

Institution: Buckinghamshire New University
Unit of Assessment: Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Research activity now focuses on two broad themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sport, health, exercise and wellbeing b) Sport, society and social policy <p>The Group achieves impact through partnerships with external organisations. The main partners and beneficiaries include community organisation for older people, primary care trusts, outdoor education companies and their service users, football associations, football and rugby clubs and individuals with disabilities. The nature of these relationships is discussed in section b. The main types of impact include greater physical activity of older people, greater engagement with outdoor education, enhancement of employment practice, and establishment of programmes for people with disabilities. These relate to research on engagement of older people with exercise, the requirements of non-formal outdoor education, team psychology and the needs of disabled participants in sport.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The overall approach of the Group to achieve impact has been built on establishing links with sports communities, recreational groups and businesses. Research has been aligned with the issues facing a range of sport and recreation organisations. To illustrate, the Movers & Shakers project was developed through synergies arising from research-practitioner interests (eg healthy active ageing) and a shared view of appropriate research approaches (eg interpretive work to elicit the experiences of older people who exercise). As evidence of the nature of the relationships with key users to develop impact from the research, the Movers & Shakers project illustrates the formation of a strong collaboration between local authorities, a Primary Care Trust, various communities, and the University. The achievement of two regional awards signals the achievement of partnership working and the resulting practical impact from the research.</p> <p>Building on the work with the NHS, the Group has developed a clear process that will further enhance research impact in the following ways: 1) Consultation with key users to establish objectives and methods of dissemination of research to ensure that clear benefits for users are achieved (e.g., the NFE project led to the formation of a network of outdoor education providers; 2) Following initial consultation and objective-setting, strong relationships are built through regular communication and monitoring of progress (eg through research supervision, regular meetings with stakeholders); 3) consultancy advice and support is offered to key users; 4) further dissemination of research to users is achieved through publication in company and/or other 'trade' journals that focus on professional practice; 5) production of guidebooks and reports for key users.</p> <p>The range of examples from the Group's research includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community organisations for older people (eg Movers & Shakers): participants involved in regular physical activity across culturally diverse groups. • Primary Care Trusts (Buckinghamshire): health practitioners have used the findings from

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the Movers & Shakers research project to enhance practice for healthy active ageing and physical activity interventions.

- Joint research with NHS Buckinghamshire: the beneficiaries are active adults with Type 1 diabetes through better-informed guidelines on insulin infusions.
- Outdoor education companies: small business start-ups were established as a result of the Non Formal Education (NFE) research project, thereby enhancing community health and social wellbeing.
- Service users of outdoor education companies: local communities and school pupils benefitted from outdoor education services (e.g., lifestyle and exercise; social youth workers and centres).
- Oxford City Football Club (Short KTP): semi-professional football administrators and establishing disability participant need.
- County Football Associations (eg Kent County FA, psychological resilience): dissemination of team psychology research for FA employees to enhance employment practice.
- Semi-professional rugby union clubs (eg Henley Hawks, High Wycombe): dissemination of team psychology research to players and management of clubs to enhance practice.
- Individuals with disabilities (eg Cerebral Palsy): programme established for active outdoor learning in Portugal.

The promotion of impact from the NFE project has been the focus of structured support and effort. New projects have been developed with former partners in NFE in time made available for travelling and financial support (eg Festeu was encouraged to attend a seminar organised by the French Ministry of the Youth in Paris where the innovative methodologies developed during NFE project were disseminated among other NGO and youth organisations in France). Support was also given to staff to enable them to work with small organisations in Romania where small companies and charities were using NFE methods of enhancing non-formal education amongst youth at risk groups. The unit also facilitated external collaboration with professional bodies, and community groups to enable impact to be achieved.

In its pursuit of impact, the Group was supported by wider University resources (administrative support, travel, time) plus funding to secure specific expertise (eg Visiting Professor Riddick; Research Assistant Stan). Furthermore, funding has been provided for early career researchers (eg Stone) to be bought out of other duties and allowed increased time for dissemination to non-academic users. The University provides funding for dissemination of research at practitioner national and international conferences towards the uptake of research, and has encouraged the Group to seek cross-faculty collaboration to maximise impact through shared networks and expertise.

c. Strategy and plans

The following indicate the future strategic goals for the research Group:

1. Achieve impact through the application of motion capture technology within the elite sport

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setting. To illustrate, a project is being pilot-tested that involves Watford Football Club and its sport science team. Through collaboration with leading technology companies (Centroid and Hego), motion capture technology is being employed to enhance soccer technique and rehabilitation from injury.

2. Conduct evaluation-research and consultancy for National Governing Bodies of sport and government sports agencies through externally funded projects (e.g. Football Association workforce development).
3. Provide community consultancy for public sector, not-for-profit and voluntary sports associations.
4. Develop a sport, health and exercise science performance programme for semi-professional and professional athletes and teams based on the Group's research expertise in this area.
5. Implement a health and wellbeing project that achieves social benefits through collaboration with health providers (eg NHS) on a national scale.
6. Disseminate the Group's research through contributions to a range of beneficiaries' web/ social media and trade journals. To illustrate, within the area of performance management collaborations are being formed with a leading company that includes development of publications that are circulated to global blue-chip businesses.

d. Relationship to case studies

The relationship between the support for impact and the case studies is centred on the research Group's strategy to develop research through partnerships with external organisations. This, in part, is also shaped by the wider University's mission to "drive professional and creative influence". The case studies illustrate this through an alignment between researcher interest and external partner policy and plans. This approach is now also influencing the Group's future strategy for research through the identification of wider synergies between social policy, sport science, exercise, health and wellbeing.

For example, the theme of ageing is a key aspect of one case study (Movers & Shakers). This research highlighted how older participants' mental and physical wellbeing was enhanced through health promotion interventions in socially disadvantaged communities. This is fostering new research developments within the group across physical, psychological and social aspects of health and wellbeing. The research findings presented in both case studies have influenced the way that the research Group is planning to enhance research impact further through the external partnerships formed. The potential strength of the research Group's work lies in its ability to enhance social, health and exercise benefits for a range of practitioners and users. The practical resources that emerged from the NFE project exemplify the direction the Group is now taking in order to achieve impact within local, national and international contexts.