



# PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

Canadian Sport Helpline and  
Investigation Unit



March 31, 2020



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## 1.0 Introduction

The Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) launched the Evaluation of Safe Sport Initiatives Pilot Projects in 2019 and retained PRA Inc. to conduct the evaluation and provide recommendations.

This document provides a brief overview of the two pilot projects, a brief description of the scope of the evaluation, the evaluation matrix, and a description of the methodology that guided the evaluation, as well as challenges and limitations, followed by detailed findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## 2.0 Overview of the Pilot Projects

Created in April 2004 through Provision 10 of Bill C-12, an [Act to Promote Physical Activity and Sport](#)<sup>1</sup> (S.C. 2003, c.2), the mission of the SDRCC is to “provide to the sport community a) a national alternative dispute resolution service for sport disputes; and b) expertise and assistance regarding alternative dispute resolution.”<sup>2</sup> A year after the 2017 tabling of “Closing the Loop – A Proposal for a Sport Ombuds in Canada,” the SDRCC recognized the immediate challenges that the sport community was facing in dealing with harassment and abuse allegations. It was at this time that the SDRCC first proposed providing an independent investigation service for National Sport Organizations (NSOs) and, shortly after, a confidential hotline/intake service.<sup>3</sup>

In 2019, the SDRCC’s 2016-2020 Strategic Plan was updated to include safe sport initiatives. As a result, its Pillar 3 was redefined as “Supporting the Canadian Sport Community in Creating a Safe Sport Environment.” The SDRCC put forth proposals under this pillar, and Sport Canada funded two initiatives as pilot projects: the Canadian Sport Helpline (CSH) and the Investigation Unit (IU). These two pilot projects will come to an end on March 31, 2020, but the SDRCC envisions a scenario where they become permanent measures.

<sup>1</sup> Minister of Justice. (2017). *Physical Activity and Sport Act S.C. 2003, c. 2*. Accessed at: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/P-13.4/page-1.html> (Last accessed March 16, 2020.)

<sup>2</sup> SDRCC. (n.d.). About - Mission. Accessed at: <http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/about-mission> (Last accessed March 16, 2020.)

<sup>3</sup> Gariépy, M. and M.-C. Asselin. (October 2018). Launch of the SDRCC Investigation Unit as a Pilot Project. Accessed at: <http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/documents/ITNZ-October-2018-article-EN.pdf> (Last accessed March 16, 2020.)



- A) [Canadian Sport Helpline<sup>4</sup>](#) – Launched in March 2019, the CSH is a national toll-free confidential helpline that offers assistance to victims or witnesses of harassment, abuse, or discrimination. The anonymous, confidential, and independent service allows them to share and validate their concerns, obtain advice on required next steps, and be referred to other appropriate resources for follow-up. The CSH is a listening and referral service monitored by live operators from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time, seven days a week. Users have a choice of communicating via a toll-free phone line, email, or text, in the official language of their choice. The service is run in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Mental Health and Sport (CCMHS), which assembled a team of practitioners with expertise in counselling, psychology, and sport to act as helpline operators.<sup>5</sup>
- B) [Investigation Unit<sup>6</sup>](#) – In reaction to the [announcement by the Honourable Kirsty Duncan on June 19, 2018,<sup>7</sup>](#) the SDRCC established a voluntary fee-for-service IU, providing federally-funded sports organizations access to independent third-party investigators to investigate allegations of harassment, abuse, or discrimination. The investigation services are overseen by an [Advisory Committee<sup>8</sup>](#) and provided by [pre-selected investigators<sup>9</sup>](#) who received sport-specific orientation and training. The IU currently has 25 members, covering eight provinces and territories.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> SDRCC. (n.d.) WELCOME TO THE CANADIAN SPORT HELPLINE. (n.d.) Accessed at: <http://abuse-free-sport.ca/en/> (Last accessed March 16, 2020.)

<sup>5</sup> SDRCC. (2019). Request for Proposal–Evaluation of Safe Sport Initiatives Pilot Projects. Accessed at: [http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/documents/Pilot\\_Projects\\_Evaluation\\_RFP\\_EN\\_Final.pdf](http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/documents/Pilot_Projects_Evaluation_RFP_EN_Final.pdf) (Last accessed March 16, 2020.)

<sup>6</sup> SDRCC. (n.d.) Investigation Unit. (n.d.) Accessed at: <http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/investigation-unit> (Last accessed March 16, 2020.)

<sup>7</sup> Canadian Heritage. (2018). “Minister Duncan Announces Stronger Measures to Eliminate Harassment, Abuse and Discrimination in Sport” (June 19, 2018). <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/news/2018/06/minister-duncan-announces-stronger-measures-to-eliminate-harassment-abuse-and-discrimination-in-sport.html> (Last accessed March 16, 2020.)

<sup>8</sup> SDRCC. (n.d.) INDEPENDENCE OF THE INVESTIGATION UNIT [http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/documents/INDEPENDENCE\\_OF\\_THE\\_INVESTIGATION\\_UNIT.pdf](http://www.crdsc-sdrcc.ca/eng/documents/INDEPENDENCE_OF_THE_INVESTIGATION_UNIT.pdf) (Last accessed March 16, 2020.)

<sup>9</sup> SDRCC (note 6)

<sup>10</sup> SDRCC (note 6)



## 3.0 Scope of Evaluation

The SDRCC launched an evaluation of the CSH and IU pilot projects in October 2019. It set the following objectives and scope for the evaluation:

- ▶ The evaluation “will provide an accurate picture of the impact, value and viability of the Canadian Sport Helpline and Investigation Unit. This will include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - Degree of satisfaction of the Investigation Unit’s clients and the investigators;
  - Reasonableness of the investigator’s remuneration scheme;
  - Visibility and awareness of the Investigation Unit and the Canadian Sport Helpline;
  - Strengths, weaknesses and improvements needed in regards with the Investigation Unit and the Canadian Sport Helpline;
  - Under what conditions the Canadian Sport Helpline and the Investigation Unit could become permanent measures.”<sup>11</sup>

Following an initial consultation and a review of key documents, these issues were incorporated into the evaluation matrix (Table 1 below) in the form of evaluation questions, along with indicators and potential data sources, and guided the evaluation.

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



**Table 1: Evaluation Matrix**

Questions	Indicators	Data sources
<b>Awareness</b>		
1. To what extent are potential clients/users of the services and targeted stakeholders aware of the Helpline, the Investigation Unit, and the services they provide?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of awareness of the services provided by the Investigation Unit and by the Helpline among potential clients/users and stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document and data review</li> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Focus groups</li> </ul>
2. For each type of service, who are the clients/users? Who is not being served by, or is not accessing, the available services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typology of clients/users of services to date</li> <li>Key characteristics of those who are not being served or not accessing services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document and data review</li> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Focus groups</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>		
3. To what extent are clients, staff, and investigators satisfied with the services provided by the Helpline and the Investigation Unit? Are these services meeting their needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree of satisfaction of the Investigation Unit's clients</li> <li>Degree of satisfaction among the Investigation Unit's investigators, incl. roster model, remuneration scheme, etc.</li> <li>Degree of satisfaction of the Helpline clients</li> <li>Degree of satisfaction among Helpline staff<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Focus groups</li> </ul>
4. What do potential clients/users of the services and targeted stakeholders identify as strengths and weaknesses of the Helpline, the Investigation Unit, and the services they provide (e.g., organizational structure, administration, fee structure, specific services)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the Investigation Unit and of the Helpline</li> <li>Suggestions for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Focus groups</li> </ul>
5. Are these services more or less effective compared to other organizations providing similar services, including other Canadian jurisdictions (e.g., Manitoba, Québec) and the US Center for SafeSport?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comparison of the level of effectiveness against other organizations providing similar services (who is being served, degree of satisfaction with services, strengths and weaknesses)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document and data review</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> Helpline staff include Helpline operators, managers of the CCMHS, as well as management and staff of SDRCC who are involved with the Helpline.



Table 1: Evaluation Matrix		
Questions	Indicators	Data sources
<b>Impact (Progress toward expected outcomes)</b>		
<p>6. What indications are there to date that the Helpline is making progress towards its expected outcomes?</p> <p>1) serve as a safe place for reporting or disclosing; and 2) serve as a triage mechanism to ensure the provision of advice and referral to other appropriate resources for follow-up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of cases of reporting or disclosing, by year, by type (advice, referral, or both)</li> <li>Perceptions among potential clients/users and stakeholders that the Helpline is a safe, confidential way of reporting or disclosing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document and data review</li> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Focus groups</li> </ul>
<p>7. What indications are there to date that the Investigation Unit is making progress towards its expected outcomes?</p> <p>1) to foster access by federally-funded sport organizations to third-party independent investigators; and 2) to effectively address allegations of harassment, abuse, or discrimination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of federally-funded organizations that access investigators, by year</li> <li>Perceptions among stakeholders of the independence of the investigators</li> <li>Perceptions among potential clients/users and stakeholders that the Investigation Unit is an effective mechanism to address allegations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document and data review</li> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Focus groups</li> </ul>
<p>8. Are there specific services that clients/users of the services and targeted stakeholders have found useful or not useful? If so, what are they and why are they useful? If not, why are they not useful?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree of usefulness of the services provided by the Investigation Unit and by the Helpline among potential clients/users and stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Focus groups</li> </ul>
<b>Viability</b>		
<p>9. Are the Helpline and Investigation Unit viable as permanent measures?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of overall operational funding dedicated to administration, to training, and to direct service provision for the Investigation Unit and the Helpline</li> <li>Current and projected capacity for the Investigation Unit and the Helpline based on current funding level</li> <li>Perceptions as to alternative funding models</li> <li>Perceptions regarding the appropriateness of the governance structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document and data review</li> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Focus groups</li> </ul>



## 4.0 Methodology

The methodology included three lines of evidence, which are briefly described below.

NVivo qualitative data analysis software was used to code, organize, and analyze responses collected through each line of evidence – from the document and data review to the interviews and focus groups.

### 4.1 Document and Data Review

A review of relevant documents and administrative data was conducted. This task provided further context for the evaluation and for primary data collection activities, and assisted in responding directly to specific evaluation questions (as per Table 1 matrix above).

Documents and data focussed primarily on materials provided by the SDRCC or that are available publicly, including:

- ▶ the draft Universal Code of Conduct against Maltreatment in Sport (v. 5.1);
- ▶ the Red Deer Declaration, Ministerial announcements, grant application documents, and service agreements;
- ▶ financial and human resource information:
  - including investigator call for applications, mandate template, roster of investigators, Remuneration Policy, etc.
- ▶ activity reports;
- ▶ Advisory Committee structure, terms of reference;
- ▶ communication products to date;
- ▶ social media analytics, Web analytics;
- ▶ activity/traffic reports from the CSH and the IU; and
- ▶ other relevant documents as identified by the SDRCC and/or interviewees.



## 4.2 Key Informant Interviews

Key informants were selected for their perspectives on a wide range of evaluation issues and questions – including effectiveness in design and delivery, governance, success in conducting the desired activities, progress towards achieving outcomes, and challenges encountered.

Telephone interviews were either individual or with small groups of two. Twenty-three (23) interviews were conducted with 27 individuals across the following groups:

- ▶ CSH management team (2 group interviews)
- ▶ sport organizations that have used the services of the IU (3)
- ▶ sport organizations that have not used the services of the IU (i.e., other investigators, 1)
- ▶ members of the Advisory Committee (IU and CSH) (2 group interviews)
- ▶ other stakeholder groups, including:
  - members of (recently disbanded) NSO Safe Sport Working Group (1)
  - members of Expert Working Group on Universal Code of Conduct in Sport (1)
  - provincial safe sport organizations (1)
  - members of Federal-Provincial/Territorial (F-P/T) Working Group on Ethics, Integrity and Safety in Sport (3)
  - AthletesCAN, Coaching Association of Canada, Canadian Olympic Committee, Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (1 each, total of 4)
  - athletes, coaches, and others who have used the services of either program (5)

All key informants received a letter (via email) from the SDRCC describing the purpose and nature of the research and inviting their participation. PRA then contacted them to schedule the interview and provided each key informant with a tailored guide in advance of the interview in their preferred official language.



## 4.3 Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted:

- ▶ one with CSH operators, in-person in Ottawa, with a few joining from other locations across Canada via teleconference
- ▶ another with investigators, in-person, immediately before the SDRCC Mediator and Arbitrator Conference on January 29, 2020, in Montréal (Those who wished to participate were reimbursed by the SDRCC for any travel cost.)

Two tailored moderator guides were developed for these specific stakeholder groups.

All operators and investigators received a letter (via email) from the SDRCC describing the purpose and nature of the research and inviting their participation. PRA then contacted them directly to recruit them for the focus groups. The target was between eight (8) and 12 individuals per group. A total of eight (8) CSH operators and 10 investigators participated.

## 4.4 Challenges and Limitations

There were two key challenges associated with this evaluation. They are described below, along with measures that were implemented in order to overcome them.

1. The methodology initially called for three focus groups. The third one focussed on members of the F-P/T Working Group on Ethics, Integrity and Safety in Sport. Due to the limited availability and willingness to participate of some of the members of the F-P/T Working Group, PRA and the SDRCC agreed to conduct a few interviews with a subset of its members instead. This allowed the evaluators to go into great detail with each key informant. Unfortunately, the evaluation does not benefit from the perspective of all the provinces and territories on the Working Group – only three out of six.
2. The methodology also called for CSH clients and NSOs that have used investigator services to be included in key informant interviews. Since the SDRCC could not supply that information, PRA designed and conducted two very brief online survey questionnaires in order to gather that information.

First, since the information regarding CSH clients only exists in the CSH's own software platform and is only accessible to the operators, an automated email invitation was sent by the SDRCC to all clients directly from that system. That email included a link to the PRA-hosted online survey questionnaire. Clients were asked whether they would be willing to participate in the evaluation and, if so, to provide their name, phone number, and email address. This process yielded a small pool of volunteers from which PRA drew a sample of six athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators to contact for interviews. Where individuals did not respond or refused, others were contacted until the short list was exhausted.



Second, the SDRCC did not have information pertaining to NSOs who have used the IU's investigator services, those who have used other investigators, or those who have not used investigators at all. Similarly, a brief survey was designed and hosted online by PRA, and the SDRCC sent an email and link to all NSOs. This survey asked about which services they may have used, whether they would be willing to participate in the evaluation, and, if so, whom to contact within their organization.

Both surveys helped mitigate the initial challenge. However, both sub-groups of interviewees were subject to a form of self-selection bias (individuals and organizations volunteered to participate in the evaluation, while others did not).

## 5.0 Findings

### 5.1 Awareness and Use of the CSH

#### 5.1.1 General Awareness

Among management and members of the Advisory Committee, there is uncertainty regarding how well the CSH is promoted and how aware potential clients are. Managers cite a number of ways in which the CSH has been promoted (e.g., social media, distribution of a graphics package ready to add to NSO websites, etc.). However, they also cite a lack of data to be able to gauge actual reach. Key informants in the management group suggest increased use of social media to mass promote the CSH, including customizing messages to target various groups, such as athletes, coaches, and administrators. Further, key informants suggest that government – specifically the minister responsible for sport – should also be promoting the CSH and key messages regarding the initiative and the efforts that have been deployed, and should be using various media to report to the sport community and the public on key statistics.

Not surprisingly, organizations in the sport community who also have a mandate at a national level, and members of the SDRCC's Safe Sport Initiatives Advisory Committee, report being aware of the CSH from the time of the initial discussions that led to its creation. Those who joined the committee more recently report hearing about the CSH in their previous position in the sport system or through their own network in the sport community prior to joining the committee.

NSOs report becoming aware of the CSH when they were either informed or consulted at the planning stage and/or as it was being implemented, and, in two cases, only through the press release from the SDRCC when the CSH was launched. In another case, they became aware of it during the national Safe Sport Summit in 2019. Representatives of Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs) report becoming aware of the CSH as it was launched or shortly thereafter.

Based on CSH operators' experience, clients become aware of the CSH through the various websites of the national and provincial sport organizations and associations or clubs, which promote the CSH and provide the telephone number, as well as by searching the Web for "safe sport" or "abuse in sport" information in Canada. That said, they reported that it is not well promoted by all NSOs and does not appear on some of their websites. Operators also report that some



organizations and websites do not clearly indicate the purpose of the CSH or mislabel it somehow, leading to calls for a variety of purposes completely unrelated to the CSH, such as registration in a particular club. Operators underscored the positive effect of promotional efforts, as they noticed significant increases in the number of relevant calls whenever there was a promotional campaign.

Finally, clients of the CSH report becoming aware of it by searching for resources online, coming across promotions for the CSH on Twitter, hearing about the CSH through their own network in the sport community, and through reporting by the CBC.

### *Twitter Campaigns*

To generate awareness, the SDRCC launched two targeted ad campaigns on Twitter, one in March 2019 and another in October 2019, and had simultaneous French and English language campaigns. Such campaigns are very low cost and potentially have significant reach.

The following statistics (Table 2) demonstrate the reach of each of those campaigns. The number of likes and retweets was very low and wavered across campaigns; however, the number of impressions grew with the second campaign. During the second campaign, the number of engagements and the engagement rate grew, but clicks decreased.

**Table 2: Twitter Helpline Ad Campaign Results, 2019**

Time period	Lang.	Objective	Impres- sions	Tweet enga- gements	Enga- gement rate	Clicks	Likes	Retweets
Mar 12-18, 2019	French	Awareness	4,533	55	1.21%	45	2	2
Mar 12-18, 2019	English	Awareness	10,691	176	1.65%	153	17	8
Oct 2-8, 2019	French	Awareness	24,638	88	14.30%	34	3	1
Oct 2-8, 2019	English	Awareness	54,149	209	2.00%	89	5	6

Source: Union Metrics, n.d.

That said, according to Twitter tracking statistics provided to the SDRCC by Union Metrics, the activity of the top contributors was encouraging. In March 2019, the top four were Sheldon Kennedy, Kaillie Humphries, Athletics Canada, and Rugby Canada. They each engaged and tweeted one to four times in relation to the campaign, using various hashtags, and, along with other contributors, created some momentum with retweets, etc., including 82 retweets from Mr. Kennedy's tweets alone. According to the Twitter tracking statistics, the total number of tweets and retweets about the CSH based on the March 2019 campaign was 1,497, and the total number of potential impressions was estimated at 1.7 million. This information is not available for the October 2019 campaign.

Still, it is difficult to make conclusions as to the effectiveness of this mechanism to increase awareness, since it is not possible to measure actual reach.



## *Website Visitors*

Related to awareness, Abuse-Free-Sport (CSH) website statistics provide an indication as to the number of potential users of the information that is available on the site. According to Google analytics results provided by the SDRCC (Table 3), the number of visits and unique visitors peaked in May 2019, and again in September, October, and November 2019. In total, there were 30,828 unique visitors to the website from March 13 to November 30, 2019.

**Table 3: Abuse-Free Sport Website Statistics, 2019**

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages viewed
Mar 2019	2,480	3,106	23,283
Apr 2019	2,807	3,217	29,849
May 2019	4,174	4,653	18,719
Jun 2019	2,561	3,059	48,084
Jul 2019	1,965	2,525	27,903
Aug 2019	1,852	2,371	21,182
Sep 2019	3,839	4,750	35,052
Oct 2019	5,038	5,946	62,194
Nov 2019	6,112	7,062	43,366
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,828</b>	<b>36,689</b>	<b>309,632</b>

Source: SDRCC, December 9, 2019.

### 5.1.2 Clients to Date

Based on the CSH operators' experience, to date, the main clients/users of the CSH are the parents of children or youth in club-level sports (not the actual victims, but rather, their parents), as well as some national-level athletes and some coaches (mostly at the club and provincial level, some at the national level).

As for inbound communication by telephone or email, based on the statistics provided by the SDRCC from the CSH's own platform, the operators of the CSH received 1,192 calls and emails from 193 distinct clients from March 13, 2019 to February 29, 2020. In summary:

- ▶ Clients were predominantly adults (97.3%), English-speaking (94.3%), and a higher proportion were female (56.5%) than male (38.9%). (Note that another 4.7% did not indicate gender.)
- ▶ Clients were scattered across eight provinces. By far the highest proportion was based in Ontario (37.8%), followed by 13.5% from British Columbia, 11.9% from Alberta, and 6.7% from Québec.





- ▶ Over half of the clients reported being involved in the sport community at the club level (53.4%), while 16.6% were involved at the national level, 16.1% at the provincial level, 7.3% at the community/recreational level, 1.6% at the university or college level, and 5.2% did not indicate a level.

Client characteristics		n	%
Clients helped (telephone and email)		193	100%
Language	English	182	94.3%
	French	11	5.7%
Gender	Female	109	56.5%
	Male	75	38.9%
	Other (undisclosed)	9	4.7%
Age group	Adult	146	97.3%
	Minor	2	1.3%
	Undisclosed	2	1.3%
Province	ON	73	37.8%
	BC	26	13.5%
	AB	23	11.9%
	QC	13	6.7%
	NB	10	5.2%
	NS	3	1.6%
	MB	3	1.6%
	SK	2	1.0%
	PEI, NL, NU, NWT, YK	0	0.0%
	Unknown	40	20.7%
Level	Club	103	53.4%
	National	32	16.6%
	Provincial	31	16.1%
	Community/Recreation	14	7.3%
	University/College	3	1.6%
	Undisclosed	10	5.2%
Inbound communication (total volume)		1,192	100.0%
Note: March 13, 2019 to February 29, 2020.			
Source: SDRCC, March 7, 2020.			

CSH client statistics also indicate that clients were predominantly parents (44.6%) and athletes (16.6%), followed by coaches (14.5%) and administrators (12.4%). Others included officials and volunteers, medical personnel and spectators, and clients who did not disclose their role. As can be expected, clients were predominantly witnesses (47.7%) and victims (32.1%), and



approximately one in five did not fall into either category or did not disclose (20.2%). They mostly reported concerns related to bullying (16.2%), abuse of power (12.5%), verbal abuse (11.1%), discrimination (10.6%), and harassment (9.3%). Another 9.8% is grouped under general inquiries, and 6.1% under corruption, while 5.8% and 4.0% reported psychological abuse and sexual harassment respectively.

Clients were referred to one or more resources depending on their concern. The resources that operators most commonly referred clients to are indicated in Table 5 below. In over a third of cases, they were referred to an NSO's third-party safe sport officer (34.8%), in 23.8% of cases they were referred to a PSO, and in 11.9% of cases they were referred to a legal aid service or a lawyer who may provide legal services *pro bono*. In some cases, clients were also referred to other resources, such as: child protection services, the Sport'Aide helpline in Quebec or the one in Manitoba, the Canadian Human Rights Commission, law enforcement/police, the relevant labour standards organization in their jurisdiction, etc. Only one case was referred to the IU.

**Table 5: Canadian Sport Helpline Statistics, 2019-2020**

Client characteristics		n	%
Clients helped (telephone and email)		193	100%
Role	Parent	86	44.6%
	Athlete	32	16.6%
	Coach	28	14.5%
	Administrator	24	12.4%
	Official	5	2.6%
	Volunteer	3	1.6%
	Medical Personnel	2	1.0%
	Spectator	1	0.5%
	Other or undisclosed	12	6.2%
Type of client	Witness	92	47.7%
	Victim	62	32.1%
	Other or undisclosed	39	20.2%
Concerns raised (One or more per client)	Bullying	61	16.2%
	Abuse of Power	47	12.5%
	Verbal Abuse	42	11.1%
	Discrimination	40	10.6%
	General Inquiry	37	9.8%
	Harassment	35	9.3%
	Corruption	23	6.1%
	Psychological Abuse	22	5.8%
	Sexual Harassment	15	4.0%
	Physical Abuse	13	3.4%



**Table 5: Canadian Sport Helpline Statistics, 2019-2020**

Client characteristics		n	%
	Sexual Abuse	10	2.7%
	Sexual Misconduct	7	1.9%
	Neglect	7	1.9%
	Retaliation	6	1.6%
	Inappropriate Social Media	5	1.3%
	Substance Abuse	3	0.8%
	Grooming	2	0.5%
	Pornography	1	0.3%
	Other	1	0.3%
Resource(s) referred to (One or more per client)	NSO's third party (safe sport officer)	79	34.8%
	Provincial Sport Organization	54	23.8%
	Legal Aid/Pro bono lawyer	27	11.9%
	Child Protection	12	5.3%
	Sport'Aide	8	3.5%
	SDRCC Pro bono lawyers	7	3.1%
	Human Rights Commission	6	2.6%
	Police	6	2.6%
	Suicide Prevention	5	2.2%
	Labour Standards	4	1.8%
	Kids Help Phone	4	1.8%
	MB Sport Help Line	3	1.3%
	Game Plan	2	0.9%
	Law Enforcement	2	0.9%
	Institution Athletic Department	2	0.9%
	CSC Atlantic	1	0.4%
	Mental Health Services	1	0.4%
	N.B. Child & Youth Advocate	1	0.4%
	SDRCC Investigation Unit	1	0.4%
	Sport Bien-être	1	0.4%
Sport Solution	1	0.4%	
Inbound communication (total volume)		1,192	100.0%
Note: March 13, 2019 to February 29, 2020			
Source: SDRCC, March 7, 2020.			



## 5.2 Awareness and Use of the IU

As is the case for the CSH, among management and members of the Advisory Committee, there is uncertainty regarding how well the IU is promoted and how aware potential clients are. There is no data to gauge that aspect. Not surprisingly, several organizations in the sport community who also have a mandate at a national level reported being aware of the IU, including the CAC, COC, and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES). In addition, some NSOs who were interviewed report becoming aware of the IU when they were either consulted at the planning stage or as it was being implemented, including via communication from the SDRCC to NSOs. In one case, a representative of an NSO reports not being aware of the IU until they used other SDRCC services. One NSO reported only becoming aware through a press release, and another reported becoming aware of it during the national Safe Sport Summit in 2019. As for potential clients, awareness is also limited. Some of the clients of the CSH who were interviewed also reported being aware of the IU, while others were not.

Since clients do not need to contact the SDRCC before contacting an investigator, the SDRCC does not track the few calls and/or email communications inquiring about the IU, and it is assumed that interested individuals or organizations obtain information mostly via its website, which includes information such as the list of investigators. Statistics provided by the SDRCC indicate that from December 11, 2018 to November 14, 2019, the IU page of its website had 1,760 page views and 1,526 unique visitors, with visitors spending, on average, just under four minutes (three minutes and 50 seconds) on the page.

As for actual clients, a voluntary survey of the first and second wave of IU investigators by the SDRCC in November 2019 provides an indication of the number and characteristics of clients. Twelve (12) investigators responded to the survey. In summary, this survey indicated that:

- ▶ In 2019, a total of six (6) national, five (5) provincial and two (2) club or community-level investigation mandates had been accepted among the ten (10) respondents who had been contacted for mandates;
- ▶ another two (2) respondents indicated not having been contacted for any mandates via the IU;
- ▶ two (2) of the mandates were preliminary assessments only, while nine (9) were full investigations, and another two (2) were not categorized<sup>13</sup>
- ▶ those who were contacted reported not refusing any mandates and reported only one (1) mandate that did not proceed because the organization decided not to pursue it; and
- ▶ six (6) of the mandates were conducted in English only.

<sup>13</sup> Out of the total of 13 mandates reported in relation to another survey question, only 11 were categorized in relation to this question, leaving two (2) uncategorized.



## 5.3 Effectiveness

### 5.3.1 Strengths, Weaknesses and Suggestions for Improvement

#### *Canadian Sport Helpline*

Overall, the main strengths of the CSH are that it is free, confidential, easily accessible (phone, email or text), and offers a combination of listening services and information and referral services. A few key informants also underscored that operators are well trained, and that they have a considerable amount of information at their fingertips in order to assist clients.

The vast majority of operators who participated in this evaluation were overwhelmingly positive about their satisfaction with the service they are able to provide and cited many examples of clients being satisfied, and of helping clients navigate a situation or information and resources that are in most cases foreign to them. However, operators reported that they do receive calls from people who are frustrated that the CSH does not provide counselling; that it provides referrals which are (in some cases) perceived as redirection to a sport organization that is believed to be partial or to be “part of the problem;” or that it is not more action-oriented (i.e., does not act on concerns and complaints), and does not perform any follow-up. Some key informants among NSOs and other national-level organizations agree and suggest that the CSH should be part of a larger system for safe sport in which an individual would be referred by the CSH or go directly to a neutral third-party organization to file a complaint or share allegations, and would not have to go to the sport organization to do so. (Factors that limit the impact of the CSH are discussed further in Section 5.4.)

Overall, clients agree that providing a confidential, empathetic listening service is a strength, but that the lack of follow-up and inability to directly refer concerns and complaints to an impartial sport governing body causes frustration.

Operators underscored how accessible the CSH is (i.e., twelve hours a day, seven days a week, by phone, email, or text). Among other key informant groups, the operating hours are also perceived as a strength by some, since the service operates seven days a week and attempts to cover extended hours across the various time zones; while others see the operating hours as one of the weaknesses, since they believe the operating hours are not extensive enough relative to the potential clients’ needs, and/or advocate for a 24/7 service.

Key informants representing PSOs and a few NSOs reported low awareness of the CSH as a weakness (discussed in Section 5.1.1). Along with a few CSH clients and representatives of national-level organizations, they suggest more promotion of the CSH, including clearer messages as to the services it does and does not provide (i.e., it does not provide counselling) and what distinguishes it from the other jurisdictions’ helplines and related services, such as Respect in Sport. Some Advisory Committee members suggest a single helpline for sport in Canada in order to eliminate confusion and pool resources.





Since the CSH was created and implemented on a very short timeline, there was not enough time to provide comprehensive training on all aspects operators could require in their work. According to the management team, Advisory Committee members, and the operators, specific areas where additional training is required include: a more thorough orientation to sport and the Canadian sport system; how to deal with individuals in crisis, survivors of abuse, clients suffering from serious mental illness, and/or those at risk of self-harm.

### *Investigation Unit*

The fact that the IU is under the responsibility of the SDRCC is perceived as a strength by some NSOs and other national-level organizations, due to its expertise in mediation and arbitration, and its independence. A few national-level organizations disagree and believe the IU should form part of a separate, safe sport organization which would be truly independent. As for investigators, they perceive themselves and the IU as independent from sport organizations and underscored this as a key strength of the IU.

The expertise of the investigators is considered another key strength by key informants across all groups. Not only are they experienced individuals, most have a connection to or an interest in sport. A related strength is that they are selected and trained by the SDRCC. The investigators themselves agree that together, they bring a wide range of experience, knowledge, and skills pertaining to investigative work and, in some cases, sport as well. The mandatory training is also perceived as a strength. Abuse in sport is perceived as requiring specific knowledge. Some of the investigators also underscored the importance of the effort that the SDRCC has put toward expanding the roster to include most provinces and territories and provide services in both official languages. A few key informants added that the investigators themselves are a key strength of the IU because they bring considerable expertise yet are willing to conduct investigations at a lower fee than they would otherwise charge, presumably because they believe in the importance of this type of work. Two national-level organizations added that the lower fees for investigators increase access to these types of services. That said, an NSO suggested that the service should be free of charge to NSOs and subsidized by government, since the NSOs' funding is also from government.

An NSO indicated that the IU provides consistency in terms of policies and procedures to conduct investigations of allegations involving federally-funded sport bodies. That said, key informants were divided regarding the development of policies, as well as templates, toolkits, and various supports for investigators. Among the management team and investigators, this was identified as a strength, whereas a few Advisory Committee members believed more could be developed.

An NSO, another national-level organization, and a few Advisory Committee members underscored that a service like the IU is necessary in order to enable smaller sport organizations with fewer resources to access competent investigative services. An NSO added their perception that the IU is well aligned with the new Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport, which requires investigations into allegations of harassment to be conducted by an individual or entity independent of the sport organization that may be implicated in the allegation.



A few national-level organizations suggested that, ideally, there would be an enforcement process. Right now, the investigators can make a finding and recommendations for sanctions, but it is the NSO which decides what action to take, if any. This is discussed further in relation to the impact of the IU, in Section 5.4.

Similarly, there was no feedback regarding the remuneration policy, other than the focus group discussion among investigators underscoring the challenge related to the time required to do proper investigations of more complex cases versus the maximum remuneration for an investigation, as set out in the IU remuneration policy. Thus, the feedback with regard to remuneration was actually focussed on the level of service (also discussed in Section 5.4).

Finally, there was no feedback on the process for assignment of investigators to cases; only that NSOs and investigators believe it is on the basis of availability and geographic location or level (experience at the provincial versus national level).

### 5.3.2 Comparison to Other Models and Jurisdictions

Only national-level organizations and representatives of provinces and PSOs were able to comment on the comparison with other models and jurisdictions, and they deplore the lack of data on the effectiveness of the various models. That said, they offered their views on how the CSH and the IU compare with similar services in other jurisdictions in Canada and with the models in the United States and the United Kingdom.

In the United Kingdom and the United States, the authority to act on complaints and on the results of investigations stems from legislation. The approach has been quite different in Canada, where sport organizations each develop their own harassment and abuse policies, and a universal code of conduct has been developed, as opposed to legislation.

In the US Center for SafeSport model, the complaint triage, the investigations, and the panels that adjudicate on cases are independent from sport organizations, and the three roles are independent from each other, which is not the case in Canada.

In the United Kingdom's Child Protection in Sport model, the focus is on the individual child or youth, on all forms of harassment and abuse, and it encompasses a portfolio of services. Québec's Sport'Aide initially drew heavily from that model, yet adapted it to the context in that province and the feedback from the sport community, which led Sport'Aide to design a 24/7 crisis, information, and referral helpline for individuals, along with harassment and abuse education and prevention programs for sport organizations, as well as for the broader public, and to include all levels of sport – from the local clubs to elite level. In that sense, Sport'Aide focusses on a similar clientele to the CSH, but also incorporates some of the services that Respect in Sport Manitoba provides, which are geared to sport organizations (e.g., prevention tools).

The Sport Manitoba Helpline is perceived as being very similar to the CSH in that it is a service and, unlike Sport'Aide, not part of a dedicated organization which provides other programs related to harassment and abuse education and prevention. The Sport Manitoba Helpline may be slightly different from the service provided by the CSH in that its operators are trained to provide initial



support and assist individuals, but are also specifically trained in de-escalating, which requires specialized training.

As for a comparison of the reporting mechanisms, the US Center for SafeSport and Sport'Aide provide the option to report a concern or complaint by telephone and email, but also directly online, which the CSH does not currently do.

One key informant indicated they believe that the US Center for SafeSport oversees both a helpline service and investigation services, and that they are structured so that the helpline can refer directly for investigation. This is apparently not the case with any of the models currently in place in Canada.

Another key informant added that, to their knowledge, the investigation services of the US Center for SafeSport currently face a backlog, as the demand for that service had been underestimated when it was created.

## 5.4 Impact

### *Canadian Sport Helpline*

The evidence indicates a broad consensus that the CSH is providing a safe place for voicing concerns, and providing advice and referrals. One key informant disagreed and believes the CSH does not always achieve the stated outcomes, giving the example of less than ideal situations where operators who are male are dealing with female victims of sexual abuse perpetrated by a male, and operators who are not sufficiently knowledgeable about sport and the sport community, including jurisdiction.

While many key informants and focus group participants were in general agreement with the fact that the CSH is achieving both of its outcomes (and several were able to provide concrete examples), none were able to quantify or explain the extent to which it is able to do so at this time. A few deplored the lack of information from the SDRCC in that regard. Others deplored the fact that because there is no formal follow-up on each case or client, it is not possible to know the outcome once a client has been provided with advice or referrals, nor assess their satisfaction (unless they contact the CSH again). A few key informants and operators indicated that the lists of resources could be expanded further (e.g., to include local victim support services, and additional mental health resources).

CSH client statistics are presented in Section 5.1.2. Unfortunately, the distribution of clients who sought advice versus referral(s), or both, is not available. Operators confirmed that some clients of the CSH are looking for information and advice, while others are looking for “someone to listen” or to validate their concerns.

To further enhance the impact of the CSH, the management team would require additional funding in order to update lists of resources and provide training sessions to operators more frequently and on a broader range of topics. The management team and the operators indicated that



additional resources for coaches, resources on how to approach reporting to law enforcement, and resources on mental health would be helpful. They also indicated that additional training would be helpful, in the following areas: dealing with individuals in crisis, issues involving minors, and how to help victims or witnesses navigate difficult meetings related to abuse and other concerns, as well as resources to refer them to in relation to those difficult situations (see also Section 5.3.1 on weaknesses and suggestions for improvement).

A recurring criticism of the referral service provided by the CSH is the referral to a sport organization's president, investigator, ombudsman, or to an organization's safe sport officer. In the case of federally-funded organizations, the latter are third-party officers appointed by the organization as required by Sport Canada. Nevertheless, according to most key informants, they are not perceived as independent. Referrals to heads of organizations, lawyers/investigators retained by organizations, or to ombudsmen are also considered not useful and quite frustrating for clients of the CSH, who likely have already exhausted those avenues or feel they are not appropriate avenues.

### *Investigation Unit*

Similar to the CSH, the IU is perceived as largely achieving its two expected outcomes. First, there is broad consensus that the investigators are independent from federally-funded sports organizations. However, key informants were divided as to whether they are perceived as independent by all stakeholders. While some indicated that the independence stems from the SDRCC's role in selection, training, and maintenance of the list of investigators, others indicated that regardless of the fact that investigators are attached to, and selected by the SDRCC, they can be perceived as not quite independent from the NSO that ultimately pays the investigators' fees and is ultimately the recipient of the investigators' findings, including being responsible for acting on them.

Among the management team and Advisory Committee members, there is a concern whereby an investigator of the IU may not be perceived as completely independent from NSOs if they also are under contract to one or more NSOs as a third-party safe sport officer. While there are guidelines for investigators to declare any conflict of interest and key informants trust investigators will follow those guidelines, they caution that it is possible that investigators who wear those two hats may not be perceived as completely independent from all NSOs.

The number of NSOs who have accessed the services of an investigator of the IU is not available, because the IU does not track this information. However, as indicated in Section 5.2, the SDRCC conducted a voluntary survey of investigators in November 2019. A total of six (6) national investigation mandates had been accepted among the ten (10) respondents. Investigators who participated in this evaluation indicated that they are mostly unaware of each other's work, but would be interested in a comparison over time of how many investigations each have conducted under the auspices of the IU versus external to the IU. In fact, during the focus group, the ten (10) investigators came to the conclusion that, collectively, they had conducted 10 to 15 investigations under the auspices of the IU since they joined the program (some more recently than others). They believe it remains underutilized.





With regard to the second expected outcome, a majority of key informants across all groups indicated that the IU is an effective mechanism to address allegations. In terms of reasons why it is effective, key informants indicated:

- ▶ The value in having access to individuals who are selected and trained by an organization with relevant expertise.
- ▶ The value in having access to individuals who have a combination of investigative skills as well as a solid understanding of sports or the sport system.
- ▶ They have some anecdotal evidence that indicates that NSOs appreciate the opportunity to learn and improve based on findings from an external investigator.

A few NSOs and other national-level organizations disagreed and indicated that the IU is not effective as a mechanism to address allegations because investigation reports are turned over to the NSOs, which in turn are perceived as a party to the allegation or the situation; yet, as previously mentioned, they are also responsible for acting on an investigation's findings.

Finally, some investigators indicated that the IU is not as effective as it could be in addressing allegations in the sport system because:

- ▶ The maximum amount of time and effort prescribed for investigations can cause investigations of larger or more complex cases to be less comprehensive than they should be, and ultimately be of lesser quality.
  - Two investigators described examples they were involved in where this was a risk and they chose to devote the extra effort required and “absorb” the cost, whereas another reported negotiating a separate arrangement for the additional effort with the client organizations when investigations were about to exceed the maximum.<sup>14</sup>
- ▶ There is a lack of awareness of its existence which causes this specialized independent service to remain underutilized.

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<sup>14</sup> The focus group discussion with IU investigators revealed different interpretations and led to much debate among the ten investigators who participated as to the remuneration policy, and specifically the clause regarding the maximum amount that can be charged for a single investigation.





## 5.5 Viability

### *Funding Level and Capacity*

Based on the SDRCC's Corporate Plan, the budget of the organization for the 2019-2020 fiscal year is \$1,181,100, and is broken down as follows (Table 6). The above-reference level funding of \$81,100 from Sport Canada is a portion that was requested and granted separately from the SDRCC's core funding. More specifically, following the approval of the corporate plan and core funding, because of a last minute change in service provider for the CSH, the SDRCC requested and was granted an additional \$42,500 in order to provide the service itself. The SDRCC also requested and was granted an additional \$38,600 to administer the IU.

<b>Table 6: SDRCC Budget, fiscal year 2019-2020</b>	
Administration	\$110,000
Governance	\$50,000
Official Languages	\$37,000
Operations	\$379,000
Human Resources	\$524,000
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>1, 100,000</b>
Core Funding Requested from Sport Canada	1, 100,000
Funding Above-Reference Level of Sport Canada	81,100
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>\$1,181,100</b>
Source: SDRCC. (2019). Corporate Plan for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year, p. 10.	

Based on the agreement with the CCMHS, the SDRCC paid an initial fee of \$5,000 to the CCMHS for program administration and set-up in 2018-19. It also pays:

- ▶ a monthly program support fee equal to 5% of the on-call charges, and
- ▶ a retainer of \$45,000 for CSH staffing (on-call charges, program support fee, staff hiring, and collaborating on their training).



Expenses as of January 31, 2020 are presented in Table 7 below. Two months remain in the 2019-2020 fiscal year (March 31, 2020). As can be expected, expenses have been mostly for operators' remuneration. According to SDRCC management, a higher number of calls is expected between January 31 and March 31, 2020, and the total operators' remuneration is expected to reach \$190,000.

<b>Table 7: CSH expenses as of January 31, 2020, and budget for 2019-2020</b>		
<b>Categories of expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>%</b>
Operators' remuneration	\$ 143,500.00	76.2%
Technology (Helpline dashboard)	\$ 3,000.00	1.6%
Human resources	\$ 4,500.00	2.4%
Travel (meetings and training)	\$ 2,500.00	1.3%
Evaluation (CSH and IU)	\$ 30,000.00	15.9%
Translation	\$ 750.00	0.4%
Promotion, printing, and design	\$ 4,000.00	2.1%
<b><i>Expenses as of January 31, 2020</i></b>	<b><i>\$ 188,250.00</i></b>	<b><i>100.0%</i></b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET 2019-2020</b>	<b>\$ 252,500.00</b>	
Source: SDRCC, March 11, 2020.		

As for the IU, as of January 31, 2020, expenses were mostly for investigator training (\$16,500 or 42.7% of the \$38,600 budget). However, this amount includes travel for training, and expenses for the January conference were not included yet, hence this proportion will likely be higher. Another \$2,500 (or 6.5%) was spent on human resources, and less than 2% for committee conference call meetings and promotion. There is no budget for direct service provision since investigator fees are paid directly by the organization or client that retains them (based on the remuneration policy set by the SDRCC).

The fact that the SDRCC launched three calls for investigators, including one in the fall of 2019, indicates that there is a need for increased capacity in some provinces and territories that were not previously represented on the list, and also a need for more investigators who can conduct investigations in French as well as in both official languages.

## *Other Funding Models*

The majority of key informants indicated that the federal government should continue to be the main funder of the CSH or could not think of alternate funding models. A key benefit is the perception of impartiality for both the CSH and IU services that comes with government funding, as opposed to funding from sport organizations. Another benefit of the federally-funded CSH is the perception that it is accessible to everyone across the sport system, across the country. That said, two key informants suggested that the CSH could be funded from a tax levied from sport organizations, while another underscored that the organizations themselves are funded by government. One key informant suggested that a portion of registration fees (e.g., \$1) from the club/community level on up could be pooled to fund safe sport initiatives like the CSH and IU, and another indicated these services could be cost-shared with provincial and territorial governments. A few investigators supported the notion whereby the CSH and IU services could also be subsidized by provincial and territorial governments, and indicated that several ministries should be involved beyond sport, such as those with portfolios related to health, education, youth, and families.

Some key informants are open to lottery and gaming Crown corporations or large private corporations contributing to the CSH, as long as a corporation does not have other, conflicting interests related to the Canadian sport system. One also suggested that the CSH could save by pooling resources with other helplines, be it similar sport helplines elsewhere in the country or other types of helplines, such as health-related information or crisis helplines.

Regarding the IU, several key informants could not think of alternate funding models, or indicated that the current pay-for-service model, while setting realistic fees, is the most appropriate. A few key informants suggested a mechanism for cost-sharing for the investigators' fees between the federal government and the NSOs, especially for the larger, more complex cases. One key informant suggested that the federal government could pay for preliminary assessments while the NSOs would pay for the investigations (if recommended). One suggested the creation of an emergency fund among NSOs. Others, including some investigators, believe that a national insurance system could exist whereby NSOs pay for the insurance and are insured in the event an investigation is launched. However, one key informant was adamant that no insurance underwriter would do that, considering the risk involved.

## *Governance Structure*

According to the original terms of reference for the SDRCC Advisory Committee – Investigation Services, the committee oversaw the creation of the IU, including the selection of qualified and experienced investigators. However, in 2019, the purpose of the committee evolved to include the CSH: “The general purpose of the Advisory Committee – Safe Sport Initiatives (the ‘Advisory Committee’) is to supervise the creation, implementation and the operations of the Helpline and the Investigation Unit.” Based on the latest terms of reference, the Advisory Committee is comprised of up to six (6) members: “two (2) members appointed by the Centre’s Board of Directors; one (1) member representing athletes, appointed by AthletesCAN; and at least two (2) members recommended by the first three (3) members of the Committee and subject to the approval of the Centre’s Board of Directors. Together, the Committee members shall combine



expertise in sport, safe sport issues and investigations” (SDRCC, Current Terms of Reference – Advisory Committee [Sept 2019]).

The Advisory Committee oversees the IU, sets guidelines, policies and procedures, and is responsible for the selection of qualified investigators, while the SDRCC’s management team administers the IU and oversees the training of the investigators.<sup>15</sup> As for the CSH, the SDRCC administers the service overall, yet the CCMHS administers the operators. Indeed, the CCMHS hires and compensates the operators and contributes to their training, while the SDRCC develops the bulk of the training, sets the monthly schedule for operators, and transfers funds to the CCMHS for hiring and for compensating the operators.

Unsurprisingly, key informants among the management team and the Advisory Committee members were not comfortable commenting on the governance structure. That said, the management team and some of the Advisory Committee members offered a specific suggestion based on their unique vantage point: they indicated that there is no need for two organizations – the CCMHS and the SDRCC – to be involved and that the administration of the CSH could be streamlined and more efficient if it were administered by a single organization.

On a related note, several key informants across all stakeholder groups indicated that the IU logically belongs within the purview of the SDRCC, considering its expertise in mediation and arbitration, and/or that the CSH as well as the IU logically belong with the SDRCC, yet the management and governance structure in the future should be such that it helps ensure that the three functions are formally independent from each other. Others added that the Advisory Committee was an appropriate structure in the context of providing advice and guidance for pilot projects, but (assuming these initiatives continue) to be perceived as independent and neutral – “maintain a firewall” – each of the functions should be overseen by a separate committee of the board of directors of the SDRCC, or if they were to become separate entities, have their own boards.

Finally, it may be noteworthy that a few NSOs indicated they could not comment because they were not aware of the structure for the governance of the two initiatives.

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<sup>15</sup> The program for orientation and training is set and approved by the Advisory Committee; training is delivered by Committee members with relevant expertise as well as guest speakers, while the SDRCC’s management is responsible for the overall organization and logistics.



## 6.0 Conclusions

### *Level of Awareness and Clientele to Date*

There are concerns regarding how well the CSH is promoted and how aware potential clients are. The SDRCC reached out to its network across the sport system at various stages. Sport organizations and governing bodies report a high level of awareness. According to the operators, clients report becoming aware of the CSH through the various websites of national and provincial sport organizations or clubs. That said, operators and other key informants indicated that it is not well promoted by all sport organizations.

The SDRCC also ensured a strong presence on the Web with [abuse-free-sport.ca](http://abuse-free-sport.ca), and used social media for promotional campaigns. Operators reported the positive effect of promotional efforts, having seen significant increases in the number of inbound communications whenever there was a Twitter ad campaign. At this point, there are no means by which to assess actual reach and awareness of the CSH.

To date, the main clients of the CSH are, by far, parents of athletes, followed by athletes, coaches, and administrators. Clients are predominantly witnesses, and a few clients are victims; they mostly reported concerns related to bullying, abuse of power, verbal abuse, harassment, and discrimination.

Very little is known about how NSOs become aware of the IU or of specific investigators, and which NSOs may have used the services of an investigator of the IU versus other investigators. Most of the investigators who have had assignments as members of the IU believe it is through their network and word of mouth, and the number of assignments since the inception of the IU is estimated between 10 and 15. This is based on the focus group with investigators who were reflecting back on the period since the inception of the IU, and indicates a similar order of magnitude relative to the SDRCC's survey of investigators in May and November 2019.

### *Effectiveness of the CSH*

There is very limited data on which to base substantive conclusions about the effectiveness of the CSH's, and the IU's, ability to reach and assist clients.

The main strengths of the CSH are the fact that it is free, confidential, easily accessible, offers a combination of a listening service and information and referral services, and that operators are well trained.

However, some clients are frustrated that the CSH does not provide counselling services; that it provides referrals perceived as redirection to a sport organization that is believed to be partial; that it does not act on concerns and complaints; and does not perform any follow-up. It was suggested that the CSH should be part of a larger system for safe sport in which an individual would be referred to or go directly to a neutral third-party organization to file a complaint or share allegations.

Relatively low awareness was reported as a weak spot relative to the effectiveness of the CSH, and additional promotion was recommended, with clear messaging as to the services that are





offered. Another area for improvement is the operators' training. Specific areas where additional training is required include: a more thorough orientation to sport and the Canadian sport system; how to deal with individuals in crisis, survivors of abuse, and/or with clients suffering from serious mental illness, and/or at risk of self-harm.

There was very limited evidence by which to compare across models in other jurisdictions. The Sport Manitoba Helpline is perceived as very similar to the CSH, whereas Sport'Aide is an independent entity which provides other programs beyond a helpline. The US Center for SafeSport oversees both a helpline service and investigation services, which are structured so that the helpline can refer directly for investigation. This is not the case with any of the models currently in place in Canada.

### *Effectiveness of the IU*

The various stakeholders differ in their perception of the independence of the investigators and of the IU. The fact that the IU is under the responsibility of the SDRCC is perceived as a strength by some, while others disagree and believe the IU should form part of a separate, safe sport organization which would be truly independent.

Other key strengths of the IU include: the expertise of the investigators, their experience, knowledge, and skills pertaining to investigative work, as well as their connection to or interest in sport; the selection and training of investigators by the SDRCC; the effort by the SDRCC to expand the roster of investigators to include most provinces and territories and provide services in both official languages; and the willingness of investigators to conduct investigations at a lower fee than they would otherwise charge, which is perceived as improving access to competent investigative services, especially for sport organizations with fewer resources.

Two areas for improvement were highlighted. First, the challenge related to the time required to do proper investigations of more complex cases versus the maximum remuneration for an investigation and second, the absence of an enforcement process. At this time, investigators can have findings and make recommendations for sanctions, but it is the NSO which decides what action to take, if any.

### *Impact and Limitations*

There is broad consensus among stakeholders that the CSH is providing a safe place to air concerns, and is effectively providing advice and referrals. At this time, there is no other data to quantify or explain the extent to which there is progress toward those two outcomes. It is still early in this initiative, and limited information is recorded with regard to service delivery.

Similar to the CSH, the IU is perceived as largely achieving its two expected outcomes, but there is no source of information and no stakeholder able to quantify the extent to which it is doing so. There is a broad consensus among interviewees that the investigators are perceived as independent from federally-funded sports organizations. The vast majority of stakeholders also indicated that the IU is an effective mechanism to address allegations. That said, three factors which limit the IU's impact were identified:



- ▶ Investigation reports are turned over to the NSOs, which are perceived as a party to the allegation or the situation, yet they are also responsible for acting on an investigation's findings.
- ▶ The maximum amount of time and effort prescribed for investigations can cause investigations of larger or more complex cases to be less comprehensive than they should be and ultimately be of lesser quality, and/or cause investigators who already work for a relatively low fee to absorb the additional effort and cost.
- ▶ There is a lack of awareness of the IU, which causes this specialized service to remain underutilized.

As for the CSH, a recurring criticism by clients and stakeholders is that, in some cases, operators refer clients to a sport organization's president, investigator, ombudsman, or safe sport officer. This effectively limits the impact the CSH can have since, in those cases, clients can be quite frustrated, as the individuals they are being referred to may not be perceived as independent or impartial.

### *Viability of the Two Initiatives*

There was very limited evidence by which to examine the current and future capacity, the funding model, and the governance structure of the CSH and the IU. Specifically, there is no evidence to indicate to what extent the demand for either service may increase in the future.

Finally, the evaluation confirms that in the eyes of several stakeholders, the CSH as well as the IU logically belong with the SDRCC, as long as the three main functions of the SDRCC remain formally independent from each other.

## 7.0 Recommendations

This evaluation of the CSH and IU pilot projects took place at a time when there were important conversations underway among stakeholders about making sport safer, including how best to implement the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport and whether an independent organization dedicated to safe sport is required. While this was beyond the scope of the evaluation, there are several findings that speak to this larger context. There was a strong belief among all key stakeholders that a listening and referral service and independent investigations are critical parts of a safer sport system in Canada and should continue in some form. As such, virtually all of the recommendations below remain relevant, regardless of where these two functions are located.

Based on the findings and conclusions emerging from this evaluation, assuming the funding for the two services is renewed, and acknowledging the aspects that are within the SDRCC's purview, it is recommended that:

- 1) they remain under the SDRCC's responsibility, and that the SDRCC implement a new, separate governance structure for each service, ultimately reporting to the Board of Directors of the Centre;
- 2) the SDRCC design and implement additional advertisement campaigns and other promotional efforts in order to increase awareness of the CSH and the services it provides among sport organizations, athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators;
- 3) the SDRCC increase its efforts to inform NSOs of the service provided by the IU and how to access it;
- 4) the SDRCC continue to assess the adequacy of resources and training for CSH operators on an ongoing basis, and in the more immediate future, provide a more thorough orientation to sport and the Canadian sport system, as well as additional resources and training as follows:
  - how to deal with individuals in crisis, survivors of abuse, with clients suffering from serious mental illness, and/or at risk of self-harm;
  - resources for coaches, mental health resources, resources on how to approach reporting to law enforcement, and on how to help victims or witnesses navigate difficult meetings related to abuse and other concerns;
- 5) in order to further enhance the usefulness of the CSH, the SDRCC consult with Sport Canada on the most appropriate manner by which to limit or eliminate situations where referrals from the CSH to a sport organization's safe sport officer or other representative cause frustration and upset;



- 6) the SDRCC consult investigators and other stakeholders in order to refine the remuneration policy for investigators to accommodate more complex investigations, while continuing to contain costs and support high service standards; and
- 7) the SDRCC develop and implement a performance measurement strategy for both services in order to monitor and report on key aspects of performance, including reach, capacity, demand, efficiency of service delivery, usefulness of services, and the effectiveness of both services. Since current best practices in program design and performance measurement include the integration of gender-based-analysis plus considerations, the performance measurement strategy should include such considerations where relevant, thereby ensuring the capacity to conduct such analyses is in place in the future.



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# PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT



Canadian Sport Helpline and Investigation Unit

March 31, 2020

## Appendix A – Data Collection Instruments



## Generic Interview Guide

The SDRCC has launched an evaluation of their Canadian Sport Helpline and Investigation Unit pilot projects before their conclusion in March 2020. The evaluation will provide an assessment of the impact, value and viability of the Canadian Sport Helpline and Investigation Unit. The SDRCC has retained the services of PRA Inc., a national research and evaluation firm, to assist with the evaluation.

A key component of the evaluation is interviews with a variety of stakeholders involved with these pilot projects. The interviews will take approximately one hour and will be conducted in your preferred official language.

With your permission, we will audio-record our discussion for note-taking purposes only and the recording will be destroyed at the end of the evaluation. No one outside of PRA will hear the recording; your responses will be kept confidential and you will not be identified directly or indirectly in any reporting. The information you provide will only be used for this evaluation and will be administered in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

We recognize you may not be familiar with all the topics we would like to address. Please let the interviewer know if you are unable to answer any question.

### Introduction

1. Please briefly describe:
  - a) Your involvement or your organization's involvement within the Canadian Sport System. (A1)
  - b) Your involvement or your organization's involvement with the Canadian Sport Helpline and/or the Investigation Unit. (A1)

### Awareness

2. How familiar are you with
  - a) The Canadian Sport Helpline? (If aware) How did you become aware of the Helpline? (A1)
  - b) The Investigation Unit? (If aware) How did you become aware of the Unit? (A1)
3. Have you or your organization used
  - a) The Canadian Sport Helpline? If so, please describe how and when you used the Canadian Sport Helpline, and for what purpose? (A2)
  - b) The Investigation Unit? If so, please describe how and when you used the Investigation Unit, and for what purpose? (A2)



## Effectiveness

4. *(Ask if user of CSH services)* Having used the Canadian Sport Helpline, how satisfied were you with the service you received? Did the service provided by the Canadian Sport Helpline meet your needs? If so, how so? If not, why not? (E3)
5. *(Ask if CSH staff)* How satisfied are you with the level of service that you are able to provide to individuals who use the Canadian Sport Helpline? Are you able to provide the services that clients need? Please explain. If no, why not? (E3)
6. *(Ask if NSO user of IU services)* Having used the Investigation Unit, how satisfied were you with the service you received? Did the service provided by the Investigator(s) meet your needs? If so, how so? If not, why not? (E3)
7. *(Ask if NSO non-User of IU services)* Is there a reason why you have not used the IU services? Is it that you plan to but haven't had the opportunity or do you have alternate mechanisms in place?
8. *(Ask if NSO user or non-user of IU services)* Have you used an Investigator not with the SDRCC's Investigation Unit? If so, what was the approximate cost of that investigator's services. (Probe order of magnitude/range/estimate if they cannot recall the exact cost.)
9. *(Ask if NSO or non-User of IU services)* Are you promoting the CSH as a mechanism for your members to use as a secure and confidential listening and referral service for victims and witnesses wishing to share or obtain information regarding harassment, abuse, and discrimination in sport? If not, is there a reason why you are not promoting the CSH to your membership? Is it that you plan to but haven't had the opportunity or do you have alternate mechanisms in place?
10. *(Ask if member of SSI Advisory Committee or NSO User of IU services)* How satisfied are you with the system used to assign Investigators to cases? What improvements, if any, could be made to the system? (Probe for satisfaction with the assignment process) (E3)
11. *(Ask if a member of the SSI Advisory Committee or NSO User of IU services)* How satisfied are you with the remuneration scheme for Investigators? What improvements, if any, could be made to the remuneration scheme? (E3)



12. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Canadian Sport Helpline):*
- What are the strengths of the Canadian Sport Helpline?
  - What, if anything, do you see as weaknesses of the Canadian Sport Helpline?
  - How can the Canadian Sport Helpline be improved? *(Probe for organizational structure, administration, fee structure, specific services)* (E4)
13. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Investigation Unit):*
- What are the strengths of the Investigation Unit?
  - What, if anything, do you see as the weaknesses of the Investigation Unit?
  - How can the Investigation Unit be improved? *(Probe for organizational structure, administration, fee structure, specific services)* (E4)
14. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Canadian Sport Helpline)* How does the effectiveness of the Canadian Sport Helpline compare to other models, for example, Safe Sport USA, Respect in Sport, Sport Manitoba's Sport Support Line, Quebec's *Sport'Aide's* Help Line, in terms of:
- Who is being served?
  - Satisfaction with services received?
  - Strengths?
  - Weaknesses?
- Please explain. (E5)
15. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Investigation Unit)* How does the effectiveness of the Investigation Unit compare to other models, for example, Safe Sport USA, Sport Resolutions in the UK, in terms of:
- Who is being served?
  - Satisfaction with services received?
  - Strengths?
  - Weaknesses?
- Please explain. (E5)



## Impact

16. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Canadian Sport Helpline)* The Canadian Sport Helpline is intended to:
- 1) serve as a safe place for reporting or disclosing; and
  - 2) serve as a triage mechanism to ensure the provision of advice and referral to other appropriate resources for follow up.
- a. To what extent is the Canadian Sport Helpline able to provide
- i. a safe, confidential way of sharing and validating concerns about harassment, abuse or discrimination;
  - ii. advice on required next steps, and refer to other appropriate resources for follow up?
- If so, how so? If not, why not? (I6)
- b. How useful are the services provided by the Helpline? If so, how so? If not, why not? *(Probe: For whom is it useful? Under what circumstances is it useful?)* (I8)
17. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Canadian Sport Helpline)* Are you aware of any unintended consequences, positive or negative, as a result of the establishment of the Canadian Sport Helpline? Please explain. (I7)
18. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Investigation Unit)* SDRCC's Investigation Unit is intended to:
- 1) to foster access by federally funded sport organization to third-party independent investigators; and
  - 2) to effectively address allegations of harassment, abuse or discrimination.
- a. To what extent are the Investigators independent from federally funded sports organizations? Please explain. (I7)
- b. To what extent is the Investigation Unit an effective mechanism to address allegations? Please explain. (I7)
- c. How useful are the services provided by the Investigation Unit? If so, how so? If not, why not? *(Probe: For whom is it useful? Under what circumstances is it useful?)* (I8)
19. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Investigation Unit)* Are you aware of any unintended consequences, positive or negative, as a result of the establishment of the Investigation Unit? Please explain. (I7)





## Viability

20. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Canadian Sport Helpline)* As you may be aware, Sport Canada has provided funding to SDRCC for the Canadian Sport Helpline as a pilot project, until 2020. Are you aware of alternate funding models that would be appropriate for the Canadian Sport Helpline? If so, what are they? (V9)
21. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Investigation Unit)* As you may be aware, Sport Canada has provided funding to SDRCC for the Investigation Unit as a pilot project, until 2020. Are you aware of alternate funding models that would be appropriate for the Investigation Unit? If so, what are they? (V9)
22. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Canadian Sport Helpline)* As you may be aware, the Canadian Sport Helpline is the responsibility of SDRCC, with advice from an Advisory Committee. Is this governance structure appropriate? Please explain. What improvements, if any, would you recommend to the current governance structure for the Canadian Sport Helpline? (V9)
23. *(Ask potential clients/users and stakeholders of the Investigation Unit)* As you may be aware, the Investigation Unit is the responsibility of SDRCC, with advice from an Advisory Committee. Is this governance structure appropriate? Please explain. What improvements, if any, would you recommend to the current governance structure for the Investigation Unit? (V9)
24. Do you have any other comments related to either of these pilot projects?

***Thank you for your participation.***



## Focus Groups for the Evaluation of Safe Sport Initiatives Moderator's Guide — Canadian Sport Helpline Operators

### Introduction

Hello everyone. Thank you for coming to our meeting. My name is *(name)*. I work for PRA, an independent research company. We are working with the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) on the evaluation of their Canadian Sport Helpline and Investigation Unit pilot projects before their conclusion in March 2020.

As part of this study, we are holding discussion groups like this one with Helpline operators, and investigators with the Investigation Unit. During today's discussion, we will be talking about awareness of the Canadian Sport Helpline ("the Helpline"), satisfaction with the services provided, the impact it is having thus far, and its viability.

Before we begin, I have some guidelines I would like to review.

- ▶ There are no right or wrong answers, so please feel free to provide your honest opinions.
- ▶ If you have a cell phone or smart phone, please make sure all sounds are turned off, and if you must be reachable, I encourage you to use the vibration setting.
- ▶ Because we are audio-recording our discussion today, please try to speak up, and speak one at a time. We audio-record the group to make sure our notes accurately reflect what everyone says here today. In our report, we will not use your name or any information that might identify you. After the report is completed, we destroy the recordings.
- ▶ Since you have been in contact with users of the Helpline whose anonymity must be protected, if you wish to illustrate your comments with examples, please remember not to provide information that could identify them.
- ▶ To ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak, I may call on you to get your opinion or I may interrupt you, not because what you have to say is not important, but to allow others the opportunity to speak.

Does anyone have any questions?

First, let's go around the table/phone lines. I would like each of you to introduce yourself, and briefly describe your involvement within the Canadian Sport System, and your involvement with the Canadian Sport Helpline, including how long.



## Awareness

1. From your perspective, who are the main clients/users of the Helpline thus far? (A2)
2. To what extent are potential clients/users of the services aware of the Helpline? If so, how so? If not, why not? (*Prompt if necessary: Are certain individuals or groups more/less likely to be aware of the Helpline? If so, which ones and why?*) (A1)
3. Based on your interactions with individuals who use the Helpline, how did they become aware of the Helpline? (A1)

## Satisfaction with the services provided

4. How satisfied are you with the level of service that you are able to provide to individuals who use the Helpline? Are you able to provide the services that they need? Please explain. If no, why not? (E3)
5. What are the strengths of the Helpline? (E4)
6. What, if anything, do you see as weaknesses of the Helpline? (E4)
7. How can the Helpline be improved? (*Probe for organizational structure, administration, fee structure, specific services*) (E4)

## Impact

As you know, the Canadian Sport Helpline is intended to:

- 1) serve as a safe place for reporting or disclosing; and
- 2) serve as a triage mechanism to ensure the provision of advice and referral to other appropriate resources for follow up.

I would like to explore with you the progress to date toward those two intended outcomes.

8. To what extent is the Helpline able to provide a safe, confidential way of sharing and validating concerns about harassment, abuse or discrimination? If so, how so? If not, why not? (I6)
9. To what extent is the Helpline able to provide advice on required next steps, and refer to other appropriate resources for follow up? If so, how so? If not, why not? (I6)
10. How useful are the services provided by the Helpline? If so, how so? (*Probe: For whom is it useful? Under what circumstances is it useful?*) If not, why not? (I8)
11. Are you aware of any unintended consequences, positive or negative, as a result of the establishment of the Helpline? Please explain. (I7)



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## Viability

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12. *Optional, based on time:* As you may be aware, Sport Canada has provided funding to the SDRCC for the Canadian Sport Helpline as a pilot project, until March 2020. Are you aware of alternate funding models that would be appropriate for the Helpline? If so, what are they? (V9)

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## Conclusion

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13. *Optional, based on time:* Before we part, do you have any other comments related to either the Canadian Sport Helpline or the Investigation Unit pilot projects?

**Thank you for participating.**



## Focus Groups for the Evaluation of Safe Sport Initiatives Moderator's Guide — Investigation Unit, Investigators

### Introduction

Hello everyone. Thank you for coming to our meeting. My name is *(name)*. I work for PRA, an independent research company. We are working with the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) on the evaluation of their Canadian Sport Helpline and Investigation Unit pilot projects before their conclusion in March 2020.

As part of this study, we are holding discussion groups like this one with Helpline operators, and investigators with the Investigation Unit. During today's discussion, we will be talking about awareness of the Investigation Unit, satisfaction with the services provided, the impact it is having thus far, and its viability.

Before we begin, I have some guidelines I would like to review.

- ▶ There are no right or wrong answers, so please feel free to provide your honest opinions.
- ▶ If you have a cell phone or smart phone, please make sure all sounds are turned off, and if you must be reachable, I encourage you to use the vibration setting.
- ▶ Because we are audio-recording our discussion today, please try to speak up, and speak one at a time. We audio-record the group to make sure our notes accurately reflect what everyone says here today. In our report, we will not use your name or any information that might identify you. After the report is completed, we destroy the recordings.
- ▶ Since you have been in contact with complainants and other parties involved in investigations whose anonymity must be protected, if you wish to illustrate your comments with examples, please remember not to provide information that could identify them.
- ▶ To ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak, I may call on you to get your opinion or I may interrupt you, not because what you have to say is not important, but to allow others the opportunity to speak.

Does anyone have any questions?

First, let's go around the table. I would like each of you to introduce yourself, and briefly describe your involvement within the Canadian Sport System, and your involvement with the Investigation Unit, including how long.





## Awareness

1. From your perspective, who are the main clients/users of the Investigation Unit thus far? (A2)
2. To what extent are potential clients/users of the services aware of the Investigation Unit? If so, how so? If not, why not? (*Prompt if necessary: Are certain individuals or groups more/less likely to be aware of the Investigation Unit? If so, which ones and why?*) (A1)
3. Based on your interactions with individuals who use the Investigation Unit, how did they become aware of it? (A1)

## Satisfaction with the services provided

4. How satisfied are you with the level of service that you are able to provide to individuals who use the Investigation Unit? Are you able to provide the services that they need? Please explain. If no, why not? (E3)
5. What are the strengths of the Investigation Unit? (E4)
6. What, if anything, do you see as weaknesses of the Investigation Unit? (E4)
7. How can the Investigation Unit be improved? (*Probe for organizational structure, administration, fee structure, specific services*) (E4)

## Impact

As you know, the Investigation Unit is intended to:

- 1) foster access by federally-funded sport organizations to third-party independent investigators; and
- 2) effectively address allegations of harassment, abuse or discrimination.

I would like to explore with you the progress to date toward those two intended outcomes.

8. To what extent is the Investigation Unit contributing to effectively addressing allegations of harassment, abuse or discrimination? If so, how so? If not, why not? (I6)
9. To what extent is the Investigation Unit able to foster access by federally-funded sport organizations to third-party independent investigators? If so, how so? If not, why not? (I6)
10. How useful are the services provided by the Investigation Unit? If so, how so? (*Probe: For whom is it useful? Under what circumstances is it useful?*) If not, why not? (I8)
11. Are you aware of any unintended consequences, positive or negative, as a result of the establishment of the Investigation Unit? Please explain. (I7)



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## Viability

12. *Optional, based on time:* As you may be aware, Sport Canada has provided funding to the SDRCC for the Investigation Unit as a pilot project, until March 2020. Are you aware of alternate funding models that would be appropriate for the Unit? If so, what are they? (V9)

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## Conclusion

13. *Optional, based on time:* Before we part, do you have any other comments related to either the Canadian Sport Helpline or the Investigation Unit pilot projects?

**Thank you for participating.**



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