2007). According to this view, education should enable young people to develop their own unique strengths and interests to live a fulfilled life as part of a social community (Striano, 2009). This is echoed in article 29 of The Convention on the Rights of the Child, outlining that the goals of education must fully develop each child or young person's personality, talents, and abilities with respect for their culture and rights (UNICEF UK, 1989). Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development (SMSC) has been a government focus in the UK education system since 1994 and continues to be part of the

current inspection framework (OFSTED, 2022). SMSC encompasses children and young people's individual and personal development across the curriculum and refers to participation in artistic, musical, sporting, and cultural opportunities. Peterson et al. (2014) found that SMSC provision was provided through both integration in the curriculum and additional provision such as ECAs. Good SMSC provision was identified as being experiential, involving human connection and relevant to young people's interests. However, there were found to be narrower SMSC opportunities in education for young people after the age of fourteen, with less focus on wider development and a greater focus on careers and earning money, limiting opportunities to access ECAs. The current educational agenda in the UK has a focus on academic outcomes and targets for employment, with a declining emphasis on arts, sports, and other enriching activities outside of the academic curriculum, as highlighted in the timeline in Figure 2.1 (Evans, 2021; Institute for Government, 2019). Biesta (2009) argues that this leads us to value what is measured, rather than measuring what we value in education. With less of a focus on SMSC for young people in secondary education in the UK, it is important to gain a better understanding of the potential value of ECAs to SMSC within a UK context.

2.6.2 The Voice of Young People.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child states in article 31 that all children have the right to engage in recreational activities and that appropriate and equal opportunities will be provided for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activities (UNICEF UK, 1989). Under the convention, it is the role of adults to ensure that young people know their rights and enable them to share their views and experiences. However, a previous report suggested that children and young people in the UK do not feel they are fully or meaningfully involved

in decision-making processes or able to raise their concerns on issues that impact them (UN, 2009; Children's Rights Alliance for England, 2010). It is important to have a clear understanding of young people's knowledge of the benefits of ECA participation. UK-based research found fifty-four percent of young people they asked felt that school-based ECAs contributed to their development of life skills, but more young people reported that they were unsure as to whether ECAs helped them to develop life skills than were unsure about how their school lessons contributed to these skills (Cullinane & Montacute, 2017). In contrast, interviews with thirty undergraduate students in the UK revealed that these students were actively involved in and recognised the value of participating in ECAs to their future (Thompson et al., 2013). EPs are in a good position to be able to listen to and communicate with young people, schools, and families to aid their understanding of the documented benefits of ECA participation and to share emerging research (Gilman et al., 2004).

2.6.3 The Role of Parents.

Parental support of adolescents in structured ECAs has been found to be an important factor in participation, and their perceived support has been found to predict children's involvement in ECAs (Fawcett et al., 2009; Anderson et al., 2003). Parents can play an active or passive role in supporting adolescents to participate in ECAs, and therefore have an important voice on this topic. Parental attitudes towards ECAs were found to be positive across two cultures (Los Angeles [LA], US and Rome, Italy), where parents from both regions viewed ECAs to be important to their children's success (Kremer-Sadlik et al., 2010). However, parents in Rome placed less emphasis on performance, and parents from LA emphasised achievement and preparation for adulthood. This highlights the need

to understand ECAs from the perspective of parents in the UK as there may be local and cultural factors that contribute to their views. Wheeler and Green's (2019) research highlighted how facilitating children's attendance at ECAs is viewed as a key factor of 'good' parenting for parents in middle-class social networks. Understanding parental motivation and commitment to ECAs is an important aspect to consider to further knowledge on the role that parents play in young people's ECA attendance.

2.6.4 Community-Based ECAs.

There is a greater focus in the literature on school-based ECAs than on community-based ECAs, with two key literature reviews focusing only on school-based ECAs (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012). In research comparing outcomes for participation in school- and community-based ECAs, school-based ECAs were found to be more beneficial to young people on a range of outcomes than community-based ECAs (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). This suggests that there may be key differences between school- and community-based ECAs that mean they influence developmental outcomes differently. Farb and Matjesko's (2012) review advocates for approaches that combine data collection on school- and community-based ECA outcomes and identify commonalities and differences between characteristics of the people or activities with an outcome. This would help to identify further contextual and individual factors that contribute to the developmental benefits of ECA participation. A UK based qualitative study found that ten young people in care who participated in a tailored community-based performing arts initiative gained confidence and feelings of social connectedness (Salmon & Rickaby, 2014). Although this was a small-scale study that focused on one ECA, the findings highlight the potentially important role of community-based ECAs for specific vulnerable groups of young people in the UK. Youth

development organisations, such as community-based ECAs, have the potential to empower communities through building resilience and supporting the future life trajectory of young people within that community (Maton, 2008).

Within a community there are groups of young people who are at risk of not participating in ECAs, with gender, social class and migrant background all being found to affect rates of ECA participation (Behtoui, 2019). Behtoui's (2019) research involved young people in Sweden, however similar patterns have been reported in the US. Mahoney et al. (2005) stated the main factors impacting ECA participation as individual characteristics, family resources, ECA availability, and local contextual factors. Students themselves have shared several barriers to engagement including; time, location, money, caring commitments, cultural expectations and a lack of confidence (Dickinson et al., 2021). Lareau (2011) additionally highlighted social class differences in the US as impacting young people's participation in organised leisure activities, with lower levels of participation seen in groups experiencing higher levels of disadvantage and deprivation. A review of existing literature revealed that whilst disadvantaged young people are most at risk of not participating in ECAs, these young people often experience the most positive outcomes and benefits from participation (Health et al., 2018). Similar trends in ECA participation rates have also been reported in a UK context, with inequalities between social income classes and children's engagement in ECAs, as outlined in section 2.4.3 (Sutton Trust, 2014). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has further increased existing inequalities and so it is likely that more young people now face barriers to accessing ECAs (Children's Commissioner, 2020b). These factors mean that in conducting research with participants attending ECAs, there are likely to be limited participants from disadvantaged groups and therefore a bias in the findings meaning that generalisations cannot be made across the population. Further research exploring the

barriers for these groups of young people in accessing ECAs would be useful to enable these barriers to be addressed.

2.7 Relevance for EPs

Wellbeing and mental health are prevalent topics within EP practice, with one survey in England finding that it is EPs who most often provide mental health support in schools (Sharpe et al., 2016). As Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered psychologists, EPs have a responsibility to proactively safeguard the wellbeing of those they work with, with 'wellbeing' referred to seven times in the standards of proficiency (HCPC, 2015). This focus on supporting wellbeing has increased since the pandemic, with the government introducing a grant for EPs to support schools with wellbeing for education recovery (Department for Education (DfE), 2020b). The BPS have further emphasised the need to focus on strengths, resilience and psychological wellbeing following the pandemic (British Psychological Society (BPS), 2021a; BPS, 2021b). Research has found that young people tend to rely on school staff to support their mental health and wellbeing, but that teachers may not feel skilled to support young people with some mental health and wellbeing needs (O'Reilly, 2018). EPs possess a distinct combination of skills that make them well placed to offer support at a range of levels by considering the different contexts that influence and contribute to young people's wellbeing (Farrell et al., 2006; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). It has however been argued that EPs' skills in this area are underutilised in the UK and that current support is not meeting young people's increasing mental health needs (AEP, 2021). EPs in Scotland shared how often their role in mental health and wellbeing was limited to indirect work, advice, and referral to other agencies (Greig et al., 2019). Conducting research that could provide EPs with additional and up-to-date knowledge about ECAs could help to

ensure that the advice they give is well-informed, and referral to other agencies could include the consideration of ECAs. Further exploring the value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing would therefore advance our understanding and enable EPs to provide informed support and signposting to young people, families, and education settings.

This literature review has highlighted a range of research that suggests ECA participation can positively impact upon developmental outcomes and wellbeing. The role of the EP involves applying psychology to understand and support young people experiencing difficulties across a range of developmental areas to work towards positive outcomes (Farrell et al., 2006). This range within the EP role means that there is an acknowledgement of the interlinked nature of different developmental and psychological needs and the need for a holistic approach to supporting young people (Beaver, 2011; Farrell et al., 2006). As ECAs have been linked to a range of positive developmental outcomes, they have relevance to EP practice in considering how children and young people's development can be supported.

Community psychology forms an important aspect of the EP role, with initial doctorate training including community psychology as an area of training, and two universities including it in the title of the training course (University of Exeter, n.d.; The Tavistock and Portman, n.d.). Community psychology is said to encompass the vision of providing psychological services that contribute to supporting a whole community through multi-agency and multi-context working (MacKay, 2006). Traded services have offered greater opportunities for EPs to work with a wider range of teams and services within the community (Lee & Woods, 2017). One study in the North-West of England suggested that EPs facilitate community cohesion through their values and knowledge of their school communities (Taft, 2018). ECAs are one way in which EPs could apply these skills in

community cohesion to consider how community activities and projects can and do support the children, young people, and families we work with.

2.8 Summary

A range of academic and socioemotional benefits to ECA participation have previously been explored, however socioemotional outcomes have received less research attention, and even less so in a UK context. The current research aimed to provide further evidence from a UK perspective about the relationship between ECAs and young people's wellbeing using the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011). The COVID-19 pandemic presented a unique opportunity to further explore the role of ECAs and the contribution they make to young people's wellbeing through the impact of any loss or changes to ECAs using the RSA future change framework (RSA, 2020). The research aims to address gaps in the literature by providing multiple perspectives on the topic from young people, parents and ECA organisers.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and justify the methodological approaches and methods adopted to explore the research aims and questions. Firstly, I outline the initial methods proposed with an explanation of the research challenges that I faced. Due to these research challenges, an adapted multiple case study design was adopted and an account and rationalisation is provided of this design and the methods that were used to gather, analyse, and interpret the data. Finally, I present the philosophical assumptions that underpin this research and reflect on the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data and ethical considerations.

3.1 Initial Design: Explanatory Mixed Methods

Mixed methods research involves gathering qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Qualitative data allows for the perspectives of participants to be heard and understood within their own context, whilst quantitative data allows for recognition of trends and generalisations (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). A two-phase explanatory mixed methods design was initially adopted, with the first phase of the research aiming to gather quantitative data, followed by a second stage gathering qualitative data to help to build upon initial quantitative findings (Creswell et al., 2003).

3.1.1 Questionnaire Design

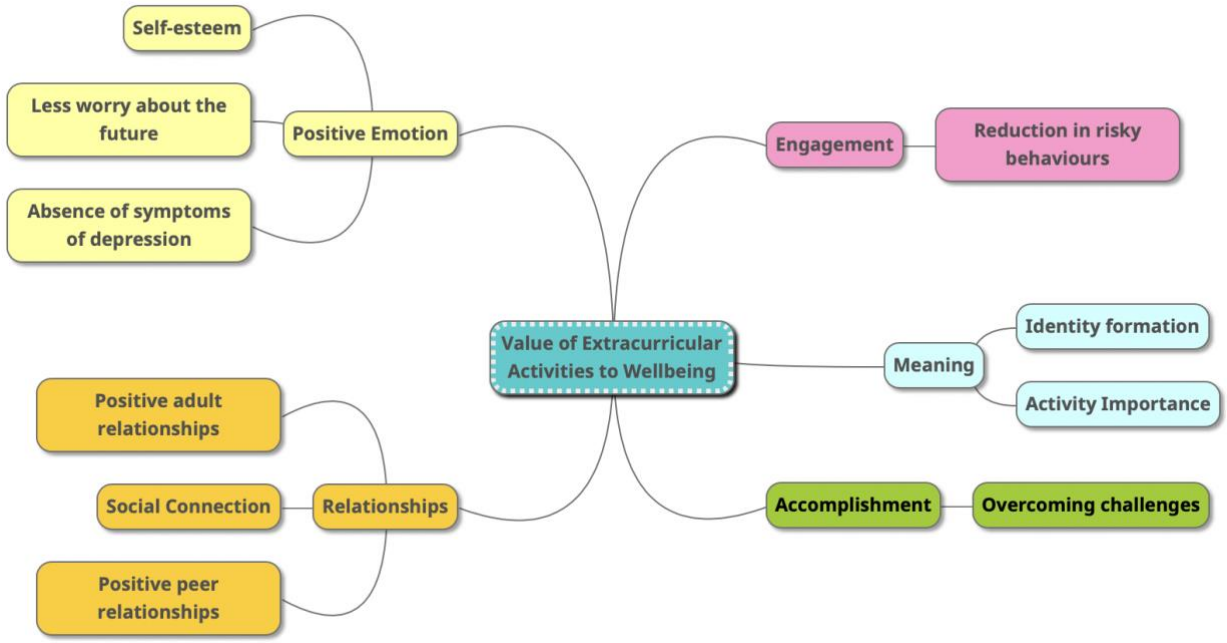
An online questionnaire was designed to gain an understanding of the social situation that exists without manipulating any variables (Riva et al., 2003). The strengths of this methodological approach were deemed best to answer the research questions by enabling a large amount of information to be gathered in a way that is not labour-intense, reaching participants regardless of their geographic location and enabling them to complete the research at their convenience (Thomas, 2017).

An online questionnaire approach may result in potential participants not responding to the invitation to participate, or not completing the questionnaire in full (Lefever et al., 2007). This would lead to a self-selected sample that may not be representative of the intended target population. A questionnaire approach also lacks the flexibility to be able to follow up with participants on their responses or to ask for more detail in direct response to their answers (Thomas, 2017). This limitation would have been addressed in the second phase, using focus groups to explore the research questions in greater detail.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain an initial, broad understanding of different perspectives on ECAs and wellbeing. To establish wellbeing statements to be included within the questionnaire, key socio-emotional outcome measures identified through the literature review were compiled and grouped against the five elements of the PERMA model, as shown in Figure 3. From this concept map, statements were written that aimed to gather information about their value in the context of ECAs.

Figure 3

Concept map to depict ways of exploring the value of extracurricular activities within the PERMA model of wellbeing (Seligman, 2011).



Within the questionnaire, participants were asked to provide relevant demographic information including gender and school year group. Participants were asked how many ECAs they participated in, the types of activities, and then to choose one important ECA to focus on for the remainder of the questions. Participants then rated a range of wellbeing statements related to their ECA before the pandemic began on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Thomas, 2017). The participants then provided information about how their activity had changed at different stages during the pandemic. Participants rated how much of an impact the changes to their ECA had on the same statements related to wellbeing, using a three-point Likert scale of negative impact, no impact and positive impact. Finally, participants were presented with a free response box to provide any additional information related to ECAs and wellbeing. Three versions of the

questionnaire were designed, amending the language to address young people, parents, and activity organisers. A copy of the questionnaires in full can be found in Appendix 3.1.

3.1.2 Data Collection

An online questionnaire was designed on the Qualtrics platform, compatible for completion on a computer or mobile device. A weblink to the questionnaires along with a QR code was embedded into an email and PDF flyer with information about the project and distributed to potential participants.

3.1.3 Participants and Recruitment

Participants invited to take part were from one of three participant groups who met the following criteria; 1) young people of secondary school age who participated in at least one ECA before the start of the pandemic, 2) parents or carers with a child meeting criteria 1, 3) individuals who organise an ECA for young people meeting criteria 1.

Participants were recruited in a variety of ways. The questionnaire was sent to SENCOs of mainstream and specialist secondary settings in one local authority area, with information about the purpose of the research. The questionnaire was also sent to the link EPs for these secondary schools to promote the research through existing professional relationships. Local authority services working with young people and a parent carer forum were also contacted. A database of local ECA providers was compiled from internet sources, including local authority directories, local businesses, and voluntary organisation directories, and using Google to find individual activities in the local area. This database consisted of one-hundred-

and-sixteen ECAs from across the local authority. Each community based ECA provider was emailed information about the research along with the questionnaire link to recruit participants. The information sent to potential participants can be seen in Appendix 3.2.

The ideal and minimum representative sample sizes were calculated and can be seen in Appendix 3.3. The number of pupils on school roll in the local authority was obtained through local authority published data. A government report based on data from 2010 to 2018 estimated that just under half of young people aged ten-to-fifteen participated in ECAs in the UK on a regular basis (Social Mobility Commission, 2019). Based on this information, the number of pupils on roll was halved to give an estimation of the number participating in ECAs. Cochran's formula was applied to this information to establish the number of young people and parent participants, and the number of ECAs in the database was used to establish the number of organisers (Bartlett et al., 2001).

3.1.4 Research Challenges

The questionnaires sent to secondary education settings did not result in the completion of any questionnaires. I followed up with each of the settings on two additional occasions, by email and phone. The settings were empathetic to the request but felt unable to help at the time, with one citing additional pressures on teachers due to the pandemic and another mentioning challenges due to staffing capacity. One setting said they may be able to support with the research in the new academic year, unfortunately due to the time constraints of this research project and continuing uncertainty in relation to the pandemic it was not possible to wait until this time.

The contact made with individual ECA providers resulted in some participation. Each activity was contacted three times by email over the course of four months. The questionnaire gained thirteen organiser responses, six young people responses, and twenty parent responses between April and September 2021. This was not enough data to be representative as none of these groups of participants met the minimum sample size identified in Appendix 3.3, making it difficult to justify the inclusion of this data to answer the research questions. Due to the amount of time and effort spent recruiting and limited options remaining to increase participation, it was deemed to be appropriate to take a different methodological approach to meet the aims of this research, adapted from the initial second phase of the mixed methods design.

3.2 Second Design: Multiple Case Studies

A multiple case study methodology was adopted to understand the contribution of ECAs to young people's wellbeing within their existing social environment (Robson, 2011). Using this strategy for research allowed for the exploration of real-life contexts, gathering a depth of empirical evidence from multiple sources (Yin, 2009; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Multiple case studies allowed for a wider exploration of the research questions than a single case study. Using a cross case analysis between case studies allowed for data to be compared within and across each case to understand their similarities and differences (Gustafsson, 2017). The strengths of this methodological approach addressed the research questions; gathering a range of situational information and triangulating responses to explore the experiences of ECA participation and wellbeing from the perspectives of key stakeholders.

Case studies are not generalisable samples, reported to be difficult to summarise to contribute to theory, and tend to be biased towards confirming a researcher's hypotheses (Starman, 2013). Although the case studies are illustrative of cases and cannot be generalised to a population, using multiple case studies enabled situated generalisations and conclusions to be made in relation to theory (Wikfeldt, 2016). Researcher reflexivity aimed to address concerns with researcher interpretation, considering myself as an active participant in the research and repeating the case study three times helped to broaden the contribution of this research to theory (Braun & Clarke, 2021b; Starman, 2013). My research supervisors also examined my analysis to share insights, clarify my thinking and explore alternative ways of making sense of the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). The case study approach provides an opportunity for an in-depth exploration of contextual factors related to the topic, generating hypotheses which can then be considered in other similar or related contexts (Robson, 2011).

A 'case' in this context is defined as an ECA for young people of secondary school age within one local authority area. A total of three case studies were included; a dance school, an athletics club, and a girls' football club. These case studies were opportunity cases due to recruitment challenges, discussed for each case in more detail below. The case study method was repeated sequentially, with each successive case adding to the understanding of the research questions (Robson, 2011).

3.3 Data Collection

The data for each case study was gathered over two to three weeks, where I attended the ECA to meet with the young people and organiser to carry out the research. The primary

data collected was quantitative to gain an in-depth understanding of participant perspectives on the topic (Creswell et al., 2003). A small amount of quantitative data was embedded within the qualitative data, providing a secondary and supplementary role to meeting the research aims and answering the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Quantitative data was gathered through an online questionnaire, and qualitative data was gathered through observation, interviews and focus groups, as well as the questionnaire. These are each explained in more detail below and a summary table of the range of data collected and their links to the research questions can be seen in Appendix 3.4.

3.3.1 Focus Group

A focus group method was adopted to allow for existing and new ideas to be formed and discussed in a group context (Breen, 2006). This method enabled in-depth discussion and sharing of ideas to gain rich qualitative information in response to the research questions. Open-ended questions were prepared around each research question, with the flexibility to ask follow-up questions to balance the need for answers to specific questions with the value of free-flowing discussion (Finch et al., 2014). A limitation of the use of focus groups as a data collection tool is that participants may not feel able or comfortable to share their thoughts and feelings openly in a group context (O.Nyumba et al., 2017). Focus groups are also dependent on the group dynamics and process of information generated through discussion (Finch et al., 2014). There can be a tendency for there to be dominant members in a group, members who are reluctant to speak, and potential for disagreements to occur (Smithson, 2007). It was hoped that the use of pre-existing groups in the current research would help to overcome some of these limitations.

Focus groups were held with the young people who participated in the ECA. The young people were provided with an explanation and supporting visual of the PERMA model of wellbeing as a prompt for the different areas of wellbeing that they could consider. I was interested in finding out how the young people would interpret each of these elements in the context of their own activity. The PERMA prompt can be seen in Appendix 3.5, where accomplishment is referred to as achievement and as such, the terms accomplishment and achievement are used interchangeably within this research. The young people were asked open-ended questions related to the research questions and were encouraged to generate a discussion, with the flexibility to ask follow-up prompt questions in response to discussions. The focus group questions can be seen in Appendix 3.6.

Existing literature suggests that the optimum size for a focus group is between six and eight participants to enable all participants to engage in an in-depth discussion (Finch et al., 2014). Although this is recommended as the ideal group size, the decision was made to hold larger focus groups that allowed for participation with a pre-existing group, allowing all young people within one ECA group who wanted to participate to take part together. Using a pre-existing group was valuable for exploring shared meaning within the ECA context, and for gathering a breadth of information and opinion on the topic (Finch et al., 2014). In addition, allowing large focus groups aimed to maximise participation to account for the possibility of non-attendance and to enable the young people to reflect on the questions as a group who take part in the ECA together (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014).

Mishra (2016) cautioned that large focus groups can be challenging for the moderator to manage and could also lead to participants feeling they do not want to speak or that they do not have enough opportunity to speak (Smithson, 2007). As the young people were all

familiar with each other outside of the research, it was thought that this was likely to have increased their comfort in speaking with each other about their shared experience of attending their ECA (Williams & Katz, 2001). The focus groups were able to be held at the location where the ECAs took place, an environment familiar to the young people and another factor that may have increased feelings of comfort during the focus group (O.Nyumba et al., 2017). To facilitate the focus groups and encourage all participants to be able to express their views, managing dominant and reticent participants within the group, the young people were encouraged to think together about questions in small groups or pairs to then share and discuss in more detail with the whole group (Finch et al., 2014). As the group facilitator, I leaned into my practitioner skills to navigate the group dynamics including; using a light-hearted approach to build rapport, using active listening skills, good communication skills, and flexibility to respond to the discussion as it unfolded (O.Nyumba et al., 2017).

3.3.2 Interview

An interview method was used to explore the research questions with the ECA organisers. An interview is an interactive method between the participant and researcher, and this interaction itself shapes the information that is gathered (Yeo at al., 2014). In this way, new knowledge is created through the active interview process by prompting reflection and generating new ideas (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Interviews were deemed to be most appropriate in this context as a means of exploring the organisers' experiences. The organisers participated in a semi-structured interview where the questions mirrored those asked to young people in the focus groups, amended to gain the perspective of the organiser. In addition, organisers were asked to explain how the activity delivery had

changed over the course of the pandemic. The interview questions are included in Appendix 3.7.

3.3.3 Observation

Observation for familiarisation was used as a method to understand the processes and events within the context of each ECA to support the understanding of the interview and focus group information as part of a multi-method design (McNaughton Nicholls et al., 2014). This method allowed an insight into the structure of the activity, the number of participants, and the interactions within the activity. I was observing as a participant, aiming to observe as unobtrusively as possible whilst recognising that some engagement is both necessary and inevitable (Gold, 1958). This meant engaging with the activity at the start as a means of introduction and being transparent about the purpose of the observation (McNaughton Nicholls et al., 2014). Observations were conducted before interviews and focus groups, before engaging more deeply with participants. The observation schedule used to record information about the structure of the activity is included in Appendix 3.8.

3.3.4 Questionnaire

A questionnaire method was used to gather parent views with a self-administered online questionnaire distributed to parents. This was considered the best approach for maximising participation as there were limited opportunities to meet with parents in person at the ECAs. The questionnaire was adapted from the initial questionnaire, the design of which was outlined in section 3.1.1. The questionnaires consisted of multiple-choice, scaling, and free-

response questions in relation to the research questions and relevant demographic information. The amended parent questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 3.9.

3.3.5 Piloting data collection tools

A pilot study refers to a small-scale version of the main study conducted to test the feasibility of the research, or as a means of pre-testing particular research tools (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Piloting data collection tools is considered useful to the research process to identify weakness that can be addressed, and to enable a researcher to be better prepared for potential challenges that may arise during data collection and analysis (Malmqvist et al., 2019). Piloting the research tools is likely to have improved the quality of the tools used in this research. However, the research tools were not piloted with the target population within this research as the challenges with acquiring research participants made it difficult to identify any additional participants from the target population to take part in a pilot phase of the research. This meant that potential weaknesses in the research tools were not identified before their use within this research. To reduce the impact of the lack of piloting, the research tools were discussed as part of a collective reflexive process with my research supervisors to jointly consider potential weaknesses and improvements before their use with participants (Barrett et al., 2020). The questionnaires completed in the initial design provided useful information to enable modifications to be made to the questions to ensure the information gathered was useful in answering the research questions.

3.4 Participants and Recruitment

To recruit ECAs to participate as case studies, I reached out to organisers of these activities. Follow up emails were sent to those who had completed the original online questionnaire and provided an email address expressing their interest in participating in phase two of the original research design. Of the five organisers contacted, three responded expressing their interest and one of these activities followed through to participating as the first case study. To identify additional case studies, the same approach as that outlined in section 3.1.3 was used to contact activity organisers again. This generated four responses, with one activity opting to participate as the second case study. Recruitment emails were then sent to the EP service within the local authority area to enquire about any personal or professional links to ECAs. This generated discussions with a further four ECA organisers, with one of these choosing to participate as the third case study.

Three case studies were determined to be appropriate to allow for an exploration of similarities and differences between experiences within each of the ECAs (Robson, 2011). The three ECAs were different activity types to enable comparison; dance, athletics and football. All three ECAs took place in different areas within one local authority. Participants within each case study were made up of young people, parents, and activity organisers who met the participant criteria outlined in section 3.1.3. The organisers were the main point of contact for recruitment within the case study, inviting young people and parents to participate on my behalf. The information and consent form sent to the organiser to circulate is included in Appendix 3.10. I attended the activity during the first week of data collection to introduce myself to the young people, provide further information and answer questions about the research. It was hoped that having this opportunity to meet me before

the focus groups encouraged participation by increasing familiarity and establishing rapport (Gibson, 2012).

3.4.1 Case Study 1: Dance Activity

The first case study was a dance school offering a range of classes to children, young people, and adults. The activity ran in line with the academic year, from September through to July. The organiser was a dance teacher and ran the activity as a business in a paid position. An interview was conducted with the organiser using an online platform and lasting one hour and twenty-five minutes. The interview was recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The young people targeted were those who attended several back-to-back classes on one evening at the dance school. The class was attended by fifteen young people and six volunteered to participate in the research. The decision was made to hold two separate focus groups with three young people in each to enable all of those interested to participate as they were not available at the same time. All participants were female, in one focus group were two participants aged seventeen and one aged sixteen, and in the second focus group two young people were aged fourteen and one aged fifteen. Focus group one lasted for twenty minutes and focus group two lasted for twenty-six minutes, both focus groups were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Table 3.1

Participant characteristics and associated participant codes for young people participants attending the dance extracurricular activity (case study 1).

Participant Code	Identifying Gender	Age	Focus Group
CS1 YP1	Female	16	1
CS1 YP2	Female	17	1
CS1 YP3	Female	17	1
CS1 YP4	Female	14	2
CS1 YP5	Female	14	2
CS1 YP6	Female	15	2

Three parents completed the questionnaire in full. Two parents had children in school years eleven, and one parent had a child in year thirteen. All three identified their children as being 'White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British' and attending a mainstream secondary school.

Table 3.2

Participant characteristics and associated participant codes for parent participants of young people attending the dance extracurricular activity (case study 1).

Participant Code	Child's identified gender	Child's school year group	Child's school type	Child's identified ethnicity
CS1 Parent 1	Female	11	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS1 Parent 2	Female	13	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS1 Parent 3	Female	11	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

3.4.2 Case Study 2: Athletics Activity

The second case study was an athletics club for secondary school aged young people running short and middle distances. The activity ran all year round holding three sessions each week attended by the same group of young people, with an additional separate session for sprinters. The organiser was a coach at the activity in a volunteer role. An interview was conducted with the organiser using an online platform and lasting fifty-five minutes. The interview was recorded and transcribed for analysis.

All young people participating in the activity were invited to take part in the focus group, and all who attended the activity on the evening of the focus group chose to participate.

Fourteen young people participated in one focus group, eleven of whom identified as female, and three identified as male. Three of the young people were aged thirteen, six aged fourteen, four aged fifteen, and one aged seventeen. The focus group ran for forty-two minutes and was recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Table 3.3

Participant characteristics and associated participant codes for young people participants attending the athletics extracurricular activity (case study 2).

Participant Code	Identifying Gender	Age
CS2 YP1	Female	13
CS2 YP2	Female	13
CS2 YP3	Female	13
CS2 YP4	Female	14
CS2 YP5	Male	14
CS2 YP6	Male	14
CS2 YP7	Female	14
CS2 YP8	Female	14
CS2 YP9	Female	14
CS2 YP10	Male	15
CS2 YP11	Female	15
CS2 YP12	Female	15
CS2 YP13	Female	15
CS2 YP14	Female	17

Nine parents completed the questionnaire. The parents were of eight female participants and one male participant with one in year seven, three in year eight, one in year nine, and four in year ten. All nine identified their children as being 'White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British'. Seven of the young people attended a mainstream secondary

school, one attended a mainstream secondary school with some additional support, and one attended an independent school.

Table 3.4

Participant characteristics and associated participant codes for parent participants of young people attending the athletics extracurricular activity (case study 2).

Participant Code	Child's identified gender	Child's school year group	Child's school type	Child's identified ethnicity
CS2 Parent 1	Female	8	Mainstream secondary school with some additional support	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS2 Parent 2	Female	10	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS2 Parent 3	Female	9	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS2 Parent 4	Female	7	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS2 Parent 5	Female	10	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS2 Parent 6	Female	10	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS2 Parent 7	Female	8	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS2 Parent 8	Female	8	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS2 Parent 9	Male	10	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

3.4.2 Case Study 3: Girls' Football Activity

The third case study was an under fourteen girls' football team for young people in school years eight and nine. The activity was seasonal and ran from September until the end of May. The organiser was a coach at the activity in a volunteer role and a parent of one of the participating young people. An interview was conducted in person with the organiser and another coach in person and lasting thirty-three minutes. The interview was recorded and transcribed for analysis.

All young people participating in the activity were invited to take part in the focus group, and all attending the activity when the focus group took place chose to participate. Ten young people were involved in one focus group, all of whom identified as female. One young person was aged twelve, and the other nine were aged thirteen and fourteen. The focus group ran for thirty-five minutes and was recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Table 3.5

Participant characteristics and associated participant codes for young people participants attending the girl's football extracurricular activity (case study 3).

Participant Code	Identifying Gender	Age
CS3 YP1	Female	12
CS3 YP2	Female	13
CS3 YP3	Female	13
CS3 YP4	Female	13
CS3 YP5	Female	13
CS3 YP6	Female	13
CS3 YP7	Female	14
CS3 YP8	Female	14
CS3 YP9	Female	14
CS3 YP10	Female	14

Eight parents completed the questionnaire. The parents shared their children's year groups with one in year eight, and seven in year nine. All eight identified their children as being 'White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British'. Parent responses indicated that seven of the young people attended a mainstream secondary school and two attended a mainstream secondary school with some additional support. The options of the questionnaire were not limited to one response and one parent selected both mainstream and mainstream with additional support, accounting for nine responses to this question.

Table 3.6

Participant characteristics and associated participant codes for parent participants of young people attending the girl's football extracurricular activity (case study 3).

Participant Code	Child's identified gender	Child's school year group	Child's school type	Child's identified ethnicity
CS3 Parent 1	Female	9	Mainstream secondary school, Mainstream secondary school with some additional support	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS3 Parent 2	Female	9	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS3 Parent 3	Female	9	Mainstream secondary school with some additional support	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS3 Parent 4	Female	8	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS3 Parent 5	Female	9	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS3 Parent 6	Female	9	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS3 Parent 7	Female	9	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
CS3 Parent 8	Female	9	Mainstream secondary school	White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

3.5 Data Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, an approach which involves engaging in a process of coding and theme development for descriptive (explicit) and latent (implicit) meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). This approach to analysis required me as the researcher to critically reflect on my role in the research process (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Braun and Clarke (2021b) outline six phases in carrying out reflexive thematic analysis; 1. Familiarisation with the dataset, 2. Coding, 3. Generating initial themes, 4. Developing and reviewing themes, 5. Refining, defining, and naming themes, and 6. Writing up. An inductive orientation to coding and theme development uses the dataset as the foundation from which to develop meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). A deductive orientation is theory-driven, where the theoretical ideas provide a foundation for understanding the dataset. A deductive approach was used by using the research questions, PERMA model and RSA future change framework as a starting set of codes, whilst being open to the addition of new codes through inductive coding during analysis. This approach allowed me to explore the limits of the PERMA model and RSA future change framework, and the appropriateness of their application in the context of my research.

Each case study was analysed using the information gathered from the four sources; young people focus groups, organiser interviews, parent questionnaires, and observation for familiarisation. Information gathered from the observations of ECAs was used to provide details about the structure and organisation of these activities. Whole group analysis was used to consider the information from young people focus groups, organiser interviews, and parent questionnaires as one unit of analysis in the context of the ECA (Spencer et al., 2014). NVIVO was used to code and theme the dataset. Deductive coding was used reflecting the

PERMA model, RSA future change framework, and research questions, and new codes were added during the process (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). For multiple-choice questionnaire responses, frequency analysis was used to view the total responses for each variable and then these responses were coded (Robson, 2011). This process was repeated for each of the three case studies. Examples of the coding from NVIVO can be seen in Appendix 3.11. A cross-case analysis was then conducted to make comparisons between the three case studies, considering similarities and differences between each of the identified themes to produce new knowledge and understanding in relation to the research questions (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008). The cross-case analysis concluded with emerging propositions to be explored in further detail in the discussions (Atkinson, 2002).

3.6 Philosophical Assumptions

As a researcher my values and beliefs have guided and influenced my research in relation to design, data collection, analysis, and implications. My world view has shaped the aims and research questions and how I seek to answer these questions (Malterud, 2016). This makes the ontological and epistemological assumptions that I hold of importance to the research to understand how they have influenced decision making in relation to the research design (Grix, 2004).

Critical realism views the world as socially constructed and proposes that attempts can be made to understand this social world (Easton, 2010). Alongside this view, critical realism accepts that there is a reality that exists, independent of our knowledge of it (Sayer, 1992). These two views can exist side-by-side by accepting that we can apply rules, theories, explanations, and hypotheses to the social world, but that the social world may not always

follow these. This approach allowed for me to apply theories and models within this research, whilst being open to the views and experiences of participants (Robson, 2011).

3.6.1 Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the nature of what exists, how an individual views social reality and being (Crotty, 1998). It involves thinking about what is meant when saying that something 'exists'. Ontology considers whether there is one shared social reality, or multiple realities that are context specific (Ormston et al., 2014). Within a critical realism paradigm, there is a recognition of a real social world that exists that is independent of us observing it, and that attempts can be made to understand it (Danermark et al., 2002). Critical realism considers both agency and social structures as real, whereby social structures influence the actions of individuals, and the actions of individuals can reproduce or transform social structures through their actions (Fryer, 2020).

3.6.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with what we can know and how knowledge is acquired, and in the context of research, the relationship between a researcher and what can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Critical realism acknowledges that some knowledge can be closer to reality than other knowledge (Fletcher, 2016). Knowledge can be gained through retroductive argument, applying theories and models to help to understand and make rational judgements about social realities (Fryer, 2020; Archer et al., 1998).

3.6.3 Critical realism in the context of the current research

From a critical realist stance, the purpose of this research is to develop a deeper level of explanation and understanding in relation to the topic (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). The research was designed starting from existing knowledge and theory; the PERMA model of wellbeing and the RSA future change framework. To explore these theories, research tools were designed to gather empirical information to understand the lived experiences, or reality, of the participants (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). Participant quotes are included in the findings to highlight these individual realities. Qualitative methods were primarily used to explore how the theories apply in relation to the specific conditions of the three case studies in this research (Mingers, 2014). The research tools were administered flexibly, using semi-structured questions to gather information related to the theories, whilst being open to emergent information from participants. The PERMA model and RSA future change framework were subjected to empirical testing while being open to emergent findings. Knowledge from the cross-case analysis formed situated generalisations, this knowledge was generated through exploring the subjectivity within each of the case study contexts (Schraube & Højholt, 2019).

3.7 Trustworthiness and authenticity

By actively engaging with the subjectivity within this research, I have been able to reflect on how I have shaped the research to contextualise myself as part of the process (Gough & Madill, 2012). There was a close relationship between myself as a researcher and what was being researched, with me visiting participants at their activities to collect data (Creswell &

Clark, 2007). Reflexivity was important to enable me to consider myself as both an inside and outside group researcher, and how my own identities, life experiences, beliefs and behaviours influenced the research process (Braun & Clarke, 2021b; Ormston et al., 2014).

By providing detailed accounts of methods and contextual information, readers will be able to judge the transferability of the information against other contexts, and theoretical generalisation to contribute to existing theories (Nowell at al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2014). Interpretations were drawn from data from different participant groups within each case study, using a range of methods and triangulating this information to compare different sources to achieve credibility and consistency in addressing the research questions (Robson, 2011). To further increase the credibility of the research I have endeavoured to present clear interpretations of the findings, making a distinction between information that is directly from participants and where interpretations are being made based on their views (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical implications were considered using the University of Exeter research ethics framework principles, and the British Psychological Society ethical principles (University of Exeter, 2018; BPS, 2018). The British Educational Research Association's ethical guidelines for educational research was used as an additional source of guidance (BERA, 2018). Ethical permission was granted by the University of Exeter Ethics Committee, a copy of the certificate of ethical approval is included in Appendix 3.12.

3.8.1 Consent

Written information outlining the aims and requirements of the research was circulated to potential participants with the promotion of the research and again before participants consented to take part. Participants were required to acknowledge that they had read and understood the information. Parental consent was sought for young people under the age of sixteen. It was made clear to participants that they were free to opt out at any time during the research without any reason or repercussions.

3.8.2 Anonymity and Data Protection

Participants were informed that they would remain anonymous in the research, ensured by not disclosing identifying details about the ECAs or participants. There is no known research interest that would require the identity of the ECAs or participants to be revealed. Any personal data pertaining to participants remained confidential and only accessible to me as the researcher. Identifying information shared during the focus groups or interviews were removed from transcriptions so as not to appear in codes. Personal contact details provided in questionnaire responses were stored separately to response data to ensure they cannot be traced to each other. All data was stored on encrypted university storage systems and will be deleted six months after completion of the final thesis.

3.7.3 Protection from Harm

The research was considered unlikely to induce psychological stress or harm. As questions were asked about the wellbeing of participants and the impact of the pandemic, there was a

risk that this would be distressing for young people to reflect upon. The welfare of participants was of utmost importance throughout the project and overrode any aims of the research. I endeavoured to avoid making excessive demands of the participants, ensuring that data collection methods efficiently gathered only the information needed. I ensured that participants knew they would be asked questions about their wellbeing and provided my contact details so that they could ask any questions. Parents and carers were informed about the nature of the research to enable them to provide emotional or practical support to their children following participation. In the event of any distress caused, resources were prepared to signpost young people to support, for example local mental health support charities.

3.7.4 Integrity

There were no known conflicts of interest. I endeavoured to be respectful of the communities I was working within and maximise the social value of the research by considering how the research findings could be shared accessibly with the participants (Molyneux & Bull, 2013). I strived to remain curious and open-minded to exploring new ideas, maintaining professional boundaries and being explicit about my positionality as a researcher.

Chapter 4: Findings

Findings from the three case studies are presented sequentially; dance activity, athletics activity, and girls' football activity. For each case study, key themes are presented in relation to each research question. The chapter concludes with findings from a cross-case analysis between the three case studies in relation to the research questions.

4.1 Case Study 1: Dance Activity

4.1.1 Activity Structure

I observed one class to gain an understanding of the structure of the dance activity. Fifteen young people attended with one teacher (who was not the organiser) leading the activity. The young people were present and chatting with each other when I arrived, having participated in the previous class. The activity began with a register, followed by a warm-up and a recap of the dance they had learnt in previous weeks. The teacher split the class into three groups, working with one group at a time to teach new content while the other two groups practiced independently. The whole class then practiced the dance routine together several times, filming the last one for the young people to practice at home. The activity ended and some young people went home while some stayed for the next class. No parents were observed to be at the activity, remaining in the car park at collection.

4.1.2 RQ1a: What is the perceived value of extracurricular activities to young people's wellbeing?

My analysis identified themes related to the perceived value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing under the five elements of the PERMA model and physical activity. An overview of themes in response to the three research questions can be seen in Appendix 4.1. There were two important types of relationship relevant to the activity for young people; those with their teachers and those with other young people.

Theme 1: Physical Activity. Part of young people's reason for participating in dance is for physical activity. The young people were grateful for their involvement in a physical activity when comparing themselves to friends who do less physical activity. The young people find dance an enjoyable way to stay active, compared to going to the gym or running. Staying active has been particularly important for one young person recovering from long COVID-19 symptoms. Young people also recognised that they leave the activity with more energy than they arrived with. Despite these benefits, the young people highlighted their main reasons for attending the activity were related to wellbeing more than physical benefits; "I think my main reason for coming to dance is because of mental wellbeing rather than physical obviously physical as a part of it but it's mostly mental for me" (CS1 YP3).

Theme 2: Positive Emotion. Young people explained that attending dance makes them happy, leaving in a better mood than when they arrived; "I'm always in a better mood when I leave than when I come" (CS1 YP3). This view was shared by the organiser and parents, with two parents strongly agreeing and one agreeing that participating helped their child to feel happier. Both the activity organiser and the young people referred to the importance of

the activity being fun and enjoyable, with young people saying that they genuinely love being able to dance. Both young people and the organiser highlighted the value of the activity being a relaxing and 'chilled' environment with no pressure, compared to school; "everything just feels like quite calm but like also like fun at dance" (CS1 YP6). The activity provided young people with a way to relax after a bad day and a space to 'switch off' from school.

There was consensus between the young people and organiser that confidence was an important aspect of positive emotion that is supported by the activity; "yeah I'd definitely say it's improved my confidence as well" (CS1 YP1). Parent views echoed this with two parents strongly agreeing and one agreeing that the activity was important for making the young people feel good about themselves. The young people's experiences through the pandemic had made them more resilient in their dancing by adapting to changing circumstances. Two parents felt neutral, and one strongly agreed that the activity helped their child to worry less about the future. The activity may be supporting some young people to reduce their worries through increased resilience, but this may not be true for all of them.

Theme 3: Engagement. The organiser shared their thoughts on the importance of young people learning to recognise when they need to take a break and how to use their time to relax.

> I'm sure that probably helps in other aspects of their life like at school if they've been able to close off from school for half an hour or forty-five minutes and really stick into the activity and forget about everything. (CS1 Organiser)

This idea of taking a break was also important to young people who said that dance is a nice escape from school and specific pressures, such as writing their personal statement to apply for university. During times when young people have had school exams, they have valued that there is no pressure of exams at this particular dance activity. The young people do not think about exams when they are dancing as they can 'switch off' from this anxiety by focusing on dance; "now it's like that point where I don't think about exams I've got something else to focus on" (CS1 YP5). One young person shared that they feel 'chilled' at dance, a 'completely different mindset' to being at home or school. The organiser has noticed that those young people who continue to attend during their exams are able to recognise the value of taking a break from their studies.

Two parents felt neutral, and one disagreed that the activity helped their child to stay out of trouble. These responses may reflect that for at least one young person, the activity is not helping them to stay out of trouble, and it may be that for at least two of the young people the statement was not felt to be relevant. More information would be needed to accurately understand and interpret these parent views.

Theme 4: Relationships with Young People. Connections with other young people were cited by all three groups of participants as one of the most important elements in attending the activity. Young people felt the activity enabled them to make fulfilling, lasting friendships with people from a range of different schools and year groups who they would not have been friends with without the activity; "it's just kind of nice to interact with different people who you wouldn't usually" (CS1 YP1). For one young person, a benefit of this was being more likely to know other people when they go to college, with the organiser confirming that several young people from different secondary schools have gone to higher education

settings together. This demonstrates the value of the supportive network that young people build through their activity.

One of the benefits of having mixed age classes is that the younger students view older students as aspirational role models; “the young ones will always look up to the older ones even if they’re like a couple of years older” (CS1 Organiser). The organiser said that the young people share a unique experience in working hard together and supporting each other backstage at shows. The activity fosters respect, patience and understanding through being inclusive of a range of ages, abilities, and needs. Parents had differing views on mixed age classes, with one feeling that it had been helpful for their child to dance with the older students, while another said their older daughter did not want to be with younger students. Although parents had mixed views about this element, it was viewed positively by the young people during the focus groups and the organiser views it as a key ethos of the activity.

Through the experience of running online classes, the organiser realised that the young people seeing and getting support from their friends at the activity is an important element. One parent agreed and two strongly agreed that the young people were important to their child. Two parents agreed and one strongly agreed that these relationships were an important part of their child’s life, with one commenting that it makes their child happy to be with their friends. Losing this element for a period during the pandemic highlighted the value of these relationships.

Theme 5: Relationships with Teachers. There were different attempts to define the relationship between teachers and young people. The organiser and some of the young people described a friendship between them and the teachers; “it’s those friendships that

they don't have the formality of like a schoolteacher where you wouldn't see them in a social occasion" (CS1 Organiser). One young person labelled the relationship as professional, but also as friends. However, another young person said the relationship is not exactly like a friend, describing it as 'weird' with a bond unlike a schoolteacher. The organiser's views echoed that the relationships do not have the formality of a schoolteacher. Although these relationships are described differently, there appears to be consensus that the relationships are less formal and closer to friendships than those that young people have with other teachers, such as those in school.

The young people described their relationships with their dance teachers as being important to them. One parent agreed and two strongly agreed that the adults were important to their child. The activity organiser and young people both felt that the teachers were able to joke with them whilst being supportive, respected and looked up to. The young people do not feel self-conscious around the teachers who are encouraging and provide them with constructive criticism; "you don't feel like self-conscious around them cos they're never going to say like oh no you did that awfully" (CS1 YP3). Some young people emphasised how the teachers show they care about them by asking how they are and how their week has been. The young people who have attended the activity since they were young valued that these relationships have continued for a long period of time; "so it's like she's watched pretty much me grow up so if anything I think the long term side of the relationships that I've now had for like a really long time" (CS1 YP3).

Theme 6: Meaning. Getting out of the house was a motivation for the young people attending the activity, rather than doing something less productive such as being on their phone. Different motivations for attending have been noticed by the organiser, where those

who attended one or two classes a week seem to be focused on social elements, whereas those who attended more classes a week had dance as their primary focus and the social side is secondary. This is different to what the young people attending multiple classes a week said, explaining that the wellbeing benefits are a bigger motivation for their participation than the dance element alone. The social elements of the activity may be more important to the young people than the organiser is aware of.

The young people thought the activity gave them a purpose and a space to be creative; “it can give you a purpose” (CS1 YP3). Two parents strongly agreed, and one agreed that the activity was an important part of their child’s life. The organiser felt that they provide a safe space for young people to experience feelings of belonging and to develop skills for the future. Although this demonstrates a wide range of meaning is gained from the activity, both the organiser and young people emphasised that many young people attend simply because it is fun, and they enjoy dancing; “I do genuinely just love it” (CS1 YP3).

One parent strongly agreed and two agreed that the activity formed an important part of how their child thinks about themselves. This idea of the activity forming part of their identity was not raised by the young people or organiser, it may be that this is not considered to be so important to them.

Theme 7: Accomplishment. The organiser recognised some overlap between motivation and achievement, whereby part of the young people’s motivation to attend (meaning) comes from the achievement they get from the activity. Young people develop skills that they can use in other areas of their life such as leadership qualities, time management, communication, and teamwork; “they use the skills that they build in dance to like go into

other things" (CS1 Organiser). One young person had learnt to take criticism better through dance and thought this helped them with preparing for job interviews. One parent strongly agreed, one agreed, and one felt neutral about the activity making their child feel able to achieve good things in their life. By developing a range of skills through the activity the young people experienced a sense of general achievement beyond the context of the ECA.

The young people mentioned that it feels great when they have been working towards a routine for a long time and then finally 'get it', they feel pleased with themselves. The organiser has noticed that the young people might struggle when they are learning but there is no pressure so they can take their time to achieve. This process is helped by the young people developing familiarity so that they do not mind if they look 'silly'. The young people were aware of having to put a lot of work into their dancing to look good but described this as enjoyable pressure rather than the type of pressure from exams; "there's still pressure with dance but it's like a different sort… it's like enjoyable pressure rather than exam pressure" (CS1 YP6). The young people valued having something to work towards and to look forward to.

The young people experienced a sense of achievement from working towards routines for a show over a period of time. One young person finds watching the show DVD a positive moment where they can see their hard work has paid off. As the students get older, the organiser thinks that getting on stage gets scarier as there are more feelings of embarrassment and worry of getting things wrong. The organiser described how the achievement of performing on stage helps the young people to realise their capabilities. This idea of overcoming challenges, such as those faced when performing on stage, was echoed

by parents, two of whom agreed, and one strongly agreed that the dance activity helped their child to feel like they can overcome challenges.

4.1.3 RQ1b: Which elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing are supported through ECA participation?

The young people thought that all five PERMA elements were relevant and important to the activity. Both focus groups ranked the elements of the PERMA model from the most to least important to them in their attendance at the ECA, and independently gave the same order; 1. Positive emotion, 2. Relationships, 3. Meaning, 4. Achievement, 5. Engagement. The young people felt that relationships is the main element that link the other four elements together, recognising that relationships particularly contribute to positive emotion. Some of the young people reflected that they experienced achievement and engagement as temporary, and meaning and relationships as more long-term.

> For me I feel like achievement and engagement are a more temporary feeling. Whereas meaning relationship they're more stick with you longer. So that's where like I've gone with this like that's much more long term and like will have a more personally more of an effect on me than engagement and achievement. (CS1 YP5)

This may explain why they placed more importance on relationships and meaning as they were viewed as more enduring. The reason that achievement was not in their top three was because they thought they gained achievement in other areas of their life, such as school.

4.1.4 RQ1c: How are these elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing supported through ECA participation?

Theme 1: Positive emotion. The organiser interview gave some insight into how they support the positive emotion of young people through providing a relaxing environment and their decision not to have exams as part of their dance school; “relaxation away from like school” (CS1 Organiser). Young people shared this view that having a calm and fun environment was important. The organiser also highlighted the importance of young people feeling able to ‘give it a go’ in class and to be a bit silly. Creating this atmosphere seemed to be supportive of young people’s enjoyment of the activity.

The organiser endeavours to support all students to feel good about themselves by emphasising that they can dance to the best of their own abilities and by celebrating individual progress. Young people’s confidence improved through attendance over time, participating in shows and feeling that the activity provided a space where they can be themselves. The organiser ensures that all students get the opportunity to perform; “they always move around, somebody always gets a chance to shine on the front row” (CS1 Organiser). Running classes virtually during the pandemic led to the young people being self-conscious as they could see themselves, emphasising to the organiser that it may be important to young people’s confidence that they cannot see themselves in class.

Theme 2: Engagement. The organiser thought that it was important for the young people to feel part of a team through the collective experience of dancing together; “feeling as part of a team and feeling engaged in the activity” (CS1 Organiser). Both young people and the organiser shared the view that providing an environment where the young people do not

think about school or exams for the duration of the activity is important. One parent felt that the dance routines themselves were important as a means by which young people engaged with the activity.

Theme 3: Relationships with young people. Many young people reported to have attended the activity since a young age, as young as three years old, and so have developed long-term relationships with each other; “a lot of them have danced with us since they were three four so they’ve grown up with all pretty much the same class” (CS1 Organiser). Being a community-based activity that is open to young people from different schools allows friendships to develop between those who would not otherwise know each other; “I’ve got a lot of friends here who I only see through dance and I made them because of dance” (CS1 YP3). The organiser describes how young people take on different roles within their relationships, where younger students are supported by older students. As they get older, the younger students then become the supportive role models. These dynamics allow young people to develop their relational skills through modelling and experience.

Theme 4: Relationships with teachers. Young people described valued qualities and behaviours in their teachers; being nice, ‘chill’, positive, offering constructive criticism, and showing a genuine and caring interest in them and their lives. “It’s always constructive criticism it’s like you’re doing this and if you did this… it’s never like well you can’t do that it’s like it’s always like portrayed nicely” (CS1 YP4). The organiser shared that it is important that the teachers provide clear boundaries without being too strict and still being able to have a laugh with the young people. The teachers also offer practical support such as giving the young people ideas during small group work.

One teacher who the organiser highlighted as being particularly good with the young people connects with them by being able to make a fool of herself, showing the young people they do not need to be perfect and that it is okay to make mistakes. The organiser thinks this helps the young people to view the teacher as relatable. In addition, one young person felt it was important that they have shared memories with the teachers; “There’ll be certain things where she’s like ‘oh do you remember this costume?’ and it’s like ‘yeah that’s when I was three’” (CS1 YP4). Being able to reminisce on these shared experiences helped to strengthen the relationships between teachers and young people.

Theme 5: Meaning. The dance school’s ethos is inclusive with a focus on fun and emphasising that anybody can dance; “the main thing really is giving those that don’t, may not always have the opportunity to dance or to join activities” (CS1 Organiser). This was not something that the young people explicitly mentioned, but their references to a supportive environment and not feeling any pressure may reflect their experience of this underlying ethos.

The organiser indicated that the young people have purposely chosen to continue to attend a dance school that is relaxed and without exams and that this may be especially important during their teenage years; “definitely it like gets you out the house” (CS1 YP4). The organiser reflected on how the decision to attend the activity shifts from a parent or carer to the young people as they gain more autonomy over what they do in their time after school and how this may explain why the dance school tends not to lose students to other dance schools during adolescence.

Theme 6: Accomplishment. The organiser reported that while the young people are not assessed, they are learning new skills and have something to work towards. The organiser asks the young people what they want to learn and achieve to give them goals. The teachers can also see what the young people can improve on to be able to focus on these skills. The young people's views echoed this, sharing that they benefit from having something to work towards, particularly the show; "there's definitely a form of like achievement about it because we're working towards the show" (CS1 YP4). The organiser emphasises that each young person has their own abilities and their own level to reach, ensuring that the young people celebrate and support each other in their individual achievements; "even those that aren't haven't got the best technique aren't top of the class as such they still feel good about themselves and feel that they can do it and they can do what they can do to the best of their ability" (CS1 Organiser).

4.1.5 RQ2: What are the perceived enabling factors and barriers to participating in ECAs?

Enabling factors. To enable young people to attend, the organiser communicates the nature of the activity in their advertising, that anybody can join including beginners; "I try and like in our advertising and things I try and make it that anybody can join so like especially for teenagers sort of say you can be a beginner and that that's okay" (CS1 Organiser). The organiser will send information and photos to families before they join the activity and will listen to parents' advice about supporting their child to make the experience less overwhelming. The teachers endeavour to create a welcoming and supportive environment and will ask a young person in the class to support the new student if they would like.

Both young people and the organiser mentioned that the initial decision to attend was often a parental decision from a younger age. Some of these parents are friends with each other and have multiple children attending the activity, with one young person sharing that attending with their sisters is an important enabling factor. Families therefore play an important role in supporting young people to attend the activity.

For the young people, knowing that they have an upcoming show motivates them to attend as they view catching up as more difficult than missing class for a week; "you're missing thirty seconds in a four-minute routine so it's quite a big just if you miss one week and then it's catching up is always gonna be worse than going for the lesson" (CS1 YP4). Having this motivation enables the young people to work towards their goals. Another motivation is young people's desire to get out of the house and knowing that they will leave dance in a better mood than when they arrived. Two young people referred to their Mum's playing an enabling role when they are reluctant to go by reminding them that they will feel better afterwards; "my mum's always like 'go on you're going to feel so much better you've got to go' and like that's quite nice to have that" (CS1 YP5). This means that parental views on the role of the ECA are an important factor in whether young people attend.

Barriers

Barriers faced by young people currently attending the ECA. Young people shared that school pressures can also be a barrier, feeling that they are at an age where they must prioritise school above their ECAs; "we have quite a lot of classes so it is quite time consuming if I've got like other things like school that comes first" (CS1 YP3). Coming to the activity can feel like they are losing time that they could be using to revise when they have an exam or important deadline coming up; "I find I get so involved in schoolwork like if I have something

important coming up then I'm like no I can't make the time" (CS1 YP1). The organiser shared that some young people have stoped attending during GCSE and A-Levels because they feel they have too much work. Some of the young people who continue to attend address this barrier by bringing their work to do between dance classes. These external pressures present as ongoing barriers to participation.

Another barrier some young people mentioned was sometimes feeling too tired, finding classes on Wednesdays particularly difficult for this reason. The young people can also find it challenging to use the benefits they feel when they do attend as motivation. One young person shared that at home they will say they do not want to go, then when at the activity they enjoy it and do not know why they had been so resistant. Parents were cited as important to overcoming this barrier by reminding the young people that they will feel much better after doing the activity.

Barriers that may be preventing young people from attending the ECA. The organiser identified the cost of the activity as a barrier that may prevent young people from participating. Costs include termly fees, shows, and uniform, and many young people attend multiple classes a week which increases the total class fees; "all the like the shows, uniform, termly fees, I'm sure that is a barrier that young people will face" (CS1 Organiser). One parent also shared that their child needs transport to get to and from the classes, which could be another barrier faced by some families. These external barriers may prevent young people from accessing the ECA.

Anxiety was thought to be an additional barrier, where young people might be anxious to join a new activity and the thought of being behind when they start may prevent them from

signing up; “what if I can’t do it? What if someone asks me? What if I do something silly?’ All those feelings would be running through their head” (CS1 Organiser). Young people have also been anxious about the show, with two young people in recent years having to pull out of the show due to anxiety.

4.1.6 RQ3: How have ECAs changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and what impact has this had on young people’s wellbeing?

The RSA Future Change Framework was used to explore changes to practice, as shown below in Figure 4.1. A table outlining in detail how the activity delivery changed from the start of the pandemic until the time of the case study data collection in November 2021 can be found in Appendix 4.2.

Figure 4.1

RSA future change framework to conceptualise collective sense-making through crisis-response measures (RSA, 2020)

		Post-crisis		
		Stopped	Started	
During crisis	Started	END: Things done to immediate demands, but specific only to crisis	AMPLIFY New things tried and they show signs of promise for the future	→ NEW PRACTICES
	Stopped	LET GO: Things that were stopped during crisis; no longer fit for purpose after crisis	RESTART: Things stopped so focus on crisis, but need to be picked up post crisis	→ OLD PRACTICES

End. The organiser and young people shared practices that had been started during the height of the crisis to meet demands and have since ended;

- Online workshops with industry professionals in collaboration with other dance ECA organisers.
- An online only timetable of classes.
- Families paying for online classes in four-week blocks.
- Offering Zoom classes into the summer holidays.

Let Go. The organiser and young people shared practices that were stopped during the height of the crisis and have since been let go;

- The original timetable and structure of the dance school.
- Families paying upfront for a twelve-week term.
- Providing sibling discounts and significant multi-class discounts.
- The use of a particular venue for classes and shows.

Amplify. The organiser and young people shared practices that had started during the height of the crisis that showed signs of promise for the future and so have continued as new practices;

- A mix of age groups in the classes.
- Offering 'hybrid' classes, using Zoom to allow those who are self-isolating to attend.
- Parents watching performances on Zoom at the end of term.
- A new timetable offering new dance styles.
- Families paying for a half-term of classes upfront.
- Using a new venue from which to host classes and shows.

Restart. The organiser and young people shared practices that stopped during the height of the crisis and have since restarted as continuing practices;

- In-person classes.
- A second-hand uniform box for families to affordably buy uniform.
- A selective performance group.

Impact of Changes. The time spent participating in the activity in modified ways during the pandemic led to some young people choosing to leave the activity. During the summer of 2020, attendance dropped as the limitations of 'bubbles' meant young people were not able to do all the classes that they wanted to do with their friends or preferred teachers. A second period of loss was during the summer term of 2021, when activities such as cheerleading, gymnastics and guides were able to work with their governing bodies to relax the rules on social distancing in their classes. As dance does not have a governing body, the activity had to continue to follow these rules and some young people chose to attend activities with less restrictions. A third period of loss came in early 2021 when some young people chose not to continue after finding out that the classes would continue to be delivered online. The organiser reported this to be the term with lowest attendance overall.

The young people who had continued with the activity shared that they had less motivation to attend when it was online and had found it easier to not attend than they would have in person; "I didn't have to like physically get into a car drive here. It was it I didn't turn on my computer. It was so much simpler to not do it" (CS1 YP5). One reason for the lack of motivation was that young people were spending a lot of time on online calls, such as for school. The young people also felt that there was little point in dancing in their kitchen or

living room in front of a screen and some had difficulties with their internet connection. The young people were glad to have continued with the activity, with one saying that they were unsure about whether to continue but now it feels like they have never been away.

Dancing online and the loss of connection with others highlighted to the organiser the importance of social interactions in young people's attendance. The young people were not getting feedback or motivation from each other online and they missed these interactions; "I definitely I think doing online didn't have the same effect because you don't have the interactions with people" (CS1 YP1). The teachers also found it difficult to deliver the lessons online without anybody physically present with them. Young people struggled when they had to socially distance in smaller bubbles as they could not chat freely to each other. By having social connection removed through these circumstances, the organiser and young people were able to recognise how important this is to participation; "I suppose what came out of the being online is that they want to come for their friends, it's all about it is a social occasion" (CS1 Organiser).

Parents were asked how much of an impact the changes to the activity had on their child. Two parents reported that the changes to the ECA had impacted their child's wellbeing positively (their wellbeing had improved), one parent reported that there had not been much of a difference and no parents reported a negative impact. Parents were asked to rate how much of an impact the changes to their child's activity had on different statements related to elements of wellbeing. The statements and responses are recorded in Appendix 4.3. Across all statements, two parents reported a positive impact, and one parent reported no impact, reflecting their overall ratings of the impact of changes.

Impact on the organiser. The impact on the organiser is an important aspect to consider as without the organiser's commitment to running the activity it would not be there for the young people to participate in. The organiser shared difficulties they had experienced in running their activity through the pandemic, such as timetabling and complying with changing restrictions. The organiser valued the support they received from an online network of dance teachers and the time to reflect on the dance school, "everybody I speak to in the same situation it's the lockdowns [that] gave people like a real almost like time to look at themselves and look at what they wanted" (CS1 Organiser). The organiser gained confidence in making changes to focus on what is important to the future of the dance school, including adding new classes and letting a teacher go. The organiser reflected on the importance of running the activity as a business and the need to make decisions to ensure the dance school is making money so that it can continue to be there for young people.

4.1.7 Summary

Benefits to young people's wellbeing from attending the ECA were more important than the physical benefits of the activity. The ECA was viewed as a fun way to stay active with no pressure and no exams. An important focus was on developing individual skills, abilities, and confidence by working towards goals and overcoming challenges. The activity gave young people a sense of purpose and autonomy. Getting out of the house and stepping away from school pressures helped the young people to learn the importance of taking a break.

Connection was shared as being one of the most important elements, highlighting the value of the collective experience of the activity. The young people celebrate each other through their supportive, long-term relationships, with older young people supporting the younger.

Teachers were valued as resembling friends, showing caring interest in the young people and providing positive and constructive support.

The importance of social connection had been further highlighted through the impact of the pandemic. Organisational and structural elements were let go, and mixed age and hybrid classes were retained as new practices. The pandemic was reported to have had an overall positive impact on wellbeing for those who had continued to attend. Barriers to the activity include cost, transport, anxiety, and external pressures. Enabling factors include an accessible and supportive joining process, family support and working towards a goal.

4.2 Case Study 2: Athletics Activity

4.2.1 Case Study Context

The athletics activity runs four sessions a week, the same group of short and middle-distance runners attend three sessions, with an additional session for sprinters. I observed one session which was taking place on an outdoor lit running track. Fourteen young people were present along with two coaches, one of whom was the organiser. Most parents arrived with their child and chatted with the coaches and other parents before leaving. Three parents stayed to help with the training session. The activity began with the young people going for a warm-up run around the track, then splitting into three age groups and a fourth group of sprinters. Each group worked on dynamic stretching, followed by activities to practice skill and technique. Then the young people changed into their spikes for their main training run, each group timed by a different adult. The young people then changed back into their trainers for a warm down run before being collected by their parents.

4.2.2 RQ1a: What is the perceived value of extracurricular activities to young people's wellbeing?

My analysis identified themes related to the perceived value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing under the five elements of the PERMA model and physical activity. There were two important types of relationships relevant to the activity for young people; those with their coaches and those with other young people.

Theme 1: Physical activity. Young people, parents and the organiser felt that the physical aspect of the activity outside in the fresh air was important to young people's health and wellness. Keeping physically fit through the activity aided the young people in their general fitness and other sporting activities; "it kind of like helps with other sports activities" (CS2 YP4). The organiser hopes to leave the young people with a love of activity and sport, they may not continue as competitive runners, but most continue to run several times a week into adulthood. Participating in a sporting activity seems to have clear physical health benefits and the organiser hopes that placing value on physical activity will endure throughout young people's lives.

Theme 2: Positive emotion. Young people described the activity as enjoyable and said that they look forward to coming along to it; "I feel like you have like something to like look forward to" (CS2 YP7). The organiser thinks that if the young people were not enjoying themselves, they would not be committed to coming consistently three times a week. The young people feel good after competing, particularly when they have achieved well. Most

parents agreed that the activity helped their child to worry less about the future, with one parent feeling neutral, seven parents agreeing and one parent strongly agreeing.

One of the organiser's aims is to build young people's self-esteem through the activity, believing that feeling physically fit will help them to feel positive about themselves. Young people shared that they feel good when they achieve their goals in running. Five parents agreed, and three strongly agreed that the activity was important for making their child feel good about themselves, and three parents agreed and five strongly agreed that the activity helped their child to feel happier. One parent disagreed with both statements, suggesting that the positive impact of the activity on young people's self-esteem and happiness may not be consistently experienced. This may also highlight that from one parent's perspective, positive emotion is not the most important element to this activity.

Theme 3: Engagement. The young people shared that attending the activity helps them to feel less stressed; "I feel like it also makes you less stressed about stuff, like because when you're running you don't have much to do except for run so you can think about stuff" (CS2 YP12). The organiser echoed this, saying that when the young people are at the activity their stresses and pressures from school are gone for a short time. One young person felt that sometimes school is 'just a bit overwhelming' and that it is nice to do a different activity outside of school, not just schoolwork and revision. In addition, one parent shared that the activity gave their child a focus and connection to the outside world during the pandemic. Six parents felt neutral about the activity helping their child to stay out of trouble, two parents agreed, and one strongly agreed. The activity may not be helping most young people to stay out of trouble, but provided an outlet for young people to get away from external stressors.

When the young people are running they have time to think, for example planning their homework or their distance and pace. The organiser felt that as the young people are concentrating on running, they are not able to think about their worries at the same time. Although there seems to be some contradiction between the two views, both young people and the organiser felt that running provided headspace for them to think.

Another way in which young people experience engagement is through the routine and 'rhythm' that the organiser describes the activity as having. The schedule of training and competitions follow regular cycles, providing predictability and consistency which the organiser thinks are good for young people.

Theme 4: Relationships with young people. The organiser felt that the social side to the activity is a bigger draw for young people than running alone; "even though it's an individual sport there's a lot of socialising" (CS2 Organiser). Young people make friendships they would not have made without the activity and tend to attend together for many years. Young people shared this view, supporting and relating to each other through their shared experiences and enjoyment of the activity; "because we're doing like the same thing we can like relate to each other and like have the same experiences" (CS2 YP11). The young people like having friends from outside of their school and finding out what their friends are doing each week. Having relationships with young people outside of their schools therefore seems to be a valuable element for young people, facilitated by the activity itself.

For one parent, they love their child being part of a 'team' where the older young people look out for the younger ones; "we love our daughter being part of a 'team' and everything she is achieving with the group" (CS2 Parent 4). At competitions, the older young people

help to get the younger ready for their races. This behaviour perpetuates as the younger team members get older and support others in the same way. The young people do their best to 'rally round' and support each other when someone is having a bad time. Some gender differences had been noticed by the organiser, with girls tending to be more likely to offer emotional support than boys.

The importance of relationships was highlighted by some parents, sharing that being able to see friends from the activity helped their children's wellbeing throughout the pandemic. This parent view was echoed by some of the young people who found it harder to run by themselves and more enjoyable when they were able to meet up with a friend. Most parents strongly agreed or agreed that the other young people at the activity were important to their child and that these relationships were an important part of their child's life. However, one parent strongly disagreed with both statements. This parent was of a female young person, and so is not explained by the gender differences noticed by the organiser. Although for most young people their relationships with others were seen to be an important element of the activity, this may not be experienced consistently.

Theme 5: Relationships with coaches. The organiser feels that it is valuable for the young people to feel that the coaches focus on them and that they are important; "it's really important to them that the coach… is really focused on them" (CS2 Organiser). Five parents strongly agreed and four agreed that the adults at the activity were important to their child. The organiser has been able to develop relationships with the young people through their consistent attendance three times a week, with many young people attending for the duration of their teenage years. The young people said that if they do well the coaches will be pleased with them, reflecting the value they placed on these relationships.

Another important element is creating an environment where the young people feel valued and safe to enable them to flourish. For the organiser, this means ensuring that young people feel comfortable, happy, and able to express themselves. The young people value that their coaches push them to do their best without making them feel bad; “I think they push you and they make sure you do your best, but they don't like over push you” (CS2 YP8). The coaches are described as being ‘really nice’ and able to joke around with the young people, qualities that support the development of these positive relationships.

Theme 6: Meaning. For the young people, one reason they take part is simply because they enjoy the sport of running; “I just do it because I like it” (CS2 YP5). The young people felt that running gave them a purpose, saying that it was nice to have something they enjoy doing outside of school that sets them apart from others. The young people described a passion for the activity that drives them to want to do well. Six parents strongly agreed and three agreed that the activity was an important part of their child’s life; “during lockdown it gave them a focus and a connection to the outside world” (CS2 Parent 5). This reflects young people’s views about the importance of the activity. Six parents strongly agreed, and two parents agreed that the activity formed an important part of how their child thinks about themselves. One parent strongly disagreed with this statement, suggesting that there may be some young people who do not view athletics as a key part of their identity.

Theme 7: Accomplishment. All three groups of participants shared that achievement is an important element to the activity. Five parents agreed and four strongly agreed that the activity helped their child to feel they can overcome challenges. Four parents agreed and five strongly agreed that the activity made their child feel able to achieve good things in their

life. Additional skills are developed through the discipline of the activity, such as learning to get themselves organised and ready on time. For young people they gained a sense of achievement, not just from competing but during training as well; "[the athletics activity] makes you feel accomplishment like, not even after competitions just training as well" (CS2 YP8). This was particularly important during the pandemic, where following their training schedules helped young people to feel they had done something productive with their day.

The organiser stated that through the activity young people learn to win and lose. Many of the young people accept that they are not going to win their races, but when they are competing, they are still getting fitter, stronger, and faster. The organiser would prefer that a young person comes last in a race and get a personal best time than winning a race and not getting a personal best. The young people recognised that when they do not do well in competitions, this motivates them to do better next time. One parent wrote that the goals and focus within the activity enable their child to gain a sense of achievement, and another reflected positively on everything that their child is achieving within the group.

4.2.3 RQ1b: Which elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing are supported through ECA participation?

The young people said that participating in the athletics activity is important to their wellbeing and felt that all five elements of the PERMA model were supported through the activity. The young people spoke about achievement, relationships, meaning and positive emotion as being the most important in their attendance at the activity.

Achievement was important as the young people have something to be inspired to achieve through the activity. Relationships and being with friends were important, as well as meaning because the young people have passion and want to do well. The young people recognised relationships between the five elements. One young person felt that positive emotions encapsulated the other four elements as engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement all gave them positive emotions; “probably like positive emotion encapsulates all of them into one… All of them give you like positive emotion” (CS2 YP5). Another young person said that if they are engaged, having fun, and achieving then that gives them positive emotion

4.2.4 RQ1c: How are these elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing supported through ECA participation?

Theme 1: Positive emotion. The organiser highlighted how the physical element of the activity contributes to positive emotions through endorphins that are released and help to make young people feel good. Young people said they feel good after doing well at competitions, and this could be partly influenced by endorphins, as well as other factors such as achievement; “when you do like competitions and you do well and then like feel good afterwards” (CS2 YP9). Young people felt that positive emotion was particularly supported through the other four elements of the PERMA model.

Theme 2: Engagement. Young people described ways in which they become engaged with the activity, with one saying they think about what they are going to have for dinner or planning their homework for when they get home; “so most of the time when I'm running I’ll think about like stupid stuff like what I’m going to have for dinner or something” (CS2 YP11).

Another young person shared how they go through maths problems in their head by figuring out how far they have already run, how far they have left and how long it is going to take them. It appears that young people have different mental strategies that they use to engage with the activity.

Theme 3: Relationships with young people. The structure of the activity enables young people to spend a lot of time chatting with each other. During a typical session the young people can chat during their warm-up, dynamic stretching, skills practice in small groups, and changing their shoes. The young people then do the training part of the session where they do not talk with each other so much as they are running their hardest. For the remainder of the session the young people can continue socialising while they change their shoes and warm down. This means that there is a lot of opportunity for young people to develop their friendships with others.

The organiser encourages 'community spirit' within the activity; "the older ones will always look after the younger ones" (CS2 Organiser). The young people support each other both emotionally and practically when they are competing. The older young people will warm up the younger ones ready for their race, lending warm layers and drinks, getting them to the start line, and finding positives for them when they are struggling. This support helps to develop the community spirit.

The activity provides young people with an opportunity to build and maintain the friendships they have formed; "we can like encourage each other" (CS2 YP7). Several young people from one secondary school attend the activity so the organiser will divide the group to encourage friendships between young people from other schools. The young people will support each

other through these friendships, for example by inviting each other home for tea when they have had a difficult session.

Theme 4: Relationships with coaches. The organiser can remember the young people's personal best times and has memorised these for every young person in every distance they have run. This attention to each young person helps them to feel valued and important. The organiser feels that they create an atmosphere where the young people feel happy, safe, and able to express themselves; "I think the most important thing is creating a place where they feel mentally and physically safe" (CS2 Organiser). The coaches also aim to create this environment when they are training in open spaces, ensuring that young people know that they are safe and being watched. The coaches do not shout or force the young people to do anything they do not want to do. The young people know that the adults are there to offer support and said that if they are tired the coaches will let them stop, joking that they will have to pay a pound. This is another way in which the organiser fosters positive relationships, by engaging the young people in 'quite a bit of fun'. The organiser teases the young people, having known them for long enough to know what will get a positive reaction and a laugh. The organiser does not make the young people feel uncomfortable and this was supported by the views of the young people who like that the coaches make jokes during the training sessions to create a positive environment. The young people appreciate that the coaches are friendly and not strict, they will comment on things they can improve about their runs, but 'not in a bad way'; "they also will comment on good stuff about your runs as well, like if you do well then they will be pleased" (CS2 YP4). This approach enables caring and supportive relationships to develop between the coaches and young people.

Theme 5: Meaning. The organiser shared that the young people need to be competing to gain meaning from the activity; “you can see some improvement in training but you can see what that would mean by competing” (CS2 Organiser). This does not mean that the young people need to be winning, but that they need to compete to be able to put their training into practice and to see their improvement.

Theme 6: Accomplishment. The organiser shared the importance of focusing on personal bests to motivate and track progress. A young person may not be at the front of the race, but they can still achieve by doing better than they did last time; “doing their best is absolutely enough and I think that’s really, really important” (CS2 Organiser). This attitude towards accomplishment helps to foster each young person’s skills and ability to achieve. The training sessions are carefully planned throughout the year and young people need to attend consistently, several times each week to get the benefit of the sessions building on top of each other. Young people’s knowledge of the importance of this consistency helps them to improve at the activity.

In addition, the young people are motivated to achieve by participating in team events. The organiser recounted a ‘stand-out’ athlete who the other young people could race alongside in a team event, encouraging them to push their own skills to work towards winning a team medal. This highlights how young people can be motivated and inspired by the achievements of others.

4.2.5 RQ2: What are the perceived enabling factors and barriers to participating in ECAs?

Enabling factors. The activity ethos is that everyone should be given the same opportunity. The organiser is not selective, so long as the young people commit to training consistently then they can attend no matter their ability; “I turn nobody away all I ask is you come training whatever your ability so the group can flex quite can become quite large” (CS2 Organiser). Parents agreed that the organiser enables their children to participate by taking this encouraging approach to leadership; “great leadership from the coaches and the encouragement from the other athletes” (CS2 Parent 4).

When young people know they have a race coming up, this helps to give them a reason to turn up and attend the activity. One young person stated that if they miss a session, they feel they have lost that bit of training. Knowing that coming to every session will make the young people better in the long run enables them to attend, as well as remembering that they will feel better after they have taken part. Parents said that it also helps when their children get encouragement from their friends at the activity, with the organiser and young people sharing this view that seeing their friends is an important enabling factor.

Parental commitment to the activity is also important to facilitate the young people’s involvement, taking them to and from the activity several times each week. One parent found lift sharing helpful as well as help from grandparents. Young people are dependent on their families to enable them to attend the activity.

Barriers

Barriers faced by young people currently attending the ECA. While parents can be important enablers, their schedules can be a barrier to young people’s attendance at the activity. The organiser shared that the families at the activity were ‘middle class’ with the resources to

attend, but parental work commitments impact on attendance; “it’s not finances, it's not money, it's not resources, it's definitely not that so it's just parents time to get them there” (CS2 Organiser). Other commitments such as other ECAs also impact, for example one young person had another ECA that clashed with athletics training. Juggling family commitments meant young people were sometimes unable to attend the activity.

For the organiser, a limitation was that there is ‘only one of me’. The organiser would like to have had more time to talk to each young person every session and to notice what is going on, sometimes wishing they had spoken more with particular young people; “I don't always have the time to stop and realise what's going on with certain people” (CS2 Organiser). There are two coaches at the activity, but the organiser still felt they would like to have given more attention to the young people than they were able to.

Some young people shared that they sometimes lack motivation and make excuses to not attend. One parent thought that it can be difficult for their child to balance their activity with long school days and schoolwork. Another young person found themselves less motivated to run on Sundays and sometimes ‘cannot be bothered’. As well as motivation, injury can prevent young people from participating fully. Going on holiday also acts as a barrier; “sometimes if you’ve say missed something because you’ve gone on holidays, sometimes I’m dreading going back because I know the sessions going to be hard” (CS2 YP12). These multiple barriers exist and can be difficult for young people to overcome.

Barriers that may be preventing young people from attending the ECA. There were gender differences in how young people started attending the activity. The organiser noticed that boys tended to go to the gym to get fit before starting. For girls, they could feel that they will be last or look 'silly' or out of place compared to those already attending the activity and so did not want to start. The organiser supported these new young people to overcome this barrier by reminding them that everyone was new at some point and that the other young people represent what they can achieve with consistent attendance.

The training spaces lacked toilet facilities, meaning that the young people must use the woods to go to the toilet. The organiser had safeguards in place, such as ensuring the young people always go in pairs, but was surprised that the young people put up with it. There may be other young people for whom this would be a barrier to attending the activity.

The organiser explained how some young people attending the activity have developed eating disorders and used athletics as a way of reducing their weight. The organiser recalls the sadness in having to tell these young people that they could not come to training. There have been times when the organiser has noticed the steps towards eating disorders and had to explain these concerns to their parents. For the organiser it is important that they know the young people well enough to be able to notice any concerning changes.

4.2.6 RQ3: How have ECAs changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and what impact has this had on young people's wellbeing?

The RSA Future Change Framework was used to explore changes to practice, as can be seen in Figure 4.1 (RSA, 2020). A table outlining in detail how the activity delivery changed from

the start of the pandemic until the time of the case study data collection in December 2021 can be found in Appendix 4.4.

End. The organiser and young people shared practices that started during the height of the crisis to meet demands and have since ended;

- Online training sessions.
- Young people following training plans independently at home, including running, plyometrics, core and leg strength.
- Young people training seven days a week.
- Virtual leagues and competitions between the young people and family members.
- Coaching in person with limited numbers of young people.
- Social distancing at training sessions.

Let Go. The organiser shared practices that were stopped during the height of the crisis and have since been let go. These practices have been let go due to ongoing concerns from the organiser about COVID-19;

- Weekly indoor training session focused on core strength and plyometrics.
- A reassuring touch on the shoulder or hug when the young people are upset.

Amplify. The organiser shared practices that started during the height of the crisis and showed signs of promise for the future so have continued as new practices;

- Older young people going to the gym independently and following instruction provided by the coaches.

Restart. The organiser shared practices that were stopped during the height of the crisis and have since restarted as continuing practices;

- Participating in races and events across the country.
- Planning training sessions in a framework in detail for a whole year at a time.

Impact of changes. The organiser reflected that the impact of the pandemic had been 'terrible' for the young people, missing out on school and social events. A few parents felt that the time spent in lockdown negatively impacted their child's mental health. The young people felt mixed about the role of their activity during lockdown, with one saying it gave them something productive to go out and do, but another saying that they felt they had nothing to look forward to without meeting in person. The young people felt bored and found it difficult to sit in front of a screen for most of the day. Although the young people were set training runs to go on during lockdown, they found it hard to find motivation and were not able to gage their pace against the other athletes.

> I think it was also quite harmful because it's like if you weren't put in a group with like your friends then you'd be going on different days so then you'd have to do like a run by yourself and they'd be running together. So you kind of feel like you're missing out because you're doing it by yourself and they're probably having fun. (CS2 YP12)

Young people's motivation and wellbeing both improved from when the online calls started and they were able to meet with one friend to train together.

The organiser found that coaching between one and twelve athletes was easier for them as they could spend a good amount of time with each young person. The young people found

this time confusing to keep track of which days they should be attending. The young people also described the small groups as 'harmful' as if they were not in a group with their friends they would feel like they were missing out, going for a run on their own while their friends were having fun together.

There are still limited racing events for the young people to get involved with compared to before the pandemic. The organiser shared how the group are out of the rhythm and cycle of competing throughout the year. Although young people have been diligent with their training during lockdown, they are not in the same competition mindset. The young people feel that the activity 'is all back to normal now' and one parent said their child is 'back to themselves' because they can fully participate. For the organiser, the young people have lost two years in athletics terms, describing it as 'really sad' that they will never get that time back. The organiser would not have thought it would be so impactful to have that time taken away until it happened.

Parents were asked how much of an impact the changes to the activity had on their child. Four parents reported that the changes to the ECA had improved their child's wellbeing, four reported that there had not been much of a difference and one reported that their child's wellbeing had been negatively impacted. Parents were asked to rate how much of an impact the changes to their child's activity had on different elements of their wellbeing, the statements and parent responses are recorded in Appendix 4.5. Most parents felt that the changes have had a positive impact on the importance of young people's relationships, the importance of the activity and their identity. The pandemic may have highlighted how important these elements were to young people, enabling them to gain a better appreciation of these. When considering positive emotion and engagement, there was a

combination of positive impact and no impact, suggesting that these may be less important than the elements of relationships and meaning. A negative impact was reported for one young person's happiness and feeling they can achieve good things in their life. This could reflect the ongoing impact that the pandemic continues to have on the activity.

Impact on the organiser. The organiser runs the activity as they wanted to share their experiences of having had adults who supported them through sport and helped them in their life. They initially began coaching rugby, before training as an athletics coach to facilitate their son's interest. The organiser has continued since their son left as they enjoy coaching young people. The organiser shared their experience of going into 'scared mode' at the start of the pandemic, working a full-time job alongside running the activity which was 'stressful'. The organiser had decided that they were not going to coach again as they did not want to put themselves at risk, however some of the young people reached out as they were struggling so the organiser decided to return to coaching; "I went from I'm not going to coach ever again not putting myself at risk to pushing the, pushing the rules really by the end" (CS2 Organiser). This pushing of the rules may have reflected the organisers ethos of giving everybody equal opportunities within the activity. Overall, the organiser feels less driven by the activity and that the pandemic has 'mellowed' them. Previously the organiser would have been focused on planning the training sessions and would have had a detailed plan for the year ahead. The organiser is now only working in the current quarter, saying 'why put all the effort in when it could all change tomorrow'.

4.2.7 Summary

Positive emotion was said by young people and organisers to be contributed to by several factors, including spending time outside and the release of endorphins. This positive emotion was felt to be closely linked to and influenced by the other elements of wellbeing. A focus on individual personal bests helped the young people's skill development and belief that they could achieve. The activity gave young people a focus and time away from school pressures, helping them to feel less stressed. Having passion and purpose through the activity gave the young people motivation and drive to persevere through challenges and setbacks. The coaches created a safe and comfortable environment through a constructive and light-hearted approach. Long-term relationships with young people from different schools were strengthened through shared experiences and a 'community spirit' within the team, with older young people supporting the younger.

Attendance was enabled through the activity welcoming all abilities, working towards upcoming races, encouragement from friends, and parental commitment. Parental commitment also posed a barrier, with working schedules impacting on transport. The venue facilities, organiser time and individual factors such as motivation, school, other commitments, injury and eating disorders all acted as barriers to accessing the activity.

Young people had mixed experiences during the pandemic, with some valuing the modified activity as something productive to do, and others feeling they had nothing to look forward to without the social element. The pandemic led to fewer competitions for the young people to participate in and the organiser feeling less driven by the activity than previously, including stopping a coach-led indoor training session. There was a negative impact on

wellbeing when the activity was not running normally, however reflecting retrospectively since the activity had resumed for all young people highlights an overall positive impact on wellbeing.

4.3 Case Study 3: Girls' Football Activity

4.3.1 Activity Structure

The girls' football activity runs one training session each week, and one match most weekends. I observed a training session to gain an understanding of the structure of the activity. Most of the young people were present when I arrived, having a kick about on the pitch before the activity started. There were ten young people present, one of whom arrived partway through the session, and another watching with an injury, two coaches, and three parents watching. The activity started with a warmup game which involved a race in two teams, before 'drills' to practice possession skills. The young people then split into two groups and practiced their passing with one coach each before playing a game of football, with one coach and one parent in goal providing tips and encouragement.

4.3.2 RQ1a: What is the perceived value of extracurricular activities to young people's wellbeing?

My analysis identified themes related to the perceived value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing under the five elements of the PERMA model and physical activity. Two types of important relationships emerged; those between the young people and those with their coaches.

Theme 1: Physical activity. Physical activity was shared as an important element that contributes to wellbeing. The young people valued that the activity enabled them to keep up their fitness. The organisers shared this view and noted that there are physical benefits from

the endorphins released while running around for an hour; “also it's just to be honest the endorphins of coming along and running around for an hour” (CS3 Organiser).

Theme 2: Positive emotion. The young people said they enjoy the activity; “you have a good time [and] that makes you feel happy” (CS3 YP2). The organisers like to see the young people leave the activity with “a big smile on their faces’” (CS3 Coach). Four parents strongly agreed, and four agreed that the activity helped their child to feel happier. One parent noted that when the activity stopped during the pandemic their child had more mood swings and were lower in confidence, highlighting its importance to this young person. The young people said that they sometimes get more enjoyment from the activity when they get better at it, but sometimes not, suggesting that being good at the activity does not fully explain its contribution to the experience of positive emotion.

The organisers felt that the activity built young people’s confidence and made them feel better about themselves. Five parents strongly agreed, and three agreed that the activity was important for making their child feel good about themselves, with one parent noticing that it has helped their child to improve their overall confidence and wellbeing. The organisers think that this element may be more important as a girls’ team, than compared to boys’ teams. One young person said that coming to the activity gives them balance if they have had a bad day. Many of the young people who attend are said to have experienced bullying at school and find that football helps them to feel more positive about themselves; “football is something that makes them feel much more positive about their I guess their self-esteem they can cope with bullying better” (CS3 Organiser).

The young people's resilience has been further strengthened through their experiences within the activity. Initially the team was losing matches fifteen-nil and so they have learnt how to cope with losing. Three parents strongly agreed, four parents agreed, and one felt neutral about the activity helping their child to worry less about the future. For some young people the activity may be reducing their worry about the future through these resilience-building experiences within the activity.

Theme 3: Engagement. When the young people are playing a game of football, it helps to clear their mind; "when you're playing in a ninety minute game it kind of just clears your mind for ninety minutes" (CS3 YP2). The young people recognised that the activity provides them with a means to step away from their worries and become immersed in the activity. The organisers said that it was nice to hear the young people say that they feel they can 'leave everything else behind' while they take part. Two parents strongly agreed, five parents agreed, and one felt neutral about the activity helping their child to stay out of trouble. As well as providing a way for young people to switch off, the activity may be providing a focus for many young people to stay out of trouble.

Theme 4: Relationships with young people. The young people at the activity are important to each other, with five parents strongly agreeing, and three agreeing with this statement. Four parents strongly agreed, and four agreed that these relationships were an important part of their child's life. For the young people, they value that the activity gives them friends who they would not have without football, some are from different schools and they value that they don't already know everything about each other; "you wouldn't be friends with them without football obviously how could you if you don't go to the same school" (CS3 YP4). The

young people feel better after training than they do before because they have been able to see their friends. These friendships are a valued part of the activity.

The organisers have seen the young people forming bonds with each other, stating that they are very supportive and caring of each other as a team. The organisers reflected on how the young people continued attending each week despite losing many of their matches, highlighting social relationships as being more of a motivation for attendance than football alone. The organisers have noticed that the young people will encourage each other more than when the activity first started, and they are better at communicating with each other. The young people do fall out with each other, but the activity is used as a means to repair their relationships; “they seem to mend [their friendships] through football to be honest cos we'll say to them look you're a team, you’ve got each other’s back, even if you’re not speaking in school you’ve got to play a match” (CS3 Organiser).

One parent noted that the social aspect to the activity is great for their child’s mental health, and another shared that being part of a team is very important to their child, echoing those views held by the young people and organisers; “[the] social side of being part of a team is very important” (CS3 Parent 1).

Theme 5: Relationships with coaches. The young people viewed the coaches as friends who encourage them when they do not get the results they want as a team and ‘bring us back up’; “they’re not always just a coach they’re like they try and be your friend as well” (CS3 YP5). Two parents strongly agreed, five agreed, and one felt neutral about the adult at the activity being important to their child. Given that not all parents strongly agreed, they may not view the relationships with the coaches as the most important factor in young people’s

participation. This is echoed by the fact that the young people did not share as much information about their relationships with their coaches as they did about other elements. In line with the activity's safeguarding policy, the coaches were present during the focus group and one of the coaches is the parent of a young person on the team. These factors may have impacted the young people's openness in talking about their relationships with their coaches in more depth.

Theme 6: Meaning. Young people valued that the activity is fun, giving them something to be good at that they enjoy doing. One young person said that the activity gives them some direction in life and "gives you something to be good at" (CS3 YP2). Four parents strongly agreed, and four agreed that the activity was an important part of their child's life. The activity gets the young people out of the house, and a few said that if they did not come then they would be sat at home, probably watching football.

For many of the young people, the activity and the team has become part of their identity and how they define themselves; "they define themselves as 'the football girls' as a team now so that gives them a lot of purpose" (CS3 Organiser). This was largely echoed by three parents strongly agreeing, four agreeing, and one feeling neutral about the activity forming an important part of how their child thinks about themselves. For many of the young people, football would be in the top three things that they like and identify with, and this is becoming true for more of the young people over time.

Theme 7: Accomplishment. The organisers shared that the young people had got a lot better at football. The young people explained how they had gone from losing fourteen-nil to one team, to drawing with them, to winning against them. "When you do score a goal you have

accomplished and then achieved one of the things you want to do in a game" (CS3 YP2). One young person said that they do not like scoring goals because 'all the attention then goes on you'. This difference may be supported by the different roles that young people can hold within the activity, where not all the young people's aims in a game will be to score goals.

One young person also said that if they get 'really good' at the activity, then they can do something with it in the future. Two parents strongly agreed, and six agreed that the activity made their child feel like they were able to achieve good things in their life. Three parents strongly agreed, and five agreed that the activity helped their child to feel like they can overcome challenges. This may reflect some understanding that the achievement young people experience through the activity contributes to their ability to work through challenges and towards their goals.

4.3.3 RQ1b: Which elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing are supported through ECA participation?

Both the young people and organisers agreed that the activity contributes to young people's wellbeing. The young people thought that all five PERMA elements were relevant and supported in the context of the activity; "I don't think any of them are like not true or not important" (CS3 YP7).

Positive emotion was highlighted as important as the young people have a good time and get to see their friends. Although they did not explicitly mention relationships, the young people's reflection on positive emotion highlights relationships as an important contributor to this. One young person felt meaning was an important element, otherwise they would

stay at home and feel 'trapped and bored'. Another young person felt accomplishment was particularly important as when they do score a goal, they have achieved something they wanted to in a game. The young people did not explicitly mention engagement when talking about which elements of the PERMA model were particularly supported, suggesting that this may be important to a lesser extent than the other elements of wellbeing.

4.3.4 RQ1c: How are these elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing supported through ECA participation?

Theme 1: Positive emotion. The organisers felt that bringing fun to the activity contributed to young people's wellbeing; "the fun element is what probably helps their wellbeing the most" (CS3 Organiser). The coaching approach has been to focus on keeping the activity fun and playing games, particularly as they train on a Friday evening. The coaches remind the young people that if they lose matches it does not matter as 'at the end of the day it is only a game'. As the team are advancing in the county cup, the coaches highlighted the need to not take the training too seriously to ensure that they do not put the young people off coming the following week.

The organisers shared the Football Association's (FA) 'four-corner' model of coaching which they use as a framework, the four corners being technical or tactical, physical, social, and psychological (The FA, 2020). The social and psychological corners mean that wellbeing is high on the agenda for the coaches, however they do not feel they get much training or understanding of the psychological quarter of the model. Confidence is something that the coaches feel is often mentioned within the psychological corner, which they focus their efforts on.

Theme 2: Engagement. One young person shared that engaging with the activity is “kind of like kicking away all your anger” (CS3 YP3), pretending that the ball is their sister’s face. Engagement with the activity may be providing the young people with a constructive outlet for managing their frustrations and difficulties.

Theme 3: Relationships with young people. The young people have learnt how they can support each other through the activity. The organisers shared that previously the young people would blame each other when mistakes were made. Now the young people have ‘given up any sort of blame culture’ and any mistakes are the teams, and they keep going together; “I think that the relationship is what's making them perform well” (CS3 Organiser). The young people are encouraging of each other, they have ‘got each other’s backs’ and if one young person has an issue the whole team will try to help. The young people have developed a social chat network, enabling them to strengthen their relationships beyond the activity.

Theme 4: Relationships with coaches. The young people valued that the coaches were positive and did not ‘scream’ at them for making mistakes. Instead, the coaches shouted words of encouragement and helped by correcting the young people in a positive way, rather than a negative way; “they encourage us when we don’t get results and stuff they bring us back up and stuff” (CS3 YP2). The coaches felt they gave the young people ‘a bit of an ear’ to chat to them if they had a problem. Even if the coaches were unable to help with the problem, they were there to listen, and this was valued.

Revision and school exams were not a significant concern for this age group, but the coaches reflected on how this was likely to become more of a concern from next year. The coaches were thinking about introducing GCSE revision sessions at football, where the young people can learn science facts, ask for help with PE GCSE, or find out how to relieve their stress. The coaches being aware of how they can use their relationships to support the young people through their GCSE's highlights both their commitment to the young people, and their concern and support for their wellbeing.

Theme 5: Meaning. The organisers felt that quite a few of the young people attended because their dads push them to go to football, however none of the young people agreed that this was their motivation for attending. It may be that parental motivation explains how the young people began attending the activity, but that they have since found their own meaning with which they identify with as their reasons for participating.

Theme 6: Accomplishment: The organisers reflected on how much the team has achieved given that most of the young people have only been playing football consistently for the past year. The young people's self-esteem in the activity has been building through their skill development, which the organisers think is helped by a 'couple of real stars' on the team whose skills support everyone's development. The young people feel a sense of achievement from winning and scoring goals as a team; "we literally lost against [team] like fourteen nil and then we just drew with them and now we won" (CS3 YP3). One young person feels they have achieved when they score a goal or do a good assist in a game. The organisers reinforce that the team's achievements are a result of the young people's commitment and hard work.

4.3.5 RQ2: What are the perceived enabling factors and barriers to participating in ECAs?

Enabling Factors. Parental support was shared as being a key enabling factor for young people. This support involves a commitment to taking their child to and from training and matches. Two parents also noted the valuable role that volunteers played in enabling the activity to run. A local secondary school is also supportive by actively recruiting young people to the activity. This range of adult support is essential in enabling young people to attend the activity.

For the young people, training on a Friday night is helpful as they find it a fun place to come after a stressful week at school. The young people reflected that if training was on a Monday, it would be more difficult to come with the whole school week ahead. On a Friday, the young people value that the activity marks the start of their weekend; “yeah I think it would be different if it was like in between in the weekdays because then you're like on a Friday you’re like oh it’s the weekend I don’t have to do anything for a while now” (CS3 YP3.

The young people’s friends at the activity help them to be able to attend, with one parent highlighting the usefulness of a positive attitude from teammates. Another parent noted the value in having a relatable female coach; “great to have female coach that really gets the girls and motivates them.’ (CS3 Parent 8). These factors linked to relationships contribute to enabling participation.

Another factor that enables the young people to attend each week is having an important game on the weekend. One young person said that if they do not come to training then they will not feel prepared for the game and will get more anxious about it. Another young

person shared that they feel bad if they are able to come but do not as they feel like they are not dedicated. For another young person, they do not really think about it they just come. This range of motivations highlights that there are different factors deemed to be helpful to different young people.

Barriers.

Barriers faced by young people currently attending the ECA. The organisers shared that high levels of anxiety have prevented some young people from participating; “we've got some girls who suffer with really bad anxiety (yeah) um who’ve been unable to come to the social group because they just can't cope with a group activity even with a ball” (CS3 Organiser). Other barriers for the young people include menstrual cycles and illness. Young people said that they would prefer to ‘chill’ at home when they are injured than having to sit out of the activity. Tiredness also impacts young people’s ability to participate, with one young person feel too tired to attend if they have had a bad day at school. These individual factors are likely to be barriers that young people must continue to manage.

The organisers said that boys and boyfriends can keep the young people away from the activity, and if they come to watch the training or matches then the girls do not want to play. This is related to the young people’s confidence in playing football, and the organisers shared this as one reason why they will not play football with boys having started football at an older age. Parents also shared that the young people do not want to attend when they occasionally fall out with each other. This highlights that confidence and social relationships can be barriers as well as enablers.

Both the organisers and parents raised access to facilities as a barrier because the training pitch is poor quality, and the facilities are sometimes closed. The young people want to play

indoor football, but the organisers cannot access the facilities as they tend to be fully booked and there are ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. This feeds into another barrier raised by all three groups of participants, the weather, which can be cold and wet leading some young people to choose to stay at home. Family commitments can also be a barrier, with one young person sharing that they sometimes see their extended family at weekends instead of going to a match. Parental illness and family weekends away can also impact on accessing the activity. These external factors impact on the young people's participation and the ability of the organisers to effectively run the activity.

4.3.6 RQ3: How have ECAs changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and what impact has this had on young people's wellbeing?

The RSA Future Change Framework was used to explore changes to practice, and can be seen in Figure 4.1 (RSA, 2020). A table outlining in detail how the activity delivery changed from the start of the pandemic until the time of the case study data collection in January 2022 can be found in Appendix 4.6.

End. The organisers shared practices started during the height of the crisis to meet demands that have since ended;

- Online Zoom training sessions with under twelve, under fourteen, and under fifteen teams all together.
- Setting at home challenges, such as the keepy-uppy challenge.
- Socially distanced training in 'bubbles' of six young people.

Let Go. The organisers shared practices that were stopped during the height of the crisis and have since been let go. These practices have been let go due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns and restrictions and the hope is that they resume in the future;

- Indoor football training sessions.
- County indoor football tournaments.

Amplify. The organisers did not think that there were any practices that were started during the height of the crisis that showed signs of promise for the future to continue as new practices. This may be reflective of the activity not running for twelve months during the height of the pandemic and as such not needing to develop new practices.

Restart. The organisers shared practices that were stopped during the height of the crisis and have since restarted as continuing practices;

- Training in person.

Impact of Changes. The organisers held several online sessions which were not well attended and so did not run for long. The young people did not feel that online sessions worked well, they were either sat in their bedroom or the organisers dropped footballs at their homes so they could practice kicking outside against a wall. Two young people shared that they would meet outside once the strictest lockdown had ended. The organisers felt that the young people were not engaging because they were not getting anything out of Zoom socially, and that this social element is something they found hard during lockdown. The team socialising 'broke down' and the young people communicated within their school groups. Not having the opportunities to socialise over lockdown was cited by one parent as having a negative

impact on their child's happiness, noticing that this has improved since school and activities have resumed.

During lockdown, the young people felt they could not do anything and that they 'moped' around, sitting on their bed and not seeing anyone. One young person said they were 'becoming fat' from the lack of exercise. The young people missed the team spirit and seeing their friends, including seeing school friends every day. The organisers were intrigued by how much the young people gain from the team relationships, as the young people could have practiced individual football at home but they found it difficult to find a purpose in this without the team; "the wall can't speak to you so it's pretty pointless" (CS3 YP3).

The organisers explained how they had only started as a team in September 2019, before having to stop due to the pandemic in March 2020 and resuming in April 2021; "we literally started for like a couple of months and then lockdown hit and the we basically skipped a year" (CS3 YP2). This was frustrating for both the organisers and young people who missed playing football. The young people found it 'annoying' as they could not prove themselves individually and as a new team. All the young people returned when the activity resumed, demonstrating their commitment to the team and the activity.

The organisers followed the local authority Football Association's guidance when restarting the activity, supported by a parent in the role of COVID-19 officer. When the activity restarted in April 2021, there were some restrictions in place including social distancing, and some training games that were unable to be played as the young people were not allowed to touch each other. These restrictions 'petered out' by June 2021. The pandemic continues to disrupt the activity, for example an upcoming match had been cancelled due to COVID-19

outbreaks. In addition, the young people previously had a weekly indoor training session which had not been reinstated. This is a shame to the organisers as indoor football helps the young people to improve their feet faster than outdoors. This range of factors will have impacted on the young people's experience of the activity and what they gain from it.

Parents were asked how much of an impact the changes to the activity had on their child. Three parents reported that the changes to the ECA had impacted their child's wellbeing positively (their wellbeing had improved), three reported that there had not been much of a difference and two parents reported that their child's wellbeing had been negatively impacted (their wellbeing had been made worse). Parents views may reflect differences in the way in which the pandemic and resulting changes have impacted on the young people.

Parents were asked to rate how much of an impact the changes to their child's activity had on different elements of their wellbeing, the statements they were given and their responses are recorded in Appendix 4.7. The importance of the activity and relationships to the young people were rated most positively. This may be because the value of the relationships and activity were highlighted by having them taken away; "not having the opportunity to socialise over lockdown had a negative impact on her happiness" (CS3 Parent 8). Worry about the future, how the young people feel about themselves, and their identity were reported as being the least impacted by changes to the activity, which may reflect that these elements are less important in the context of the activity and may be well supported in other areas of the young person's life. The pandemic was reported to have had the most negative impact on happiness, but the same number of parents also reported a positive impact. This means that the changes may have impacted young people's happiness differently. Although there is variability in parent responses, most items indicate a positive

impact or no impact, suggesting that for most young people their wellbeing is no worse off at this stage now their activity has resumed.

Impact on the organisers. The organisers hold volunteer roles within the activity as coaches. For one organiser, they coach to facilitate their daughter's passion for football. This organiser values being more actively involved in their child's life than they would have been otherwise. The other coach is a part of the activity because they love football and want to share that passion with others. Although their reasons for participating as coaches differ, both reasons enable them to share their passion with the young people. The organisers gain a sense of achievement from how much the young people have developed over the past year. It has been positive for the organisers to see the bonds and relationships that the young people formed and their support for each other as a team. This has also enhanced their self-esteem as coaches as the team has been doing well so as coaches 'we must be doing something right'.

4.3.7 Summary

The activity improved fitness and the endorphins released contribute to young people's happiness, helping to clear their mind of worries. The young people identified as 'the football girls', finding the activity gave them purpose, direction, and something to be good at. Improved confidence and resilience enabled them to cope better with bullying and to feel good after having fun with their friends at football. It was valuable for the young people to be part of a supportive and encouraging team who socialise online outside of the activity. Relationships are repaired and strengthened through football, contributing to the team's achievement. Commitment to the team has demonstrated the importance of social

relationships to young people's attendance. The coaches emphasised that the teams' successes are due to the young people's hard work and commitment, dismissing 'blame culture' and focusing on fun.

As the activity and social relationships were not well established when the pandemic started, the activity stopped and the social connection as a team was not maintained. The young people missed the 'team spirit' and all young people returned when the activity resumed. The activity has 'let go' of indoor training and tournaments but hopes to resume these. No new practices emerged, likely because the activity stopped so did not develop new practices.

Enabling factors included having a female coach, volunteer and parent support, and a dedication to upcoming games. Arguments between teammates could be a barrier to attendance, along with facilities and the weather, family commitments, boyfriends, anxiety, injury or illness and menstrual cycles. Overall, there was felt to have been no impact or a positive impact of the pandemic on wellbeing. The newness of the activity may have meant there was less to lose during the pandemic in terms of the activity's positive contribution to wellbeing.

4.4 Cross Case Analysis

4.4.1 Activity Structure

Across all three ECAs the young people attended multiple sessions each week. In case study 1 (CS1) there were different combinations of young people attending each class, whereas in

case study 2 (CS2) and case study 3 (CS3) the activity sessions were all attended by the same group of young people. The activities were of similar sizes, with between ten and fifteen young people participating. CS1 was led by one teacher with no parents present, whereas CS2 and CS3 had three parents present, some of whom supported the coaches with running the session. The presence of parents may have strengthened parental commitment to the activity and contributed as an enabler for young people's attendance. This commitment may also explain why CS2 and CS3 had a greater number of young people returning after the pandemic than CS1.

The activity structures were similar between the ECAs, possibly due to them all being physical activities and having common elements such as a warm-up. Each activity had specific time to work on learning or developing new skills, followed by time to put these new skills into practice. An overview of the structure of each activity can be seen in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Overview of the structure of the three case study activities.

Case Studies	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5
Dance Activity	Teacher-led warm up	Recap of dance from previous week	Learning of new content	Practice of whole dance	Filming of dance
Athletics Activity	Warm up run	Small group dynamic stretching	Small group practicing of skills	Main training practice	Warm down
Girls' Football Activity	Warm up game	Drills games	Skills Practice	Practice match	Warm down

4.4.2 RQ1a: What is the perceived value of extracurricular activities to young people's wellbeing?

Theme 1: Physical activity. Both CS2 and CS3 recognised that endorphins released while doing physical activity played a role in contributing to positive emotion. The young people in these two case studies said that the activity keeps them physically fit which helps in other aspects of their life. In both CS1 and CS2, the activity being an enjoyable way to stay active was important, with the young people in CS2 particularly appreciating being outside. The young people in CS1 also recognised the physical benefit of leaving the activity with more energy than they arrive with. The young people in all three activities felt that these health and fitness benefits were important, but only part of their reason for participation. Wellbeing was cited as having greater importance to the young people than the physical elements of the activity.

Theme 2: Positive emotion. All the participating young people found their ECA enjoyable and that they left in a good mood. Both CS1 and CS3 attendees felt the activity helped them to relax after a difficult day. The importance of fun was highlighted in CS1 and CS3, and those in CS2 looked forward to coming along to each session. In CS2, the young people felt good after competing, especially when they had done well. However, in CS3 doing well in the activity did not fully explain the young people's experience of positive emotion. This difference suggests that the value placed on doing well and how this is experienced might be different in the context of each activity.

Both CS1 and CS3 explicitly mentioned that the young people's confidence is built through participation in the activity, providing a space where they can be themselves and feel good about themselves. CS2 referred to similar concepts, with young people building their self-esteem and feeling good when they achieve their goals. In the context of CS3, feeling positively about themselves enabled young people to better cope with bullying. This highlights that building self-esteem in one area may contribute to increased self-esteem in others. Resilience was highlighted in CS1 and CS3, strengthened through facing challenges within the activity such as adapting to changing circumstances and coping with losing. Parents reported reduced worry about the future across all three activities. Participation may have reduced young people's worry through these resilience-building experiences within the activity.

Despite these benefits, not all parents in CS2 felt that the activity was important to self-esteem and happiness. However, the organisers and young people across the three case studies agreed that positive emotion was an important aspect of the activity. The different perception from parents in CS2 may reflect their feeling that positive emotion is not as important or not experienced consistently.

Theme 3: Engagement. All three ECAs were valued for enabling young people to become immersed in the activity, stepping away from worries and external stresses for the activity duration. The young people particularly valued their activities as a break from school and revision. The young people in CS1 had learnt to recognise the value of taking a break and relaxing and in all activities the young people felt that this idea of having a break from other pressures was important. CS2 and CS3 participants highlighted that their activity either clears their mind for the duration of the activity or provides space for them to think more

clearly. The young people seem to be able to use engagement with their activity to support other areas of their lives.

There were mixed parent reports in response to the statement 'the activity helped my child to stay out of trouble'. For some it may be providing a focus and consistency to help the young people to stay out of trouble, for others it may support this element by providing an outlet for them to get away from external stressors.

Theme 4: Relationships with young people. Social relationships and connections with other young people were said to be one of the most important elements in all three activities. All young people felt they would not enjoy the activity so much without the friends they had made there. For CS1 and CS2, running the activity online further highlighted the importance of the social element of seeing friends at the activity. These friends were valued for being from different schools and particularly in CS1 and CS2, from different school year groups. In CS1 and CS2, it was important that the friendships had been developed over a long period of time to create a supportive network. For the more recently established CS3, being part of a team was important to the young people, forming bonds and developing their support for each other.

The case studies consistently emphasised that the young people support each other in their activities. Having a shared experience, enjoyment and passion for an activity and working hard together facilitated their relationships. In CS3, the young people had improved at encouraging and communicating with each other, using football to repair their relationships as a team. This highlights how a shared interest can help to nurture new relationships.

In both CS1 and CS2 where there was a wide age range in the participants, the older students provided practical and emotional support to the younger students and were viewed as aspirational role models within the activity. This was not the case for CS3, potentially because the young people were of a more similar age, within three years of each other. The dynamic of having some young people in roles of responsibility and others looking up to them may help to mediate relationships, as the absence of this may account for the turbulence reported with some relationships in CS3.

While for most young people their relationships with others were seen to be an important element of the activity, there were some differences in how this was experienced. One parent in CS2 seemed to have a different perception of the value of these relationships as they did not agree that they were important to their child, in contrast with the consistent views of the young people in the focus group. It was reported in CS1 that while the younger students particularly like being with the older, some older young people do not and so there may be more value in this dynamic for the younger students than the older. CS2 also reported some gender differences, with girls more likely to offer support than the boys. As the majority of participating young people were female, it is difficult to draw conclusions about gender differences without further exploration of this.

Theme 5: Relationships with teachers and coaches. The relationships between the young people and teachers or coaches were considered important in all three activities. The participants in CS1 and CS3 described the relationships as informal and closer to friendships than those the young people had with schoolteachers. In CS2, the young people described wanting to do well so that the coach was pleased with them, reflecting that they also valued these relationships.

There were a range of qualities that young people highlighted as being important to their relationships with adults at the activity. At all three activities, the adults were thought to be encouraging, supporting the young people to do their best. The young people in CS1 and CS2 valued the adults joking around with them, creating a supportive environment, providing constructive criticism, and making them feel valued by checking in with them (CS1) or knowing when they had run a personal best time (CS2). Using these qualities, the teachers and coaches have been able to develop relationships with the young people over time through their consistent attendance at the activity. In CS3, the relationships with the coaches were not raised as an important element in young people's participation. This difference in CS3 may be a result of the young people not having had the relationships for as long, not attending the activity as many times each week, or not feeling able to talk openly about these relationships during the focus group.

Theme 6: Meaning. The young people felt the activities themselves were important to them in the form of dancing, running or football. The activities consistently gave the young people purpose through something productive to do outside of school and home. Attendance at all activities was thought to develop skills that were transferrable beyond the activity. For CS2 and CS3, the young people's passion for the activity enabled them to improve in something they enjoy and motivated them to want to do well. It may be that this passion for achieving was more important in the context of the competitive sporting activities. Competition and winning was not relevant to CS1, instead it was said to provide a space for young people to be creative, potentially highlighting a difference between arts and sporting activities.

There was variability in how important the activities were thought to be to young people's identity. Parents in CS1 and CS3 agreed that the activity was important to identity, and all but one parent agreed with this in CS2. The organiser in CS3 highlighted identity as particularly important in their activity context with the young people calling themselves 'the football girls'. It may be that the nature of the team sport is supportive of identity formation within the activity. None of the young people themselves explicitly mentioned identity as being important in the context of their activities. Identity formation and identity change may have been an element that adults were more able to notice in the young people than they were in themselves.

Theme 7: Accomplishment. Having their own focus and goals to work towards was a shared feature for young people in all three activities. CS2 highlighted achievement as a particularly important element of the activity. There were different ways in which young people were motivated towards their goals within each activity. CS1 recognised that the young people's achievement fuelled their motivation, benefitting from working towards a goal over time in a low-pressure environment. For CS2, setbacks in working towards goals served as motivation, and experiencing success within the activity has motivated the young people in CS3 to continue to improve further. The ways in which achievement is gained from the activity seem to be activity specific, but what is consistent is that it is important to be achieving within the ECA.

CS3 recognised that experiencing achievement through the activity contributed to young people's ability to work through and overcome challenges. Young people also learned to overcome challenge in CS1 by performing on stage, and in CS2 by learning to win and lose. Additional transferrable skills were mentioned across all three case studies including taking

criticism, and discipline. Highlighting these additional skills may be another way through which young people recognise their achievement through the activities.

4.4.3 RQ1b: Which elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing are supported through ECA participation?

There was consensus between all three ECAs that the five elements of the PERMA model were all important to and supported by their activity, and that their activity was important to their wellbeing. Positive emotion, relationships, meaning, and achievement were highlighted by all three as being particularly important. In the context of discussions about the five elements, engagement was either not discussed or to a lesser extent. It may be that engagement is less important or its impact less explicit.

All three groups of young people thought that the PERMA elements influenced each other, with differences in how they felt the elements related to one another. In CS1, the young people felt that relationships linked the other four elements together. In CS2, the young people thought that positive emotion encapsulated the other four elements as all four gave them positive emotion. There may be differences between the activities that determine which of the elements are most supported through participation.

In CS1 it was felt there was a strong link between relationships and positive emotions. CS2 and CS3 also highlighted the importance of seeing their friends at the activity and being able to have a good time. Relationships with the young people and positive emotions were consistently considered to be the most supported by the activities, suggesting that these elements may be less context dependent and more broadly supported by ECAs.

There were differences in the degree of importance placed on meaning, with both CS1 and CS2 reporting that having something they are passionate about to get out of the house and focus on was particularly supported by their activities. Differences in the degree of importance placed on achievement may reflect the nature of achievement within each activity. Both CS2 and CS3 highlighted that the young people are inspired to achieve through the activity and that this is an important focus, whereas CS1 felt this element was less important as they get achievement from other areas of their life such as school. The competitive nature of the sporting activities may mean that there is higher value placed on achievement than with the arts activity.

4.4.4 RQ1c: How are these elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing supported through ECA participation?

Each case study highlighted ways in which young people's wellbeing is supported. Table 4.3 outlines how each element of the PERMA model is supported by each ECA.

Table 4.3

Overview of the ways in which each of the three extracurricular activities support young people's wellbeing using the PERMA model of wellbeing (Seligman, 2011)

PERMA Element of Wellbeing	Case Study 1: Dance Activity	Case Study 2: Athletics Activity	Case Study 3: Girls' Football Activity
Positive Emotion	• A calm and fun environment. • Emphasising individual ability. • No exams.	• A safe environment for young people to express themselves. • Activity releasing endorphins.	• Having fun and playing games. • Activity releasing endorphins.
Engagement	• Dance routines. • Collective group experience.	• Using mental strategies, such as calculations.	• Ninety-minute match. • Kicking the ball as an outlet for frustrations.
Relationships: Young people	• Attendance over time. • Different schools. • Older young people supporting younger.	• Time to socialise. • Older young people supporting younger. • Encouraging friendships between school groups.	• No blame culture, emphasising team mistakes. • Supporting each other. • Online social chat.
Relationships: Teachers or Coaches	• Qualities; nice, 'chill', positive, caring, relatable. • Constructive criticism. • Checking in. • Clear boundaries. • Joking around. • Modelling mistakes. • Shared memories and experiences.	• Qualities: friendly, not shouting. • Positive comments. • Knowing personal best times. • Allowing young people to stop if they need to. • Having fun, making jokes and teasing.	• Positive words of encouragement. • Listening to their problems. • Considering how to support through GCSEs.
Meaning	• Open to anyone. • No exams. • Active choice to attend.	• Open to anyone committed. • Training for and participating in competitions.	• Young people developing their own meaning for participating. • Identity.
Achievement	• Celebrating individual achievements. • Working towards new skills. • Choice over what skills to learn.	• Individual skills and abilities. • Motivating and tracking progress using personal bests. • Consistency. • Team events.	• Increased self-esteem through skill development. • Motivated and upskilled by others. • Winning through commitment and hard work.

Table 4.3 shows that there is more that is similar than is different in how the activities support young people's wellbeing. To facilitate experiences of positive emotion, the organisers all create an environment that is fun and that makes the young people feel safe. Organisers in both CS2 and CS3 recognised that endorphins released during the physical aspect of their activity contributed to experiences of positive emotion. Although CS1 did not explicitly mention this, it is also an active activity where this benefit is likely to be present. Engagement was achieved through different practices, but for each activity this was most relevant to the core practice part of the sessions (Part 4 in Table 4.2). This was practicing a dance routine, challenging themselves with their running, or playing a football match.

Relationships between the young people were consistently facilitated by being from different schools and supporting each other. However, it was only in CS1 and CS2 that older young people supporting those younger than them was an important means of fostering relationships. In contrast, CS3 were the only group to share that they have a 'team chat' that they use to keep in contact outside of the activity, emphasising their commitment to developing relationships as a team and perhaps also a reflection of them being closer in age to each other. Teachers and coaches supported young people across all three activities through offering positive and constructive comments. In both CS1 and CS2 it was felt to be helpful that the adults were friendly and made jokes. The importance of having shared memories was raised by the young people in CS1 and alluded to by those in CS2 by the value placed on the coach's memory of their personal best times. The different means by which the adults related to the young people is likely to reflect differences in their personalities and approaches, with their authenticity being what connects with the young people.

CS1 and CS2 are activities whose ethos states that they are open to anyone, whereas CS3 is limited to a particular gender and age group. In all three activities, the young people expressed their own choice and meaning for participation, highlighting that they felt some agency over their decision to attend the activity. All three of the activities had a focus on individual abilities and progress, and on the importance of the young people being able to learn from each other. In CS1, the young people were able to choose what they wanted to focus on and work towards, whereas the young people in CS2 and CS3 seemed to have less autonomy over this. The young people's autonomy, own meaning and an individualised approach are likely to have supported their wellbeing and motivation to continue to attend.

4.4.5 RQ2: What are the perceived enabling factors and barriers to participating in ECAs?

Enabling Factors. Parental commitment and facilitation of the ECA was an important enabling factor across all three case studies. For some of the young people in CS1, their decision to attend followed on from a parental decision to attend when they were younger. In CS2 and CS3, continued parental commitment to drive to the activity was an important factor. In CS1, young people also felt that parental encouragement and reminders about the benefits they feel after attending was enabling. In addition to parental commitment, parents in CS3 highlighted the importance of having a female coach and the role of volunteers in enabling the activity to run. Adults are therefore important to supporting the activity to run and enabling the young people to attend.

All three case studies shared a similarity in having an important focus and goal that enabled the young people to attend consistently; an upcoming show, race, or important game. The

young people shared the recognition that attending consistently helps them to improve and to feel prepared for these events.

Young people in CS2 and CS3 felt that having encouraging friends at the activity was another enabling factor. Young people in CS1 and CS2 were motivated by getting out of the house, and young people in CS3 felt that the activity being on a Friday night was also enabling. This range of factors mean that different enabling influences may be important to different young people.

The organisers of each activity shared ways in which they feel they support young people's attendance through their ethos. Both CS1 and CS2 are not selective and open to all young people to attend. Whilst CS3 is selective in terms of age and gender, they are a new team and open to all abilities. The organisers recognised different ways in which they can foster and facilitate an open and enabling environment for young people.

Barriers. The organisers of all three activities shared anxiety as a barrier to young people participating, whether that was worry about starting the activity in the first place or anxiety related to social pressures within the activity. In addition to anxiety, external pressures for young people were another common barrier raised across all three activities. Balancing the pressures of long school days and revision with attending the activity and feeling as though they must prioritise school. This led to the young people sometimes lacking motivation or feeling too tired to attend the activity. In CS1 young people sometimes found it difficult to focus on the benefits to attending to motivate themselves, and in CS2 the young people felt less motivated to run on their own on Sundays. Young people also have other commitments that might present as barriers such as other ECAs, family commitments or holidays. In CS2

the young people found it difficult to return after a holiday as they knew that they would find the session difficult having missed training sessions. In both CS2 and CS3, illness and injury were cited as barriers to attending including specific concerns such as menstrual cycles and eating disorders. Social fall outs were a barrier in CS3 and may have been more prominent in this activity as the young people were of similar age and working closely as a team. This range of potential barriers that directly impact young people highlights how individual circumstances can prevent young people from attending their activities.

Whilst parental commitment can be an enabler, this was also raised as a potential barrier when parents may have difficulty with transporting the young people to the activity due to working schedules and other commitments. A barrier unique to CS2 was that the organiser did not feel they were able to give their full attention to all the young people, possibly impacting on the young people's experience of the activity. The accessibility of the activity due to the cost of participation was raised as a potential barrier in CS1, whereas CS2 explicitly referenced cost and resources as not being an issue as the young people who attended were from 'middle class' families. It may be that in CS2 there were young people who are prevented from attending in the first place due to the costs involved with the activity. Other external factors such as access to appropriate facilities were explicitly raised in CS2 and CS3, with facilities being of poor quality and not always available to use. Although CS1 did not explicitly mention facilities as a barrier, the activity moved to several different venues over the course of the pandemic and so accessing suitable facilities has been a difficulty that the organiser has faced. Some additional external barriers that were raised in CS3 were the presence of boyfriends and the weather. This range of external barriers demonstrates there are many elements outside of the control and influence of participants that may hinder attendance at ECAs.

4.4.6 RQ3: How have ECAs changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and what impact has this had on young people's wellbeing?

During the pandemic, there were similarities between the adaptations that CS1 and CS2 made. CS1 changed between delivering online to in-person. The activity moved initially to an online only delivery, followed by a transition back to in person classes in September 2020 with restrictions including the number of students allowed in each class and social distancing. In November 2020 the activity returned to being delivered online, before switching back to in-person with continuing restrictions in April 2021. CS2 also initially moved to an online delivery with the young people completing training independently. This activity managed to avoid jumping between methods of delivery by gradually transitioning back to in-person delivery from October 2020, increasing over time from one young person, to six, to twelve and more. By contrast, CS3 trialled online sessions which were not positively received and so the activity did not run in any form between May 2020 and March 2021. The activity then resumed with some restrictions which gradually reduced so that from September 2021 young people were attending in person with only a few limitations such as not being able to train indoors. CS2 has also been running in-person for all young people since September 2021 and continues not to run indoor sessions. Since September 2021, the classes in CS1 have also been delivered in person with continued limits on class sizes. All three activities shared similarities in how they have returned to the activity since September 2021 and how the activity continues to run. In all case studies, the young people attending felt that their activity had largely returned to being run as it was pre-pandemic.

RSA Future Change Framework (RSA, 2020). When considering how practices have changed as a result of the pandemic, 'let go' and 'amplify' are of particular interest as they highlight

how the pandemic has led to enduring change in the way that the activities are run. A table showing the changes to practices in each activity can be found in Appendix 4.8.

In CS1, the organiser made changes to the structure and organisation of the activity, both through 'let go' and 'amplify' practices, to keep the dance school running as a business. It may be that the need to run the activity for their livelihood motivated the organiser to consider new ways of working. This activity was the only one of the three to lose participants because of the pandemic and this may have further driven the need to consider changes to the activity.

Both CS2 and CS3 shared indoor training sessions as practices that have been 'let go' and they hope these will be able to be reinstated at some stage. This may also lead to the amplified practice in CS2 of young people doing independent indoor training being reconsidered. Rather than no longer being viewed as fit for purpose, these practices continue to be impacted by the ongoing nature of the pandemic, highlighting how whilst we may currently be out of a 'crisis' stage of the pandemic it continues to impact these activities.

Impact of changes. CS1 reported a reduction in attendance at the activity as a result of the pandemic, with many young people opting not to return. The organiser thinks this may be due to not enjoying online classes or restricted in-person classes. By contrast, all the young people from CS2 and CS3 were reported to have returned when the activity resumed in-person. With the same group of young people comprising the activities in CS2 and CS3, they may have felt more connection to the activity and therefore more motivated to continue. It is difficult to understand the importance of the activity to the wellbeing of the young people

who no longer attend CS1, however it could be that the activity was less important to these young people than those who continued.

In all three case studies, the young people had less motivation for the activity when it was not delivered in-person and found it easier to miss a session or class. The young people cited reasons such as spending a lot of time at the computer during the day, and not seeing their friends. The young people in CS2 highlighted that their motivation and wellbeing improved when they were able to meet with another young person face-to-face. This was echoed by CS1 and CS3, where it was felt that the pandemic had highlighted the importance of social interactions between young people. It was thought that this loss of connection with others impacted young people's attendance at online sessions and was particularly evident in CS3 where the team socialising 'broke down'. Whilst the organiser in CS2 valued coaching a smaller number of athletes, the young people felt they were missing out if they were not in a session with their friends. These experiences highlighted the importance of social relationships to young people.

In both CS2 and CS3, the pandemic impacted on the purpose of the activity. In the context of CS2, there were fewer competitions for young people to participate in which disconnected them from the rhythm and mindset of competing. With CS3 being a new activity, the young people felt that they did not have the chance to prove themselves, and with the loss of connection they were unable to sustain the team spirit. Meaning therefore seemed to be largely achieved by the activity running in-person and the environment and opportunities that came along with this experience.

Parents in all three case studies shared that the changes had an overall positive impact on the importance of relationships and the activity to the young people. In CS1 and CS2 young people's identity was also thought to have been positively impacted. These parent views about relationships and meaning reflect the organiser and young people's views of how the value of these elements have been highlighted through the experiences of the pandemic. The pandemic may have enabled those in all three activities to gain a better appreciation of the importance of the activity to their wellbeing through relationships and meaning.

In all three case studies parents reported that some elements related to positive emotion had been impacted positively or not at all. This could suggest that this element is less important than the elements of relationships and meaning. It may also be the case that positive emotion was well supported in other areas of the young person's life, meaning that the impact of changes to the activity on this element was lessened. A negative impact was reported for some statements of positive emotion in CS2 and CS3 such as happiness, and in some statements related to achievement in CS2, such as feeling they can achieve good things in their life. These reports could reflect how the young people may have experienced the changes differently in terms of their wellbeing, as well as the ongoing impact that the pandemic has on the activity. The pandemic continues to disrupt some of the activities, for example less competitions (CS2) and the cancellation of matches (CS3). It is likely that the impact of the pandemic on these activities will continue to be experienced.

Impact on the organisers. All three organisers shared a passion for their activity and supporting young people, with two particularly valuing their own past experiences in attending ECAs. This demonstrates how positive experiences with ECAs can lead to a desire to support other young people through ECA participation. The organiser of CS1 runs the

activity as a business, whereas in both CS2 and CS3 the organisers run the activity in volunteer positions, with different paid jobs outside of the activity. Two of these organisers became involved as a means of facilitating their own children's interest in the activity.

Organisers in CS1 and CS2 reflected on the personal impact of the pandemic on their ECAs, sharing that it was a challenging context to run an activity in. The organiser of CS1 valued the time to reflect on the activity and gained confidence in making changes. By contrast, the impact of the pandemic had led to the organiser of CS2 feeling less driven by the activity. It is important to consider the impact on organisers as without their commitment and dedication to running these ECAs, they would not be there to support young people.

4.4.7 Emerging propositions

Three key propositions emerge from the cross-case analysis. Firstly, ECAs are perceived to be valuable to young people's wellbeing, with most of the elements of wellbeing that are important being captured by the PERMA model. In addition to PERMA, physical activity is an important element that contributes to wellbeing. It was recognised that the elements of the PERMA model are interlinked, and that there are different ways in which the elements can influence and impact upon each other. Secondly, there are important barriers and enablers that impact on a young person's access to and participation in ECAs. Barriers and enabling factors can be at an individual or environmental level. Finally, the pandemic has highlighted the value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing, particularly their relationships with other young people. The activity; dance, athletics or football, in itself was not enough for the young people, and this was highlighted through the young people finding participating

online or with restrictions less fulfilling. These three propositions will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Three propositions emerged from the cross-case analysis in relation to the themes of the three key research questions;

1. The PERMA model is helpful to understanding the value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing.
2. Individual and environmental factors impact on a young person's access to and participation in ECAs.
3. The pandemic has highlighted the value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing.

Each of these propositions are discussed below in relation to the current research and existing literature, with reference to research discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2) and additional literature to interpret new areas that emerged from the findings. The weighting of importance of each theme within the propositions is reflected by the amount written.

5.1 Proposition 1: The PERMA model is helpful to understanding the value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing.

In all three case studies, the ECA was valued as important to young people's wellbeing, and as the most important factor in young people's attendance at the activity. All elements of the PERMA model were said to be important, and the model was useful in highlighting the ECAs value to wellbeing. The multidimensional nature of the model provided a structure from which to explore how practices might contribute to these different elements of

wellbeing (Seligman, 2011). While the model has been used previously to identify elements that can be targeted to improve wellbeing, in this context it was useful to understanding which elements of wellbeing were important in the context of the ECAs (Nebrida & Dullas, 2018). The model's focus on individual wellbeing means that it is subjective and in this case was reliant on retrospective self-reporting which may be subject to memory bias (Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2002). By gathering the perspectives of three different participant types, this allowed for claims to be strengthened where there was consistency in participant reports. Using a range of indicators in relation to wellbeing in this research helped to strengthen the view that wellbeing is multi-dimensional and can be nurtured in multiple ways (Forgeard et al., 2011).

5.1.1 Relationships

Social relationships between young people and with adults have been found to be particularly important factors in influencing adolescent subjective wellbeing, and as important elements in understanding positive ECA participation (Cunsolo, 2018; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). In the context of this research, having a distinction between relationships with the young people and relationships with adults at the ECA was important as they were viewed and experienced differently.

In the current research, relationships between the young people were valued for enabling friendships from different schools, having shared experiences with young people of different ages, supporting each other, and acting as role models. The current research supports existing claims that social processes are important in both initiating and maintaining participation in ECAs (Rose-Krasnor, 2008). Participation in ECAs over time can develop

young people's social skills and enable positive peer interactions, building relationships with those with shared interests (Eccles et al., 2003; Fredricks and Eccles, 2006; Oosterhoff et al., 2017). Fujiyama et al. (2021) proposed that these positive influences of ECA participation are likely to persist after young people stop participating through the development of life-long skills.

Relationships with adults were valued for being different to those that young people have with adults in school, being long-term and friendly with a positive, constructive approach. These community-based activities provided young people with adult relationships that seemed to be valued for being different to and independent from their schools. Previous research in the US has suggested that frequent positive interactions within the community may increase a young person's network of adult support, promoting positive self-esteem and involvement in physical activity (Vandell et al., 2015; Oosterhoff et al., 2017). Also from US research, engaging with non-family adults in the community was associated with enhancing young people's wellbeing and thriving (Scales et al., 2006). The current research is supportive of these findings and provides evidence within a specific UK context that adults within the community can positively contribute to young people's wellbeing through their involvement in ECAs.

5.1.2 Positive emotion

The most consistently important elements of the PERMA model were relationships between the young people and positive emotion, particularly feeling good, confidence and self-esteem. As these findings were consistent across the three activities it may be that these elements are less dependent on the context of each activity. This supports existing research

which has highlighted ECA participation as positively contributing to self-esteem, self-regulation strategies and peer belonging across a range of sporting ECA activities (Kort-Butler & Hagewen, 2011; Oberle et al., 2019; Guilmette et al., 2019). Oberle et al. (2019) found that peer belonging through participation in sports activities was associated with better mental health, but that this was not true of activities with an individual rather than team focus. This contrasts with the findings of the current study, where the athletics and dance activities with an individual focus still found a sense of team spirit as a group within their activity, suggesting that being a 'team' could extend beyond specifically playing a team sport or activity.

5.1.3 Engagement, Meaning & Accomplishment

Meaning and achievement seemed to be closely linked in the findings, with working towards a goal providing meaning within the ECA. Engagement may also have been linked to meaning and achievement, as experiencing flow has been said to encourage an individual to persevere with an activity, contributing to the development of skills over time (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). In this research, having an individualised approach to goals and accomplishment through young people's choice and agency was highlighted as being important. Research has found that experiencing greater agency contributes to positive identity formation in young adults and positively impacts on life satisfaction (Morsunbul, 2013). A young person's sense of agency increases during adolescence and so they may benefit from the way in which this can be supported through ECA participation (Lerner et al., 2005). Further exploration of the interactions between these elements of wellbeing could be a focus for future research.

5.1.4 Limits of the PERMA Model

The addition of physical activity as an important element to wellbeing was highlighted through this research. McNaught's (2011) definitional framework included physical influences in their definition of individual wellbeing, which could include the physical activity element of ECAs. This may highlight a limitation of the PERMA model which does not explicitly acknowledge the contribution of physical activity to wellbeing. Norrish et al. (2015) implemented a whole-school positive education initiative in Australia based on a revised PERMA model, which added positive health as a sixth element. This so-called PERMA-H model has also been explored in a whole-school primary context in Hong Kong and been found to be useful as a means of supporting a thriving school community (Lai et al., 2018). This model may also be applicable to strengthening communities and the context of ECAs, and future research could look to explore this further in a UK context.

The PERMA model has been criticised as representing a western approach to wellbeing (Khaw & Kern, 2014). As the participants in this UK-based research all identified as being White British, the model was unlikely to have been challenged to address these limitations related to differences in culture, for example considering the importance of spirituality to wellbeing (Khaw & Kern, 2014). Wider consideration of how ECAs are related to cultural differences is an important factor to explore in further detail as it may impact upon how ECAs are viewed and attended by young people and their families.

5.1.5 Implications for Socioemotional and Academic Outcomes

The current research provides additional evidence and support for the idea that participation in dance and sport ECAs can enhance young people's wellbeing (Mansfield et al., 2018). Supporting positive wellbeing and flourishing can contribute to socioemotional development and positive outcomes (Coffey et al., 2014). The current research contributes to the literature on socioemotional outcomes through the exploration of wellbeing, starting to address the imbalance between research on academic and socioemotional factors in ECA participation (Farb & Matjasko, 2012).

There is also educational significance to promoting wellbeing, given that socioemotional outcomes and academic achievement have been said to be inextricably linked (Vignoles & Meschi, 2010). It has been proposed that ECA participation can have an indirect influence on academic outcomes, whereby socioemotional factors such as identity formation and peer group membership positively influence educational outcomes (Seow & Pan, 2014; Eccles et al., 2003). The implications of this are that promoting the socioemotional elements of wellbeing through ECAs may in turn contribute to improved academic outcomes. This would require further exploration as considering academic outcomes was beyond the aims of the current research.

The current research adds to the evidence base highlighting the important positive role that ECAs can play in young people's wellbeing and in their development more broadly. Considering access to ECAs in the UK is therefore important to understanding barriers and enablers that influence young people's attendance at these activities.

5.1.6 The Bioecological Model

The bioecological model views young people as an active participant in their development and research has highlighted the importance of context at the microsystem level to positive outcomes for young people (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Guest & McRee, 2008; Mahoney et al, 2009). Community-based ECAs can be viewed as an important developmental context at the microsystem level, making the interaction between young people and their ECA important to consider. Previous literature highlighted that participating in any athletic ECA can have important benefits for emotional wellbeing (Guilmette et al., 2019). The current research further supports this notion by adding evidence that group sport and dance activities may enhance young people's subjective reports of wellbeing (Mansfield et al., 2020). As the three activities in this research were all physically active, there are likely to have been more similarities between them than differences and so considering activities with more differences would provide further evidence as to the importance of activity type as a context contributing to wellbeing.

5.2 Proposition 2: Individual and Environmental Factors Impact on a Young Person's Access to and Participation in ECAs.

There are individual and environmental factors that can act as enablers or barriers to young people's attendance at ECAs. Personal factors include adolescence, anxiety and friendships, and environmental factors include community-based ECAs, school, and the role of parents and carers.

5.2.1 Individual Factors

Adolescence. Positive youth development highlights that the connection between an individual and their environment is an important basis for development (Martin et al., 2013). The relationship between young people and their ECA as a context is important, and the PERMA model provided one way in which to understand the relationship between the two. Adolescence is a time during which young people gain increasing independence and autonomy, making more active contributions to their development (Lerner et al., 2015). Young people are active agents in their own lives and so considering their views is an important element of any research in this area (Lerner et al., 2005). The current research provides original evidence that captures the voice of young people in understanding the contribution of ECAs to wellbeing within a specific UK context.

Young people in this research had their own meaning for participating and had actively chosen to either start or continue to attend their activity. By making this decision, these young people were able to experience the potential of their ECA to positively contribute to their wellbeing (Gilman et al., 2004). Adolescence has been highlighted as an important time to teach young people how to support their own health and wellbeing (Sawyer et al., 2012). Young people face particular challenges that can impact on ECA participation during adolescence including understanding and refining their strengths and weaknesses, as well as finding meaning and purpose in taking an active role in their development (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). In addition to these factors, young people's demographic characteristics can influence the types of ECAs they participate in and so they need the flexibility to choose their activities according to these factors (Feldman & Matjasko, 2007). To successfully manage the

challenges of adolescence, young people depend on appropriate social support and developmental contexts, both of which could be provided through ECA participation.

Anxiety. Another personal factor that was cited as being a barrier to attendance at ECAs was anxiety. For young people this could be anxiety related to attending the activity, or the impact of anxiety from other areas of their life, such as school. Amongst other mental health concerns, anxiety has been reported to have increased among young people in the UK between 2004 and 2020, remaining consistent between 2020 and 2021 (NHS, 2021). Physical activity has been found to be a potentially useful approach to supporting young people with difficulties related to anxiety (Carter et al., 2021). In addition to physical activity, there are other positive elements to ECA participation related to wellbeing that may also be helpful to managing anxiety such as supportive peers and being outside (DfE, 2017; Thompson Coon et al., 2011). This suggests that supporting young people experiencing high levels of anxiety to attend an appropriate ECA could provide them with a positive coping strategy for their anxiety.

Friendships. Friends within the ECAs were cited as being important enablers to attendance. However, in one of the case studies falling out with friends was said to be a barrier at times. There is also mixed evidence in the research about the impact of peers, for example one paper highlighted the importance of peer belonging to positive outcomes for young people, whilst another citied these peers as influencing negative behaviours (Oberle et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2013). It may be that positive perceptions of peer relationships reflects an active choice that the young people have made in attending and associating with the ECA group. Previous research has highlighted the importance of peer group belonging in ECA participation and although group belonging was not explicitly mentioned by the young

people in this research, the themes suggest that this is what the young people were experiencing through the value placed on relationships with young people and the mention of shared interests and identity development (Berger et al., 2020; Newman et al., 2007). This sense of belonging may be what enables friendships to support young people in attending ECAs. Belonging to sports and arts groups has previously been associated with high levels of resilience, highlighting further the interlinked nature of different elements of wellbeing and ECA participation (Ruvalcaba et al., 2017).

5.2.2 Environmental Factors

Community-based ECAs. The current research was focused on community-based ECAs, rather than school-based activities. The ethos of the ECAs was an external enabling factor for young people, fostering safe and fun spaces. This was an important element for the young people as they valued their ECAs as a supportive space that was independent of their school settings. This is in contradiction to Marsh and Kleitman's (2002) findings that school-based activities in the US seemed to be more beneficial to young people on a range of outcomes than community-based ECAs. However, this may reflect cultural or systemic differences, as a UK Social Mobility Commission (2019) report highlighted the value of community-based activities for young people to step away from school pressures. The relationship between young people and ECAs is dependent on contextual factors, and the importance of the ECA environment as a context may extend beyond the activity itself (Guest & McRee, 2008). Systemic and structural differences within a country or culture, part of the exosystem and macrosystem, may contribute differently to young people's experiences of ECAs (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). ECAs can also provide protective factors for young people to overcome disadvantage from the exosystem or macrosystem, such as positive role

models, active involvement within their community, and feeling valued (DfES, 2003). Protective factors such as these have also been highlighted as being supportive to young people's wellbeing, with access to sports ECAs found to be a protective factor for young people in Northern Ireland (Nolan & Smyth, 2021). Building resilience and wellbeing to empower young people within a community and listening to their voices can be an important means of promoting community wellbeing, meaning that it could be in the interest of wider communities to value and support ECAs (Maton, 2008; Goodwin & Young, 2013).

School. Across the three case studies, school was consistently raised as an external factor that could pose barriers to attendance. The participants referred to the expectations and pressures from school revision and exams, as well as difficulties with friendships and bullying. Two thirds of young people shared that they feel most stressed about homework and exam pressures in a survey by the Children's Commissioner (2020a). This was echoed in a UK-based survey by YoungMinds (2019) where pressure to do well in school was the most cited reason for young people seeking mental health support. Community-based ECAs could be an important way to provide a space for young people to find engagement outside of these school pressures.

It has been reported that young people's participation in ECAs in the UK declines from childhood to adolescence (King et al., 2009). In the current research, young people spoke about the challenges of managing pressures from school and the need to give priority to school, leading to young people in one ECA opting to leave the activity during adolescence. This may partly explain a decline in ECA participation during adolescence. The current research did not aim to gain a clear understanding of why young people choose to leave

ECAs during adolescence as participants were those who were committed to attending an ECA and not those who had opted to leave.

The role of parents and carers. Parental support has been found to be important to young people's ECA participation and this is supported by the current research (Fawcett et al., 2009). Parental and family commitment to the ECA was raised as being both a barrier and enabler in the context of the three case studies. Parents in this research viewed the ECAs as being positive and important to their children, reflecting the positive attitudes of parents in the US and Italy in previous research (Kremer-Sadlik et al., 2010). Parents were particularly positive about the role of meaning and relationships for the young people which more closely echoed the Italian parent's views where they placed less emphasis on achievement.

Practical factors in relation to the role of parents were also raised, such as their availability to transport the young people to and from their ECA, and the financial implications of participation, similar to issues raised in a previous sporting ECA case study (Macphail et al., 2003). There are inequalities in young people's opportunities to access ECAs, with more children of parents in higher earning social groups participating in ECAs than those in the lowest earning groups (Social Mobility Commission, 2019; Sutton Trust, 2014). This highlights that there are factors outside of parents control that influence their ability to support young people in attending ECAs.

Another important external factor that has recently impacted on young people's ECA attendance and wellbeing, as well as increasing existing inequalities in the UK is the COVID-19 pandemic, which is discussed in more detail below in relation to proposition 3 (Cowie & Myers, 2020; Blundell et al., 2020).

5.3 Proposition 3: The pandemic has highlighted the value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing

Wellbeing was a topic at the forefront of the pandemic, with surveys and research during the early stages of the pandemic capturing its negative impact on young people's wellbeing (Yeeles et al., 2020; Widnall et al., 2020; Creswell et al., 2021). An increase in focus and resource on wellbeing because of the pandemic highlights its importance as an area of focus in the UK (Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2021). In the current research, changes to ECAs due to the pandemic were reported to have negatively impacted on young people's attendance, motivation, and purpose. The reasons reported in this research echo those cited in surveys including not being able to take part in their usual activities and a loss of social connection with young people and adults at the activities (YoungMinds, 2020a; YoungMinds, 2020b; YoungMinds, 2021). Identifying elements that negatively impacted young people's wellbeing has provided an insight into the factors that are particularly important to supporting young people's wellbeing.

Parents in this research shared that the pandemic had generally had no impact or a positive impact on their children's wellbeing, which may reflect the positive experiences for young people associated with the pandemic (Soneson et al., 2022; McKinlay et al., 2022). These positive parent reports could also be reflective of their retrospective consideration of the impact at a time when the ECA had resumed and was running in a relatively 'normal' way. The positive reports in this research may also reflect the opportunity provided by the impact of the pandemic to learn about what is important and the additional attention on young people's wellbeing and mental health (UNICEF UK, 2021). If the research was conducted

during the height of the pandemic, I wonder whether there may have been higher rates of reporting a negative impact on young people's wellbeing, having not yet returned to ECAs and their benefits not yet resumed.

Whilst ECAs were an important developmental context that were impacted by the pandemic, it is difficult to understand the impact of this on young people's wellbeing in isolation from other contextual factors, such as concerns about COVID-19 restrictions (Magson et al., 2021). As restrictions eased in the UK and ECAs gradually resumed in-person, so did other aspects of young people's lives such as school and social events. Young people in one UK study were generally positive about schools reopening but shared ongoing concerns about safety (Larcher et al., 2020). These factors are likely to have had some contribution to young people's wellbeing and this is difficult to separate from elements related to ECA participation alone as young people's experiences and environmental factors influence upon each other (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Most learning (let go and amplify practices) came from CS1 which was the only activity that was running itself as a business and for a greater number of children and young people than those involved in this research (RSA, 2020). This ECA was potentially the one that most needed to learn and adapt to continue to be economically viable, for example by working alongside other dance activity providers to jointly deliver online workshops (Crick & Crick, 2020). The pandemic has had a personal impact on ECA organisers, influencing their decision making and drive for running their ECAs. Understanding what motivates and supports organisers is an important aspect to consider as they enable the activities to run for young people, in both paid and voluntary roles.

The pandemic continues to influence our daily lives and we are living with a 'new normal' that has emerged from the lasting impact of the past few years (Hiscott et al., 2020). This is highlighted by the ECAs in this research that continue to experience challenges and changes in relation to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. In addition to the continued impact, there is discussion about the real risk of further pandemic events in the future and what can be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to minimise the impact of these (McKinley et al., 2021; Daszak, 2021). It is therefore important to understand how this pandemic has impacted on young people's wellbeing, and what can be learnt to safeguard young people from future events.

5.4 Summary

5.4.1 PERMA model of wellbeing

The five PERMA elements provided a useful model to explore wellbeing with the young people in this research, opening discussions and providing a framework for the young people to consider the value of their ECA. The PERMA elements of Relationships and Positive emotion were cited most consistently and considered to be the most important to the young people in their attendance at their ECA, from the perspective of young people, parents, and organisers. The current research provides additional support for the multidimensional nature of wellbeing, with the young people all feeling that the five elements were supported through their ECA. In considering adolescent wellbeing, previous research has also highlighted the important role of relationships in wellbeing and proposed that young people increasingly find meaning and purpose in life through relationships and social interactions with others (Cunsolo, 2018; Kern et al., 2015b; Damon et al., 2003; Hill et al., 2010). Further exploration of the role of relationships in relation to the other four elements of the PERMA

model, and physical activity and health, would be useful to gain a greater understanding of the features of these relationships that are particularly important to wellbeing. Greater understanding of how ECAs support each element of the PERMA model would also be useful to be able to share this information with ECA organisers for them to best support young people's wellbeing through their activities.

5.4.2 Bioecological Model

The bioecological model views the child as an active participant in their development, embedded in multiple interrelated contexts (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Figure 1 highlighted an application of this multi-level model in understanding young people's wellbeing using three categories of contexts; the world of the child, the world around the child, and the world at large (UNICEF, 2020a).

The world of the child. The microsystem refers to the contact between a young person and their immediate environment, including relationships with friends and key adults (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Community-based ECAs were highlighted as an important developmental context at the microsystem level within the current research. Several individual factors were identified in this research that seemed to influence a young person's attendance at an ECA, highlighting that the world of the child has an ongoing influence on young people's participation. Further consideration needs to be given as to how young people view the relationship between wellbeing and physical health and the importance of this relationship in the context of ECAs.

The world around the child. The current research highlighted the value of community networks for young people's wellbeing, particularly through their relationships with other

young people from different schools, and the adults involved in running the ECAs. These community-based ECAs enabled young people to create a network of supportive relationships, in addition to any supportive relationships they had inside the home and in school. The mesosystem, for example in this context the interaction between parents and ECA organisers, also impacts on a young person's experience of ECAs. The current research highlighted the potentially important role that parents can play in supporting the running of ECAs and in turn, their child's participation. Both parents and young people are dependent on the resources that exist in their household and their neighbourhood, with community-based ECAs being influenced by the resources that exist within their community (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). It is important to further our understanding of the networks that exist within communities to support wellbeing to enable young people to benefit from them.

The world at large. The chronosystem is important in the context of this research in viewing the COVID-19 pandemic as an environmental event that contributed to significant changes in young people, and adult's lives. The relationship between young people and ECAs is dependent on contextual factors, and the pandemic served as an important contextual factor (Guest & McRee, 2008). As well as impacting the daily lives of young people, the pandemic led to an increased focus on and resource for supporting wellbeing, highlighting how significant world events can have multiple influences on matters that impact young people (Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2021)..

Beyond the pandemic, ECAs and young people's wellbeing are both influenced by systemic factors within our country and culture. The relationship between systemic factors and young people is bidirectional, and so supporting young people's wellbeing through community

initiatives may promote community wellbeing and enable these communities to thrive (Goodwin & Young, 2013). In addition, considering how community-based ECAs can be utilised to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds will enable more young people to benefit from protective factors within ECAs (DfES, 2003).

5.4.3 Conclusion

It is important to remember that young people's wellbeing in relation to ECAs does not exist in isolation from other influences and factors in their lives. Whilst we can attempt to understand wellbeing through their experiences within an ECA, there will always be multiple factors in the world of the child, the world around the child, and the world at large that influence young people's wellbeing and their attendance at ECAs.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Implications for Policy and Practice

All children and young people have the right to an education that fully develops their personality, talents, and abilities, and adults working with them must provide this (UNICEF UK, 1989). Peterson et al. (2014) proposed a model for SMSC where critical and reflective thinking are nurtured and where ECAs form an integrated and valued aspect of education. The current research provides additional support for the perception of ECAs as a valued context for children and young people's experiential learning and development (Sikandar, 2015). Public Health England (2014) highlighted how pupils with effective social and emotional skills had better wellbeing and were more likely to be successful with academic achievement. This strengthens the need to view education more broadly than the academic national curriculum and as supporting young people's social growth and development (Peterson et al., 2014; Striano, 2009). Integrating ECAs as a key aspect of children and young people's development would enable them to develop a range of skills to live fulfilled lives. As SMSC provision may become less valued during secondary school, opportunities for young people to participate in provision that supports SMSC development, such as ECAs, may be decreasing (Peterson et al., 2014).

The government 'catch-up' programme and Labour party 'ten by ten' ambition both cite ECAs as an important aspect of these initiatives (House of Commons Education Committee, 2022; Streeting, 2021). It is positive that the value of ECA attendance is being recognised at a national level and there may be additional factors raised through this research that could be

considered. The young people in the current research valued having choice and agency to participate in their ECAs and enforced attendance may not lead to the same experiences for young people. In addition, the community-based nature of the activities was important in this research to providing a developmental context independent of school settings. The bias of existing literature towards school-based ECAs may influence decision making about ECA funding and initiatives at a government level, adding further argument to the need to explore the value of community-based ECAs. This raises considerations as to whether the government proposal would extend to providing support and funding to facilitate young people's attendance at existing ECAs and resources within the community to enable them to benefit from both school and community environments.

The rights of all children to engage in recreational and leisure activities needs to continue to be considered in the context of access to these activities in the UK (UNICEF UK, 1989). Previous research has highlighted inequalities in access to ECAs in relation to family resources and the impact of the pandemic (Sutton Trust, 2014; Children's Commissioner, 2020b). EPs can play a role in highlighting the importance of access to ECAs and in working with other professionals, families, and young people to consider how barriers to accessing these activities can be overcome and how enabling factors can be strengthened. The current research valued the voices and experiences of young people as an important source of knowledge on the topic. Young people sharing the value that they place on participating in ECAs is in line with the views of young people in research by Cowie and Myers (2020). I believe young people's voices to be the most important in considering activities and practices that impact them. Their voices should be sought, respected, and valued as a key source of information to inform decision making and tailoring support to meet their needs (Johnson, 2017). EPs are in a good position to support with this as a key part of their role

involves gathering the views of children and young people and advocating for them (Aston & Lambert, 2010). EPs as individuals and as a profession have a responsibility to promote children and young people's wellbeing to positively impact their lives (Roffey, 2017).

6.2 Implications for Educational Psychologists

The current research sheds light on the role that ECAs can play in supporting young people's wellbeing. From an EP perspective, wellbeing forms an increasingly important aspect of the work that we do (HCPC 2015; DfE, 2020a). EPs could use the learning from the current research to explore the potential role of ECAs as a supportive context when working with young people, families, and schools, in addition to considering school and home environments (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). EPs could also consider how this research might apply systemically when working with schools and how settings could work more closely with community resources to further support children and young people. The role of EPs enables them to have a flexible response to changing socio-political contexts, recently responding to the pandemic and challenges that came along with this for families and education settings (Fallon et al., 2010; DfE, 2020a). It will be important to gain a clearer understanding of EPs perceptions of their own role in the current climate to fully understand how ECAs could form an important part of how EPs support children and young people.

In this research, ECA attendance was associated with several factors that are relevant to EP practice including developing a sense of identity, increased self-esteem, and building intrinsic motivation in being able to experience success in skill development within an ECA. This provides evidence to strengthen the need to consider young people's development holistically and the interlinked nature of development (Beaver, 2011; MacKay, 2006). EPs are

well placed to support and model how adults should listen to the views and experiences of young people about what helps them, including asking about ECA participation and considering how they can be supported to be involved in these activities (Gilman et al., 2004).

The young people in this research valued their ECAs and the supporting adults for being within the community and separate to their school contexts. One study in the UK highlighted the importance of relationships and trust in those providing mental health support outside the home, including in community contexts, which reflects the experiences of the young people in this research (Jago et al., 2020). The range of positive impact that ECAs can have on young people's development highlights the importance of working with communities and considering community factors in EP work (MacKay, 2006). It will be important to further understand EPs knowledge and confidence in the potential benefits to ECA participation and how to explore this with those they work with. This has implications for EPs and for initial training courses in supporting trainee EPs and EPs to understand the interrelated nature of ECAs and the range of academic and non-academic benefits so that they can support schools to recognise the potential importance of ECAs. A perspective that may act as a barrier to EPs discussing ECA participation may be related to funding and concerns about how young people can access ECAs within their communities. This barrier can serve as a motivation to build stronger connections between EP services and community partners to be fully informed on the resources available to support children and young people's development. Future consideration could also be given to how families and the systems around young people can be supported through community-based ECAs. For example, supporting parents and carers through community activity participation could aid development of their skills to support and model the importance of ECAs to their children.

6.3 Limitations of Methods of Research Design, Data Collection and Analysis

A limitation of the case study research design used for this study was that it lacked a breadth of data as it provided an in-depth look at just three ECAs in one local area. This case study information was limited to each case study context and so may not be generalisable to other populations. There is likely to have been a bias in the information gathered towards fitting with the PERMA model elements as I introduced the model to the participants and so their responses are likely to have been tailored to the five elements. Additionally, the lack of piloting of research tools meant that weaknesses or improvements may not have been made to these before their use in the research (Malmqvist et al., 2019). Piloting would also have uncovered feedback from young people, parents and organisers on questions which were not clear or additional questions that may have been useful or relevant to discuss. The large size of two of the focus groups is likely to have impacted the on information that was gained, with less time within the group for each individual to speak (Smithson, 2007). Future research could consider ways in which to address this limitation to maintain a sense of whole group coherence whilst holding separate focus groups. Alternatively, it may be that holding several focus groups as a larger pre-existing group over a time may have helped to develop greater discussion as familiarity with the focus group context developed (Finch et al., 2014).

The organisers of each activity for the case studies were a self-selected sample who responded to a request to participate in research about ECAs and young people's wellbeing. Those organisers who responded are likely to have had an interest in wellbeing and this may therefore already be an important aspect of their activity delivery. Only three different

activity types were explored in this research, with all being physical activities, and so the findings may not reflect experiences of a wider range of activities.

The families who participated in this research paid for their children to attend ECAs and so were likely to have been able to afford this. Consideration as to the experience of young people attending ECAs that are free to families, either subsidised or run by charitable organisations, would provide further insight into the contribution of ECAs to the wellbeing of young people from lower income families. The sample was also limited by identifying ethnicity and identifying gender, with the majority of participants being Female and of White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British ethnicity. Further research with participants with a wider range of demographic characteristics would be necessary to consider similar research questions with a more diverse sample than within this research. The current research also did not consider the role of disability in ECAs for young people and so it would be useful for this information to be gathered in future research. The young people who participated in the research are those who currently attend an ECA and have overcome many of the barriers to attending. There may be additional barriers faced by those young people who are unable or who have chosen not to attend ECAs that have not been identified in this research. Having a more comprehensive view of young people's experiences of barriers to participating in ECAs would provide a greater understanding about how to address these.

Each case study is context specific, with participants experiences being influenced by their chosen activity and their own life experiences. Whilst this limits the ability to generalise from this research, elements that are consistent between the activities and that support research in the existing literature can contribute to strengthening existing arguments.

6.4 Future Directions

It is hoped that themes that emerged in the context of this research can inform future research in this area to further explore these ideas. There are potential research questions that were beyond the scope of the current research, and questions which have arisen from the journey of this research. Future research in this area could include;

- Further exploration of the interactions between the five elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing and physical activity in the context of ECAs.
- Exploring a wider range of activities to consider the extent to which the themes identified in the current research are consistent or differ between activity types.
- Considering similar research questions in the context of ECAs across more areas of the UK to understand what differences and consistencies exist at a national level.
- Further consideration of the barriers faced by different groups of young people in accessing ECAs, including consideration of how cultural differences, gender, age, disability, and disadvantage relate to ECA attendance.
- The views of EPs on their role or potential role, in relation to ECAs.
- Understanding what motivates and supports organisers running ECAs in both paid and voluntary roles.
- Exploration of the impact of ECA participation on executive functions, in the context of the EP role.

6.5 Concluding Statement

The current research has added to existing literature exploring ECAs in the UK and their value to wellbeing. The findings within this research highlight the potential value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing and consideration has been given to the relevance of this for EP practice, as well as within education more broadly. Further consideration and discussion within the EP profession, in terms of their potential positive role in promoting the benefits of ECA participation for young people, will be an important continuation of this work.

References

Anderson, J. C., Funk, J. B., Elliott, R., Hull Smith, P. (2003) Parental support and pressure and children's extracurricular activities: Relationships with amount of involvement and affective experience of participation. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 24*(2), 241-257. https:/doi.org/10.1016/S0193-3973(03)00046-7

Andrews, K., Vernon, G., & Walton, M. (1996). *Good policy and practice for the after-school hours.* Pitman.

Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T., & Norrie, A. (1998). General introduction. In Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T., & Norrie, A. (Eds.). *Critical realism: Essential readings* (pp. ix-xxiv). Routledge.

Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP). (2021). *Written evidence - The Association of Educational Psychologists*. AEP. https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/23310/pdf/

Aston, H. J. & Lambert, N. (2010). Young people's views about their involvement in decision-making. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 26*(1), 41-51. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667360903522777

Atkinson, J. (2002). Four steps to analyse data from a case study method. *ACIS 2002 Proceedings, 38*, 1-11.

Bailey, R. (2017). Sport, physical activity and educational achievement – towards an explanatory model. *Sport in Society, 20*(7), 768-788. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2016.1207756

Barrett, A., Kajamaa, A., & Johnston, J. (2020). How to… be reflexive when conducting qualitative research. *The Clinical Teacher, 17*(1), 9-12. https://doi.org/10.1111/tct.13133

Bartkus, K. R., Nemelka, B., Nemelka, M., & Gardner, P. (2012). Clarifying the mearning of ECA: A literature review of definitions. *American Journal of Business Education (AJBE), 5*(6), 693-704. https://doi.org/10.19030/ajbe.v5i6.7391

Bartlett, J. E., Kotrlik, J. W., & Higgins, C. C. (2001). Organisational research: Determining appropriate sample size in survey research. *Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Journal, 19*(1), 43-50.

Bartoko, W. T., & Eccles, J. S. (2003). Adolescent participation in structured and unstructured activities: A person-oriented analysis. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 32*(4), 233-241. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023056425648

Beaver, R. (2011). *Educational psychology casework: A practice guide (2nd ed.).* Jessica Kinsgley Publishers.

Behtoui, A. (2017). Social Capital and the Educational Expectations of Young People. *European Educational Research Journal, 16*(4), 487–503.

Behtoui, A. (2019). Swedish young people's after-school extra-curricular activities: Attendance, opportunities and consequences. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 40*(3), 340-356. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2018.1540924

Berger, C., Deutsch, N., Cuadros, O., Franco, E., Rojas, M., Roux, G., & Sánchez, F. (2020). Adolescent peer processes in extracurricular activities: Identifying developmental opportunities. *Children and Youth Services Review, 118*, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105457

Biesta, G. (2009). Good education in an age of measurement: On the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 21*, 33-46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9064-9

Blundell, R., Costa Dias, M., Joyce, R., Xu, X. (2020). COVID-19 and inequalities. *Fiscal Studies, 0*(0), 1-29. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5890.12232

Bradley, J. L., & Conway, P. F. (2016). A dual step transfer model: sport and non-sport ECAs and the enhancement of academic achievement. *British Educational Research Journal, 42*(4), 703-728. https://doi.org/10.1002/BERJ.3232

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11*(4), 589-597. https://doi.org/10.1080/21596X.2019.1628806

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2021a). Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis. *Qualitative Psychology, 9*(1), 3-26. https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000196

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2022b). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide.* SAGE Publications Ltd.

Breen, R. L. (2006). A practical guide to focus-group research. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education, 30*(3), 463-475. https://doi.org/10.1080/0398260600927575

British Psychological Society (2021, February 5). *British Psychological Society briefing: Children and young people's mental health and psychological wellbeing.* The British Psychological Society. https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Briefing%20-%20Children%20and%20Young%20Peoples%20Mental%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing.pdf

British Psychological Society (2021, February 22). *Unhelpful 'catch up' narrative about lost learning during the pandemic places unnecessary psychological pressure on children and young people.* The British Psychological Society. https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/unhelpful-narrative-lost-learning-during-pandemic

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Evans, G. W. (2000). Developmental science in the 21st century: Emerging questions, theoretical models, research designs and empirical findings. *Social Development, 9*(1), 115–125. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9507.00114

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). *The bioecological model of human development*. In Lerner, R. M., & Damon, W. (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Theoretical models of human development* (pp. 793-828). John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Buckley, P., & Lee, P. (2021). The impact of extra-curricular activity on the student experience. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 22*(1), 37-48. https://doi.org/10.1177/1460787418808988

Burke, J., & Minton, S. J. (2019). Well-being in post-primary schools in Ireland: The assessment and contribution of character strengths. *Irish Educational Studies, 38*(2), 177-192. https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2018.1512887

Burkhard, B. M., Robinson, K. M., Murray, E. D., & Lerner, R. M. (2020). Positive youth development: Theory and perspective. *The Encyclopaedia of Child and Adolescent Development, 1-12.* https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171492.wecad310

Busseri, M. A., Rose-Krasnor, L., Willoughby, T., & Chalmers, H. (2006). A longitudinal examination of breadth and intensity of youth involvement and successful development. *Developmental Psychology, 42*(6), 1313-1326. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.42.6.1313

Butler, J., & Kern, M. L. (2016). The PERMA-Profiler: A brief multidimensional measure of flourishing. *International Journal of Wellbeing, 6*(3), 1-48. https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v6i3.526

Carter, T., Pascoe, M., Bastounis, A., Morres, I. D., Callaghan, P., & Parker, A. G. (2021). The effect of physical activity on anxiety in children and young people: A systematic

review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 285*, 10-21. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.02.026

Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition (2021, September 21). *Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing: A whole school or college approach.* GOV.UK https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1020249/Promoting_children_and_young_people_s_mental_health_and_wellbeing.pdf

Children's Commissioner (2020a, May 20). *Children and stress, what's worrying them most.* Children's Commissioner. https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/2020/05/20/children-and-stress-whats-worrying-them-most/

Children's Commissioner. (2020b, September 29). *Childhood in the time of Covid.* Children's Commissioner. https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/cco-childhood-in-the-time-of-covid.pdf

Children's Rights Alliance for England (2010, June). *Children's participation in decision making: A children's views report.* Children's Commissioner. http://www.crae.org.uk/media/26282/Childrens_participation_in_decision-making_-_A_childrens_views_report.pdf

Ciarrochi, J., Atkins, P. W., Hayes, L. L., Sahdra, B. K., & Parker, P. (2016). Contextual positive psychology: Policy recommendations for implementing positive psychology into schools. *Frontiers in psychology,* 1561.

Clegg, S., Stevenson, J., & Willott, J. (2010). Staff conceptions of curricular and extracurricular activities in higher education. *Higher Education, 59*, 615-626. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-0269-y

Co-SPACE Study (2021a, February 17). *Report 08: Changes in children's and young people's mental health symptoms: March 2020 to January 2021.* Co-Space Oxford. https://cospaceoxford.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Report_08_17.02.21.pdf

Co-SPACE Study (2021b, March 8). *Report 09: Update on children's & parents/carers' mental health; Changes in parents/carers' ability to balance childcare and work: March 2020 to February 2021.* Co-Space Oxford. http://cospaceoxford.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Report_09_15march2021.pdf

Coffey, J. K., Wray-Lake, L., Mashek, D., & Branand, B. (2014). A multi-study examination of well-being theory in college and community samples. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 17*(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9590-8

Cowie, H. & Myers, C-A. (2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health and well-being of children and young people. *Children & Society, 35*(1), 62-74. https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12430

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research.* Sage Publications Ltd.

Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M., & Hanson, W. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C (Eds.). *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research.* (pp. 209-240). Sage Publications Ltd.

Creswell, C., Shum, A., Pearcey, S., Skripkauskaite, S., Patalay, P., & Waite, P. (2021). Young people's mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Lancet, 5*, 535-537. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(21)00177-2

Crick, J. M., & Crick, D. (2020). Coopetition and COVID-19: Collaborative business-to-business strategies in a pandemic crisis. *Industrial Marketing Management, 88*, 206-213. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.05.016

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundation of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process.* SAGE Publications Ltd.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Seligman, M. (2000). Positive psychology. *American psychologist, 55*(1), 5-14.

Cullinane, C., & Montacute, R. (2017, October). *Life lessons: Improving essential life skills for young people.* The Sutton Trust. https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Life-Lessons-Report_FINAL.pdf

Cummins, R. A. (2018). *Measuring and interpreting subjective wellbeing in different cultural contexts: a review and way forward.* Cambridge University Press.

Cunsolo, S. (2017). Subjective wellbeing during adolescence: A literature review on key factors relating to adolescent's subjective wellbeing and education outcomes. *Studi Sulla Formazione, 20,* 81-94. https://doi.org/10.13128/Studi_Formaz-20941

Damon, W., Menon, J., & Bronk, K. C. (2003). The development of purpose during adolescence. *Applied Developmental Science, 7,* 119–128. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532480XADS 0703_2

Danermark, D., Ekström, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, K. C. (2002). *Explaining society: An introduction to critical realism in the social sciences.* Routledge.

Darling, N., Caldwell, L. L., & Smith, R. (2005). Participation in school-based extracurricular activities and adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Leisure Research, 37*(1), 51-76. https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2005.11950040

Daszak, P. (2021). Lessons from COVID-19 to help prevent future pandemics. *Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 3*(7), 132-133. https://doi.org/10.46234/ccdcw2021.035

Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin, 95*(3), 542-575. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033- 2909.95.3.542

Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Oishi, S. (2002). *Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and life satisfaction,* In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.). *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 63–73). Oxford University Press.

Discovery in Action (2019, March 7). *Flourish model – PERMA plus vitality.* Discovery in Action: Turning Knowing into Doing. https://discoveryinaction.com.au/the-perma-theory-of-wellbeing/flourish-model-perma-plus-vitality/

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2012, February 28). *Cultural education in England: The government response to Darren Henley's review of cultural education.* GOV.UK. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/260727/Cultural_Education_Govt_response.pdf

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport & Department for Education (2015, May 8). *2010 to 2015 government policy: Sports participation.* GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-sports-participation/2010-to-2015-government-policy-sports-participation

Department for Education (2017, March). *Peer support and children and young people's mental health: Research review.* GOV.UK. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603107/Children_and_young_people_s_mental_health_peer_support.pdf

Department for Education (2019, July 14). *Press release: Children to have greater opportunity to access 60 minutes of physical activity every day.* GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/children-to-have-greater-opportunity-to-access-60-minutes-of-physical-activity-every-day

Department for Education (2020a, August 12). *Wellbeing for education recovery: Grant determination letter.* GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wellbeing-for-education-return-grant-s31-grant-determination-letter

Department for Education (2020b, August 25). *Press release: £8m programme to boost pupil and teacher wellbeing.* GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/8m-programme-to-boost-pupils-and-teacher-wellbeing

Department for Education and Skills (2003, September 8). *Every child matters.* GOV.UK. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/272064/5860.pdf

Department of Health (2014, January). *A compendium of factsheets: Wellbeing across the lifecourse.* GOV.UK. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/295474/The_relationship_between_wellbeing_and_health.pdf

Department of Health and Social Care & Department for Education (2018, July). *Government response to the consultation on transforming children and young people's mental health provision: A green paper and next steps.* GOV.UK. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728892/government-response-to-consultation-on-transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health.pdf

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education.* Macmillan.

Diamond, A. (2006). *The early development of executive functions*. In Bialystok, E., & Craik, F. I. M. (Eds.) *Lifespan cognition: Mechanisms of change* (pp. 6-95). Oxford University Press.

Diamond, A., & Lee, K. (2011). Interventions shown to aid executive function development in children 4-12 years old. *Science, 333*(6045), 959-964. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1204529

Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin, 95,* 542–575.

Dickinson, J., Griffiths, T-L., & Bredice, A. (2021). 'It's just another thing to think about': encouraging students' engagement in extracurricular activities. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 45*(6), 744-757. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2020.1813263

Dodge, R., Daly, A. P., Huyton, J., & Sanders, L. D. (2012). The challenge of defining wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing, 2*(3), 222-235. https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v2i3.4

Donaldson, S. I., Van Zyl, L. E., & Donaldson, S. I. (2021). PERMA+ 4: A framework for work-related wellbeing, performance and positive organizational psychology 2.0*. Frontiers in psychology, 12.*

Eacker, A. (2020). *Well-being definition and measures.* In Byyny, R. L., Byyny, R., Christensen, S., & Fish, J. D. (Eds) *Medical Professionalism Best Practices: Addressing Burnout and Resilience in Our Profession* (*pp. 91-103).* Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society.

Easton, G. (2010). Critical realism in case study research. *Industrial Marketing Management, 39*, 118-128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2008.06.004

Eccles, J. S., Barber, B. L., Stone, M., & Hunt, J. (2003). ECAs and adolescent development. *Journal of Social Issues, 59*(4), 865-889. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0022-4537.2003.00095.x

Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development.* National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.1097/00004703-200510000-00009

Evans, S. (2021, September). *Focus on results: How a greater focus on outcomes can contribute to England's learning and skills systems.* Learning and Work Institute. https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/focus-on-results/

Fallon, K., Woods, K., & Rooney, S. (2010). A discussion of the developing role of educational psychologists within children's services. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 26*(1), 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/0266736909352274.

Farb, A. F., & Matjasko, J. L. (2012). Recent advances in research on school-based ECAs and adolescent development. *Developmental Review, 31*, 1-48. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2011.10.001

Farrell, P., Woods, K., Lewis, S., Rooney, S., Squires, G., & O'Connor, M. (2006). *A review of the functions and contribution of educational psychologists in England and Wales in light of "Every child matters: Change for children".* Department for Education and Skills. https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:93204&datastreamId=FULL-TEXT.PDF

Feldman, A. F., & Matjasko, J. L. (2005). The role of school-based extracurricular activities in adolescent development: A comprehensive review and future directions. *Review of Educational Research, 75*(2), 159-210. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543075002159

Feldman, A. F., & Matjasko, J. L. (2007). Profiles and portfolios of adolescent school-based extracurricular activity participation. *Journal of Adolescence, 30*, 313-332. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2006.03.004

Feraco, T., Resnati, D., Fregonese, D., Spoto, A., & Meneghetti, C. (2022a). An integrated model of school students' academic achievement and life satisfaction. Linking soft skills, extracurricular activities, self-regulated learning, motivation, and emotions. *European Journal of Psychology of Education,* 1-22. https://doi.org/10/1007/s10212-022-00601-4

Feraco, T., Resnati, D., Fregonese, D., Spoto, A., & Meneghetti, C. (2022b). Soft skills and extracurricular activities sustain motivation and self-regulated learning at school. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 90*(3), 550-569. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2021.1873090

Finch, H., Lewis, J., & Turley, C. (2014). *Focus Groups.* In Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton-Nicholls, C., & Ormston, R. (2014). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students & researchers* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Fletcher, A. J. (2016). Applying critical realism in qualitative research: Methodology meets method. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 20*(2), 181-194. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2016.1144401

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 12*(2), 219-245. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363

Ford, T., John, A., & Gunnell, D. (2021). Mental health of children and young people during pandemic. *British Medical Journal, 372*(614), 1-2. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n614

Forgeard, M. J. C., Jayawickreme, E., Kern, M. L., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). Doing the right thing: Measuring wellbeing for public policy. *International Journal of Wellbeing, 1*(1), 79-106. https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v1i1.15

Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2006). Extracurricular involvement and adolescent adjustment: Impact of duration, number of activities, and breadth of participation. *Applied Developmental Science, 10*(3), 132-146. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads1003_3

Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2008). Participation in ECAs in the middle school years: Are there developmental benefits for African American and European American youth? *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 37*, 1029-1043. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-008-9309-4

Freeman, R. (2017). *The relationship between extracurricular activities and academic achievement.* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. National Louis University. https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/diss/245

Friedman, H. L. (2013). *Playing to win: Raising children in a competitive culture.* University of California Press.

Fryer, T. (2020). *A short guide to ontology and epistemology: Why everyone should be a critical realist.* http://tfryer.com/ontology-guide

Fujiyama, H., Kamo, Y., & Schafer, M. (2021). Peer effects of friend and extracurricular activity networks on students' academic performance. *Social Science Research, 97*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2021.102560

Galinha, I., & Pais-Ribeiro, J. L. (2011). Cognitive, affective and contextual predictors of subjective wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing, 2*(1), 34–53. https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v2i1.3

Gibson, J. E. (2012). Interviews and focus groups with children: Methods that match children's developing competencies. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 4*, 148-159. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1756-2589.2012.00119.x

Gilman, R., Meyers, J., & Perez, L. (2004). Structured ECAs among adolescents: Findings and implications for school psychologists. *Psychology in the Schools, 41*(1), 31-41. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.10136

Goodman, F. R., Disabato, D. J., Kashdan, T. B., & Kauffman, S. B. (2018). Measuring well-being: A comparison of subjective well-being and PERMA. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 13*(4), 321-332. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2017.1388434

Goodwin, S., & Young, A. (2013). Ensuring children and young people have a voice in neighbourhood community development. *Australian Social Work, 66*(3), 344-357. https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2013.807857

Gough, B., & Madill, A. (2012). Subjectivity in psychological science: From problem to prospect. *Psychological Methods, 17*(3), 374-384. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029313

Gold, R. L. (1958). Roles in sociological field observations. *Social Forces, 36*(3), 217-223. https://doi.org/10.2307/2573808

Greig, A., Mackay, T., & Ginter, L. (2019). Supporting the mental health of children and young people: A survey of Scottish educational psychology services. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 35*(3), 257-270. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2019.1573720

Grix, J. (2004). *The foundations of research.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Guest, A. M., & McRee, N. (2008). A school-level analysis of adolescent ECA, delinquency, and depression: The importance of situational context. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38*, 51-62. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-008-9279-6

Guilmette, M., Mulvihill, K., Villemaire-Krajden, R., & Barker, E. T. (2019). Past and present participation in extracurricular activities is associated with adaptive self-regulation of goals, academic success, and emotional wellbeing among university students. *Learning and Individual Differences, 73*, 8-15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2019.04.006

Gustafsson, J. (2017). Single case studies vs. multiple case studies: A comparative study. *Academy of Business, Engineering and Science, Halmstad University, Halmstad, Sweden.* https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1064378/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Hanley, T., Winter, L. A., & Burrell, K. (2020). Supporting emotional well-being in schools in the context of austerity: An ecologically informed humanistic perspective. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 90*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12275

Hardaway, C. R., McLoyd, V. C., & Wood, D. (2012). Exposure to violence and socioemotional adjustment in low-income youth: An examination of protective factors. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 49*, 112-126. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-011-9440-3

Harding, S. K., Page, A. S., Falconer, C., & Cooper, A .R. (2015). Longitudinal changes in sedentary time and physical activity during adolescence. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, 12*(44). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-015-0204-6

Haynes, J. D., Sakai, K., Rees, G., Gilbert, S., Frith, C., & Passingham, R. E. (2007). Reading hidden intentions in the human brain. *Current Biology, 17*(4), 323-328. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2006.11.072

Health & Care Professions Council (2015, July 1). *Standards of proficiency: Practitioner psychologists.* https://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/standards/standards-of-proficiency-practitioner-psychologists/

Heaslip, G. P., Davis, H., & Barber, B. L. (2021). Extracurricular activity participation in early adolescence predicts coping efficacy one year later. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 73*(3), 306-315. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530.2021.1884000

Heath, R. D., Anderson, C., Turner, A. C., & Payne, C. M. (2018). Extracurricular activities and disadvantaged young: A complicated – but promising – story. *Urban Education,* 1-35. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085918805797

Helliwell, J. F., & Putnam, R. D. (2004). The social context of well-being. *Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society, 359*, 1435-1146. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2004.1522

Heshmati, S., Oravecz, Z., Brick, T. R., & Roeser, R. W. (2020). Assessing psychological well-being in early adulthood: Empirical evidence for the structure of daily well-being via network analysis. *Applied Developmental Science,* https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2020.1766356

Hill, P. L., Burrow, A. L., O'Dell, A. C., & Thornton, M. A. (2010). Classifying adolescents' conceptions of purpose in life. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 5,* 466–473. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2010.534488

Hiscott, J., Alexandridi, M., Muscolini, M., Tassone, E., Palermo, E., Soultsioto, M., & Zevini, A. (2020). The global impact of the coronavirus pandemic. *Cytokine and Growth Factor, 53*, 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cytogfr.2020.05.010

Holloway, S. L., & Pimlott-Wilson, H. (2014). Enriching children, institutionalizing childhood? Geographies of play, extracurricular activities, and parenting in England. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 104*(3), 614-627. https://doi.org/10.1080.00045608.2013.846167

Holt, L., & Murray, L. (2021). Children and covid 19 in the UK. *Children's Geographies,* https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2021.1921699

House of Commons Education Committee (2022, March 8). *Is the catch-up programme fit for purpose? Fourth report of session 2021-22.* GOV.UK. https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9251/documents/160043/default/

Institute for Government (2019). *Performance tracker 2019: Schools.* Institute for Government. https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/performance-tracker-2019/schools

Jago, N., Wright, S., Hartwell, B. K., Green, R. (2020). Mental health beyond the school gate: Young people's perspectives of mental health support online, and in home, school and community contexts. *Educational and Child Psychology, 37*(3), 69-85.

Johnson, V. (2017). Moving beyond voice in children and young people's participation. *Action Research, 15*(1), 104-124. https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750317698025

Kern, M. L., Benson, L., Steinberg, E. A., & Steinberg, L. (2015a). The EPOCH measure of adolescent well-being. *Psychological Assessment, 28*, 586-597. https://doi.org/10.1037/pas0000201

Kern, M. L., Waters, L. E., Adler, A., & White, M. A. (2015b). A multidimensional approach to measuring well-being in students: Application of the PERMA framework. *The Journal*

of Positive Psychology, 10(3), 262-271. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2014.936962

Khambati, N., Mahedy, L., Heron, J., & Emond, A. (2018). Educational and emotional health outcomes in adolescence following maltreatment in early childhood: A population-based study of protective factors. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 81*, 434-353. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.05.008

Khan, S., & VinWynsberghe, R. (2008). Cultivating the under-mined: Cross-case analysis as knowledge mobilization. *Qualitative Social Research, 9*(1), 34. https://doi.org.10.17169/fqs-9.1.334

Khaw, D., & Kern, M. L. (2014). A cross-cultural comparison of the PERMA model of well-being. *Undergraduate Journal of Psychology at Berkeley, 8*(1), 10-23.

King, G., McDougall, J., DeWit, D., Pentrenchik, T., Hurley, P., & Law, M. (2009). Predictors of change over time in the activity participation of children and youth with physical disabilities. *Children's Health Care, 38*(4), 321-351. https://doi.org/10.1080/02739610903237352

King, A. E., McQuarrie, F. A. E. & Brigham, S. M. (2021). Exploring the relationship between student success and participation in extracurricular activities. *SCHOLE: A Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education, 36*(1-2), 42-58, https://doi.org/10.1080/1937156X.2020.1760751

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice, 24*(1), 120-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Kort-Butler, L. A., & Hagewen, K. J. (2011). School-based ECA involvement and adolescent self-esteem: A growth-curve analysis. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 40*, 568-581. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9661-4

Kremer-Sadlik, T., Izquierdo, C., & Fatigante, M. (2010). Making meaning of everyday practices: Parents' attitudes toward children's ECAs in the United States and in Italy. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 41*(1), 35-54. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1492.2010.01066.x

Kvale, S. & Brinkman, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing.* SAGE Publications Ltd.

Kwong, A. S. F., Pearson, R. M., Adams, M. J., Northstone, K., Tilling, K., Smith, D., Fawns-Ritchie, C., Bould, H., Warne, N., Zammit, D., Gunnell, D. J., Moran, P. A., Micali, N., Reichenberg, A., Hickman, M., Rai, D., Haworth, S., Campbell, A., Altschul, D.,… Timpson, N. J. (2021). Mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in two longitudinal UK population cohorts. *The British Journal of Psychiatry, 218*, 334-343. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2020.242

La Placa, V., McNaught, A., & Knight, A. (2013). Discourse on wellbeing in research and practice. *International Journal of Wellbeing, 3*(1), 116-125. https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v3i1.7

Lai, M. K., Leung, C., Kwok, S. Y. C., Hui, A. N. N., Lo, H. H. M., Leung, J. T. Y., & Tam. C. H. L. (2018). A multidimensional PERMA-H positive education model, general satisfaction of school life, and character strengths use in Hong King senior primary school students: Confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis using the APASO-II. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.3389/fp-syg.2018.01090

Larcher, V., Dittborn, M., Linthicum, J., Sutton, A., Brierley, J., Payne, C., & Hardy, H. (2020)> Young people's views on their role in the COVID-19 pandemic and society's recovery from it. *Archives of Disease in Childhood, 105*, 1192-1196. https://doi.org/10.1136/archdischild-2020-320040

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life.* University of California Press.

Lee, J., Krause, A. E., & Davidson, J. W. (2017). The PERMA well-being model and music facilitation practice: Preliminary documentation for well-being through music provision in Australian schools. *Research Studies in Music Education, 39*(1), 73-89. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X17703131

Lee, K., & Woods, K. (2017). Exploration of the developing role of the educational psychologist within the context of "traded" psychological services. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 33*(2), 111-125. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2016.1258545

Lefever, S., Dal, M., & Matthiasdottir, A. (2007). Online data collection in academic research: Advantages and limitations. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 38*(4), 574-582. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2006.00638.x

Leontopoulou, S. (2020). Measuring well-being in emerging adults: Exploring the PERMA framework for positive youth development. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 25*, 72-93. https://doi.org/10.12681/PSY_HPS.25337

Lerner, R. M., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., & Lerner, J. V. (2005). Positive youth development: A view of the issues. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 25*(10), 10-16. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431604273211

Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Bowers, E., & Geldhof, G. (2015). *Positive youth development: A relational developmental systems model*. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.) & W. F. Overton & P. C. Molenaar (Eds.). *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science: Vol. 1. Theory and method* (7th ed., pp. 607–651). Wiley.

Lewis, J., Ritchie, J., Ormston, R., & Morrell, G. (2014). *Generalising from qualitative research.* In Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton-Nicholls, C., & Ormston, R. (2014). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students & researchers* (2nd ed., pp. 347-366). SAGE Publications Ltd.

MacInnes, P. (2021, March 2). *Fears that 25% of grassroot sports clubs may not return after lockdown.* The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/mar/02/fears-that-25-of-grassroots-sports-clubs-may-not-return-after-lockdown?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

MacKay, T. (2006). The educational psychologist as community psychologist: Holistic child psychology across home, school and community. *Educational and Child Psychology, 23*(1), 7-15.

Macphail, A., Gorely, T., & Kirk, D. (2003). Young people's socialisation into sport: A case study of an athletics club. *Sport, Education and Society, 8*(2), 251-267. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573320309251

Magson, N. R., Freeman, J. Y. A., Rape, R. M., Richardson, C. E., Oar, E. L., & Fardouly, J. (2021). Risk and protective factors for prospective changes in adolescent mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 50*, 44-57. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-020-01332-9

Mahoney, J. L., Larson, R. W., Eccles, J. S., & Lord, H. (2005). *Organised activities as developmental contexts for children and adolescents.* In Mahoney, J. L., Larson, R. W., & Eccles, J. S. (Eds.). *Organised activities as contexts of development: Extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs* (pp.3-22). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Mahoney, J. L., Vandell, D. L., Simpkins, S. D., Zarrett, N., & Simpkins-Chaput, S. (2009). *Adolescent out-of school activities.* In R. M. Lerner, & L. Steinberg (Eds.), T*he handbook of adolescent psychology: Vol. 2. Contextual influences on adolescent development (3rd ed., pp. 228-269).* John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Malmqvist, J., Hellberg, K., Möllås, G., Rose, R., & Shevlin, M. (2019). Conducting the pilot study: A neglected part of the research process? Methodological findings supporting the importance of piloting in qualitative research studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 18*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919878341

Malterud, K. (2016). Theory and interpretation in qualitative studies from general practice: Why and how? *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health, 44*, 120-129. https://doi.org/10.1177/1403494815621181

Mansfield, K., Jindra, C., & Fazel, M. (2020, September). *The OxWell school survey 2020: Report of preliminary findings.* University of Oxford Department of Psychiatry. https://www.psych.ox.ac.uk/research/schoolmentalhealth/summary-report

Mansfield, L., Kay, T., Meads, C., Grigsby-Duffy, L., Lane, J., John, A., Daykin, N., Dolan, P., Testoni, S., Julier, G., Payne, A., Tomlinson, A., & Victor, C. (2018). Sport and dance interventions for healthy young people (15-24 years) to promote subjective well-being: A systematic review. *British Medical Journal, 8*(7), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1136/bjmopen-2017-020959

March, H. W., & Kleitman, S. (2002). Extracurricular school activities: The good, the bad, and the nonlinear. *Harvard Educational Review, 72*(4), 464-511. https://doi.org/10.17763/HAER.72.4.051388703V7V7736

Martin, A. J., Mansour, M., Anderson, M., Gibson, R., Liem, G. A. D., & Sudmalis, D. (2013). The role of arts participation in students' academic and nonacademic outcomes: A longitudinal study of school, home, and community factors. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 105*, 709-727. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032795

Mason, M. J., Schmidt, C., Abraham, A., Walker, L., & Tercyak, K. (2009). Adolescents' social environment and depression: Social networks, ECA, and family relationship

influences. *Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings, 16*, 346-354. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10880-009-9169-4

Maton, K. I. (2008). Empowering community settings: Agents of individual development, community betterment, and positive social change. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 41*, 4-21. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-007-9148-6

McCallum, F. & Price, D. (Eds.) (2016). N*urturing wellbeing development in education: From little things, big things grow.* Routledge.

McEvoy, P., & Richards, D. (2006). A critical realist rationale for using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. *Journal of Research in Nursing, 11*(1), 66-78. https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987106060192

McKinley, A. R., May, T., Dawes, J., Fancourt, D., & Burton, A. (2022). 'You're just there, alone in your room with your thoughts': A qualitative study about the psychosocial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic among young people living in the UK. *British Medical Journal, 12*(2), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-053676

McKinley, I. G., West, J. M. & Hardie, S. M. L. (2021). Risk management for pandemics: A novel approach. *Sustainability Science, 16*, 1625-1635. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-021-00999-8

McNaught, A. (2011). *Defining wellbeing.* In Knight, A. & McNaught, A. (Eds.). *Understanding wellbeing: An introduction for students and practitioners of health and social care* (pp.7-23). Lantern Publishing.

McNaughton Nicholls, C., Mills, L., & Kotecha, M. (2014). *Observation.* In Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton Nicholls, C., & Ormston, R. (Eds.). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students & researchers* (2nd ed., pp. 243-268). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Metsäpelto, R-L., & Pulkkinen, L. (2014). The benefits of extracurricular activities for socioemotional behaviour and school achievement in middle childhood: An overview of the research. *Journal for Educational Research, 3*, 10-33. https://doi.org/10.25656/01:9685

Mills, A. J., Durepos, G., & Wiebe, E. (2010). Conceptual model: Operationalization. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research.* https://methods.sagepub.com/reference/encyc-of-case-study-research/n76.xml

Mingers, J. (2014). *Systems thinking, critical realism and philosophy: A confluence of ideas*. Routledge.

Mishra, L. (2016). Focus group discussion in qualitative research. *TechnoLEARN, 6*(1), 1-5.

Molyneux, S. & Bull, S. (2013). Consent and community engagement in diverse research contexts: Reviewing and developing research and practice: Participants in the community engagement and consent workshop, Kilifi, Kenya, March 2011. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research, 8*(4), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1525/jer.2013.8.4.1

Morsunbul, U. (2013). An investigation of the relationships between agency, identity formation and life satisfaction in adolescence period. *Dusunen Adam: Journal of Psychiatry & Neurological Sciences, 26*(2), 163-170. https://doi.org/10.5350/DAJPN201360206

Mruk, C. J. (2008). The psychology of self-esteem: A potential common ground for humanistic positive psychology and positivistic positive psychology. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 36*, 143-158. https://doi.org/10.1080/0887326082111176

Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2009). *Flow theory and research.* In Snyder, C. R., & Lopez, S. J. (Eds.). *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (pp. 195-206). Oxford University Press, Inc.

National Health Service (NHS) (2021, March 28). *Mental health of children and young people in England 2021 – wave 2 follow up to the 2017 survey.* NHS Digital. https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2021-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey

Nebrida, J. D., & Dullas, A. (2018). "I'm perfectly imperfect": Exploring the relationship between PERMA model of wellebign with self-esteem among persons with disabilities. *International Journal of Research Studies in Psychology, 7*(2), 22-44. https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrsp.2018.3005

Newman, B. M., Lohman, B. J., & Newman, P. R. (2007). Peer group membership and sense of belonging: Their relationship to adolescent behavior problems. *Adolescence, 42*(166), 241-263.

Nolan, A., &, Smyth, E. (2021) Risk and protective factors for mental health and wellbeing in childhood and adolescence. *The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), 120*. https://doi.org/10.26504/rs120

Norrish, J. M., Williams, P., O'Connor, M., & Robinson, J. (2013). An applied framework for positive education. *International Journal of Wellbeing, 3*(2), 147-161. https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v3i2.2

Norwich, B. (2000). *Education and psychology in interaction: Working with uncertainty in interconnected fields.* Routledge.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

O'Reilly, M., Adams, S., Whiteman, N., Hughes, J., Reilly, P & Dogra, N. (2018). Whose responsibility is adolescent's mental health in the UK? Perspectives of key

stakeholders. *School Mental Health, 10*, 450-461. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-018-9263-6

O.Nyumba, T., Wilson, K., Derrick, C. J., & Mukherjee, N. (2017). The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution, 9*(1), 20-32. http://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210X.12860

Oberle, E., Ji, X. R., Schonert-Reichi, K. A., & Gadermann, A. M. (2019). Benefits of extracurricular participation in early adolescence: Associations with peer belonging and mental health. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 48*, 2255-2270. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01110-2

OFSTED (2022, April 14). *School inspection handbook.* GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook

Oosterhoff, B., Kaplow, J. B., Wray-Lake, L., & Gallagher, K. (2017). Activity-specific pathways among duration of organized activity involvement, social support, and adolescent well-being: Findings from a nationally representative sample. *Journal of Adolescence, 60,* 83-93. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.07.012

Ormston, R., Spencer, L., Barnard, M., & Snape, D. (2014). *The foundations of qualitative research.* In Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton-Nicholls, C., & Ormston, R. (Eds.). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students & researchers* (2nd ed., pp. 1-26). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Peterson, A., Lexmond, J., Hallgarten, J., & Kerr, D. (2014, March). *Schools with soul: A new approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.* RSA: Action and Research Centre. https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/reports/schools-with-soul-report.pdf

Public Health England (2014, November). *The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment: A briefing for head teachers, governors and staff in education settings.* GOV.UK. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/370686/HT_briefing_layoutvFINALvii.pdf

Public Health Matters (2020, June 1). *The community response to coronavirus (COVID-19).* GOV.UK. https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/06/01/the-community-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19/

Puerta, M. L. S., Valerio, A., & Bernal, M. G. (2016). *Definitions: What are socio-emotional skills?* E-Library. https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-0872-2_ch3

Raffo, C., & Forbes, C. (2021). A critical examination of the educational policy discourse on/for school extra-curricular activities – a Deweyan perspective. *Oxford Review of Education.* https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2020.1835625

Riva, G., Teruzzi, T., & Anolli, L. (2003). The use of the internet in psychological research: Comparison of online and offline questionnaire. *Cyber Psychology and Behaviour, 6*(1), 73-80. https://doi.org/10.1089/109493103321167983

Robson, C. (2011). *Real World Research (3rd ed).* John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

Roffey, S. (2017). *Young people's wellbeing in schools: Student voice and agency.* In Hardy, J., & Hobbs, C. (Eds.). *Using qualitative research to hear the voice of children and young people* (pp. 83-93). The British Psychological Society.

Rose-Krasnor, L. (2008). Future directions in youth involvement research. *Social Development, 18*(2), 497-509. https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1467-9507.2008.00506.X

RSA (2020a, April 29). *How to create real, lasting change after COVID-19.* RSA. https://www.thersa.org/blog/2020/04/change-covid19-response

Ruvalcaba, N. A., Gallegos, J., Borges, A., & Gonzalez, N. (2017). Extracurricular activities and group belonging as a protective factor in adolescence. *Psicología Educative,* 23, 45-51. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pse.2016/09/001

Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*, 1069–1081.

Ryff, C. D., & Singer, B. H. (2006). Best news yet on the six-factor model of well-being. *Social Science Research, 35*, 1103-1119. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2006.01.002

Salmon, D., & Rickaby, C. (2014). City of one: A qualitative study examining the participation of young people in care in a theatre and music initiative. *Children & Society, 28*, 30-41. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860-2012-00444.x

Sawyer, S. M., Afifi, R. A., Bearinger, L. H., Blakemore, S-J., Dick, B., Ezeh, A., & Patton, G. C. (2012). Adolescence: A foundation for future health. *The Lancet, 379*(28), 1630-1640. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60072-5

Sayer (1992). *Method in social science: A realist approach (2nd ed).* Routledge.

Scales, P. C., Benson, P. L., & Mannes, M. (2006). The contribution to adolescent well-being made by nonfamily adults: An examination of developmental assets as contexts and processes. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*(4), 401-413. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20106

Schraube E., & Højholt, C. (2019). Subjectivity and knowledge: The formation of situated generalization in psychological research. In Højholt, C., & Schraube, E. (Eds.). *Subjectivity and knowledge: Generalization in the psychological study of everyday life* (pp. 1-19). Springer.

Scott, S., McGowan, V. J., & Visram, S. (2021). 'I'm gonna tell you about how Mrs Rona has affected me'. Exploring young people's experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic in North East England: A qualitative diary-based study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18*(3837), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18073837

Seligman, M. E. P. (2006). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life.* Vintage Books.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Free Press.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2018). PERMA and the building blocks of well-being. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 31*(4), 333-335. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2018.1437466

Seow, P-S., & Pan, G. (2014). A literature review of the impact of extracurricular activities participation on students' academic performance. *Journal of Education for Business, 89*(7), 361-366. https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2014.912195

Sharpe, H., Ford, T., Lereya, S. T., Owen, C., Viner, R. M., & Wolpert, M. (2016). Survey of schools' work with child and adolescent mental health across England: A system in need of support. *Children and Adolescent Mental Health, 21*(3), 148-153. https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12166

Shulruf, B. (2010). Do extra-curricular activities in schools improve educational outcomes? A critical review and meta-analysis of the literature. *International Review of Education, 56*(5-6), 591-612. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-010-9180-x

Shulruf, B., Tumen, S., & Tolley, H. (2008). ECAs in school, do they matter? *Children and Youth Service Review, 30*, 481-426. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2007.10.012

Sikandar, A. (2015). John Dewey and his philosophy of education. *Journal of Education and Educational Development, 2*(2), 191-201. https://doi.org/10.22555/joeed.v2i2.446

Smithson, J. (2007). *Using focus groups in social research: The sage handbook of social research methods.* Sage Publications.

Social Mobility Commission (2019, July 19). *An unequal playing field: Extra-curricular activities, soft skills and social mobility*. GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extra-curricular-activities-soft-skills-and-social-mobility

Soneson, E., Puntis, S., Chapman, N., Mansfield, K. L., Jones, P. B., & Fazel, M. (2022). Happier during lockdown: A descriptive analysis of self-reported wellbeing in 17,000 UK school students during Covid-19 lockdown. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry,* https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-021-01934-z

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., O'Connor, W., Morrell, G., & Ormston, R. (2014). *Analysis in practice.* In Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton-Nicholls, C., & Ormston, R. (Eds.). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students & researchers* (2nd ed., pp. 295-346). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Spencer, L.H., Lynch, M., Lawrence, C.L., Edwards, R.T. (2020). A Scoping Review of How Income Affects Accessing Local Green Space to Engage in Outdoor Physical Activity to Improve Well-Being: Implications for Post-COVID-19. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 17*(24), 9313. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17249313

Sport England (2021, January). *Uniting the movement: A 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.* Sport England. https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-02/Sport%20England%20-

%20Uniting%20the%20Movement%27.pdf?7JxbS7dw40CN0g21_dL4VM3F4P1YJ5RW

Springer, K.W., Hauser, R.M., (2006a). An assessment of the construct validity of Ryff's scales of psychological well-being: method, mode, and measurement effects. *Social Science Research 35*(4), 1079–1101.

Springer, K. W., Hauser, R. M., & Freese, J. (2006b). Bad news indeed for Ryff's six-factor model of well-being. *Social Science Research, 35*, 1120-1131. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2006.01.003

Starman, A. B. (2013). The case study as a type of qualitative research. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies, 1*, 28-43.

Stewart, D. W., & Shamdasani, P. N. (2014*). Focus groups: Theory and practice (Vol. 20*). Sage Publications.

Streeting, W. (2021, August 20). *Why I'm launching Labour's new ambition: ten by ten.* Labour List. https://labourlist.org/2021/08/why-im-launching-labours-new-ambition-ten-by-ten/

Streuli, N., Woodhead, M., & Camfield, L. (2009). What's the use of 'well-being' in contexts of child poverty? Approaches to research, monitoring and children's participation. *The International Journal of Children's Rights, 17*(1), 65-109.

Striano, M. (2009). Managing educational transformation in the globalized world: A Deweyan perspective. *Educational Theory, 59*(4), 379-393. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741.2009.00326.x

Sullivan, P. (2018). *Extra-curricular activities in English secondary schools: What are they? What do they offer participating students? How do they inform EP*

practice? [Unpublished doctoral dissertation], University College London. https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10053701/

Taft, L J. (2018). *Exploring the potential contribution of educational psychology to the promotion of community cohesion* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Manchester. https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/files/84030412/FULL_TEXT.PDF

Tansey, T. N., Smedema, S., Umucu, E., Iwanaga, K., Wu, J-R., da Silva Cardoso, E., & Strauser, D. (2017). Assessing college life adjustment of students with disabilities: Application of the PERMA framework. *Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin, 61*(3), 131-142. https://doi.org/10.1177/0034355217702136

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research.* SAGE Publications Ltd.

The Children's Society (2021, August 18). *The good childhood report 2021.* https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-08/GCR_2021_Full_Report.pdf

The Football Association (FA) (2020, May 12). *The FA's 4 corner model.* The Boot Room. https://thebootroom.thefa.com/resources/coaching/the-fas-4-corner-model

The Sutton Trust (2014, September). *Research brief: Extra-curricular inequality.* https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Extracurricular-inequality-1.pdf

The Tavistock and Portman (n.d.). *Professional Doctorate in child, community and educational psychology.* https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/training/courses/child-community-and-educational-psychology-m4/

Thomas, G. (2017). *How to do your research project: A guide for students* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Thompson, L. J., Clark. G., Walker, M., & Whyatt, J. D. (2013). 'It's just like an extra string to your bow': Exploring higher education students' perceptions and experiences of extracurricular activity and employability. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 14*(2), 135-147. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787413481129

Thompson Coon, J., Boddy, K., Stein, K., Whear, R., Barton, J., & Depledge, M. H. (2011). Does participating in physical activity in outdoor natural environments have a greater effect on physical and mental wellbeing than physical activity indoors? A systematic review. *Environmental Science & Technology, 45*, 1761-1772. https://doi.org/10.1021/es102947t

United Nations (UN). (2009, July 1). *Convention on the rights of the child.* https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC-C-GC-12.pdf

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2020a, September). *Worlds of influence: Understanding what shapes child well-being in rich countries.* https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/Report-Card-16-Worlds-of-Influence-child-wellbeing.pdf

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2020b, November). *Averting a lost COVID generation: A six-point plan to respond, recover and reimagine a post-pandemic world for every child.* https://www.unicef.org/media/86881/file/Averting-a-lost-covid-generation-world-childrens-day-data-and-advocacy-brief-2020.pdf

United Nations Children's Fund UK (UNICEF UK) (1989). *The United Nation convention on the rights of the child.* https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/

United Nations Children's Fund UK (UNICEF UK) (2021). *Five opportunities for children we must seize now: An open letter on why I believe we can reimagine a better post-COVID world for every child.* https://www.unicef.org/media/93226/file

University of Exeter (n.d.). *DEdPsych educational child and community psychology.* http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/study/dedpsych/

Van Teijlingen, E. R., & Hundley, V. (2001). The importance of pilot studies. *Social Research Update, 35*(4), 49-59.

Vandell, D. L., Larson, R. W., Mahoney, J. L., & Watts, T. W. (2015). Children's organized activities. In Bornstein, M. H., Leventhal, T., & Lerner, R. M. (Eds.) Ecological settings and processes in developmental systems: Vol. 4. Handbook of child psychology and developmental science (7th ed., pp. 305-344). John Wiley & Sons, Inc..

Vignoles, A., & Meschi, E. (2010). *The determinants of non-cognitive and cognitive schooling outcomes.* Report to the Department of Children, Schools and Families. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529936.pdf

Viner, R., Russell, S., Saulle, R., Crocker, H., Stansfeld, C., Packer, J., Nicholls, D., Goddings, A-L., Bonell, C., Hudson, L., Hope, S., Schwalbe, N.., Morgan, A., & Minozzi, S. (2021) Impacts of school closures on physical and mental health of children and young people: A systematic review. *British Medical Journal.* https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.02.10.21251526

Wexler, L., & Eglinton, K. A. (2015). *Reconsidering youth well-being as fluid and relational: A dynamic process at the intersection of their physical and social geographies.* Handbook of Children and Youth Studies. Springer Science. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-4451-15-4_11

Wheeler, S., & Green, K. (2019). 'The helping, the fixtures, the kits, the gear, the gum shields, the food, the snacks, the waiting, the rain, the car rides…': Social class, parenting and children's organised activities. *Sport, Education and Society, 24*(8), 788-800. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2018.1470087

Widnall, E., Winstone, L., Mars, B., Haworth, C., & Kidger, J. (2020, August). *Young people's mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.* NIHR School for Public Health Research. https://sphr.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Young-Peoples-Mental-Health-during-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-Report.pdf

Wikfeldt, E. S. (2016). Generalising from case studies. *Academy of Business, Engineering and Science, Halmstad University, Halmstad, Sweden.* https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1051446/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Williams, A., & Katz, L. (2001). The use of focus group methodology in education: Some theoretical and practical considerations. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning, 5*(3), 1-10.

Witten, H., Savahl, S., & Adams, S. (2019). Adolescent flourishing: A systematic review. *Cogent Psychology, 6*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2019.1640341

World Health Organisation (n.d.) *Health and wellbeing.* World Health Organisation. https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/major-themes/health-and-well-being

World Health Organisation (2013). *Measurement of and target-setting for well-being: an initiative by the WHO Regional Office for Europe. Second meeting of the expert group, Paris, France, 25–26 June 2012.* https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/181449/e96732.pdf

Yeeles, P., Baars, S., Mulcahy, E., Shield, W., & Mountford-Zimdars, A. (2020). *Assessing the early impact of school and college closured on students in England.* The Centre for Education & Youth. https://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/aboutusresponsive/wideningparticipation/Assessing_the_early_impact_of_school_and_college_closures_on_students_in_Engalnd.pdf

Yeo, A., Legard, R., Keegan, J., Ward, K., McNaughton Nicholls, C., & Lewis, J. (2014). *In-depth interviews.* In Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton-Nicholls, C., & Ormston, R. (Eds.). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students & researchers* (2nd ed, pp. 177-210). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (4th ed.).* SAGE Publications Ltd.

YoungMinds (2019, September). *YoungMinds survey results – September 2019.* https://www.youngminds.org.uk/media/hihnhkpm/youngminds-act-early-survey-embargoed-to-monday-2nd-september.pdf

YoungMinds (2020a, March). *Coronavirus: Impact on young people with mental health needs.* https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3708/coronavirus-report_march2020.pdf

YoungMinds (2020b). *Coronavirus: Impact on young people with mental health needs, Survey 2: Summer 2020.* https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3904/coronavirus-report-summer-2020-final.pdf

YoungMinds (2020c). *Coronavirus: Impact on young people with mental health needs, Survey 3: Autumn 2020 – return to school.* https://youngminds.org.uk/media/4119/youngminds-survey-with-young-people-returning-to-school-coronavirus-report-autumn-report.pdf

YoungMinds (2021). *Coronavirus: Impact on young people with mental health needs, Survey 4: February 2021*. https://youngminds.org.uk/media/4350/coronavirus-report-winter.pdf

Zaborskis, A., Grincaite, M., Lenzi, M., Tesler, R., Moreno-Maldonado, C., & Mazur, J. (2019). Social inequality in adolescent life satisfaction: Comparison of measure approaches and correlation with macro-level indices in 41 countries. *Social Indicators Research, 141,* 1055-1079. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-1860-0

Zafeiriou, M. E., & Gulliford, A. (2020). A grounded theory of educational psychologists' mental health casework in schools: Connection, direction and reconstruction through consultation. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 36*(4), 422-442. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.1818553

Zarrett, N., & Eccles, J. (2006). The passage to adulthood: Challenges of late adolescence. *New Directions for Youth Development, 111*(7), 13-28. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.179

Appendices

3.1 Online Questionnaires for Initial Design

YP - ECA and Wellbeing Survey - FINAL

The following questions will ask you to tell me a little bit about yourself

Which school year group are you in?

- ○ Year 8
- ○ Year 9
- ○ Year 10
- ○ Year 11

Which gender do you identify yourself as?

Please select one...

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Non-binary
- ○ Prefer not to say

Which option best describes your ethnic group or background?

Please select one...

- ○ White and Black Caribbean
- ○ White and Black African
- ○ White and Asian
- ○ Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background
- ○ Indian
- ○ Pakistani
- ○ Bangladeshi
- ○ Chinese
- ○ Any other Asian background
- ○ African
- ○ Caribbean
- ○ Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
- ○ White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- ○ White Irish
- ○ White Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ○ Any other White Background
- ○ Arab
- ○ Any other ethnic group
- ○ I would prefer not to say

Which of the below best represents your education?

- [ ] I attend a mainstream secondary school
- [ ] I attend a mainstream secondary school and have some additional help in school
- [ ] I attend a mainstream secondary school and have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- [ ] I attend a specialist school for young people with additional needs
- [ ] I attend an independent (private) school

Which area of [Local Authority] do you live in?

- ○ [Area 1]
- ○ [Area 2]
- ○ [Area 3]
- ○ [Area 4]
- ○ [Area 5]
- ○ [Area 6]

Extracurricular activities are organised activities that you take part in that are not part of your lessons or curriculum. You might take part in them at school or outside of school, and there are lots of different types of activities that this includes, from sports to drama.

The next set of questions is going to ask you to think about your routine before the COVID-19 pandemic began (before March 2020).

Where did you attend extracurricular activities?
(you can pick more than one)

- [ ] At my school
- [ ] In my local community
- [ ] Specialist groups (e.g. wheelchair basketball)

In a typical week, how many different activities did you attend?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5 or more

What type of activities were these?
(you can pick more than one)

- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Drama
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Football
- ☐ Netball
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Rugby
- ☐ Hockey
- ☐ Gymnastics
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Cricket
- ☐ Fitness
- ☐ Other sports (please describe below)

- [ ] Scouts
- [ ] Guides
- [ ] Cadets
- [ ] Chess
- [ ] Homework club
- [ ] Gaming
- [ ] Youth Club

Other...

_____

Please pick **one** activity that was particularly important to you and type it into the box below

_____

For the rest of the questionnaire, I want you to think about this one extracurricular activity that was important to you. Please think about your wellbeing when you took part in this activity before the pandemic.

How much do you agree or disagree with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
It was important for making me feel good about myself	○	○	○	○	○
It helped me to worry less about the future	○	○	○	○	○
It helped me to feel happier	○	○	○	○	○
It helped me to feel like I can overcome challenges	○	○	○	○	○
It helped me to stay out of trouble	○	○	○	○	○
The other young people there were important to me	○	○	○	○	○
The adults there were important to me	○	○	○	○	○
These relationships were an important part of my life	○	○	○	○	○
It was an important part of my life	○	○	○	○	○
It formed an important part of how I think about myself (my identity)	○	○	○	○	○
It made me feel like I was able to achieve good things in my life	○	○	○	○	○

Now think about the period of time since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

What have the changes been to your important extracurricular activity at different times

during the past year?
(you can choose more than one option if needed)

	It stopped	It moved online (e.g. on Zoom)	It took place in person in a different way (e.g. staying 2m apart)	It carried on in the usual way	I started a different extracurricular activity instead	My activity would not normally be running at this time (e.g. seasonal sport)	Other
Lockdown 1 - March to June 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Summer - July to September 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lockdown 2 - October to December 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lockdown 3 - January to March 2021	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Currently (at the time of completing this questionnaire)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you selected 'Other' above, please explain the changes in more detail

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How many different activities do you attend in a week now?

- ○ 0
- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5 or more

Please think about how you feel now.

How much of an impact have the changes to your important activity had on;

	Negative impact	No impact	Positive impact
How I feel about myself	○	○	○
Worrying about the future	○	○	○
My happiness	○	○	○
Feeling I can overcome challenges	○	○	○
Helping me to stay out of trouble	○	○	○
How important the other young people are to me	○	○	○
How important the adults are to me	○	○	○
How important these relationships are in my life	○	○	○
How important the activity is in my life	○	○	○
How I think about myself (my identity)	○	○	○
Feeling I am able to achieve good things in my life	○	○	○

Apart from the one activity you have been thinking about, are there any other activities that have changed and had an impact on your wellbeing?

○ Yes

○ No

Q20 Overall, how do you think that any changes to your extracurricular activities have impacted your wellbeing?

- ○ Positively (your wellbeing has improved)
- ○ Negatively (your wellbeing has been made worse)
- ○ There has not been much of a difference

Is there anything else you would like to share about extracurricular activities and their impact on your wellbeing that you think is important?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Parent - ECA and Wellbeing Survey - FINAL

The following questions will ask you to tell me a little bit about yourself and your child

Which school year group is your child in?

- ○ Year 8
- ○ Year 9
- ○ Year 10
- ○ Year 11

Which gender does your child identify themselves as?

Please select one...

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Non-binary
- ○ Prefer not to say

Which option best describes your child's ethnic group or background?

Please select one...

- ○ White and Black Caribbean
- ○ White and Black African
- ○ White and Asian
- ○ Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background
- ○ Indian
- ○ Pakistani
- ○ Bangladeshi
- ○ Chinese
- ○ Any other Asian background
- ○ African
- ○ Caribbean
- ○ Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
- ○ White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- ○ White Irish
- ○ White Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ○ Any other White Background
- ○ Arab
- ○ Any other ethnic group
- ○ I would prefer not to say

Which of the below best represents your child's education?

- [ ] Mainstream secondary school
- [ ] Mainstream secondary school with some additional support
- [ ] Mainstream secondary school with an EHCP
- [ ] Specialist school for young people with additional needs
- [ ] Independent school

Which area of [Local Authority] do you live in?

- [ ] [Area 1]
- [ ] [Area 2]
- [ ] [Area 3]
- [ ] [Area 4]
- [ ] [Area 5]
- [ ] [Area 6]

Extracurricular activities are organised activities that your child takes part in that are not part of their lessons or curriculum. Your child might take part in them at school or outside of school, and there are lots of different types of activities that this includes, from sports to drama.

The next set of questions is going to ask you to think about your child's routine before the COVID-19 pandemic began (before March 2020).

Where did they attend their extracurricular activities?
(you can pick more than one)

- [ ] At their school
- [ ] In their local community
- [ ] Specialist groups (e.g. wheelchair basketball)

In a typical week, how many different activities did they attend?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5 or more

What type of activities were these?
(you can pick more than one)

- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Drama
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Football
- ☐ Netball
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Rugby
- ☐ Hockey
- ☐ Gymnastics
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Cricket
- ☐ Fitness
- ☐ Other sports (please describe below)

- [ ] Scouts
- [ ] Guides
- [ ] Cadets
- [ ] Chess
- [ ] Homework club
- [ ] Gaming
- [ ] Youth Club

Other...

_____

Please pick **one** activity that was particularly important to your child and type it into the box below

_____

For the rest of the questionnaire, I want you to think about this one extracurricular activity that was important to your child. Please think about your child's wellbeing when they took part in this activity before the pandemic.

How much do you agree or disagree with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
It was important for making them feel good about themselves	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to worry less about the future	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to feel happier	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to feel like they can overcome challenges	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to stay out of trouble	○	○	○	○	○
The other young people there were important to them	○	○	○	○	○
The adults there were important to them	○	○	○	○	○
These relationships were an important part of their life	○	○	○	○	○
The activity was an important part of their life	○	○	○	○	○
The activity formed an important part of how they think about themselves (their identity)	○	○	○	○	○
The activity made them feel like they were able to achieve good things in their life	○	○	○	○	○

Now think about the period of time since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

What have the changes been to your child's important extracurricular activity at different

times during the past year?
(you can choose more than one option if needed)

	It stopped	It moved online (e.g. on Zoom)	It took place in person in a different way (e.g. staying 2m apart)	It carried on in the usual way	They started a different extracurricular activity instead	It would not normally be running at this time (e.g. seasonal sport)	Other
Lockdown 1 - March to June 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Summer - July to September 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lockdown 2 - October to December 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lockdown 3 - January to March 2021	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Currently (at time of completing this questionnaire)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you selected 'Other' above, please explain the changes in more detail

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How many different activities does your child attend in a week now?

- ○ 0
- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5 or more

Please think about the current situation for your child.

How much of an impact have the changes to your child's extracurricular activity had on;

	Negative impact	No impact	Positive impact
How they feel about themselves	○	○	○
Worrying about the future	○	○	○
Their happiness	○	○	○
Feeling they can overcome challenges	○	○	○
Helping them to stay out of trouble	○	○	○
How important the other young people are to them	○	○	○
How important the adults are to them	○	○	○
How important these relationships are in their life	○	○	○
How important the activity is in their life	○	○	○
How they think about themselves (their identity)	○	○	○
Feeling they are able to achieve good things in their life	○	○	○

Aside from the one important activity you were thinking about, are there any other activities that have changed and impacted on your child's wellbeing?

○ Yes

○ No

Overall, how do you think that any changes to extracurricular activities have impacted your child's wellbeing?

- ○ Positively (their wellbeing has improved)
- ○ Negatively (their wellbeing has been made worse)
- ○ There has not been much of a difference

Is there anything else you would like to share about extracurricular activities and their impact on your child's wellbeing that you think is important?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Extracurricular activities are organised activities that young people take part in that are not part of their lessons or curriculum. Young people might take part in them at school or outside of school, and there are lots of different types of activities that this includes, from sports to drama.

The following questions will ask you to tell me a little bit about your extracurricular activity

What is the average % of each gender for your activities?
Male : _____
Female : _____
Non-binary / third gender : _____
Total : _____

Which education settings do the young people attend?

- ☐ Mainstream secondary school
- ☐ Specialist school
- ☐ Independent school

Which areas of [Local Authority] do you run activities in?

- ☐ [Area 1]
- ☐ [Area 2]
- ☐ [Area 3]
- ☐ [Area 4]
- ☐ [Area 5]
- ☐ [Area 6]

The next set of questions is going to ask you to think about your routine before the COVID-19 pandemic began (before March 2020).

Where did you run extracurricular activities?
(you can pick more than one)

- [ ] At local schools (e.g. on school premises)
- [ ] In the local community (e.g. in a community hall or leisure centre)
- [ ] Specialist groups (e.g. wheelchair basketball)

In a typical week, how many different sessions or classes did you run?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5 or more

What type of sessions or classes were these?
(you can pick more than one)

- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Drama
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Football
- ☐ Netball
- ☐ Swimming
- ☐ Rugby
- ☐ Hockey
- ☐ Gymnastics
- ☐ Athletics
- ☐ Cricket
- ☐ Fitness
- ☐ Other sports (please describe below)

- [ ] Scouts
- [ ] Guides
- [ ] Cadets
- [ ] Chess
- [ ] Homework club
- [ ] Gaming
- [ ] Youth Club

Other...

_____

If you run more than one activity or session, please pick **one** activity or session that was particularly important to the young people who participate and type it into the box below

_____

For the rest of the questionnaire, I want you to think about this one important extracurricular activity. Please think about the wellbeing of the young people who took part in this activity before the pandemic.

How much do you agree or disagree with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
It was important for making them feel good about themselves	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to worry less about the future	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to feel happier	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to feel like they can overcome challenges	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to stay out of trouble	○	○	○	○	○
The other young people there were important to them	○	○	○	○	○
The adults there were important to them	○	○	○	○	○
These relationships were an important part of their life	○	○	○	○	○
The activity was an important part of their life	○	○	○	○	○
The activity formed an important part of how they think about themselves (their identity)	○	○	○	○	○
The activity made them feel like they were able to achieve good things in their life	○	○	○	○	○

Now think about the period of time since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

What have the changes been to your extracurricular activity at different times during the

past year?
(you can choose more than one option if needed)

	It stopped	It moved online (e.g. on Zoom)	It took place in person in a different way (e.g. staying 2m apart)	It carried on in the usual way	I started a different extracurricular activity instead	It would not normally be running at this time (e.g. seasonal sport)	Other
Lockdown 1 - March to June 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Summer - July to September 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lockdown 2 - October to December 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lockdown 3 - January to March 2021	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Currently (at the time of completing this questionnaire)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you selected 'Other' above, please explain the changes in more detail

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How many different sessions or classes do you run in a week now?

- ○ 0
- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5 or more

Think again about the one important activity.

How much of an impact have the changes to this activity over the course of the pandemic had on young people. Please think about their experience at the time of completion.

	Negative impact	No impact	Positive impact	Don't know
How they feel about themselves	○	○	○	○
Worrying about the future	○	○	○	○
Their happiness	○	○	○	○
Feeling they can overcome challenges	○	○	○	○
Helping them to stay out of trouble	○	○	○	○
How important the other young people are to them	○	○	○	○
How important the adults are to them	○	○	○	○
How important these relationships are in their life	○	○	○	○
How important the activity is in their life	○	○	○	○
How they think about themselves (their identity)	○	○	○	○
Feeling they are able to achieve good things in their life	○	○	○	○

Overall, how do you think that any changes to your extracurricular activities have impacted young people's wellbeing?

- ○ Positively (the impact has improved their wellbeing)
- ○ Negatively (the impact has made their wellbeing worse)
- ○ There has not been much of a difference
- ○ I don't know

Is there anything else you would like to share about extracurricular activities and their impact on young people's wellbeing that you think is important?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.2 Recruitment information emailed to participants

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Using the COVID-19 pandemic to understand the role of extracurricular activities in young people's wellbeing

Are you a **young person (Year 7-11)** who participated in an extracurricular activity before the pandemic?

Are you the **parent or carer**, or the **organiser or leader** of an extracurricular activity for young people (Year 7-11)?

If the answer to one of these questions is YES, I would like to hear from you!

I am carrying out a research project which aims to understand the role of extracurricular activities in young people's wellbeing by asking questions about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Gloucestershire. I hope to hear from young people, parents or carers, and organisers to find out the impact this has had.

These extracurricular activities may have been at a school, in the community, or specifically designed for young people with additional needs. The extracurricular activities may be sport, music, drama, dance, art, board games club, youth group, scouts, air cadets or many, many more.

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire. This should take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time.

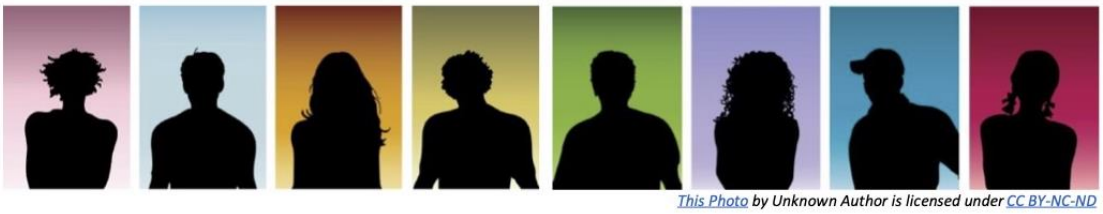
To find out more information and how to take part, follow one of the links below.

Please click here to be taken to the questionnaire for young people

Please click here to be taken to the questionnaire for parents

Please click here to be taken to the questionnaire for organisers

For more information, or any questions please contact me Laura Douglass on ld537@exeter.ac.uk



3.3 Ideal and minimum sample size for participation in the questionnaire, calculated using Cochran's formula (Bartlett et al., 2001)

Sample Size	Participant Type	Participant Numbers
Ideal	Young People	377
Confidence level 95%, margin of	Parents	377
error 5%	Organisers	90
	Total	*844*
Minimum	Young People	68
Confidence level 90%, margin of	Parents	68
error 10%	Organisers	43
	Total	*179*

3.4 Summary of Range of Data Collected and Links to Research Questions

Case Study Data Collection Plan	**Young People**	**Parents**	**Organisers**
Case study context:	**Observation** to understand the context: • Number of organisers/participants • Structure of the activity • Parent attendance/engagement Current covid rules/restrictions being followed		
Research Questions and Methods			
1a What is the perceived value of ECAs to young people's wellbeing? 1b Which elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing are supported through ECA participation? 1c How are these elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing supported through ECA participation?	**Focus group** (adapted from original online questionnaire) with 5 key open-ended questions based on the 5 elements of the PERMA model • *Positive Emotion* • *Engagement* • *Relationships* • *Meaning* • *Accomplishment*	**Questionnaire** (adapted from original online questionnaire)	**Interview** (adapted from original online questionnaire) with 5 key open-ended questions based on the 5 elements of the PERMA model • *Positive Emotion* • *Engagement* • *Relationships* • *Meaning* • *Accomplishment*
2 What are the perceived enabling factors and barriers to participate in ECAs?	**Focus group** open-ended question about elements that enable and those that are barriers • What helps you to be able to attend? • What make it difficult or stop you from being able to attend?		**Interview** open-ended question about elements that enable and those that are barriers • What do you do that helps YP to attend? • What are the barriers that can make it difficult for YP to attend?
3 How have ECAs changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and what impact has this had on young people's wellbeing?	**Focus Group** open-ended question about changes and impact of the pandemic		**Interview –** to map out the changes as a result of the pandemic using the RSA model and establish any new practices that have emerged

3.5 PERMA Model of wellbeing - Visual Tool (Discovery in Action, 2019).

3.6 Focus Group Questions

Research Questions	Young People Focus Group Questions

1. What is the perceived value of extracurricular activities to young people's wellbeing?	Introduce wellbeing and the PERMA model of wellbeing.
	• Can you tell me a bit about your activity, why you do it and what you get from it?
	• Does this activity contribute to your wellbeing?
	  ○ How does this activity contribute to your wellbeing?
	  ○ Is this contribution positive, or negative?
	  ○ If it doesn't, why not?
	  ○ In what way does this not contribute to X?
	  ○ Is there anything about coming to this activity that has a negative impact on you?
	  ○ If this activity did support your wellbeing more, what would be different?
	• How important is wellbeing in your decision to come to this activity?

2. Which elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing are supported through ECA participation?	• Which of the 5 elements are most relevant to this activity? • Why are these the most important? • Which are the least relevant? • Are the least relevant supported by the activity
3. How are these elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing supported through ECA participation?	• What does the activity leader do that supports your wellbeing? • What do other young people do that supports your wellbeing?
4. What are the perceived enabling factors and barriers to participate in ECAs?	• What helps or supports you to be able to attend? • What makes it difficult or stops you from being able to attend?
5. How have extracurricular activities changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?	Introduce the RSA model in Figure 2.2 and share with the focus group. • What practices have ended? Those started during the immediate impact of the pandemic, and have now stopped. • What practices have been let go? Those stopped during the immediate impact of the pandemic, and have not been resumed. • What practices have been amplified? Those that had started during the immediate impact of the pandemic, had have been continued.

- What practices have been restarted? Those that had stopped during the immediate impact of the pandemic, and have since resumed.

3.7 Interview Questions

Research Questions	Organiser Interview Questions
1. What is the perceived value of extracurricular activities to young people's wellbeing?	• Introduce wellbeing and the PERMA model of wellbeing. • Why do you organise/run this activity, what is the main purpose? • What do you hope that young people will gain from attending your activity? • How do you think young people's personal or social development factors into your activity? • How do you think your activity contributes to young people's wellbeing?
2. Which elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing are supported through ECA participation?	• Which of these 5 elements do you feel your activity supports development of? • Which are the most important? • Which are the least important?
3. How are these elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing supported through ECA participation?	• How are these elements supported by your activity? • What do you think you, or other organisers/teachers do to contribute to this? • What do the young people do for each other to contribute to this? • Is there anything. You would like to do differently to support young people's wellbeing?
4. What are the perceived enabling factors and barriers to participate in ECAs?	• What do you do that helps YP to attend? • What are the barriers that can make it difficult for YP to attend?
5. How have extracurricular activities changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?	How has the activity delivery changed over the course of the pandemic? • Can you provide a timeline of these changes? Introduce the RSA model in Figure 2.2 and share with the organiser. • What practices have ended? Those started during the immediate impact of the pandemic and have now stopped. • What practices have been let go? Those stopped during the immediate impact of the pandemic and have not been resumed. • What practices have been amplified? Those that had started during the immediate impact of the pandemic, had have been continued. • What practices have been restarted? Those that had stopped during the immediate impact of the pandemic and have since resumed.

3.8 Observation Schedule

Observation – *in person, usual activity duration, time and location – one observation over the usual duration of the activity to cover the start and end of the activity (e.g. if the activity runs for 45 minutes, so will the observation), option to observe more than one session if feedback from those involved is that the week is not typical.*

Observation Schedule (ensure to ask organiser if this is reflective of typical session)	
Structure of the activity	*Prompts to consider:* Number of organisers/ leaders/ instructors Number of young people participating Length of activity Key activities that make up the session Elements of the activity that are consistent each week Elements of the activity the change between weeks How does the activity begin and end?
Parent attendance/engagement	*Prompts to consider:* Parents present at start and/or end of activity? Do they interact with teachers, other parents, young people?
Current covid rules/restrictions being followed	*Prompts to consider:* Are the young people or adults wearing masks? Social distancing? Limited on numbers in the session? Hand sanitising? Waiting list/young people not attending specifically because of covid restrictions?

3.9 Online parent questionnaire for case study design

Case Study - Parent Questionnaire

The following questions will ask you to tell me a little bit about yourself and your child

Which school year group is your child in?

- ○ Year 7
- ○ Year 8
- ○ Year 9
- ○ Year 10
- ○ Year 11
- ○ Year 12
- ○ Year 13

Which gender does your child identify themselves as?

- ○ Please select one...
- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Non-binary
- ○ Prefer not to say

Which option best describes your child's ethnic group or background?

- ○ Please select one...
- ○ White and Black Caribbean
- ○ White and Black African
- ○ White and Asian
- ○ Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background
- ○ Indian
- ○ Pakistani
- ○ Bangladeshi
- ○ Chinese
- ○ Any other Asian background
- ○ African
- ○ Caribbean
- ○ Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
- ○ White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- ○ White Irish
- ○ White Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ○ Any other White Background
- ○ Arab
- ○ Any other ethnic group
- ○ I would prefer not to say

Which of the below best represents your child's education?

- [ ] Mainstream secondary school
- [ ] Mainstream secondary school with some additional support
- [ ] Mainstream secondary school with an EHCP
- [ ] Specialist school for young people with additional needs
- [ ] Independent school

Which area of [Local Authority] do you live in?

- ○ [Area 1]
- ○ [Area 2]
- ○ [Area 3]
- ○ [Area 4]
- ○ [Area 5]
- ○ [Area 6]

Extracurricular activities are organised activities that your child takes part in that are not part of their lessons or curriculum. Your child might take part in them at school or outside of school, and there are lots of different types of activities that this includes, from sports to drama.

This next set of questions is going to ask you to think about how your child's extracurricular activity contributed to their wellbeing before the COVID-19 pandemic. For the rest of the questionnaire, I want you to think about this <u>one</u> extracurricular activity that was important to your child. Please think about your child's wellbeing when they took part in this activity <u>before</u> the pandemic.

How much do you agree or disagree with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
It was important for making them feel good about themselves	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to worry less about the future	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to feel happier	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to feel like they can overcome challenges	○	○	○	○	○
It helped them to stay out of trouble	○	○	○	○	○
The other young people there were important to them	○	○	○	○	○
The adults there were important to them	○	○	○	○	○
These relationships were an important part of their life	○	○	○	○	○
The activity was an important part of their life	○	○	○	○	○
The activity formed an important part of how they think about themselves (their identity)	○	○	○	○	○
The activity made them feel like they were able to achieve good things in their life	○	○	○	○	○

Now think about the period of time since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

What have the changes been to your child's extracurricular activity at different times during the past year?
(you can choose more than one option if needed)

	It stopped	It moved online (e.g. on Zoom)	It took place in person in a different way (e.g. staying 2m apart)	It carried on in the usual way	They started a different extracurricular activity instead	It would not normally be running at this time (e.g. seasonal sport)	Other
Lockdown 1 - March to June 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Summer - July to September 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lockdown 2 - October to December 2020	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lockdown 3 - January to March 2021	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Currently (at time of completing this questionnaire)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you selected 'Other' above, please explain the changes in more detail

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please think about the current situation for your child.
How much of an impact have the changes to your child's extracurricular activity had on;

	Negative impact	No impact	Positive impact
How they feel about themselves	○	○	○
Worrying about the future	○	○	○
Their happiness	○	○	○
Feeling they can overcome challenges	○	○	○
Helping them to stay out of trouble	○	○	○
How important the other young people are to them	○	○	○
How important the adults are to them	○	○	○
How important these relationships are in their life	○	○	○
How important the activity is in their life	○	○	○
How they think about themselves (their identity)	○	○	○
Feeling they are able to achieve good things in their life	○	○	○

Overall, how do you think that any changes to extracurricular activities have impacted your child's wellbeing?

- ○ Positively (their wellbeing has improved)
- ○ Negatively (their wellbeing has been made worse)
- ○ There has not been much of a difference

What supports, enables or helps your child to be able to attend their activity?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What makes it difficult or stops your child from being able to attend their activity?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is there anything else you would like to share about extracurricular activities and their impact on your child's wellbeing that you think is important?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.10 Research project information and consent form

Understanding the role of extracurricular activities in young people's wellbeing

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Please take time to read the information carefully and to talk about it with family or friends if you wish.

What is the research project?

- This research project aims to understand the role of extracurricular activities in young people's wellbeing from the perspectives of young people, parents or carers and activity organisers.
- I hope to gain a greater understanding of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on extracurricular activities and young people's wellbeing.

Why am I being asked to take part?

- You are being asked to take part as part of a case study to find out more about the value of your extracurricular activity to young people's wellbeing.
- Taking part will involve agreeing to as many of the following as you wish:
  - an observation of the activity,
  - completion of a questionnaire,
  - participation in an interview or focus group.

Why might I not want to take part?

- You will be asked to share information about young people's wellbeing and the impact of the pandemic on extracurricular activities and wellbeing. Thinking about these may be difficult for some people. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, and if you want to stop taking part you can ask to stop at any time.

How will my information be kept confidential?

- Once you have participated, it will not be possible to remove your responses as these will be stored anonymously.
- All participants will remain anonymous in the research reporting so that there will be no possible way any participant can be identified.
- All information will be stored on a password encrypted device and uploaded to the secure university one drive at the earliest possible opportunity. It will be stored until one year after the research project has been completed (31/08/2023).

What will happen to the results of this study?

- The results of the research will be written up in a thesis for submission as part of a Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology at the University of Exeter.
- The findings may be shared with local services in Gloucestershire.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and considering taking part in this research project.

Laura Douglass
Trainee Educational, Child and Community Psychologist
University of Exeter
Email: ld537@exeter.ac.uk

This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter (Reference Number D2021-088).

If you have any queries about the University's processing of your personal data that cannot be resolved by the research team, further information may be obtained from the University's Data Protection Officer by emailing dataprotection@exeter.ac.uk or at www.exeter.ac.uk/dataprotection

If you are not happy with any aspect of the project and wish to complain, please contact the College of Social Sciences and International Studies Research Ethics Committee: ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Consent Form

To be completed by the participant

Please read the information below and tick the box to participate in the research:

- I confirm that I have read the information sheet for the project and agree to take part in this research.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any repercussions.
- I understand that any information I provide will remain anonymous and that I will not be identifiable in any reports or presentations. I understand that once my answers have been collected and anonymised it is not possible to remove the data from the research project.

I have read and understood the information above and agree to take part in the research project. ☐

To be completed by a parent or carer of young people under the age of 16

Please read the information below and tick the box to participate in the research:

- I confirm that I have read the information sheet for the project and agree to my child taking part in this research.
- I confirm that my child has had the opportunity to read the information sheet with me.
- I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any repercussions.
- I understand that any information my child provides will remain anonymous and that they will not be identifiable in any reports or presentations. I understand that once my child's answers have been collected and anonymised it is not possible to remove the data from the research project

I have read and understood the information above and agree to my child taking part in the research project. ☐

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

3.11 Examples of Coding and Themes

3.11.1 Example 1: Case Study 1 – Theme: Value of ECA to Engagement

CS1 ORGANISER INTERVIEW

Codes: relaxation, switching off

those that stay are able to use use their time to relax they know when they need to stop.

Codes: taking a break

I think that's a really important life skill that you know when you need a break.

Codes: switching off, break from school

I'm sure that probably helps in other aspects of their life like at school if they've been able to close off from school for half an hour or forty-five minutes and really stick in to the activity and forget about everything

Codes: break from school

so being engaged in one thing I'm sure will help the engagement when they go back to school or when they start doing work cos I think that time off is really important.

Codes: switching off, engaged

there's time time off one thing but focusing on something else.

Codes: effort

they get from the class as much as they give

Codes: gaining something

they obviously come back so I always think like they come they're paying each term so they're obviously getting something from it even if they're not putting loads of energy in

Codes: effort

a quite a lot of them do put a lot of energy in and really push themselves and then they also get a lot back and they're the ones that do multiple classes and multiple days

CS1 YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS GROUP 1

Codes: escape from school

And it's kind of like a bit of an escape from like school

Codes: chill, break from school

Yeah like I'm doing my personal statement at the moment and I absolutely hate it. (yeah) And like coming here it's like I'm chill

Codes: chill while here

And then I'll go back home write my personal statement and I won't be chill anymore but right now

CS1 YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS GROUP 2

Codes: switch off from exams, another focus

now it's like that point where I don't think about exams I've got something else to focus on

Codes: escape

I feel like it's like a nice escape

Codes: switching off from day

hen I feel like I'd much rather come here than just sit on my bed thinking about everything that's happened in the day when I don't do that here.

Codes: different mindset

It's like a completely different mindset

3.11.2 Example 2: Case Study 2 – Theme: Practice in ECAs to relationships with coaches

CS2 ORGANISER INTERVIEW

Codes: memorising personal best times, feeling important

I also know all their personal best times as well so I've memorised them so every one of those children every distance they've run I know their personal best in- they're logged in here [pointing to head] so when they do run a time I know it's a personal best or not or close to and that's really important to them that I know that they think they're really important because could coach you knew my 800m time and I've run a PB and he knew what it was.

Codes: memories over time, feeling important

sometimes they forget even perhaps their distance they don't run very often and I go 'yeah you ran that two years ago you did run whatever it might b', and they're like 'oh bloody hell' you know so it's really important that's not on here but it's really important to them that the coach or that you know it's got is really focused on them.

Codes: memories over time

I can go back more than ten years and I can remember every session that some of them would have run and what they ran. If I was if I was timing them

Codes: past experiences influencing decision making

if I were to take a girl who was fourteen ten years ago and I can tell you all the sessions she ran that summer what time she did in training what time she raced a race I can then look at a girl now and say if you're doing a training times I think you can run that fast

Codes: happy, safe atmosphere

I think what I do errm subconsciously this is I try and create an atmosphere where they feel happy and safe

Codes: free to speak

I think that's really important you know that they they feel that they can say within reason

Codes: fun

I engage them in conversations I engage them in quite a bit of fun in a way

Codes: games, fun

I play word games with them as well so they they'll recognise that there's something going on I play word games with them to see what response I get things that

Codes: not shouting, not forcing

I never shout or force them to do anything

Codes: safe atmosphere, free to speak, free to stop

you still create that atmosphere of you know you're safe we're making sure that you're not going to be left anywhere or not watched or you know and you can say what you want you can stop when you want if you're not feeling very well we'll wrap you up

Codes: teasing, fun, not belittling

I don't belittle them I do tease them you know there's a bit of but it's always- I get to know them first understand them first and then you know how you can how to tease them in a way that they'll they'll see it as a positive thing.

Codes: teasing, knowing each individual

some of the girls who go to the selective school they're obviously quite bright and so I'll tease them about number of repetitions they've done so you can, 'what's the matter you can't count? You got a problem with numeracy?' You know so they'll know it's not meant at them because they're quite bright but it's just me just teasing them just trying just trying to get to understand them

Codes: fun, knowing each individual, not belittling, laughing

you'll hear me say things that some if you're a bystander you might think that's really bad er but because I've known them for so long I know what I can say to them that will get a positive reaction and a laugh (yeah) Yeah not actually belittle them make them feel uncomfortable with that in the environment or with their peers

Codes: fun, teasing, laughing

I had a very good girl who broke the county record for erm um for eight hundred metres I forget which schools record that was right so we went into it was in [location] into the into the back helpers and we got the time and said 'oh bloody hell is that the best you can do [young person]? We'll have to give up that's rubbish.' Right? So she knew exactly what- and they were like 'you can't say that to her' you know and we were basically teasing them and she was playing along 'yeah, I think you're probably right I didn't have a good day, did I?'

(inaudible) ((laughs)) So just so just sort of just there's just a bit of so we both walked out she's laughing and we all had a good time you know?

Codes: not shouting

I hate watching people shout at children if you've got to shout at children you've lost it, you've lost.

Codes: not intimidating

you're not gaining control you're intimidating that's all you're doing

Codes: kind

she's got heart of gold she's been with me since well god for years fifteen years now

Codes: kind

she's got an absolute heart of gold will do anything for anybody

CS2 YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS GROUP

Codes: borrow gloves, practical support

They let me borrow gloves

Codes: friendly, not strict

I feel they're quite friendly, like they are not like that strict like some teachers, coaches are strict

Codes: friendly

Like, I used to do dance and my coaches were really rude to me. But I feel like they are really like quite friendly and stuff

Codes: makes jokes

I feel like, like C is like makes jokes and stuff.

Codes: let you stop, makes jokes

Yeah and like if you're really tired they'll let you stop, they'll like joke that you have to pay a pound or something. They don't actually make us pay.

Codes: hugs

And like at the end of races M always gives us hugs like that make us feel good.

Codes: positive comments, pleased

Yeah and they also will comment on good stuff about your runs as well, like if you do well then they will be pleased or whatever after

Codes: constructive feedback

And they'll like tell you things to improve but not in a like bad way

3.11.3 Example 3: Case Study 3 – Theme: Enabling Factors

CS3 ORGANISERS INTERVIEW

Codes: parental support

parental support

Codes: supportive parents

Yeah they are really good the parents aren't they

Codes: getting to training

Getting them here obviously

Codes: recrutiment

school a little bit as well I mean school actively recruits girls into our team for us (right) so school's very supportive

CS3 YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS GROUP

Codes: Friday night

Is it tough to come on a Friday night?

YP?: No

YP?: No I think it's easier

Codes: fun after stressful school week

it's like you have a stressful week at school and then you just get the like there's just such a fun like place to come

Codes: start of the weekend

Yeah I think it would be different if it was like in between in the weekdays because then you're like on a Friday you're like oh it's the weekend I don't have to do anything for a while now

Codes: end of week

If it was a Monday I don't think I would come

Codes: end of week

Cos its just the start of the week

Codes: end of week

Yeah there's the whole week like to go through

Codes: feeling prepared for important game, anxious

Cos sometimes like if you have an important game on the weekend or something and you don't come to training you're not very prepared (yeah) and you get even more anxious or something like that (mhm) whereas if you come you can yeah

Codes: feeling dedicated, guilt

I feel bad if I don't come and I can come like if I'm able to come and I don't come then I feel bad like I'm not dedicated or something

Codes: just come

I don't really think about it I just come

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Codes: volunteers, parental support, facilities, driving to matches, friends, positive attitude

What supports, enables or helps your child to be able to attend their activity?
Adults volunteering to run the event. Our ability to run her around a drive her to matches.
Availability of facilities and parental support
Parents
Role of volunteers
Friends made in football
Parental support driving to football. Availability of all weather facility.positive attitude if team mates

3.12 Certificate of Ethical Approval

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

St Luke's Campus
Heavitree Road
Exeter UK EX1 2LU

http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project:
Using the COVID-19 pandemic to understand the role of extracurricular activities in adolescent wellbeing.

Researcher(s) name: Laura Douglass

Co-Investigators:

Supervisor(s): Brahm Norwich, Margie Tunbridge

This project has been approved for the period

From: 01/01/2021
To: 31/08/2022

Ethics Committee approval reference: D2021-088

Signature:  Date: 18/01/2021

(Professor Justin Dillon, Professor of Science and Environmental Education, Ethics Officer)

4.1 Overview of Case Study Themes

RQ1 a: What is the perceived value of extracurricular activities to young people's wellbeing?
b: Which elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing are supported through ECA participation?
c: How are these elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing supported through ECA participation?

- *Physical Activity*
- *Positive Emotion*
- *Engagement*
- *Relationships with Young People*
- *Relationships with Teachers/Coaches*
- *Meaning*
- *Accomplishment*

RQ2 What are the perceived enabling factors and barriers to participate in ECAs?

- *Enabling Factors*
- *Barriers*

RQ3 How have ECAs changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and what impact has this had on young people's wellbeing?

- *End*
- *Let Go*
- *Amplify*
- *Restart*
- *Impact of Changes*
- *Impact on Organiser/s*

4.2 Timeline of changes to dance activity delivery from March 2020 to November 2021

Date	Method of activity delivery
March to April 2020	• Pre-recorded classes uploaded each week onto YouTube.
April to July 2020	• Timetable of live online classes. • Additional classes such as workshops with industry professionals.
August 2020	• No classes over the summer break.
September to October 2020	• In person classes with restrictions; bubbles of fifteen students, social distancing, ventilation, additional cleaning, and hand washing. • Additional classes to accommodate more students.
November 2020 to April 2021	• Timetable of live online classes.
April to July 2021	• In person classes with restrictions; bubbles of fifteen students, social distancing, ventilation, additional cleaning, and hand washing. • Additional classes to accommodate more students.
September to November 2021	• In person classes with restrictions; classes limited to fifteen students, ventilation, additional cleaning and hand washing.

4.3 Three dance activity parent reports of the impact of the pandemic on a range of statements related to their children's wellbeing

Statement	Negative impact	No impact	Positive impact
How they feel about themselves	0	1	2
Worrying about the future	0	1	2
Their happiness	0	1	2
Feeling they can overcome challenges	0	1	2
Helping them to stay out of trouble	0	1	2
How important the other young people are to them	0	1	2
How important the adults are to them	0	1	2
How important these relationships are in their life	0	1	2
How important the activity is in their life	0	1	2
How they think about themselves (their identity)	0	1	2
Feeling they are able to achieve good things in their life	0	1	2

4.4 Timeline of changes to athletics activity delivery from March 2020 to December 2021

Date	Method of activity delivery
March to April 2020	• Activity was not running.
April to September 2020	• Online sessions twice a week. • Training plans sent to young people for up to seven days a week of training.
October 2020 to February 2021	• Coaching one young person in person. • Online sessions twice a week. • Training plans sent to young people for up to seven days a week of training.
March to April 2021	• Coaching six young people in person, one young person consistently and the other five rotated on a schedule. • Social distancing. • Training plans sent to young people to follow independently when not being coached in person.
May to June 2021	• Coaching a total of twelve athletes in person. • Social distancing.
June to August 2021	• Coaching twenty-four, and then thirty-six athletes in total in person, which enabled all young people to attend.
September to December 2021	• Coaching all young people in person.

4.5 Nine athletics activity parent reports of the impact of the pandemic on a range of statements related to their children's wellbeing

Statement	Negative impact	No impact	Positive impact
How they feel about themselves	0	3	6
Worrying about the future	0	5	4
Their happiness	1	1	7
Feeling they can overcome challenges	0	3	6
Helping them to stay out of trouble	0	5	4
How important the other young people are to them	0	1	8
How important the adults are to them	0	1	8
How important these relationships are in their life	0	1	8
How important the activity is in their life	0	1	8
How they think about themselves (their identity)	0	1	8
Feeling they are able to achieve good things in their life	1	1	7

4.6 Timeline of changes to girls' football activity delivery from March 2020 to January 2022

Date	Method of activity delivery
March to April 2020	• Three or four sessions delivered over Zoom.
May 2020 to March 2021	• The activity was not running.
April to June 2021	• In person training with some restrictions; socially distanced in 'bubbles' of six young people, hand sanitiser and QR code for NHS test and trace check-in at matches. • No throwing of balls. • No close-contact training games.
June – July 2021	• In person training with some restrictions; putting up a COVID-19 notice at matches with a QR code for NHS track and trace. • Following venue restrictions, such as wearing masks indoors. • Sanitising the footballs on a weekly basis.
August 2021	• The activity was not running.
September to January 2022	• In person training with no additional restrictions for the young people at training. • Sanitising the footballs on a weekly basis. • Following venue restrictions, such as wearing masks indoors. • Putting up a COVID-19 notice at matches with a QR code for NHS track and trace.

4.7 Eight girls' football activity parent reports of the impact of the pandemic on a range of statements related to their children's wellbeing

Statement	Negative impact	No impact	Positive impact
How they feel about themselves	1	4	3
Worrying about the future	2	5	1
Their happiness	3	2	3
Feeling they can overcome challenges	1	3	4
Helping them to stay out of trouble	1	3	4
How important the other young people are to them	2	3	3
How important the adults are to them	1	3	4
How important these relationships are in their life	1	2	5
How important the activity is in their life	1	1	6
How they think about themselves (their identity)	0	4	4
Feeling they are able to achieve good things in their life	2	2	4

4.8 RSA Future Change Framework summary of changes across case study 1, case study 2 and Case Study 3

Future Change Framework	Case Study 1	Case Study 2	Case Study 3
End	• Collaborative online workshops. • Online only timetable of classes. • Option to pay for classes in four-week blocks. • Online classes in the summer holidays. • Social distancing at classes.	• Online training sessions. • Training plans to follow at home independently. • Training for seven days a week. • Virtual leagues and competitions. • Coaching in-person with limited numbers of young people. • Social distancing at training sessions.	• Online training sessions with three teams together. • Setting home challenges. • Socially distanced training in separate 'bubbles' of six young people.
Let Go	• Original timetable and structure of the dance school. • Paying for a twelve-week term in one invoice. • Providing sibling discounts and significant multi-class discounts. • Change in venue, letting go of the original venue.	• Weekly indoor training session for older young people. • Reassuring touch on the shoulder or hug if young people are upset.	• Indoor football training sessions. • County indoor football tournaments.
Amplify	• Mixed age groups in the classes. • Offering 'hybrid' classes. • Parents watching dances online at the end of term. • New timetable and structure of the dance school. • Paying for their classes on a half-termly schedule. • New venue for classes and shows.	• Older young people doing independent indoor training following training plan from the coaches.	• No new practices that have been adopted were shared, likely due to the activity not running during the height of the pandemic.
Restart	• In-person classes. • Second hand uniform box. • Exclusive performance group.	• Participating in races and events across the country. • Planning the training sessions in a framework in detail for a whole year at a time. • Indoor training sessions for the older young people with the coaches will need to be reinstated.	• Training in person.