BASES' POSITION STAND ON THE ONGOING PANDEMIC

Winter 2021

Written on behalf of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences by Drs Andy Smith, Rita de Oliveira, Mark Faghy, Mark Ross, and Neil Maxwell.

Introduction

This Position Stand is aimed at a broad readership including –

- ✓ Heads of Sport and Exercise Science Departments in academia and industry who are looking for guidance on how to lead during the ongoing Pandemic.
- ✓ Students and researchers who are looking for a resource that captures, in part, what has happened to date in British Sport and Exercise Science during the Pandemic.
- ✓ Sport and Exercise Scientists, like the authors, who whilst still amid the Pandemic are attempting to reflect on *what just happened and what next?*

Accordingly, the purposes of this stand are to –

1. Recognise that at the time of writing (Winter 2021) that the Pandemic is not over and that its impact on Sport and Exercise Science will be long lasting and profound. Such recognition is important as there has not yet been time to either i) build back better nor ii) get back to a new normal - meaning that the SES community still needs to support each other and find the right ways to practice, research and teach effectively.

2. Create an historical record of how BASES responded to the Pandemic from which lessons can be learned to inform the Association's response to future crises. Without such a record much may be forgotten along with the learning needed to develop resilience against future global pandemics.

3. Provide advice and resources to members on how to continue to practice safety during the ongoing Pandemic and in its aftermath.

4. Inform members how they can volunteer to support others and how they can access support themselves.

5. Speculate on the ongoing and long-term impact of the Pandemic and the implications of these for members and the Association. Informed and where possible, evidence-based reasoning about the future is important to ensure we prepare the next generation of Scientists for new opportunities and challenges.

This Stand draws heavily on the data and statistics reported by Spiegelhalter and Masters (2021) in their book *Covid by Numbers.* The authors would like to acknowledge their debt to this work and to recommend the book as essential reading for any Sport and Exercise Scientists trying to understand the Pandemic.

To compliment the statistics presented here this Position Stand includes 2 short vignettes. They add to the vignettes included in the BASES Reflective Stand on Reopening. The purpose of these vignettes is to capture specific moments during the Pandemic and lockdown.

The word cloud shown below was generated from the text of this Stand and serves to illustrate its content.

Word Cloud 1: Illustrative Content of the Stand

It is hard to find purpose in a world where a virus can surface rapidly and claim the lives of millions of people across the globe. However, it is possible to find meaning and cause for optimism in how people across society responded to the challenge. Science, sport, and exercise have on the whole, been a force for good during the Pandemic. For example, Sport and Exercise Scientists have and continue to be involved in exercise prescription schemes, delivered exercise sessions, and conducted important research in collaboration with the medical sector aimed at understanding and improving health during the pandemic. Learning the lessons from COVID-19 may help us build back better and improve our resilience to address important and future global challenges.

Captain Sir Tom Moore
30 April 1920 – 2 February 2021

Captain Tom raised £32.79m for the NHS and lifted the spirit of the nation by walking laps of his garden.

He became BBC Sports Personality of the year in 2020.

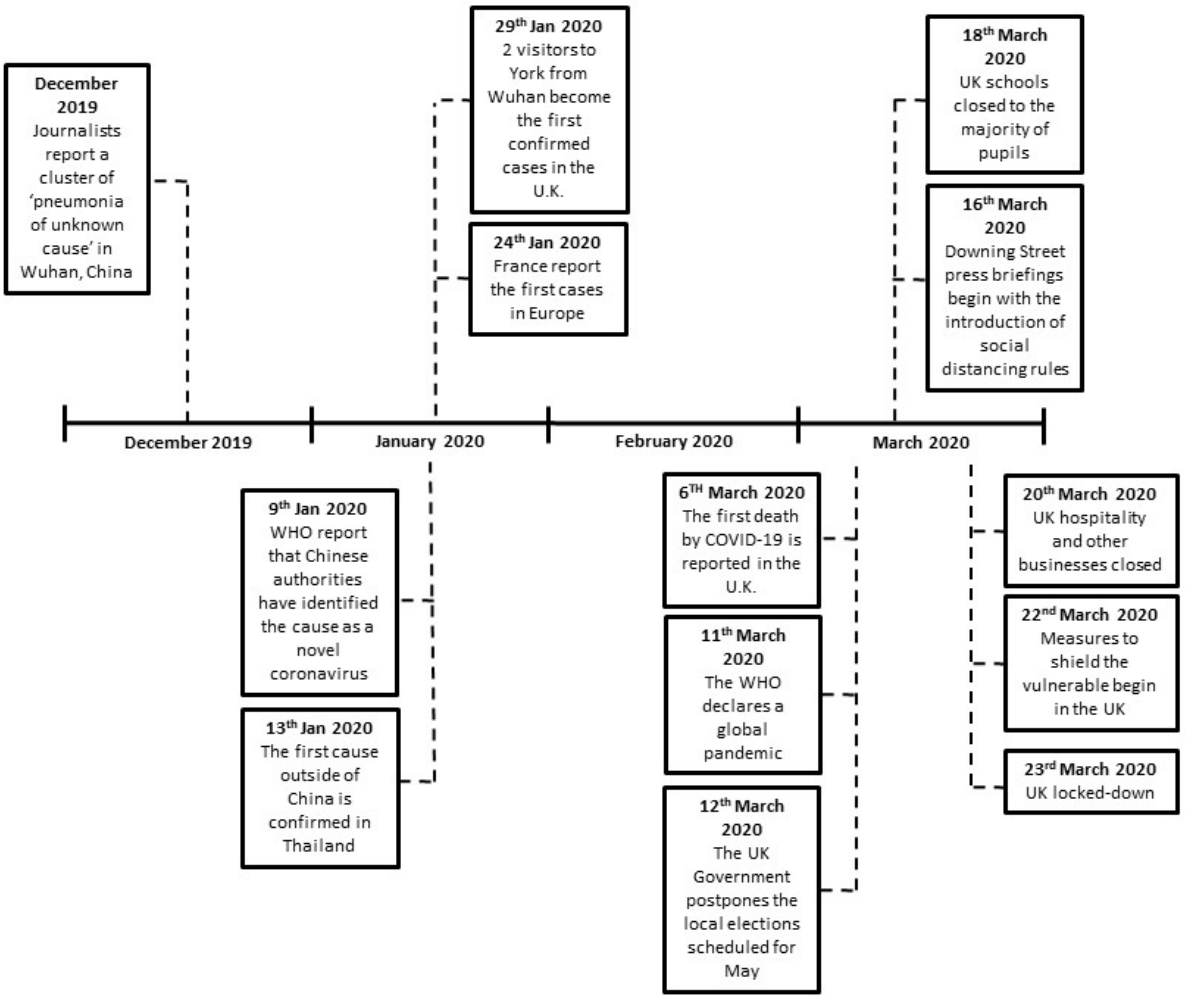
He died in February 2021 after contracting pneumonia and testing positive for COVID-19.

For more details see - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_Tom_Moore

Exercise Vignette 1: Captain Sir Tom Moore

It's not Over

Whilst, as the timeline below documents, one can capture with some precision the start of the Pandemic, determining when (if?) it has ended may prove more problematic.



Timeline 1: A Chronology of the Beginning of the Pandemic, focused on the UK

The chronology of this Position Stand is itself illustrative of how quickly things can change. It was first proposed on 27 September 2021 at a time when arguably some people felt the pandemic was over. Therefore, there was a perceived need to state it was in fact 'ongoing'. However, when it was submitted to the Board for approval on 6 December 2021, the Omicron variant had been identified and the rules on mask wearing and international travel had been tightened once again. Not only do these events remind us that the Pandemic is not over but they also emphasise the importance of checking government and health regulations / restrictions on a regular basis.

The definition of the word Pandemic is contested (Singer et al, 2021) and which definition one adopts has implications for policy makers, practitioners, and researchers. Here the definition from the dictionary of the International Epidemiology Association is used which defines a Pandemic as 'an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting large numbers of people' (Porta, 2014). As large numbers of people in the UK and across Europe are still contracting COVID-19, this Pandemic is not over. In November 2021 when this Stand was being worked on the R value in the UK was between 1.1 and 1.3. This is not to dispute the huge progress that has been made in controlling the virus with the deployment of an effective vaccination programme and public health interventions. However, it is to recognise that the impact of the virus on

the work of Sport and Exercise Scientists and the character of the Discipline is ongoing. This impact is likely to be long lasting and profound. Therefore, BASES wants to i) continue to support its members through the next phases of the Pandemic and its aftermath and ii) shape the Disciplines post pandemic future. This Position Stand stems from this motivation.

Liverpool V Atlético Madrid
10 March 2020

49,000 Liverpool fans turned up to Anfield for this Champions League match which they went on to lose 3-2 (4-2 on aggregate). 3,000 Atlético Madrid supporters travelled to watch their team win whilst back in Spain i) they could not attend matches and ii) schools were closed.

Sports Vignette 1: Liverpool V Atlético Madrid

BASES' Response to the Pandemic 2020 – 2021

BASES, like most organisations, had to react in real time to COVID-19. Not surprisingly, a Pandemic was not on the Association's risk register nor was there a contingency plan in place. Therefore, the first lesson from the Pandemic is that the Association should begin planning for the next one, or similar crises, now. This Position Stand and the actions and mindset that stem from it is part of that planning process.

In roughly chronological order this was the response of the Association to the Pandemic –

1. On the 23 March 2020 the BASES Office was closed, and the Team worked from home to continue to support members. See here.

2. Impact on BUES endorsement regarding the delivery mode and assessment methodologies of academic programmes as a result of COVID-19 was shared.

3. BASES issued an announcement on COVID-19. See here.

4. BASES conferences, workshops events and meetings were moved online. Examples include:
   BASES 2020 Annual Conference
   BASES 2020 Annual General Meeting
   International Webinar on Physical Education, Sport and Exercise Sciences in Context to COVID-19
   BASES Multi-disciplinary Webinar Series
   BASES Multi-disciplinary Webinar Series topics
   BASES 2021 Annual Conference

5. The BASES Expert Statement on COVID-19 and Exercise was published. See here.

6. The BASES COVID-19 Special Interest Group was established, with members updated on developments.

7. An update on BASES Laboratory Accreditations was shared.

8. The BASES Position stand on Reopening after lockdown was published.

9. A report and infographic from a survey asking undergraduate students about their opinions on the impact COVID-19 had on their learning was shared.

10. The BASES Reflective Stand on Reopening was published.

11. BASES Mental Health in Sport and Exercise training resources were developed and made publicly available. These included units on Depressive Disorders and Anxiety Disorders which were considered particularly relevant during lockdown and the Pandemic.

12. The Sport and Exercise Scientist published a number of pieces related to the Pandemic.

13. BASES wrote to all HE Vice-Chancellors and CEOs about the return of students to on campus learning.

14. BASES established i) a Public and External Affairs Advisory Panel (PEA-AP)and ii) a Climate Change Action Team (CCAT) in part to help 'build back better' after the Pandemic.

When viewed from a little distance, these actions evidence a tremendous response by the Association, which itself was operating in the difficult circumstances caused by the Pandemic. The achievement is even more remarkable given that much of this work was and continues to be carried out by volunteers who had been catapulted into delivering material online, with the support of the small BASES Operations Team. Nonetheless, with the benefit of hindsight, it is recognised that some things could have been done better and quicker for example ensuring that BASES's voice was heard by politicians and policy makers.

The actions listed above also illustrate the opportunity cost of the Pandemic - that is what BASES could have achieved if it had been able to put all this time and effort into another project. For example, what could we have done about i) tackling the student retention issue in the Discipline or ii) creating career development pathways for Sport and Exercise Scientists in industry? Knowing what we can achieve when we put our minds to it and work together and entrepreneurially, should give us hope about what we can achieve in the future.

BASES Ongoing Response to the Pandemic

BASES ongoing response to the Pandemic will continue as follows –

1. The response to the Pandemic is now embedded in all parts of the BASES structure and the Association will continue to consider the ongoing and long-term impact of COVID-19 in its decision making.

2. Much of the material and many of the resources developed between 2020 and 2021 remain relevant and will continue to be available for members to access (see the links in the section above). For example, see the BASES Position Stand on 're-opening' and the Reflective Statement summarised below. These resources may prove helpful not just during the Pandemic but afterward as learning resources. For example, the reflective statement may prove a useful example of reflective practice that could be used on a number of modules to illustrate what is meant by reflective practice.

Figure 1: Summary of the BASES Position Stand on Reopening

The inner ring of the donut represents 10 principles to guide reopening following lockdown. The outer ring summarises suggested actions that grow out of these principles.

Word Cloud 1: Taken from the BASES Reflective Stand

This word cloud was generated from the text of the reflective statement. The bigger the word the more often it was used in the statement.

IMPORTANT UPDATE

Since much of this guidance was published it has become clear that the main route by which COVID-19 spreads is through *aerosol transmission.* Therefore, more emphasis should now be placed on –

- Appropriate ventilation in laboratory and teaching spaces
- The continued use of face coverings, social distancing, and hand washing.

- Medical questionnaires completed ahead of exercise testing should enquire of COVID-related symptoms
- Where exercise protocols involve the measurement of expired air samples or lung function, experimenters should avoid positioning themselves directly in front of participants and all equipment should follow recommended cleaning practices

3. If you want to share best practice that you have developed during the Pandemic, you can submit a proposal for a paper to the Sport and Exercise Scientist (TSES). For information on how to do this please see –

https://www.bases.org.uk/sspage-resources-the_sport_and_exercise_scientist-contribute_to_the_sport_and_exercise_scientist.htm

4. If you have developed a specific and demonstrable expertise around COVID-19 you can seek funding and support from BASES to draft an Expert Statement. For information on how to do this please see –

https://www.bases.org.uk/sspage-awards___grants-grants-expert_statement_grants.html

5. If you want to help others by directing members to resources and/or research, please contact Ian Wilson (iwilson@bases.org.uk) to discuss how this might be achieved through a mailout or inclusion in the newsletter.

6. If you have a specific question or need support on a matter related to the Pandemic, please contact the BASES Office (enquiries@bases.org.uk) so that you can be put in contact with the relevant person who can help.

7. The Public and External Affairs Advisory Panel (PEA-AP) will continue to 'lobby' external stakeholders (e.g., Vice Chancellors) about the impact of the Pandemic on Sport and Exercise Scientists and the Discipline.

8. The Association through, for example, the Climate Change Action Team (CATT) will strive to build back better.

9. Importantly, the Association will continue to provide a number of platforms (for example, TSES) where members can debate the big issues of the day as they relate to Sport and Exercise Science. As the Pandemic has taught us, the development of good policy and practice requires freedom of speech and open debate.

10. The BASES COVID-19 Special Interest Group (SIG) played a pivotal role in responding to the Pandemic between 2020 and 2021. At the 2021 BASES conference members had the opportunity to debate whether the lessons from the Pandemic had been learned. Following the debate, the Convenor of the SIG, Andy Smith, stepped down to focus on his roles as Chair of the PEA-AP and CATT. As a result, the SIG will become 'dormant'. That is, it will remain part of the structure of BASES and from time to time will run special projects and be ready to 'step up' if needed. However, it will not have the level of activity seen between 2020-2021. If you would like to volunteer to become the Convenor of the SIG, please contact Ian Wilson(iwilson@bases.org.uk).

11. **Please see the Postscript for an important update on Omicron and 'Plan B'.**

Speculating on the Ongoing Impact of the Pandemic on Sport and Exercise Science

The impact of the Pandemic on Sport and Exercise Scientists and the Discipline will differ across specialisms and contexts. Whilst some of the impacts are reasonably foreseeable, inevitably there will be some surprises. Our intention here is to attempt to identify the opportunities and challenges that we will be presented with over the coming months and years and how they might be exploited and overcome. As illustrated in the figure below, one way to think about the impact of the Pandemic is that the virus itself hit older people the most whilst young people felt the restrictions put in place to control the virus to a greater extent than older people. As Lewis et al (2021) concluded 'Children have least to gain and most to lose from school closures. This pandemic has seen unprecedented intergenerational transfer of harm and costs from elderly socioeconomically privileged people to disadvantaged children'.

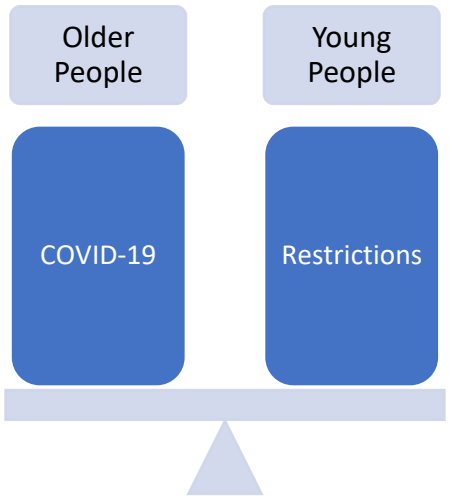


Figure2 The balance of impacts?

In drafting what follows the authors were aware that the opportunities and challenges that are listed are often the 'flip side' of each other. One person's opportunity is another person's challenge and vice versa. Nonetheless, we hope the reader finds it a useful form of categorisation which aids presentation.

OPPORTUNTIES

Opportunity #1 – Taking Control and Valuing Freedom: One of the many disconcerting experiences during the Pandemic has been the loss of perceived and actual control of our health, civil liberties, professional practice and ultimately of the future. Gradually this control is being given back to us as vaccines and new treatments reduce some of the inherent risks, and the lifting of legal restrictions renew our freedom of movement and association. Having lost and then regained some level of control and freedom of action presents an opportunity to truly recognise the importance of these values. There is an opportunity to rethink and revalue i) the choices we have in relation to our health and ii) our freedom and civil liberties.

Opportunity #2 – Volunteers and amateurs: One of the unintended consequences of the development of Sports Science and the growth of professional sport has been the redefinition of the word 'amateur'. In many contexts to be an 'amateur' has come to mean doing something badly and to lack the skills of a professional. Arguably we need to reclaim the original definition of the term to mean someone who does something for the love of it rather than for payment. Throughout the Pandemic many communities and organisations, including BASES, have depended on volunteers and amateurs to deliver services and provide support. There is an opportunity to build on this generosity of spirit by finding new ways to encourage volunteering in all our organisations. Increasing the number of

volunteers in Sport and Exercise Science could for example i) help us recruit more research participants, ii) enable us to develop more 'citizen science' projects and iii) find more external mentors and placements for our students and early career sport and exercise scientists. There are several ways in which BASES can increase volunteering both within the Association and the Discipline more generally. These include i) ensuring that those who help are appropriately recognised and supported and ii) emphasising the direct benefit to those volunteering in terms of, for example, the sense of achievement and wellbeing that comes from making a contribution.

Opportunity # 3: Build on the success of British Science: Working with partners from across the world and building on decades of international research the achievements of British Science during the Pandemic included–

- ✓ Establishing a world leading surveillance system to identify new variants of the virus.
- ✓ 'The UK has contributed to the global SARS-CoV-2 genome repository about a quarter of its sequences' (Spiegelhalter and Masters, 2021 page 38.)
- ✓ By a week early in January 2021, 2.5 million Britons had a PCR Test.
- ✓ As early as April 2020 the Office for National Statistics established a survey to investigate rates of infection.
- ✓ The British *Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy* (RECOVERY) led to the use of low-dose dexamethasone as an intervention estimated to have saved over a million lives across the world.
- ✓ The Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT) is enabling the world to evaluate which global interventions were most successful.
- ✓ The Oxford–AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine (AZD1222) was developed in Britain.
- ✓ The UK was the first country to approve vaccines and to develop a new 'pill' to treat COVID-19 (see, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-59163899).

Arguably trust and respect for Scientists in Britain has never been higher. This may result in i) more people wanting to study science-based Disciplines like SES, ii) more demand for evidence-based interventions in a range of settings including exercise and sport and iii) more government funding for research and science. Through the PEA-AP the Association is working more closely with the Science Council and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) to lobby government and other decision makers for more investment in research and science education. For example, in advance of the Autumn 2021 Budget and Spending Review, BASES co-signed a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for more funding for UK science.

The Pandemic demonstrated the need to ensure that as many people as possible have a grounding in the scientific method and the statistics of risk (particularly probability) to avoid the spread of misinformation. Sport and Exercise Science has a good track record in widening participation to a science-based education amongst groups of people underrepresented in Higher Education and science. There is an opportunity to communicate this achievement more strongly to funders and policy makers to increase investment and recognition of the Discipline.

Opportunity # 4 Refocus on Biological Age: By far the biggest risk factor in relation to COVID-19 is age. However, research is needed to determine if the risk factor was frailty or biological age rather than age as such. This might open up the field of epigenetics for Exercise Science and the development of physical activity-based interventions to prevent frailty and reduce the biological age of individuals and populations.

CHALLENGES

Challenge #1 – Supporting the COVID Cohort: The next generation of Sport and Exercise Scientists who are currently undergraduate or postgraduate students have been educated in 'interesting times'. 9/11, the war on terror, the economic crash, the rapid development of social media and now the Pandemic have shaped their thinking and education. Whilst members of the Association and BASES itself have done much to support these students (see for example the BASES 2021 Student Conference (https://www.solent.ac.uk/solent-sport/documents/bases-conference/bases-conference-brochure.pdf) much remains to be done. The need for this support is all the more pressing because i) Sport and Exercise Science Degrees suffer from high levels of drop out and ii) there is compelling evidence that the mental health and wellbeing of the student population is not as good as it could be. To meet this challenge several possible interventions present themselves to the Association -

- ✓ Ensuring that the student voice is heard and understood. To compliment the excellent work members are doing in their own Institutions to listen to students the Association will continue to work closely with its student members. As part of the Governance Review, BASES established a new Student Advisory Group (SAG), comprising of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Student Representatives from the five Divisions. The Chair of the SAG is a member of the Stakeholder Committee, a Standing Committee of the Board.

- ✓ Working more closely with the Office for Students.

- ✓ Supporting the work of the Education and Teaching SIG.

- ✓ Defining this cohort by its strengths not its weaknesses.

- ✓ Expanding the BASES CPD offer.

- ✓ Communicating regularly with Vice Chancellors.

Challenge # 2 – Mitigating the economic impact of COVID-19: The Pandemic will inevitably have a negative impact on the world's economies. At the time of writing, it is hard to assess the knock-on effect this will have in Sport and Exercise Science. If Universities and Sport find that their funding has been cut or demands for their services reduced, this might see Departments and Institutes with reduced budgets or at worst facing closure. Equally troubling the communities who host us and to which we belong may find themselves facing more poverty and higher rates of unemployment. In turn economic hardship will lead onto an increase in health problems including obesity, coronary heart disease and mental illness. In this context public engagement, knowledge exchange and outreach work has never been more important.

Challenge # 3: Long COVID: Even after infection and death rates have tumbled, societies across the world are going to be left with the unwanted legacy of long COVID. Exercise Science has a role to play in the development and testing of bespoke COVID-19 specific rehabilitation approaches.

Challenge # 4: Tackling health inequality: 'Relative to the white population, age-adjusted death rates were higher for all ethnic groups: the death rate among Black Africans was nearly four times higher for men and three times higher for women. After adjusting for geography, deprivation and pre-existing medical factors, the death rates for most ethnic groups comes closer to white people. That suggests increased risks were not genetical, but more associated with living circumstances and factors such as occupation and access to health care' (Spiegelhalter and Masters, 2021. pp 122-123). Everyone should have an equal opportunity to i) be healthy and ii) to contribute to improving the health of others and be recognised and respected for that contribution. As we move forward, the Association's value of *equality and diversity* has never been more important and relevant to the situation created by the Pandemic. Therefore, the Association will continue to –

- ✓ aim to create a culture and practices that recognise, respect, value, and embrace difference for everyone's benefit.

- ✓ strive to attract and retain talented people to work for BASES and to support our wider work.

- ✓ promote and celebrate the positive effect that diversity has both in our workplace and within our members.

BASES 2021 Conference Debate

Whilst drafting this Position Stand the authors took part in a well-received debate 'at' the BASES 2021 annual conference. The aim here was to explore the lessons that had already been learned from COVID-19 and what lessons still needed to be addressed. The Table below summarises some of the issues that emerged from the debate. Thanks go to all the participants who took part in the event. The content of the table are points for discussion and are tabulated to provoke further debate rather than being presented as definitive conclusions.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PANDEMIC AND CHANGES MADE	LESSONS WHICH STILL NEED TO BE LEARNED AND CHANGES STILL REQUIRED
The Pandemic led to more collaboration between Sport and Exercise Scientists from different institutions. There were countless examples of intellectual generosity, kindness, and voluntary effort.	How do we make the people and physical resources of SES available to those who need support dealing with health challenges, including but not limited to long COVID? How can we improve our partnerships with Physical Education and lobby for more specialist PE Teachers in primary schools?
COVID-19 highlighted the importance of both interdisciplinary research (see 'The Future of Interdisciplinary Research' from the Physiological Society') and cross-professional working.	How do we create the same sense of urgency around obesity and heart disease as that around COVID?
The importance of understanding sedentary behaviour as well as physical activity and exercise was highlighted. A Web of Science search of the word 'sedentary' revealed 9,654 papers between 2016-2018 and 11,400 between 2021 - a 18% increase.	How do we influence and work more closely with the NHS and health sector? Acknowledging the national and international need for support and expertise from the exercise sciences and role that the current SES community and future practitioners can play.
The Pandemic has prompted society to focus more on equality, diversity, and inclusion.	How can we improve both the retention of undergraduate students on SES Degrees and their employment prospects?
In response to the lockdown many Sport and Exercise Scientists moved their professional practice, research and teaching online in a matter of days demonstrating flexibility and agility.	Do we need a re-think about the delivery of SES at HE/FE institutions? Delivery of sport vs. exercise, and emphasis of these in recruitment of students
Our response to COVID-19 has changed how and where we work.	
The Pandemic has highlighted the importance of the natural environment and the importance of addressing the climate change emergency (hence the establishment of the CCAT).	

Table 1: Discussion Points from the BASES 2021 Conference Debate

Conclusion

Like most civic institutions, professional and scientific bodies, BASES could have been better prepared for COVID-19 and have responded more quickly and effectively. By acknowledging this and learning the lessons from the Pandemic we can and will do better next time. To do so begins with the acknowledgement that there will be a next time and that there is still much to do before the current crises and its aftermath is over.

A clear 'finding' from our work on this Position Stand is that the Association's response to the Pandemic was dependent on the Teamwork between i) the professional staff of the Association; ii) the Directors and elected officers and iii) volunteers. Overall, this worked well because i) there was a shared sense of urgency & common purpose and ii) the level of bureaucracy was kept to a minimum.

Covid 19 has killed, scarred lungs & minds, created fear, ruined businesses, and ravaged economies. It has damaged health and wealth. It is not the first such catastrophe to confront humankind. As a species we overcame the bubonic plague, Spanish flu and hit back against malaria, AIDS, smallpox, leprosy, and TB. If history teaches us anything it is that living on the 3rd rock from the sun is a series of challenges. Whilst as Pinker (2018) evidences the enlightenment has powered an impressive improvement in the human condition Pandemic level threats will strike us again. A positive response to the knowledge that we will face other global catastrophes in the future is to recognise that we can use the Pandemic as a harsh and unforgiving Teacher. One of its lessons about the brutal reality of threats yet to come is not to lose hope but to value the periods of peace, health and prosperity that are also part of human existence. We must use these periods to improve the human condition through education, science, sport, and exercise. If we can achieve this, then the Pandemic may lead to Post Traumatic Growth. After all, if within ourselves and our Associations we have found the resilience to keep going in the face of COVID-19 ***we can and will do it again.***

PLAN B POSTSCRIPT

After this Position Stand had been peer reviewed, submitted to the Board for approval and prepared for publication, it was announced that England would move to Plan B 'in response to the risks of the Omicron variant.' New measures are also in place in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

Details can be found here:
England
Northern Ireland
Scotland
Wales

In response to these developments, it was felt appropriate that this 'post-script' be added.

Whilst all viruses have the potential to mutate, at the time of writing there is much that remains to be known about the new Omicron variant. Therefore, what follows should be treated with caution and fact-checked against peer reviewed publications and official guidance as and when they are published:

- ✓ The Omicron variant appears to be more transmissible, and it is likely that if new measures are not put into place, the UK (and other countries) could see a large increase in infections. This could put the NHS under considerable strain.
- ✓ In some people, the Omicron variant appears to cause only mild to moderate illness but for others, particularly the vulnerable, it still has the potential to cause serious illness.
- ✓ Whilst the current vaccines, particularly after the booster (third dose), offer protection, as with any vaccine, they do not provide a complete defence. Thankfully work is underway to adapt existing vaccines to account for the altered spike protein that the omicron strain contains.

The headline messages from the UK Government to help people stay safe and prevent the spread of the virus are to:

- ✓ 'Wear a face covering in most indoor public places and on public transport'
- ✓ 'Get tested and self-isolate if required'
- ✓ 'Work from home, if you can'
- ✓ 'If you haven't already, get vaccinated'
- ✓ 'Let fresh air in if you meet indoors. Meeting outdoors is safer'

Universities, employers, Institutes, and others will no doubt be issuing situational and sector-specific advice. Readers are encouraged i) to access and follow such guidance when it is issued and ii) to share it with colleagues.

These recent developments serve to illustrate that to control the virus requires a range of measures including i) vaccinations, ii) effective treatments, iii) support pathways for those with long-COVID, iv) preventative measures and v) safe behaviours. Whilst an appropriate and sustained commitment to these measures will bring the Pandemic under control, the disease is likely to remain Endemic and will still need to be managed and considered for many years to come.

Sport and Exercise Scientists work in a wide variety of settings including clinics, clubs, research institutes and Universities. All of these environments present opportunities to help colleagues, clients or students to stay safe and protect others. Whilst our respective organisations have a responsibility to ensure they create COVID-secure environments, each of us has a personal and professional responsibility i) to keep ourselves and those around us safe and ii) to promote the adoption of actions to prevent the spread of the virus.

We have learned a lot from previous 'waves' which we need to continue to apply, as it is persistence that in the end will overcome the Pandemic. As the Omicron variant reminds us, this is a marathon not a sprint and we need to continue to support each other and work together over the coming months.

GET BOOSTED NOW

14 /12 /21

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to Ian Wilson and the BASES Office Team, the participants in the BASES 2021 conference debate on COVID-19 and the Steering Group of the BASES SIG on COVID who contributed to much of the work reported here.

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Mark is a BASES accredited SES, member of the Public and External Affairs Advisory Panel and Associate Professor in Respiratory Physiology at the University of Derby. His research in Respiratory Physiology and long-term conditions involves investigating the determinants of recovery following acute respiratory infection and using methods derived from the exercise sciences to improve patient outcomes and quality of life. Mark is also a core member of the Healthy Living for Pandemic Event Protection (HL-PIVOT) international network and leading a number of collaborative initiatives.

Dr Mark Ross

Mark is a BASES accredited sport and exercise scientist and Steering Group member of the BASES COVID-19 SIG. He is a lecturer in Exercise Physiology and Programme Leader of the BSc Hons Sport and Exercise Science degree programme at Edinburgh Napier University. His research interests include the effect of exercise, physical activity, and dietary interventions to improve cardiovascular repair.

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PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS POSTION STAND IS FOR GUIDANCE ONLY. FURTHER INDEPENDENT LEGAL GUIDANCE SHOULD ALWAYS BE SOUGHT IF NECESSARY.

THE PANDEMIC IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING AND THERE ARE CHANGES AND UPDATES ALMOST DAILY WHICH SHOULD BE MONITORED AND ACTED UPON BY ALL SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENTISTS

THIS POSITION STAND WAS PUBLISHED ON 17/12/2021.

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