

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> Loughborough University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> C24, Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Globally influencing physical education policy, curricula and practice in schools		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2004-2016		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Professor Jo Harris	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> <b>Professor of Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 1990-present
Professor Lorraine Cale	Professor of Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy	1996-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality yet over 80% of children worldwide do not meet physical activity for health recommendations. Extensive research on the teaching of health-related physical education (HRPE) in schools by Harris and Cale: 1) Influenced English, Welsh and international physical education policy and curricula development, including UNESCO's "Quality Physical Education Guidelines for Policy-makers" which resulted in the adoption of new PE policies in Qatar and three developing countries (South Africa, Mexico and Zambia), and 2) Enhanced PE teacher education and professional development and improved PE teachers' health-related practices in the UK.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Active children typically report more positive physical, mental, and social health outcomes than inactive children. However, global concerns have been expressed about many children's low levels of physical activity. Governments worldwide have turned to curriculum physical education (PE) as a form of public health investment due to its potential to reach nearly all children and positively influence their physical activity behaviour.</p> <p>Harris and Cale's research has found that, whilst PE is well placed to support children and young people to lead active lifestyles, health-related practices within the subject are variable, inconsistent, and problematic. Their research has played a major role in understanding, addressing, and resolving issues associated with PE's role in promoting active lifestyles. This work has been funded by a range of agencies including the Welsh Assembly, the British Heart Foundation, and the Youth Sport Trust. This has resulted in a substantive body of research exploring the role of PE in promoting active lifestyles and new and important insights, guidance, and recommendations. Specifically, Harris and Cale's research has focused on:</p>		
<p><b>i. Critiquing and addressing the fitness orientation and domination of health-related PE curricula nationally and internationally</b></p>		
<p>Harris and Cale identified PE teachers' practices associated with the promotion of physical activity to be narrow, fitness orientated, and frequently dominated by performative practices such as the excessive and compulsory use of fitness testing [R1, R3, R5]. They considered such practices to be potentially counterproductive to the goal of promoting physical activity</p>		

and, based on their findings, produced guidance and practical recommendations to enhance PE teachers' practice in this area.

**ii. Emphasising the need for effective health-related PE initial teacher education and professional development**

Harris and Cale [R2, R4, R6] highlighted the marginal attention paid to health within PE teacher education programmes and the limitations of health-related PE teacher education, especially the school-based component. They also found a lack of subsequent health-related PE professional development to support PE teachers as well as a low uptake by PE teachers of the limited development opportunities that were available. Harris and Cale [R6] evidenced that, for physical activity to be effectively promoted within PE, teachers need to increase their awareness and use of activity promoting pedagogies. Examples of these pedagogies have been co-designed and implemented with teachers and have involved the adoption of new activity promoting principles, and resolving common activity promoting paradoxes within practice. Harris and Cale have found that such a shift towards effective health-related pedagogies significantly enhances PE's vast potential to promote active lifestyles.

**3. References to the research** (indicative maximum of six references)

- R1** Harris, J., & Cale, L. (2007). Children's fitness testing: A feasibility study. *Health Education Journal*, 66(2), 153-172. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1177/0017896907076754>
- R2** Harris, J., Cale, L., & Musson, H. (2012). The predicament of primary physical education: a consequence of 'insufficient' ITT and 'ineffective' CPD? *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 17(4): 367-381. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2011.582489>
- R3** Cale, L., Harris, J., & Chen, M H. (2012). Monitoring health, activity and fitness in physical education: its current and future state of health. *Sport, Education and Society*, 19(4), 376-397. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2012.681298>
- R4** Harris, J. (2013). Physical education teacher education students' knowledge, perceptions and experiences of promoting healthy, active lifestyles in secondary schools. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 19(5): 466-480. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2013.769506>
- R5** Harris, J., & Leggett, G. (2015). Testing, training and tensions: The expression of health within physical education curricula in secondary schools in England and Wales. *Sport, Education and Society*, 20(3-4): 423-441. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2013.779241>
- R6** Cale, L., Harris, J., Duncombe, R., & Musson, H. (2016). Promoting physical activity in secondary schools: Growing expectations, 'same old' issues? *European Journal of Physical Education*, 22(4): 526-544. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X15623774>.

The above papers include research which has been supported by competitively awarded funding by the Welsh Assembly, the British Heart Foundation, and the Youth Sport Trust, and are published in peer-reviewed international journals of the highest quality [R2,3,4,5] or the most well established [R6] in the field.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

Harris and Cale's research has been instrumental in changing PE policy and curricula globally, and in equipping teachers with the knowledge, understanding and skills to effectively teach children to lead active lifestyles.

The two specific impacts are described below.

### **1. Influenced national and transnational physical education policy and curricula development**

Harris and Cale's research [R1, R2, R3] radically influenced health-related PE curricula development in England [S1], Wales [S2], Singapore [S3] and Qatar [S4]. It resulted in a move away from a narrow, fitness and performance orientated approach to health to an inclusive, holistic 'physical activity for life' focus. Sue Wilkinson MBE, Chief Executive Officer of the Association for Physical Education (afPE) stated:

*'The Department for Education...has utilised their research to inform and impact on PE policy and curricula; in particular, it has supported the continued strengthening of the position of health within successive PE curricula and has been instrumental in shaping the 'healthy, active lifestyles' focus within the current national curriculum for physical education. In addition, it has resulted in changes to health-related practices in schools' [S1].*

Their research informed successive versions of afPE's (the lead association for PE in the UK) Health Position Paper [S5], and the recommendations from this work were adopted within the association's policy statement on fitness testing.

Regarding the reach of this impact in Wales, Elaine McNish, formerly a Physical Education and Health Advisor to the Welsh Government, stated that Harris and Cale's work:

*'directly influenced the direction that the Welsh Government took, as they decided against commissioning fitness testing, and the work also helped shape understanding around how to do fitness testing in an appropriate manner...this fed into the thinking of future projects and strategy development within the Welsh Government' [S2].*

The need for Harris and Cale's approach to PE curricula was also recognised and hence adopted in Qatar and Singapore. In Qatar, the approach was embedded in their national PE Curriculum Standards [S4], whilst in Singapore it led to changes to the content and focus of their PE curriculum [S3]. Wee Boon, a Physical Education Advisor in the Department for Education in Singapore contacted Harris in November 2013 to say:

*'We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge your efforts as well as Dr Cale. We extracted and referenced... papers written by you both. These...were used to convince our top management (ministerial level) about the need for changes in fitness testing' [S3].*

These changes were implemented from 2013 onwards, resulting in a more holistic and health-orientated PE curricula for all children in Singapore.

Further policy development work [R2, S5] contributed to UNESCO's 2015 Quality Physical Education (QPE) Guidelines for Policy-makers [S6]. These guidelines formed the cornerstone of UNESCO's QPE Policy Project [S7], which supported South Africa, Mexico and Zambia to revise their national PE policies to be "inclusive, developmentally appropriate and child-centered". The Institute of Sport and Development (South Africa) hailed this project as "one of the most remarkable and significant global initiatives in Physical Education of the last century." [S7].

In 2019, following the QPE project, the Department of Basic Education announced that it had "taken a deliberate step, through the curriculum, of ensuring that Physical Education constitutes an integral component of the holistic education of learners." As a result of the QPE Policy Project, a national strategy for QPE in Mexico was implemented from 2019

onwards, making physical education a key part of education for **all** Mexican children, and especially those in deprived, rural and indigenous areas [S7]. In 2018, as a direct result of their involvement in the QPE project, the Ministry of General Education & Ministry of Youth Sport and Child Development committed ZMW 12.62 million (GBP 934k; Feb 2018) to implementing a new National Physical Education Policy to “Support quality Physical Education and Sports (PES) in Zambian schools that is grounded in the equality of opportunity for all pupils to access a well-balanced and inclusive curriculum.” [S7].

Harris and Cale’s work has therefore influenced government policy around the world, leading to curricula changes in schools and consequent changes to children and young people’s experiences of PE.

## **2. Enhanced PE teacher education and professional development and improved PE teachers’ health-related practices**

Harris and Cale’s research [R4, R5, R6] led to improvements to health-related learning within PE teacher education and professional development in the UK. In particular, it significantly increased and broadened the focus on health. Many thousands of trainee and experienced PE teachers and teacher educators have benefited from Harris and Cale’s research-informed health-related initial and professional development which they designed to support PE teachers in promoting active lifestyles, both within and beyond national government-funded Physical Education and School Sport programmes in England and Wales.

Recognising the issues concerning HRPE practices in schools and Harris and Cale’s reputation and expertise, Baroness Sue Campbell CBE, the CEO of the Youth Sport Trust at the time and also Government Advisor to the Department for Education and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2000-2003), commissioned Harris and Cale in 2001 to develop ‘Fit for Life’ curriculum resources targeted at 14 to 16-year olds. These resources, with associated training, were rolled out nationally and included a focus on setting achievable targets to help this age group reach recommended levels of physical activity. Harris and Cale’s research and development work therefore led to significant changes in the approach to health-related learning in PE. These changes included an increased emphasis on promoting active lifestyles and broadening of the content to include teaching about the full range of health benefits of physical activity, the physical activity for health recommendations, the monitoring of activity levels, and the development of skills and strategies to overcome barriers and lead an active lifestyle.

In the above ways, Harris and Cale have addressed a notable ‘gap’ in the provision of initial and continuing professional development for PE teachers and have equipped them with the knowledge and skills to support millions of pupils to lead healthy, active lifestyles [R4, R5, R6]. As a former Head of PE who used Harris and Cale’s work over an extended period stated in 2019:

*‘Jo and Lorraine’s exemplary work through nationwide professional development courses, articles, books and conferences has provided teachers with the practical ideas and confidence to make the aim (of promoting active lifestyles) a reality’ and ‘I believe that few people have contributed more to advancing good practice in our subject than Jo Harris and Lorraine Cale’ [S8].*

Harris and Cale’s research and development work also strengthened the alignment between PE teachers’ ‘fitness for life’ philosophies/policies and their actual practices between 2015-2019, as reported by all PE teachers and colleagues who participated in Harris and Cale’s Promoting Active Lifestyles (PAL) research project [S9, S10]. This project involved working with teachers to implement and evaluate the impact of Harris and Cale’s broader, more inclusive, holistic ‘physical activity for life’ approach to the promotion of active lifestyles and raised teacher awareness and changed their practice. For example, teachers reported:

*This all needs sorting out and quickly. It's our responsibility to match what we say and do. It has made me do things differently for sure [S9].*

*Between us, we came up with loads of different ideas for solving some of the contradictions...the ideas included making sure that every unit of work includes a health message, helping pupils understand why fitness helps them in everyday life, and sharing health and fitness apps that teachers have found useful for PE. I felt very good about the session afterwards...it prompted a lot of good debate and action. I know some colleagues are doing things differently in their schools as they are sending me emails to let me know how they're getting on and I'm passing this information on to others [S9].*

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- S1** Statement from Sue Wilkinson MBE, Chief Executive Officer of the Association for Physical Education (2020)
- S2** Statement from Elaine McNish, former Lead for Physical Activity and Health for the Welsh Government (2020)
- S3** Email from Wee Boon, Physical Education Advisor, Department for Education, Singapore (2013)
- S4** Qatar Physical Education Curriculum Standards (QPECS) Guidance (2018)
- S5** Harris, J. (2008) Association for Physical Education: Physical Education's Contribution to Public Health. afPE Summary Position Paper. Physical Education Matters, 3, 8.
- S6** UNESCO (2015). Quality Physical Education Guidelines for Policy Makers. Paris: UNESCO
- S7** UNESCO (2018). Quality Physical Education (QPE) Policy Project: Zambia National Physical Education Policy Implementation Framework; QPE in the Republic of South Africa Desk Review; and QPE in Mexico
- S8** Statement from David Geldart, Assistant Headteacher (formerly Head of Physical Education), St. Mary's School, Menston, Leeds (2019)
- S9** Harris, J., Cale, L., Hooper, O. (2020). Prompting pedagogical change through promoting active lifestyles (PAL) paradoxes. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17, 7965. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph 17217965>
- S10** Harris, J., Cale, L., Hooper, O. (2020). The promoting active lifestyles (PAL) project: A principle-based approach to pedagogical change. The Curriculum Journal. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/curj.99>