**Purpose:** to gain a **critical understanding** of the role and experiences of **sport psychologists** working within elite football academies across England, regarding the delivery of psychology services at the academy in which they are working.

**Background:** Although the importance of sport psychology is now widely acknowledged, there is a need for greater clarity regarding (a) what is actually delivered under the banner of sport psychology, and (b) the needs of those receiving psychological support. One sport which is increasingly focusing on the role of psychological development is **football**—this is occurring via the English Premier League’s Elite Player Performance Plan.

**Method:**
- Ethical approval gained
- Interpretivist paradigm
- Semi-structured interviews

**Participants:**
- Six sport psychology practitioners, working at Professional English Football Academies

**Preliminary Themes:**
- "I would say the psychology has become a lot more accepted"
- "Now it’s more embedded in the performance aspect of the Academy"
- "In terms of what we deliver and how we deliver it, it has no impact whatsoever"
- "What’s there I understand but there doesn’t seem much, so then I’m like what have I missed"
- "They still see it as they go to the shrink... you go and see them when you’ve got a problem"
- "Anything that’s not football related, they get bored really quickly"
- "Although you know what you should be doing, if the coach doesn’t then allow you to do it, it becomes like a little bit of conflict between what you know you should be doing versus what you’re actually doing"
- "It [the integration of sport psychology into training sessions] comes down to the coaches own philosophy"
- "The elite environment is brutal"
- "They just want to be kids for a little while and I don’t think the environment actually allows them to do that"
- "Most of their worries and stuff are the bits off the pitch"
- "he was away from his mum for the first time, he was worried about his mum at home by herself, he was worried about whether or not he was gonna get into the club..."