



UNIVERSITY OF  
PORTSMOUTH

# MIND & MOVEMENT

## ISSUE 1

## SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY, SPORT & HEALTH SCIENCES

### WELCOME

HEAD OF SCHOOL - DR MIKE RAYNER

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Mind and Movement, the magazine of the University of Portsmouth's School of Psychology, Sport, and Health Sciences. Our School is dedicated to advancing education, research, and practice across diverse disciplines related to Psychology, Sport and Health Sciences. By integrating expertise from various fields, we offer a holistic approach to understanding and enhancing health, well-being, and human performance. Whether you are a current, prospective, or former student, or simply interested in our School, we extend a warm welcome to you. We hope Mind and Movement will help you stay connected with our vibrant community and the advancements we are making.



### BEYOND ACADEMIA

#### EXPERT CONTRIBUTES TO GOVERNMENT ROUNDTABLE ON PRISON TECHNOLOGY

In October 2024, in the context of the prison capacity crisis, Dr. Dominic Pearson was one of 20 international experts invited to participate in an exclusive roundtable chaired by the UK Government Office for Science and the Ministry of Justice. The meeting aimed to assess the implications of technology in community-based custody, focusing on offender behaviour and public perception. Under confidentiality, they explored the research evidence for how technology impacts rehabilitation and breach prevention, as well as how such solutions may align with British views on justice. This consultation was said to be crucial in shaping official strategies for technology-led custody solutions.

#### HEART NEWS FEATURE - GENDER STEREOTYPES IN DOMESTIC ABUSE

In November 2024, Dr. Dominic Pearson was interviewed by Heart News about his latest article, which gained attention following a Netflix documentary on male domestic abuse victim Richard Spencer (*My Wife, My Abuser: The Secret Footage*). Per research and practice, bi-directional abuse is more common than is often publicly portrayed. The study involved public evaluations of abuse scenarios and discussions with MSc Forensic Psychology trainees, revealing that cultural stereotypes heavily influence perceptions, often excusing female abusers even in female-dominated scenarios. The discussion called for professional training to challenge gender assumptions, advocated for a national conversation recognising domestic abuse as a dynamic behaviour pattern, and urged for support for families before situations escalated.

## RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

### EMPOWERING DISABLED VOICE

Juliette Gudknecht advocated for embedding disabled voices in education policy at a UNESCO event on December 3rd, 2024. The event, hosted by the SDG4 Youth and Student Network in partnership with UNESCO and the university's Centre for Interaction, Development and Diversity, addressed barriers to higher education for persons with disabilities. Participants emphasised the need for transnational efforts to dismantle ableist barriers and include disabled voices in inclusive education discussions. Dr. Steven Kapp also spoke, stressing the importance of disability cultural competence training.

### UNPACKING GROUP

Dr Sophie Milward from the School has received a £270,000 Leverhulme Trust grant to study group dynamics. Her research aims to identify mechanisms used when interacting with diverse groups, moving beyond traditional one-on-one studies. The project will examine factors like group size, relationships, and culture across the UK, Uganda, and South Korea. Dr Milward will use 'task co-representation' to understand how people mentally share tasks in groups, potentially uncovering limits to group collaboration and implications for social cognition theories

### ANNUAL PGR PRESENTATION DAY

The School recently hosted its annual Psychology PGR Presentation Day on December 6th 2024. This event provided an excellent platform for our talented postgraduate researchers to share their innovative findings with peers and faculty members. The day was filled with engaging presentations that showcased the diverse range of psychological research being conducted within our school.



## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

### EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE FUELS CONTINUED SUCCESS

The School of Psychology, Sport and Health Sciences remains committed to providing an exceptional student experience. In the most recent National Student Survey (NSS), four out of five of our UG programmes outperformed the sector average for overall student satisfaction. Similarly, our PGT courses also excelled in the most recent Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), with five out of seven courses ranking in the top two sector quartiles. Two other courses, not included in the most recent survey due to low response numbers, also achieved top-tier satisfaction in the previous year. As well as this, both sides of the School scored in the top two quartiles for overall satisfaction in the most recent Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). This reflects our ongoing commitment to academic excellence and student satisfaction across all levels. Looking ahead to the 2025 surveys, we are confident that, as one unified School, we will continue to build on these excellent outcomes to deliver even stronger student satisfaction outcomes.



## GLOBAL CORNER

### PREMIER LEAGUE GRADUATION CELEBRATED

The School has a strong track record of partnerships with external organisations, both in the UK and internationally, enhancing educational opportunities and professional development.

One of our longest-standing collaborations is with the Premier League, where the University of Portsmouth validates Master's level awards in Football Leadership and Management. This programme equips professionals with essential skills for the football industry.

Before Christmas, Dr. Mike Rayner (Head of School) and Dr. Kieren McEwan (Programme Lead for Educational Partnerships) attended the graduation celebrations in Sheffield for the latest cohort. Dr. McEwan had the honour of delivering the graduation address, celebrating students' dedication and achievements.

We are incredibly proud of our graduates, who have successfully balanced academic study with professional commitments. Their hard work has prepared them for future success, and we extend our heartfelt congratulations to them all. We look forward to seeing their continued impact in football leadership and management.



## SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

### PROMOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH THRIVING ENVIRONMENT

The 31st of March 2025 marks the end of a 20-month, £120,000 innovation contract between the University of Portsmouth and Sport Wales. Through the contract, led by Dr Daniel Brown and Professor Chris Wagstaff (both School of Psychology, Sport and Health Sciences), a group of consultants partnered with Platform Wellbeing, a mental health provider, to deliver a programme of work to develop Mental Health through Thriving Environments across Wales on behalf of Sport Wales. Sport Wales's aim for the project was to (i) challenge narratives that mental health is an individual issue only, (ii) change cultures and influence those in leadership positions, (iii) build safe and trusting relationships, and (iv) create sport environments wherein people feel safe enough to thrive. The work focused on providing guidance and bespoke support to Sport Wales, its partner sport National Governing Bodies, and sport organisation members on how to create thriving environments. From a thriving environment perspective, delivery drew on Dr Brown and Professor Wagstaff's work on issues of human thriving, enablers of thriving environments, psychological safety, vulnerability, and organisational culture in sports. In total, staff from 15 sports attended workshops, with several sports receiving bespoke follow-up support to disperse understanding within their organisations and member clubs.



As the momentum of the project evolved, additional groups of potential stakeholders became interested in the thriving environments project. In response, delivery extended to staff from Team Wales (the national performance team for major events), Disability Sport Wales, Colegau Cymru (representatives of the national colleges), Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Wales' largest youth organisation providing opportunities for children and young people through the medium of Welsh), and StreetGames (a sport for development charity working across the UK). The University of Portsmouth, Platform Wellbeing, and Sport Wales have worked to establish a common understanding of language and terminology, shared resources, and a clear national message to enable system-wide impact in sport in Wales.

## GLOBAL CORNER

### EXPANDING HORIZONS: INITIATIVES & OPPORTUNITIES

As a new school, we are committed to growing our global profile with a diverse international student and staff community. We continue to expand our transnational education (TNE) opportunities with strategic partners, ensuring worldwide access to Portsmouth education through digital delivery. Recent developments include the launch of our franchised course with Kaplan Singapore in June and ongoing work on franchised and validated courses with MAHSA Malaysia. Our three dual degree programmes with Edith Cowan University in Australia have been highly successful, and we are now developing additional dual degree courses with Brock University in Canada. In response to this growth, Dr Hannah Clarke has taken on the role of Dual Degrees Course Lead.

Our commitment to global engagement extends to on-campus students, who have access to exchange programmes, internships, placements, volunteering, and digital collaborations. Deadlines for study abroad sandwich year applications are approaching, with successful students set to be nominated in April. Two students have secured a funded MITACS research internship in Canada, and we are running a virtual exchange programme for Level 6 Psychology students with Tromsø University in Norway. We successfully hosted welcome and induction sessions for our new international students. To further support them, we are pleased to announce that Dr Kagari Shibazaki has taken on the role of International Student Support Tutor. These initiatives are just a few examples of how we are enhancing our global profile, research impact, and student experience. We look forward to continuing this progress and creating more opportunities for our students and staff.

## MEET OUR PGR RESEARCHERS

### LEWIS CLARKE

My name is Lewis Clarke and I am the Lead for Sport Science at the Professional Golfers Association (The PGA). Alongside my industry role, I am a professional doctorate student within the Research Group in Breast Health. My research is in collaboration with the Ladies European Tour and The R&A, focussing on breast and bra health for elite female golfers. I am also the Prof Doc rep for Sport, Exercise and Health.

### LAURA SAUNDERS

I am Laura- a PhD student at the Centre for Comparative and Evolutionary Psychology. My project involved working with keepers from two animal rehabilitation and conservation centres, to understand how these animals progress in certain skills for survival. Aside from my PhD, I have also recently become a Sessional Teaching Fellow which I am thoroughly enjoying. My passions are animals, nature, and just generally being outside. A secret talent of mine is skateboarding, which I can't wait to do more of this summer.

***The separate accounts for the Departments of Psychology and Sport Science will soon be closed.***



## Contact us

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