

**Fellow:** [Verity Postlethwaite](#) (PE18768), University of Worcester, School of Sport and Exercise Science

**Host:** Prof. Nobuko Tanaka, Faculty of Culture and Sport Policy, Toin University of Yokohama

**Fellowship:** JSPS Short Term Pre/Postdoctoral Fellowship

**Title of Research in Japan:** An analysis of the policy making process for disability sport in Japan and the United Kingdom: 2012 – 2020

Between March and July 2019, I spent four months in the Kanagawa prefecture at [Toin University of Yokohama](#). During that time, I worked with [Prof. Nobuko Tanaka](#) who is a world-recognised researcher in sport policy and disability studies. For a number of years the [University of Worcester](#), where I completed my doctorate, has partnered with Prof. Tanaka as part of preparations for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

During the time of the fellowship, I collected data about the Japanese policy making process for disability sport, including official materials (e.g. Japanese Government policies), mass media materials (e.g. website and newspaper articles), and semi-structured interviews (i.e. Paralympic and disability sport individuals connected to the policy making process).

With the data I examined similarities and differences of the policy making process for disability sport between the UK (London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, my doctorate research) and Japan (Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, fellowship research).



The main findings from the fellowship were:

- The difference in language affects the way UK and Japanese individuals conceptualise and discuss policy around: the Paralympics, para-sport, disability sport, and disability.
- International agreements and hosting sport mega-events have a similar influence on UK and Japanese policy making process, but the pace to which the countries change policy is different. For example, the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the pace of ratification (UK, 2009; Japan, 2014).
- Both the UK and Japan are significantly influenced by historic connections to the Stoke Mandeville Games (origins of the Paralympic movement) but more needs to be done to understand how UK and Japanese policy has been influenced by the historic connections.



I have discussed and disseminated the findings from the fellowship in a number of ways. Informally I used [Twitter and my personal blog](#), then led teaching sessions at my Japanese host university; formally I contributed to a policy forum and research symposium in Tokyo (June, 2019) at the House of Councilors, and in the UK I presented a paper at The British Society of Sport History Annual Conference (September 2019). In the future, there is one book chapter in press, and two academic peer-review journal articles in preparation.

Living and researching in Japan was enriching and challenging at the same time. The UK and Japanese cultures are very different, however I met some fantastic people who showed me the true meaning of Japan and a Japanese lifestyle. I wish to return to research and visit in the future, and I hope to continue conversations about my fellowship in the coming years.