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Institution: Canterbury Christ Church University
Unit of Assessment: Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism (26)
a. Context

The most *immediate users* are policy-makers and practitioners that have funded UoA research (eg Department of Health (DoH), NHS, Sport England, Youth Sport Trust), although immediate users comprise all those UoA research has been designed to directly influence or hold to account. *Intermediate users* comprise policy-makers and practitioners influenced by the UoA's research via its influence on the policy, practice or advice of immediate users (eg School Games Organisers, County Sport Partnerships, Health Promotion Officers, NHS Consultants, Sport Development Officers, Schoolteachers), and secondary users who have engaged with UoA research and applied it to their own context (eg Department of Education, Sport England, SportCoachUK). The same organisations may be different users for different projects – eg Sport England has funded work from the UoA (REF3b1), but also used work developed for others to inform its practice (REF3b2). Ultimately, the UoA seeks to benefit *end users*, either directly through, for example, translating the UoA's research into bespoke scientifically informed advice to performers and coaches, or indirectly through influencing immediate and intermediate users. End users comprise sport performers, event attendees and tourists, and those among schoolchildren and young people, the less active and clinical populations who might benefit from physical activity, exercise or sport participation.

For immediate and intermediate users, key impacts are to influence, inform, develop, change or provide the rationale for policy or practice, including providing support for, or against, strategic investment. Examples include: research for the NHS to support investment in heath walks in East Kent; research (with collaborators) to develop an expert statement on emotion regulation in sport for BASES; research for StreetGames to ensure doorstep sport programmes are additional rather than replacement provision for participants. For end users, key impacts are to influence or change behaviour, enhance performance or experience, or improve health markers. Examples include: research with University College Hospitals to stratify ischaemic heart disease patients for exercise programmes; translational research on running economy with Invicta East Kent Athletics Club to improve performance; research for SportLeadersUK to improve the skills of sport volunteers.

Both the user groups and the types of impact vary across the UoA's 3 research themes, with ***Policy, Politics and Education*** largely addressing policy-makers and practitioners as immediate and intermediate users, and through them impacting upon end users, ***Human Performance*** largely directly addressing end users through translational research and, although not currently at the stage of development to extensively do so, ***Clinical Exercise Science*** seeking to address the programme provision of immediate and intermediate users, and the health markers of end users.

b. Approach to impact

UoA priorities for impact are to: (i) target research towards impactful questions; (ii) maximise ownership of the delivery of impact; (iii) develop virtuous impact circles through strong relationships with users. From this starting point, each theme has a different approach according to its resource driver and research model. ***Clinical Exercise Science*** addresses distinct and impactful questions relating to the potential benefits of isometric and ambulatory (walking) exercise for clinical populations (priority i). However, work in the period has focused on moving beyond proof of concept to a point where large scale multi-centre controlled experimental designs can be developed to demonstrate efficacy and cost effectiveness. Clearly, at this stage it is not yet appropriate to seek to impact upon programmes, although there are process impacts on, for example, research participants in cardiac rehabilitation studies, whilst patents have been filed for isometric exercise devices to facilitate future impact delivery (priority ii). Also, the development of large scale controlled experimental designs has involved engagement and collaboration with immediate and intermediate users across 9 NHS Trusts and in the wider health professions, which will promote impact once efficacy and cost-effectiveness is established (priority iii). For most of the period, the approach to generating impact for ***Human Performance*** was ad hoc. Staff were encouraged and supported to engage with performers and coaches – eg national CPD work with BASES, research with Kent Fire and Rescue on fitness levels required of fire-fighters, work featured in the national and local media on swimming ergometry, and some limited regional and local sport science support. This work was supported directly by the UoA, but also by University central support services (priority ii), such as the media relations team, which successfully pitched a story on swimming ergometry research to the BBC featured on Bang Goes the Theory on BBC2

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and across South East BBC media in April 2011. However, in 2012 a strategic decision was made (REF5) to invest £30,000 of HEIF and QR funding in a translational research model for **Human Performance**, in which *SportsLab*, a new applied translational research service, would develop impact activities to directly translate research on cycling efficiency, running economy and the psychological factors that regulate or control performance into bespoke scientifically-informed advice for regional and local end users (performers and coaches)(priority ii). In its first year *SportsLab* has delivered support to individuals, but also to corporate end users including Kent County Council's high level FANS (Free Access to National Sportspeople) network, Kent County Cricket Club, and the Puerto Rican Olympic team, whilst research on placebo effects on sport performance will be featured on the BBC's Horizon programme in early 2014.

The most developed approach to impact is within **Policy, Politics and Education** through the *Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (SPEAR)*. *SPEAR* takes a pro-active approach, seeking to directly generate impact with and through immediate and intermediate users (priority ii), whilst also generating wider debate among end users in the general public which can help, where appropriate, to hold policy makers to account. *SPEAR*'s active media relations strategy, supported by University media relations, maintains a database of all journalists who have commented upon or covered *SPEAR* research, and ensures they are directly contacted when new research insights are disseminated (priority iii). This has led to national (eg The Observer on sport spectators, 2/4/09; The Guardian on HE engagement with London 2012, 12/4/12) and international (eg USA Today, 21/6/12, International Herald and Tribune, 15/2/11, on sport participation) print and broadcast media (eg BBC Breakfast News, 20/7/2012, Sky News, 19/12/2010, on Olympic legacies) coverage. Beyond *SPEAR*'s work, research on the politics of ethical tourism, for example, has featured in Times Higher Education (4/1/2008), The Independent (22/11/2010) and Humo in Belgium (5/7/2013). *SPEAR*'s Director and Associate Director have a remit to develop and nurture relationships with immediate users to help secure funding and promote *SPEAR*'s research (priority iii). For example, ongoing relationships with Podium, for whom *SPEAR* undertook annual research (2010-2012), ensured that *SPEAR* research on HE engagement with London 2012 was used by Universities UK to launch Universities Week in April 2012, at which it was endorsed by David Willet's MP, the Minister for HE. Members of *SPEAR* project teams are also supported to develop and maintain relationships with users, both by ensuring continuous contact with grant liaison officers during the course of funded research, and by being funded to attend advisory groups and meetings beyond funded projects (priority iii). For example, the DoH was first introduced to *SPEAR*'s work in 2008 as part of the ESRC Seminar Series on social, cultural and health impacts of London 2012. The DoH staff involved were a key part of the steering group for the subsequently commissioned systematic review of evidence for Olympic health legacies, and the *SPEAR* project team continued to work with DoH staff after project completion to promote and disseminate results to intermediate users, by providing training materials and directly delivering over 20 workshops around the country on implementing the findings. This led to a further DoH commission to develop an evidence-based guide to Olympic health legacies and to a wide take-up of the research among intermediate users throughout England (REF3b1). Furthermore, when the DoH lead left to join StreetGames, the relationship continued and StreetGames funded *SPEAR* to evaluate additionality of its national doorstep sport programme. *SPEAR* staff continued to support StreetGames beyond the funded work by sitting on its research advisory board. Following initial engagement as intermediate users, *inter alia* SportsLeadersUK, the Greater London Authority and Kent FA each funded work, with research for the latter on the wider impact of football underpinning Kent FA's 2012-15 football strategy emphasising the localism agenda and promoting community impacts of football to secure local resources. *SPEAR* staff further leveraged impact by presenting at the Kent FA strategy launch and supporting related media coverage. This relationship building work has been pro-actively developed to support the evidence-informed policy model for **Policy, Politics and Education** research, and is part of a 'virtuous circle' in which relationships are built with immediate users, through or prior to funded projects, with relationships maintained beyond the life of projects to assist immediate users in enhancing the engagement of a wider network of intermediate users with the research, thus ensuring primary and secondary impacts, building wider relationships, and contributing to the generation of further research income (priority iii).

c. Strategy and plans

Future impact strategy varies across each of the UoA's 3 themes, and is as follows:

Clinical Exercise Science: It would not be responsible to seek programme impacts in advance

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of the outcomes of the large scale controlled experimental research into isometric and ambulatory exercise described in section b, but should outcomes be positive, then working with immediate and intermediate users engaged in and through the research (NHS consultants, nurse practitioners and GPs) the UoA will allocate time and resources for advocacy work, and promotion and development of the cost-effectiveness case to seek programme changes to impact on end users in clinical populations. Beyond clinical populations, work will be developed to explore the feasibility of off-the-shelf isometric exercise as a preventative measure for those at risk of hypertension, and possibly for mild hypertensives. Protocols to risk stratify ischaemic heart disease patients into specific exercise programmes will also be developed.

Human Performance: *SportsLab* will focus on building a local and regional base of individual and corporate clients for bespoke scientifically-informed advice derived from UoA research on the factors that optimise performance through improving cycling efficiency and running economy, and on the ways in which emotional regulation, particularly via counterfactual-thinking, might enhance performance. As Director, **Coleman** will be supported with time and resources (including technician support), while other key staff will be supported with time to develop and deliver services relating to their research expertise. In addition, regardless of the outcome of a research funding application currently under consideration with the World Anti-Doping Agency, specific resources will be allocated to support the development of anti-doping advocacy using research demonstrating placebo effects on performance. Ultimately, the strategy is to develop a similar virtuous impact circle commensurate with translational research as exists for **Policy, Politics and Education's** evidence-informed research (section b) and, in particular, an active media relations strategy will be developed to capitalise on the potential of **Human Performance** research to act as an interest primer for other research in the UoA.

Policy, Politics and Education: Impact strategy will continue to focus on seeking to both inform and hold to account immediate and intermediate research users for the benefit of end users through the general approach to impact described in section b. However, planned activity in three areas is worthy of specific mention. Firstly, work with the YST, the DoH and SportsLeadersUK will develop a model for controlled experimental designs with robust national samples that will demonstrate how the quality of the evidence base to inform school-based sport and physical activity policy and practice can be enhanced. This will develop *SPEAR's* existing work, where its national repeated measures sample as part of its Change4Life evaluation (REF3b2) is already exceptional in an area where cross sectional research designs are the norm. Secondly, time and resources will be allocated to exercise and physical activity communication activities to: (i) draw on embryonic research into attitudes to exercise during pregnancy to communicate how exercise might positively feature during pregnancy to both intermediate users (midwives, GPs) and end users (pregnant women); (ii) draw on Olympic health legacy research to stimulate a debate among intermediate users in the medical and health promotion professions about the efficacy of communication of current physical activity guidelines to the least active. Thirdly, to continue to seek to lever Olympic legacy research in tourism, culture, sport and health to: (i) contribute to the ongoing national debate about the delivery of legacy and advocate the development of a post-legacy policy discourse; (ii) draw out the relevant implications of the research for intermediate, and potentially immediate, users hosting future Olympic Games and other events of all sizes.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies are excellent examples of the approach to impact described for the evidence-informed policy research in **Policy, Politics and Education**. REF3b1 illustrates the virtuous circle described in section b, with 4 projects building on each other to develop impacts through *SPEAR's* strong relationships with immediate users and implementation work with intermediate users to ensure best evidence informed policy and practice. Furthermore, following a change of government, *SPEAR's* media relations strategy ensured the research continued to have impact in highlighting the varying extent to which evolving legacy policy continued to be evidence-informed. REF3b2 illustrates how *SPEAR's* very strong relationship with its immediate research funders, in which funders have clearly and explicitly highlighted both what they have done to improve programme design, and what they expect intermediate users should do to improve practice, in response to the recommendations of the research, has demonstrably benefitted less active children as end users. Impacts also extended to intermediate users who were able to draw on robust evidence to inform their own policies and practices for developing sport and physical activity in school settings, which are expected to extend to end users in the future.