

<b>Institution:</b> Solent University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 24		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Sport, diversity and social change: The Kick It Out Inclusive Leadership in Football Award		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2013-2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Richard Elliott	Associate Professor	2007-present
Dr Rory Magrath	Lecturer	2014-present
Dr Ben Powis	Lecturer	2017-present
Dr Stefan Lawrence	Senior Lecturer	2013-2015
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014-present		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Research at Solent University has impacted on the work of Kick It Out (KIO), football's equality and inclusion organisation which works to address the high-profile issue of discrimination in football. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solent research underpinned Kick It Out's "Inclusive Leadership in Football Award", an educational programme which has trained over 70 football industry professionals since its launch in 2015. This is now a central component of Kick It Out's work.</li> <li>• Learners have been recruited from the Football Association, the Professional Footballers' Association, the Premier League, Arsenal FC, Liverpool FC, Everton FC, Chelsea FC, Southampton FC, West Ham United FC and Bournemouth FC. The programme has been pivotal in persuading and supporting the game's stakeholders to take equality seriously.</li> <li>• The programme has changed attitudes in football.</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Research on discrimination in football has been conducted under Solent University's internationally renowned football programme. Solent has a longstanding partnership with Kick It Out, an organisation established in 1993 by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) to tackle racism and discrimination in football. The Kick It Out Equality and Diversity Awareness in Football Award (later renamed the Inclusive Leadership in Football Award), a training programme launched in 2015 for football professionals, was designed and developed in conjunction with Solent University, drawing on Solent research as follows.</p> <p>Lawrence's 2015 research [3.1] examines representations and audience interpretations of Cristiano Ronaldo that reveal the complexities of white male identity formation and how white male identities can be interpreted through and in the context of football. Facilitated by a conception of contingent whiteness, Lawrence (and co-author Kevin Hylton – Leeds Beckett University) argue that white British men's interpretations of Ronaldo's whiteness are inextricably linked to discourses of 'race', masculinities and football, all central themes explored in the Equality and Diversity Award.</p>		

Magrath's 2017 research [3.2] speaks directly to the key themes explored in the Equality and Diversity Award. It examines the foundations of equality and diversity, the power of words/language, and the nature of football 'banter'. This research is based on 60 semi-structured interviews with Premier League academy footballers and shows four key findings: (positive) attitudes towards homosexuality; football language; football banter; and football friendships.

Elliott's 2017 edited volume [3.3] explores issues relating to race, racism, gender and sexuality over 25 years of the development of football broadly. These analyses include case-studies of institutional racism as it relates to the lack of black coaches and managers in Premier League teams, and the changing cultural relationship between football and homophobia. These issues relate directly to the development of the Equality and Diversity Award.

Magrath's 2018 research [3.4] recognises the importance of anti-discrimination policy and the effect it has had in reducing overt forms of discrimination inside English football stadia – a topic that forms a key part of the Equality and Diversity Award. This article combines an institutional analysis with 53 semi-structured interviews with football fans to judge the success of the FA's anti-homophobia policy. It shows that while some progress has been made, there are numerous shortcomings in attempts to implement change on the game.

Powis' (2018) research explores another protected characteristic that is central to the Equality and Diversity Award - disability. Across the five units of study, the Award explores a variety of disability-related issues such as the impact of the 2010 Equality Act, the significance of terminology in both the workplace and in sport, and accessibility. This is underpinned by Powis' examination of disabled peoples' experiences of playing sport at both a recreational and elite level and the multiple attitudinal barriers to sporting participation [3.5]. In the context of disability football, his research also critiques the process of classification and explores the role of disability-specific terminology in sport [3.6]. These issues are particularly relevant for football coaches and development officers – both disabled and non-disabled – who work with disabled players and fans.

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

3.1 Hylton, K and Lawrence, S (2015). 'Reading Ronaldo: Contingent whiteness in the football media'. *Soccer & Society* 16 (5-6), 765-782.

3.2 Magrath, R. (2017). 'Inclusive Masculinities in Contemporary Football'. London: Routledge.

3.3 Elliott, R. (Ed.) (2017). 'The English Premier League: A socio-cultural analysis'. London: Routledge.

3.4 Magrath, R. & Stott, P. (2018). 'Impossible to implement?' The effectiveness of anti-homophobia policy in English professional football. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* (Online First).

3.5 Powis, B. (2018). "We are playing for England, we wear the same shirt; just because I have a disability, it doesn't make me any different": Empowerment, Eliteness and Visually Impaired Cricket. *European Journal of Sport and Society*, 15(2), 189-206.

3.6 Powis, B. and Macbeth, J.L. (2018). "We know who is a cheat and who is not. But what can you do?" Athletes' Perspectives on Classification in Visually Impaired Sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 55(5), 588-602.

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

Discrimination is a longstanding, high-profile issue in football. Let's Kick Racism Out of Football was launched by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) in 1993 to tackle the "rampant racism that was an inescapable feature of the football culture in England" (Lord Herman Ousley, Chair, Kick It Out). The organisation changed its name to Kick It Out in 1997, and since that time the focus of Kick It Out's work has shifted from a focus on racism to tackling all forms of discrimination in football.

Despite great progress since Kick It Out was established, discrimination remains a problem in football. In 2018, Kick It Out received 520 complaints with racism up by 22% and homophobia by 9%. Also, in 2018, Premiership player Raheem Sterling spoke out about abuse that he had suffered. These headlines are the tip of the iceberg with problems running from the top right down to the grassroots of the game.

The Kick It Out Equality and Diversity Awareness in Football Award was launched in 2015 with the aim of "professionally developing and educating the future leaders of football ... to develop critical thinking and leadership skills around issues of equality and diversity within a football context ... to facilitate and enable further inclusive practice throughout the industry" [5.1]. It was renamed "Inclusive Leadership in Football Award" in 2020.

The Solent research described above is central to the development and design of the course curriculum, which includes themes that relate to definitions, foundations of equality and diversity, and the power of words. Solent University also delivers the course, which includes online distance learning, regular interaction with tutors, discussion with other participants via the course forum and contributions from ex-professional footballers. Through the course, Solent research has had impact in the following ways.

**Impact on the work of Kick it Out**

Kick It Out asked Solent University to develop the Award to boost its education work. As part of their investment in the programme, Kick It Out appointed a full-time Education Officer in 2014 to support the implementation of this and other education activities.

Since the course has been running, it has become central in Kick It Out's education work: "The Equality and Diversity Awareness in Football Award, run in partnership with Solent University, is one of the leading pathways for individuals in the football industry to develop a greater understanding of inclusion" Kick It Out [5.2].

"Most of the graduates from the course have been young people whom we hope will be future leaders and influencers in the football industry, for example Peter Harding, a disability sports campaigner who now works for BBC Sport. There are lots of examples of good practice being implemented by alumni of the course, for example Ben Abberstein at AFC Bournemouth and Robyn Kennerdale at Huddersfield Town FC. KIO increasingly regards education as one of its most important activities. This year [2019] we will be committing more staff to make the course available to a greater number of people. This is a significant development and speaks to the success of the course" Kick It Out [5.3].

Kick It Out followed up on this commitment, further investing in the course to launch the revised, updated and renamed Inclusive Leadership in Football Award in partnership with Solent University [5.4].

**Impact on participants**

Since its inception in May 2015 up to the latest evaluation in March 2020, 242 football industry professionals have been trained through the Award [5.5]. Learners have been recruited from the Football Association, the Professional Footballers' Association, the

**Impact case study (REF3)**

Premier League, Arsenal FC, Liverpool FC, Everton FC, Chelsea FC, Southampton FC, West Ham United FC, and Sheffield United FC and Manchester City FC, among others.

The Award has impacted on participants' awareness and understanding of issues as they relate to equality, diversity and discrimination in football:

- "I have all this newfound knowledge, I'm ready to put it into action, so I can do my bit to make the football industry a more inclusive place for all." Elizabeth McGrae, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Sheffield United FC [5.6]
- "This course has given me the confidence to challenge stereotypical remarks, discriminatory behaviour or just people not being thoughtful in what they say. The course ... has allowed me to evaluate how inclusive my workplace is and inspired me to change the things I believe need changing through the right channels with the correct guidelines." Terrie Ritchie, Inclusion Programme Manager, Liverpool FC [5.6]
- "I've gained new knowledge and skills that will help me to promote diversity in the workplace. I've also gained the confidence to challenge discrimination issues when they arise" David Alexander, Clyde FC [5.7]

Overall, the course has impacted on the attitudes and behaviours of learners who have demonstrated new ways of thinking and acting following successful completion of the course. According to Osei Sankofa, Kick It Out's Education Officer, "Everyone has said they feel more empowered to deal with issues head on and be able to look a little bit deeper" [5.8].

**Impact on the football industry**

The learners who have studied on the course represent some of the world's most high-profile sports brands. As such, whilst the application of their newly formed awareness and understanding within their specific organisation will be impactful, this impact could also extend well beyond their own employer, given the profile and visibility of these types of organisations.

Many of these organisations are globally visible in nature. As such, the implementation of behaviours and practices developed as part of the Award, and the cultural change elicited from it, will be visible to many millions of people in a range of socio-cultural contexts.

Mark Sampson, who led the England women's football team to their first ever World Cup semi-final appearance in 2015, was sacked from this role by the FA in 2017 following allegations of discrimination by England players and the emergence of evidence of "inappropriate and unacceptable" behaviour with female players in a previous role with Bristol Academy. Mark Sampson subsequently completed the Award, as reported by the BBC [5.9], saying: "I spent six weeks with Kick It Out on their educational course for equality and diversity. I need to play a more active role in making a difference. It's something I will do for the rest of my life."

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

5.1 'Kick It Out to offer equality awareness course with Southampton Solent University', Kick It Out, 2015

<https://archive.kickitout.org/news/kick-it-out-to-offer-equality-awareness-course-with-southampton-solent-university/#.X4V8ZMJKjX4>

5.2 Kick It Out Annual Report 2016/17

"The Equality and Diversity Awareness in Football Award, run in partnership with Southampton Solent University, is one of the leading pathways for individuals in the football industry to develop a greater understanding of inclusion. The course provides an introduction into equality within the football environment and how this may affect individuals from different cultures and backgrounds from feeling included in the sport. Over 70 professionals from the football industry completed the course during the season."

5.3 Letter from Kick it Out, October 2019.

5.4 'Kick It Out's football leadership learning programme looks forward to another successful year', The Voice, 2020

<https://www.voice-online.co.uk/sport/football/2020/08/20/kick-it-outs-football-leadership-learning-programme-looks-forward-to-another-successful-year/>

5.5 Email from Kick It Out, 2020.

5.6 Equality and Diversity Awareness Award Evaluation Report, Kick It Out, 2020.

5.7 'David completes equality and diversity award', Clyde FC, 2017

<https://www.clydefc.co.uk/news/2017/10/24/5643/#.W-7LsieYTOQ>

5.8 'Kick It Out: Former Charlton defender Osei Sankofa reveals what the organisation does to tackle racism on a daily basis', talkSPORT, 2019

<https://talksport.com/football/642716/kick-it-out-charlton-osei-sankofa-racism/>

5.9 'Mark Sampson: Ex-England boss will 'forever regret' situation after sacking', BBC, 2019

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/46954409>