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# A participant centred approach to understanding athletics in the UK

## USING 'MOBILE' METHODOLOGIES

### THE PROJECT SO FAR...

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#### STEP 1

Participant-generated photos is the visual 'mobile' method for participants to aid memory, stories, insight, and commentary (Welford et al, 2015; Richard & Lahman, 2014).

#### KEEPING IN TOUCH

Weekly or fortnightly contact with participants through What's App through messages and via photos.

2

#### PHOTOS!

Since the start of the project over 100 photos or videos have been sent with explanations. These will form the basis for the step 3 of the project.

3

#### STEP 2

Go-along 'mobile' interviews will actively engage in the activity/space with the participant to interact and facilitate dialogues (Moran et al, 2020; Russell et al., 2022).

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#### GO-ALONG OBSERVATIONS

Participant-led invites to club nights, training and races or events. Observations will enable understanding of the participants role and activities within athletic settings.

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#### 'MOBILE' NOTES

Voice and written notes to myself. These are written up to include reflections, and pose questions and are sent to the participants for any additional notes from the field.

6

#### 'MOBILE' PHOTOS

An important part of go-along 'mobile' methods is to gain a sense of place and atmosphere and so my photos form part of the observational notes sent to the participants.

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#### WHATS NEXT?

Step 1: ongoing for a further 5 months  
 Step 2: go-along interviews during Sept/Oct  
 Step 3: photo elicitation interviews.

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**KEY LEARNINGS FROM OBSERVATIONS/INTERVIEWS SO FAR...**

- Sociability and community is central to group cohesion and WhatsApp groups play a key role.
- Flexibility in approach to managing individuals within group environment.
- Sense of place, sociable locations, cafes and catch ups are very important.
- The effect of place on group cohesion has enabled trust and rapport to build between coaches and athletes but also between athletes and athletes.



- Further go-along interviews will be conducted during 3rd quarter of the data collection period.
- Photo-elicitation interviews will be conducted at the end of the 12-month research period.
- The participant-generated photos will form the basis for photo-elicitation interviews so that the participants can actively engage with the interpretation of images as data.
- Key focus will be understanding the notable connection to the wider work on serious leisure (e.g., Stebbins, 1996).
- The role of an athletics coach aligns with the definition of serious leisure as they tend to demonstrate a deep self-fulfilment by pursuing a volunteer core activity that requires skill, knowledge and experience but also a substantial investment of time and money to maintain.

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